

Board 1 ♠ J 10 3
 North Deals ♥ 6 3 2
 None Vul ♦ A Q 6 5
 ♣ Q J 5

♠ K Q 2
 ♥ Q 10 4
 ♦ K J 8 2
 ♣ 7 4 2

♠ A 7 5 4
 ♥ A K 9 8 7
 ♦ 7 3
 ♣ 9 8

	♠	9 8 6		
N	1	- - - -		
S	1	- - - -		
E	-	1 3 3 -		
W	-	1 3 3 -		

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

A fairly routine one to start with. I'm sure we all open the East hand and West looks pretty middle of the road for an invitational raise.

The diamonds are offside but everything else breaks. I would expect a fair amount of unanimity here. It's just possible that strong two over one fans will have a problem. In that style the West hand isn't quite worth 2♦ so you may fall back on a top-heavy 1NT and it's not inconceivable that East will pass. Now all hinges on the lead. North would be very unwise to try a diamond but either black suit looks reasonable. The clubs are stronger but no-one has bid spades. A club gets you seven tricks in defence and a spade four. Top or bottom?

Board 2 ♠ Q 10
 East Deals ♥ K J 4
 N-S Vul ♦ A K Q J 6 4 2
 ♣ Q

♠ 9 6 2
 ♥ 8 6 5
 ♦ 9
 ♣ J 7 6 5 4 2

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

	♠	A J 8 3		
N	2	5 1 4 5		
S	2	5 1 4 5		
E	-	- - - -		
W	-	- - - -		

West North East South
 Pass 3NT 1♥ Pass

Is East going to be dealt minimum 4522 hands every board? This time it's passed round to North. What's your poison?

It really doesn't seem likely that you are going to play this hand anywhere other than 3NT, so you might as well save time and energy. Moreover, why tell them any more than they need to know?

A heart lead threatens to disrupt communications, but it seems that most will make eleven tricks. If East were to start with a very passive diamond the defenders are subjected to a lot of discards, but it's unlikely to make a difference to the result.

Board 3 ♠ Q 9 6 4
 South Deals ♥ Q J 10 5 4
 E-W Vul ♦ Q 8 2
 ♣ J

♠ A 2
 ♥ A 7
 ♦ K 10 9
 ♣ A 9 8 5 4 3

♠ 7 3
 ♥ K 8 6 3
 ♦ A J 7 6 5 3
 ♣ 6

	♠	K J 10 8 5		
N	-	- - 2 -		
S	-	- - 2 -		
E	2	6 1 - 4		
W	2	6 1 - 4		

West North East South
 2♣ 3♠ All pass 1♠

This is a bit more interesting! I strongly believe that you should open the South hand, especially at this vulnerability. 1♠ rather violates the principle of preparedness, but it is at least harder to overcall than 1♣. As it happens, West wouldn't be in the least interested of bidding over 1♣! 3♠ should go one down, a good result for North-South.

It's all quite different if South passes. West opens 1♣, North should have nothing to say, and East responds 1♦. South probably overcalls and West can make a support double, showing three cards in partner's suit. East-West may well get to game now. 5♦ is easy; indeed, it looks as though you can make six on a giant cross-ruff. 3NT depends on how you play the diamonds.

Board 4 ♠ 4
 West Deals ♥ J 8 7 4 2
 Both Vul ♦ 3 2
 ♣ A Q 9 6 4

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

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	6	4	6	-	6
S	6	4	6	-	6
E	-	-	-	1	-
W	-	-	-	1	-

West North East South
 2♠ Pass 3♠ 3NT

All pass

2♠ is not a thing of great beauty, but why not? If East raises, South has little option but to have a pot at 3NT.

Because of the very lucky club position, you can actually make twelve tricks, by way of five hearts, five clubs and the other two aces. In practice you'll almost certainly duck two rounds of spades and then, assuming you trust West to have a six card suit, you can cash three hearts and run the ten of clubs. It holds, but might East be holding up? If that's the case you'd better settle for nine tricks.

If you're lucky, East isn't a good enough player for you to suspect subterfuge.

Board 5 ♠ 10 6 4
 North Deals ♥ A K 4
 N-S Vul ♦ K 7 6 5
 ♣ K 8 2

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

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

West North East South
 2♣ 1NT Pass Pass
 Pass 2♠ All pass

North has a completely down the middle weak no trump and West will compete, either with 2♣ to show both majors, as in Multi Landy, or 2♦ (Aspro) showing spades and another. With both majors most Aspro players anchor to the shorter. Whichever system you play, East has an obvious 2♠ bid.

Played by East, a diamond is the most challenging lead, threatening to shorten dummy's trumps before the hearts are set up. But the very favourable lie of both majors means there should be no problems in the play.

As we can see, North-South can make 2NT or 3♦, provided they guess the diamonds correctly (you should, given that West has nine cards in the majors). However, I can't see them competing over 2♠.

Board 6 ♠ 5
 East Deals ♥ K Q 10 4
 E-W Vul ♦ J 8 5 4 3
 ♣ J 10 8

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

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

West North East South
 ? 6 4 1♥ 2♠

Playing a weak no trump, East should start with 1♥, otherwise the suit could be lost. South has a pretty revolting weak jump overcall; you wouldn't consider it at any different vulnerability.

However, it does give West a problem. Are you prepared to bid a forcing 3♣ or, better, an off-centre double? Either should get partner to bid the obvious 3NT but it's more than likely that a number of Wests will bottle it.

