

**Board 1**

♠ 9  
 North Deals ♥ A K J 9 8  
 None Vul ♦ A J 9 3  
 ♣ Q 10 5

♠ K 7  
 ♥ Q 7 3  
 ♦ K 10 7 5  
 ♣ K 8 7 6



♠ A 10 6 5 2  
 ♥ 6 4  
 ♦ Q 2  
 ♣ J 4 3 2

	♠	Q J 8 4 3		
N	-	2 3 1 2	♥	10 5 2
S	-	2 3 1 2	♦	8 6 4
E	1	- - - -	♣	A 9
W	1	- - - -		

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
All pass			
2♥ by North			

Heart partials seem the most likely result of the bidding on this deal, perhaps reached in a couple of bids playing a 5-card major system. With an awkward choice of lead maybe a trump looks safest. Now it is natural for declarer to play ♣A and another to ensure the ruff. West wins the King and plays a second round of trumps. Declarer wins, discards a diamond on the ♣Q and plays ♦A and a second round to East's Queen. Now East has to find the tough play of underleading the ♠A to get his partner in for another round of trumps. Other defences such as a club to the King and a diamond may see declarer making as many as 10 tricks.

If East-West step out of line and contest the partscore, the penalty will be at least 300. For example, anyone for 2♠ after 1♥ – 2♥ passed back to East?

**Board 2**

♠ K 8  
 East Deals ♥ A K 7  
 N-S Vul ♦ K Q J 8 5  
 ♣ K 7 4

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



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

	♠	Q J 10 9 7 5		
N	-	2 3 4 1	♥	J 9 6 2
S	-	2 3 4 1	♦	10 2
E	1	- - - -	♣	10
W	1	- - - -		

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♣	Dbl	3♣	3♠
Pass	3N	Pass	4♠
All pass			
4♠ by South			

A club lead will sink 3NT, so it is vital to reach 4♠, where you can eventually pitch your two heart losers on club and diamond winners. Tempting as it might be to open 2♠, there are just too many flaws: the vulnerability, your second seat position, and the 4-card heart suit. Over a 1♣ opening, North is too strong for 1NT, so starts with a double.

When South shows a bit of life, game should be reached, and South should insist on playing in his long suit, as his hand may be close to useless in 3NT. If West opens an 11-count weak no-trump, North will double, and East may run with some two-suited manoeuvre. The best descriptive bid now by South is 3♠, suggesting a long spade suit but few high cards, and North has enough to raise to game.

**Board 3**

♠ 6 4 3  
 South Deals ♥ A 10 7 6 2  
 E-W Vul ♦ A 9 6  
 ♣ 10 2

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



♠ K Q 8 2  
 ♥ 9 5 3  
 ♦ Q J 5  
 ♣ J 7 3

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

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1N
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	3N
All pass			
3NT by South			

Most pairs will get to game here, either inviting after a strong no-trump opening and transfer, or using checkback after the strong no-trump rebid. Making game may prove tricky. After a low club lead, try the 10 from dummy in case the lead is from the QJ. When it is covered by the Jack, duck and win the second round.

If you judge that clubs are 5-3, then a reasonable line is to plan to build a second spade trick for your ninth trick. So, cross to the ♦A and finesse a spade; if West wins and clears clubs, play ♦K and another, hoping that East has the long diamond, and you still have the ♥A as an entry for a second spade finesse. This works fine here as East has both spade honours and the long diamond. To make 10 tricks you have to make the unnatural looking play of attacking hearts first.

**Board 4** ♠ A J 7 5 4  
 West Deals ♥ 2  
 Both Vul ♦ 10 8 7 5 4  
 ♣ K 7

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

♠ K Q 9 6 3 2  
 ♥ A 5  
 ♦ A Q 9 3  
 ♣ 10

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	-	-	-	-	
S	-	-	-	-	
E	3	3	4	3	4
W	3	2	3	3	4

♠ 8  
 ♥ Q J 8 7 6  
 ♦ K 2  
 ♣ 8 6 4 3 2

♠	8	8	8
♥	11	15	15
♦	6	6	6
♣	6	6	6

West North East South  
 1♥ 1♠ Pass Pass  
 Dbl All pass  
 1♠× by North

If North is seduced by his 5-5 shape and chances a 1♠ overcall, he may live to regret it. West should re-open with a double as it is very likely his partner has a penalty pass.

After a club to the Ace and a suit preference ♣Q back, East can underlead his ♥A back to West's King. West can now play club winners through North.

This defence will lead to either three or four down, comfortably beating the non-vulnerable game available as an alternative.

3NT should be okay, but finding the overtrick will probably be worth some matchpoints. I expect most declarers to manage that as each suit the defence plays will help declarer to some extent. 4♠ as an alternative would usually be okay but today will be scuppered by the bad trump break.

**Board 5** ♠ A 2  
 North Deals ♥ K J 10 9 5 4  
 N-S Vul ♦ 3  
 ♣ K Q J 2

♠ 10 7 6 5 4 3  
 ♥ 7 3  
 ♦ Q 2  
 ♣ 10 8 7

♠ K Q J 8  
 ♥ 6 2  
 ♦ A K J 8 4  
 ♣ A 3

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	4	-	5	-	1
S	4	-	5	-	1
E	-	1	-	3	-
W	-	1	-	3	-

♠ 9  
 ♥ A Q 8  
 ♦ 10 9 7 6 5  
 ♣ 9 6 5 4

♠	9	14	14
♥	2	18	18
♦	6	6	6
♣	6	6	6

West North East South  
 2♠ 1♥ Dbl 2♥  
 4♥ 4♠ All pass

A big double-fit hand, and any North-South pairs that find their way to 5♥ over 4♠ can consider to have done very well.

After the 1♥ opening, East is too strong to overcall with 2♦, so starts with a double. West only has two points but, with six spades, his bid lays the foundation for a potential save should the opponents bid 4♥, which looks quite likely.

Defeating 4♠ shouldn't be too difficult, as North on lead can either set up a diamond ruff or a club trick for the defence's fourth trick. Any pair finding their way to 5♥ are likely to be doubled by East and end up with a top score.

**Board 6** ♠ 6 5 2  
 East Deals ♥ A K 9 5 4 3  
 E-W Vul ♦ 8  
 ♣ K J 5

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

♠ J 9 7 3  
 ♥ Q 6  
 ♦ J 9  
 ♣ A Q 10 4 3

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	-	2	-	-	-
S	-	2	-	-	-
E	1	-	-	3	-
W	1	-	-	3	-

♠ 10 4  
 ♥ 7  
 ♦ A K Q 10 7 5 4  
 ♣ 7 6 2

♠	10	11	11
♥	9	10	10
♦	9	9	9
♣	9	9	9

West North East South  
 Pass 4♣ Pass 3N  
 All pass 4♦  
 4♦ by South

Over his partner's gambling 3NT, North doesn't have quite enough to chance a pass with only three low spades and no ♣A. Although he 'knows' his partner's suit is diamonds, 4♣ is the traditional way to bail out as 4♦ would ask if the 3NT bidder has a singleton.

West has an easy lead and, providing he determines that only two spades are cashing, a club is the natural switch at trick three and should lead to his side getting all the tricks that they are due. A heavy 3♦ opening may work even better as nobody will have anything to say and will lead to NS playing a level lower. I can't see many chances for East-West to find their spade fit, except perhaps via an unsound 1♠ overcall over a 1♦ opening, or an equally aggressive double by East if the auction starts 1♦-Pass-1♥.

**Board 7** ♠ 6 4 3  
 South Deals ♥ 7 6 4 3 2  
 Both Vul ♦ 5 4  
 ♣ A J 4

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

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	-	2	2	-	1
S	-	2	2	-	1
E	1	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

West      North      East      South

Pass      1♥      Pass      1N

All pass  
 1NT by South

There are three likely contracts on this hand: 1♦ if North passes his partner's opening, 1NT on the auction above, and 2♥ when North transfers to his suit after a strong NT opening. All of these contracts should make, as the cards lie very well for North-South.

Against 1NT on a spade to the King and Ace, declarer crosses to ♣J and plays a diamond to the Jack and King. West has to play a heart now to stop declarer making an overtrick, as otherwise declarer has the tempo to set up the diamond suit. Indeed, continuing spades would lead to as many as nine tricks. Diamond contracts should come to eight tricks, losing three tricks in the majors and two in the trump suit.

Those in 2♥ contracts are in the best double dummy spot and, providing they go after trumps immediately, should emerge with eight tricks: win a spade lead with the Ace, play ♥A and ♥J, and then, on regaining the lead, cross to dummy with a club to split out the trumps.

**Board 8** ♠ A 10 8 7  
 West Deals ♥ Q 10 9  
 None Vul ♦ J 10 9 6  
 ♣ A 3

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

♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	1	1	-	1
S	1	1	-	-
E	-	-	2	-
W	-	-	2	-

West      North      East      South

Pass      1N      Dbl      All pass

1NTx by North

A subtly interesting pairs partscore board with lots of variations possible in the auction. In the simplest scenario, North passes and East opens a strong no-trump and eventually plays and makes 2♥ after partner's transfer. If East opens an Acol 1♠, then North will protect and play 1NT.

With all those tens and nines, many will already have opened the North hand in second seat either with a weak no-trump or one of a minor, as system dictates. East will double the 1NT opening which will either lead to 2♥, this time by West, or maybe 1NT doubled if everyone passes.

No-trump contracts by North will make seven tricks unless East starts with three rounds of hearts at the start.

Finally, if East overcalls 1NT over a natural 1♦ opening then South may be able to compete to 3♦ over 2♥. This will fail by two tricks, but will be a valuable 10 points less than defending 2♥.

**Board 9** ♠ —  
 North Deals ♥ 9 6 3  
 E-W Vul ♦ Q 10 9 7 5  
 ♣ K Q 10 6 5

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

♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	3	4	-	-
S	3	4	-	-
E	-	-	1	3
W	-	-	1	3

West      North      East      South

Pass      Pass      Pass      1N

Pass      Pass      2♣      Pass

3♠      3N      Pass      4♣

All pass  
 4♣ by South

Who knows what is right for North when partner opens a weak no trump. You could pass and hope that partner has good spades, or that it is the opponents' hand in spades, or guess to transfer to one of your minors. If you transfer to clubs, that is your better suit, but if you have to do so via 2♠ you allow an easy double of your void. So maybe transferring to diamonds via 2NT is the better choice, but could still look silly if partner has two little ones. In the auction above, after East-West find their ♠ fit, North can bid 3NT to suggest both minors having passed initially over 1NT. The contract rolls in with the diamond finesse succeeding.

Maybe West with his great cards in the majors should blast 4♠, reasoning that either it may make, or his opponents can make something in the minors. Here it may well provoke North to save in five of a minor, enabling EW to go plus.

**Board 10** ♠ K 8 7 6 5  
 East Deals ♥ 10 9 6 4  
 Both Vul ♦ A 8  
 ♣ 6 2

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



	♣	♦	♥	♠	N	♠ J	
N	-	-	1	-	-	♥ A 7 5 2	7
S	-	-	1	-	-	♦ 7 6 5 3 2	11 14
E	2	1	-	1	2	♣ K 7 3	8
W	3	1	-	1	2		

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1N	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2N	Pass
3N	All pass		
3NT by West			

Many 4333 11-counts might pass a weak NT but here the minor suit honour combinations are worth a bit extra so I would lean towards inviting, which here would lead to the decent game.

A diamond lead will defeat the game, as declarer will lose the club finesse to South, who can clear diamonds whilst still maintaining the ♥A as an entry.

If instead South tries an initial heart lead, not unreasonable as East has advertised length in the minors on this auction, then declarer will have the tempo to get to nine tricks and earn himself a good score.

**Board 11** ♠ A 4  
 South Deals ♥ K Q 9 5  
 None Vul ♦ A 10 3 2  
 ♣ J 10 5

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



	♣	♦	♥	♠	N	♠ Q 9 6	
N	-	6	6	1	5	♥ A J 10 4 2	14
S	-	7	6	1	5	♦ K Q 7 5	6 4
E	2	-	-	-	-	♣ A	16
W	2	-	-	-	-		

West	North	East	South
			1♥
3♣	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	4N
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♦
Pass	6♥	All pass	
6♥ by South			

Forget reaching the double dummy par of 7♦, 6♥ with just 30 HCP rates to be a good score. Without intervention it is more straightforward as North can make a Jacoby response, and then, if South shows shortage, North has a great hand rich in controls with nothing wasted in clubs.

When West makes a nuisance of himself with a weak jump overcall (anyone for 4♣ which would make reaching slam nearly impossible?), North has room to show a good raise, and South can bid 4♦ to show some interest; or perhaps South has just about enough to immediately Blackwood into the slam over 4♣, assuming that most of his partner's high cards will be outside clubs.

**Board 12** ♠ K 4 3 2  
 West Deals ♥ K J 9 8  
 N-S Vul ♦ 8 2  
 ♣ Q 8 3

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



	♣	♦	♥	♠	N	♠ A Q J	
N	3	3	3	4	3	♥ 10 2	9
S	3	2	3	4	3	♦ A 9 7 5 4	5 7
E	-	-	-	-	-	♣ A K J	19
W	-	-	-	-	-		

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	2N
Pass	3♠	Pass	3N
All pass			
3NT by South			

This should be everyone's 3NT, so will boil down to whether declarer emerges with an overtrick. West has a natural lead of a club – perhaps the ♣7, second highest, if that is your arrangement – which will run round to declarer, who will float the ♥10 won by East's queen.

There are a couple of clues to East that it is right to switch. Firstly, the seven, a highish card, is quite likely to be from a weak suit; secondly, if playing Smith Peters, West can follow to the first heart with the ♥3 to suggest a switch (the ♥7 would suggest carrying on with a club). After the ♦3 switch to the ten, West continues with the ♦K, which should hold declarer to the contract for a good score.

If declarer ducks the ♦K continuation, then West needs to be careful to cash his partner's ♥A.

**Board 13** ♠ Q 9 7 6 4  
 North Deals ♥ A Q 7  
 Both Vul ♦ 3  
 ♣ K 8 4 3

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



	♠	A J		
N	♠	6 1 2 4 1	♥	K 6 2
S	♥	6 1 2 4 1	♦	8 7 4
E	♦	- - - - -	♣	A 10 7 6 2
W	♣	- - - - -		

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♠
Pass	5♣	All pass	

5♣ by South

Careful bidding should avoid the hopeless 3NT, which is off the diamond suit. When North supports clubs, South shows his heart stop, looking for 3NT, but North can't oblige. This enables South to show his strong doubleton spade support on the next round.

It looks a gamble for North to pass 4♠ with only Queen to five, but it will work on this layout. After ruffing the second round of diamonds, play a spade to the Jack, cash the ♠A, and then running clubs is good enough for 10 tricks.

Club games are more secure, and with both black suits behaving there are twelve easy tricks by ruffing two diamonds in dummy and taking the spade finesse. I expect making 620 one way or another will be above average.

**Board 14** ♠ A  
 East Deals ♥ A K J 6 3  
 None Vul ♦ Q J 8 7 6 3  
 ♣ A

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



	♠	Q 4		
N	♠	1 5 5 - -	♥	9 8 7
S	♥	1 5 5 - -	♦	K 10 4
E	♦	- - - 2 -	♣	K 8 6 5 2
W	♣	- - - 2 -		

West	North	East	South
		3♠	Pass
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥

All pass  
 4♥ by South

When East's pre-empt runs round to North it will be useful if his side are playing non-leaping Michaels, whereby 4 of a minor after a 3-level opening shows five in that minor and five in the other major. If you aren't playing that, maybe you gamble 4♥, or double and hope to survive.

On a spade lead against 4♥, you win in dummy and have no convenient fast entry to hand for the heart finesse. You can either cash ♥AK and play on diamonds, which leads to 11 tricks, or cash one top heart and then play a diamond to the King, hoping diamonds are 2-2. On this layout the defence can collect a ruff but at the expense of a trump trick, providing that declarer does not try to cross to hand with a second round of diamonds for a heart finesse. 4♠ is a profitable save for East-West, down only 300 compared to the non-vulnerable game, so North-South will have to take the push to the 5-level, and make it, to emerge with a decent score.

**Board 15** ♠ 10 4  
 South Deals ♥ 6 3  
 N-S Vul ♦ J 8 4 2  
 ♣ J 8 7 4 3

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



	♠	A K 9 8 2		
N	♠	2 - - 1 -	♥	10 5
S	♥	2 - - 1 -	♦	A 10 7
E	♦	- - 3 - 1	♣	A 10 6
W	♣	- - 3 - 1		

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♥	All pass		

3♥ by East

South is on lead with four cashing tricks, so defeating a heart game shouldn't be too difficult.

It is tempting with the West hand to just raise partner's protective overcall to game, but remember that partner might be weaker in this position, and a closer look at your hand will reveal that your queens are suspect values, making your hand less good than the point count suggests.

Well judged if you manage to avoid the failing game – you should be rewarded with a good score.

**Board 16** ♠ Q 8 3  
 West Deals ♥ 10 4  
 E-W Vul ♦ A J 10 7 2  
 ♣ K J 10

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

♠ A 7 5 4  
 ♥ A 9 7 2  
 ♦ 8 3  
 ♣ Q 9 5

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	-	-	-	-	
S	-	-	-	-	
E	2	-	3	1	1
W	2	-	3	1	1

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

		11	
		12	10
		7	

West North East South  
 1N All pass  
 1NT by West

The weak no trump should steal the pot. After a diamond lead collects five tricks for the defence, declarer needs a miracle to make his contract. Playing on hearts will set up a sixth trick for declarer but will usually lead to defeat thereafter. However, if North has ♣K and the suit splits 3-3, declarer can set up two more tricks for the loss of only one to make his contract.

Strong no-trumpers will do better, as they will locate their heart fit and play that strain in a partial. With the favourable club position and a 3-2 heart split, nine tricks should be available.

**Board 17** ♠ 9 3  
 North Deals ♥ A 10 7  
 None Vul ♦ K 9 6 4  
 ♣ 10 9 6 2

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

♠ K 4  
 ♥ K 4 2  
 ♦ A Q J 2  
 ♣ A 5 4 3

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	-	-	-	-	
S	-	-	-	-	
E	5	5	2	6	6
W	5	5	2	6	6

♠ J 10 8  
 ♥ Q J 8 6 5 3  
 ♦ 8 7  
 ♣ Q 7

		7	
		10	17
		6	

West North East South  
 Pass 1♦ Pass  
 1♠ Pass 1N Pass  
 4♠ All pass  
 4♠ by West

4♠ will be played from both sides, depending on whether East-West play a strong or weak no trump.

Everything is favourable for declarer: spades are 3-2, the ♥A is onside, and both diamond and club finesses are right. So proper technique on, say, a passive trump lead, will be unrewarded: Draw trumps and play a heart towards the King first, because, if the Ace is onside, you don't need the club finesse.

**Board 18** ♠ 5 2  
 East Deals ♥ 8 5  
 N-S Vul ♦ K J 7 5 3 2  
 ♣ A K J

♠ 9 8 6  
 ♥ Q 6 4  
 ♦ 10  
 ♣ 9 8 7 6 4 2

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

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	-	3	-	-	1
S	-	3	-	-	1
E	1	-	3	2	-
W	1	-	2	2	-

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

		12	
		2	15
		11	

West North East South  
 Pass 2♦ 1♥ Pass  
 All pass 3♦  
 3♦ by North

It needs sharp defence to hold diamond contracts to ten tricks. East leads the ♥A and West encourages. East switches to his singleton club and then, after winning the ♦A, he can underlead to West's ♥Q to collect a club ruff.

It is actually East-West's hand in hearts, with nine tricks available. After, say, a diamond lead, declarer can ruff a diamond, draw trumps in three rounds and then concede two spade tricks.

But how do you get there? After North's 2♦ bid, East has a good hand but doesn't really have a good bid. He doesn't have a shapely enough hand for 2♠, and Double would risk his partner bidding clubs.

**Board 19** ♠ 9 4 2  
 South Deals ♥ J 8 5 4 2  
 E-W Vul ♦ K 3 2  
 ♣ J 3

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

♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	-	2	-
S	-	-	2	-
E	1	1	-	2
W	1	1	-	2

♠ A Q      5  
 ♥ Q 10 9 7      6 13  
 ♦ A 5 4      16  
 ♣ A 9 8 4

West      North      East      South  
 Pass      2♦      Pass      2♥

All pass  
 2♥ by South

The tempo of the auction after a strong no-trump, leaving East in the protective seat, will probably enable North-South to buy the contract in 2♥.

After an Acol 1♥ and a raise to the 2-level, an adventurous West will protect with 2♠. Spade contracts play like a dream, requiring a club lead, setting up a ruff, to hold declarer to eight tricks.

A diamond lead is best against a heart contract, not giving declarer anything and working to establish a trick. Careful defence thereafter should hold declarer to eight tricks. It is easy to see that an initial spade lead is bad for the defence, but a club is too if declarer plays the spots off the cards, as he can establish a second club winner for a diamond discard.

**Board 20** ♠ J 6 4  
 West Deals ♥ K J  
 Both Vul ♦ J 8 6 4 2  
 ♣ K Q 9

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

♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	4	3	1	4
S	4	3	1	4
E	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-

♠ A K 9 5      11  
 ♥ 7 4 2      8 6  
 ♦ K 5      15  
 ♣ A J 8 5

West      North      East      South  
 Pass      Pass      Pass      1N  
 Pass      3N      All pass

3NT by South

Whether you play a strong or weak no-trump, this hand is likely to end up in 3NT by South.

West will lead a low heart and declarer will think he faces a nasty guess, although in reality he can't go wrong here. Despite having a heart trick, things are still fairly bleak for declarer, as there are only six other fast tricks, four in clubs and two in spades.

You have two realistic options: firstly, you can play a diamond, hoping East has the ♦A, the hearts are 4-4 and that the ♠Q drops doubleton; the other option is to take the double spade finesse, hoping East has exactly ♠Q10x. Neither is a very high chance, but the carding to trick one may suggest that the hearts are 5-3, leading declarer to the winning option.

**Board 21** ♠ 10 3  
 North Deals ♥ J 9 5  
 N-S Vul ♦ A J 10 6  
 ♣ Q 7 5 4

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

♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-
E	2	2	4	3
W	2	2	4	3

♠ Q J 8 2      8  
 ♥ 7 4 2      11 13  
 ♦ 7 4 3      8  
 ♣ A J 8

West      North      East      South  
 Pass      Pass      1♠      Pass  
 2♣      Pass      2♥      Pass  
 2N      Pass      3♠      Pass  
 3N      All pass

3NT by West

Most pairs will reach a game, albeit probably 4♠ or 3NT rather than the double dummy cold 4♥. 4♠ is probably the easiest to defeat, and that will be achieved as long as South wins the ♣A on the first round of the suit.

The defence should also be in control against 3NT provided that North doesn't make the mistake of leading the ♦6, which presents declarer with an undeserved trick, rather than the ♦J.

The way to make 4♥ on, say, a diamond to the ten and queen, is to cash the ♠A and ruff a spade with the ♥K. Now ♥Q and a heart to the 10 will lead to ten tricks.

**Board 22** ♠ 10 5  
 East Deals ♥ A Q 7 6 5 3 2  
 E-W Vul ♦ 10 6  
 ♣ K 5

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

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	1	3	5	2	1
S	-	2	4	1	-
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

♠ A K Q 7      9  
 ♥ 8      5 11  
 ♦ A Q 8 4 3      15  
 ♣ 9 7 2

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	1♠	1♦
Pass	4♥	All pass	1N

4♥ by North

Most pairs will reach 4♥, although it will be more difficult if East opens a light 1♠. Some declarers will give the defence a chance to beat them.

Say you win the spade lead in dummy (not daring to run it to the 10) and try the heart finesse, losing. Now East can play the ♠J back, locking declarer in dummy. If declarer tries the last spade winner in dummy, West ruffs with the ♥9. If declarer overruffs, then he ends up with two club losers, and if he tries the effect of discarding the ♣5, West can cross to partner's ♣A, who can then promote his ♥10 by playing a fourth round of spades.

To make 11 tricks in hearts, declarer wins the spade lead and has to truffle out that the ♥K is offside and play the suit by cashing the Ace and ducking to East's King.

**Board 23** ♠ K 3  
 South Deals ♥ Q 9 5  
 Both Vul ♦ J 9 2  
 ♣ A 7 4 3 2

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

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	3	-	2	-	1
S	3	-	2	-	1
E	-	2	-	2	-
W	-	2	-	2	-

♠ Q 8      10  
 ♥ A J 10 7 4      17 0  
 ♦ K Q      13  
 ♣ J 10 9 6

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♥	Pass	1♥
Dbl	Rdbl	2♠	Pass
Pass	3♥	All pass	Pass

3♥ by South

Playing 5-card majors, North will have the decision whether to go low with 2♥ or upgrade to a limit raise on the basis of the well positioned ♠K. When the auction comes back to West at the 2-level, he will protect with a double that will push the opponents up a level. The ♣K lead will eventually lead to a ruff for his partner and hold declarer to eight tricks.

Acoul players may choose 2♣ over a 1♠ overcall, which South will raise to 3♣. If that ends the auction, it should be a good result for his side as the contract will make, losing one trick in each suit.

Some Wests will start with a double and, after redouble - 1♠, his side will still find their spade fit, pushing their opponents to the three level.

**Board 24** ♠ 10 6 5 3 2  
 West Deals ♥ K Q 9 5  
 None Vul ♦ 3  
 ♣ K 10 8

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

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	-	-	-	-	
S	-	-	-	-	
E	3	7	3	2	5
W	3	7	3	2	5

♠ K Q 9 4      8  
 ♥ 7 4 3      8 16  
 ♦ K 7      8  
 ♣ 9 5 4 3

West	North	East	South
2♦	Pass	5♦	All pass

5♦ by West

If you have a weak 2♦ opening in your armoury, then the West hand is perfect.

Slam looks unlikely from East's perspective unless perhaps partner has a singleton heart, so it is sensible to bid what you think you can make.

Not for the first time in this set everything lies perfectly for declarer so, after the winning diamond finesse, the heart loser can be discarded by repeating the club finesse.

If you stumble into 3NT then, on a low spade lead, you need the diamond finesse. When that works you have nine tricks. Do you settle for nine tricks or risk the club finesse, gambling your contract for overtricks? It is probably right to try the finesse, since those in diamonds will make 13 if the club finesse is right and 12 if the finesse is wrong, unless a heart is led.



**Board 25** ♠ 9 8 7 5 4

North Deals ♥ K 3 2

E-W Vul ♦ 5 3

♣ A K 8

♠ K Q 2

♥ A Q J

♦ 8 7 6

♣ Q 10 7 4



♠ 6

♥ 9 8 6 5

♦ K Q 10 9 4 2

♣ J 6

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	-	-	1	-
S	-	-	-	1	-
E	1	2	2	-	2
W	1	2	2	-	2

♠ A J 10 3

♥ 10 7 4

♦ A J

♣ 9 5 3 2

10
14 6
10

West North East South

Pass Pass Pass

1N Pass 2N Pass

3♦ All pass

3♦ by West

Passing the weak no-trump is far from obvious, but will work out better because West has at least two stops in all the side suits.

Against a diamond partscore North leads the ♣A and, after partner discourages, has to find the non-obvious switch to a trump, which South can win to play a heart through; otherwise, declarer can play on the black suits to establish discards for his heart losers.

When West opens 1♣, North will probably overcall 1♠ despite the poor suit and his side are likely to buy the contract in 3♠. This will be a certain two down on the ♦K lead. How good a score that is will depend on whether declarers in diamonds are mostly making 9 or 8 tricks.

**Board 26** ♠ J 10 2

East Deals ♥ Q 9 4 3

Both Vul ♦ 10 7

♣ J 10 8 2

♠ 5 3

♥ K 10 5

♦ K Q 9 3 2

♣ A 9 6



♠ K Q 9 4

♥ 6 2

♦ A 8 4

♣ K Q 7 3

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	5	1	3	3
W	4	5	1	3	3

♠ A 8 7 6

♥ A J 8 7

♦ J 6 5

♣ 5 4

4
12 14
10

West North East South

All pass 1N Pass

3N All pass

3NT by East

If you adhere to the rule of fourth highest from your longest and strongest, you will lead a heart, which will work out well here as it will establish four tricks for the defence, and all North has to do is to keep his four clubs to hold declarer to the contract.

Personally, I consider leading from a broken series of honours in a four-card suit to be unattractive so would prefer the less successful spade. On a spade lead declarer can run the diamonds and test clubs and, even when they don't break, will end up with an extra trick in one of the majors and a useful overtrick – possibly two overtricks if North errs by pitching a club on the diamonds.

**Board 27** ♠ J 4

South Deals ♥ K Q 9

None Vul ♦ 6 5 3

♣ A Q 10 8 6

♠ Q 7 6 3

♥ 10 4

♦ K 8 4 2

♣ 5 3 2



♠ K 9 8 2

♥ A 7 5 2

♦ A Q

♣ J 7 4

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	2	1	2	-	2
S	2	1	2	-	2
E	-	-	-	1	-
W	-	-	-	1	-

♠ A 10 5

♥ J 8 6 3

♦ J 10 9 7

♣ K 9

12
5 14
9

West North East South

All pass Pass

1N All pass

Weak no-trumpers will probably steal the pot, but over a 1♣ opening, East will chance a take-out double to get his majors into the game, which may well result in West playing in 2♠. Against 1NT which major would you lead?

I would rate a heart as safer, but neither does much damage to declarer here. A start with either ♠2 or ♥2 gives a ninth trick to declarer, but after a spade to the queen and a spade return, it is not hard to imagine declarer making ten tricks: declarer forces out the ♥A and then if East establishes his long spade, declarer will have his three overtricks, East having to find the near impossible play of cashing ♦AQ when he wins the ♥A. Those EW pairs playing 2♠ are already onto a good thing, but the icing on the cake will be to make it. Not that unlikely!

Duck the ♥K lead and North has to switch to a small club to defeat the contract.

On a heart continuation, win and unblock two diamonds, ruff a heart, and cash the ♦K throwing a club. A fourth round of diamonds follows, ruffed in

dummy, and then cut loose with a club and make two spades in the endgame.

**Board 28** ♠ Q 10 9 5 4 2

West Deals ♥ A 3

N-S Vul ♦ 8 7 2

♣ J 8

♠ A

♥ K J 5 4

♦ K 10 5 4

♣ A 9 7 3



♠ K J 8 7 6

♥ 8 2

♦ J 9

♣ 6 5 4 2

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	1	1	-	-
S	-	1	1	1	-
E	2	-	-	-	1
W	2	-	-	-	1

♠ 3

♥ Q 10 9 7 6

♦ A Q 6 3

♣ K Q 10

7  
15 5  
13

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♦	Pass	1♠	2♥

All pass

2♥ by South

It is easy to imagine contracts being played in any strain with the exception of diamonds, but probably very few will be made.

Whilst you might open a weak 2♠ with the North hand, once the opponents strike the first blow it becomes too risky and has less upside, and indeed here you will probably suffer a penalty. The 2♥ overcall isn't completely secure, with only a poorish 5-card suit and the ♦Q likely misplaced, so it would not be unreasonable to pass and go quietly.

After the ♠A lead, West has to defend carefully by avoiding a diamond switch, which would hand declarer his contract. Say you choose to open 1NT with the West hand. This won't work too well as East will transfer to spades, South will re-open with a double, and North won't find the winning action too hard. Whatever happens I'll wager that the par contract of 2♣ will not be final contract at many tables.