What West can't do, of course, is have a think and pass. There would be no justification in East bidding again and a Director would surely disallow it.

There are four defensive tricks against 3NT but hardly anyone will find them, given the heart opening.

Board 7 ♠ Q 10 8 7 6

South Deals ♥ A 10 5

Both Vul ♦ Q

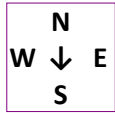
♣ A 9 7 3

♠ J 5

♥ K 8 7 3

♦ A K J 7 3 2

♣ Q



♠ 3 2

♥ Q J 9 4

♦ 10 9 6 4

♣ K 4 2

♠ A K 9 4

♥ 6 2

♦ 8 5

♣ J 10 8 6 5

12
14 6
8

West	North	East	South
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Pass	Pass	Pass	?
------	------	------	---

1♦	1♠	Dbl	?
----	----	-----	---

After a straightforward start to the auction, what should South bid? It's undoubtedly too good for a single raise and most players treat a double raise as pre-emptive, so that doesn't do the hand justice either. Maybe you fall back on an unassuming cue bid in diamonds.

West will undoubtedly compete in hearts. That is good news for North; you are short in diamonds and now you know partner has no more than two hearts. Game looks a possibility. It'll be interesting to see how many pairs bid 4♠ and, if so, how many East-West pairs find the save in diamonds. If they choose to save in hearts, North can lead a diamond and get a ruff for 800.

It'll be galling for those East-West pairs who find a good save, only to discover they get a lousy score anyway, if hardly any North-South pairs bid game.

Board 8 ♠ A 8 6 4

West Deals ♥ J 6

None Vul ♦ 9 4 3

♣ A 8 3 2

♠ Q 7 3

♥ 10 4 2

♦ K 10 7 6

♣ K Q J



♠ K 10 9

♥ 8 7 3

♦ Q J

♣ 10 7 6 5 4

♠ J 5 2

♥ A K Q 9 5

♦ A 8 5 2

♣ 9

9
11 6
14

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
------	------	------	----

Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦
------	----	------	----

Pass	2♥	All pass	
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It's mandatory for North to give "false preference" to hearts; South will certainly have five of them and, more often than not, only four diamonds. Moreover, hearts score more than diamonds. South is close to making a game try, pinpointing the distribution with a continuation of 2♠ but, at match points, discretion is the better part of valour.

Most of the points will depend on the play. On the obvious club lead you win and duck a diamond. If the defenders continue clubs you ruff, play ace and another diamond, and you can't be prevented from making nine tricks.

Say the defenders switch to a trump at trick three. Draw trumps and duck a spade. East plays a second diamond and is allowed to win. Later you duck another spade and your last diamond goes away.

Board 9 ♠ A J 9 8 3

North Deals ♥ 7 4 2

E-W Vul ♦ A 3

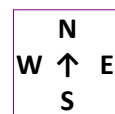
♣ A 9 4

♠ K

♥ J 5 3

♦ J 10 7 5 4 2

♣ Q J 2



♠ Q 7 5 4

♥ A Q 8

♦ 9 8 6

♣ 7 5 3

♠ 10 6 2

♥ K 10 9 6

♦ K Q

♣ K 10 8 6

13
8 8
11

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

?	?	?	?
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Oh, the perennial problem of whether to suppress a five card major and stress the general nature of the hand by opening 1NT. It's a close decision this time.

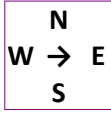
If you start with 1NT, partner will invite game, via Stayman, and North probably accepts. A diamond lead would put paid to 3NT but anything else lets it through.

4♠ would be a real battle. On a diamond lead you win in dummy and play a trump. When the king appears you have to win. The plan is to set up the thirteenth heart for a club discard but, whether the defence try to force you or to get at a club trick themselves, you have to time it perfectly. An initial club lead would put the defence in charge.

South can make 4♠ as West can't lead a club but that ain't gonna happen.

Board 10 ♠ Q 6 5 3
 East Deals ♥ 7
 Both Vul ♦ Q 9 7
 ♣ Q 7 6 5 3

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



	♠	A 7 2		
N	4 2 - 2 2	♥ A		6
S	4 2 - 3 2	♦ A 8 5 3		11 4
E	- - 4 - -	♣ A K 10 9 8		19
W	- - 4 - -			

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
1♥	Dbl	4♥	Dbl
Pass	5♣	?	

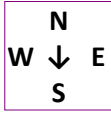
Well, this is a fine can of worms. South has a huge hand but it's not worth more than 1♣. Many would treat the West hand as a two suited overcall, though some partnerships, including mine, use two suited overcalls as either quite weak or strong, and this one is somewhere in between. North shows four spades and East jumps to game. South still has a huge hand and says so.

Whilst South's double is a strong suggestion to defend it isn't "hands off" and certainly won't include a string of hearts. With five clubs and no defence North is justified in removing it.

The par score is for East-West to double 5♣ and collect 200 but it's easy to see many pairs being reluctant to do so.

Board 11 ♠ J 8
 South Deals ♥ Q J 10
 None Vul ♦ A K 10 4 2
 ♣ J 10 2

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



	♠	K 10 9 7 5 4		
N	- 5 - 5 2	♥ 6		12
S	- 5 - 5 2	♦ Q 7 6 3		11 6
E	1 - 1 - -	♣ A Q		11
W	1 - - - -			

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♠	All pass	

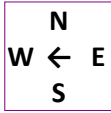
This one provides scope for both North and South to show some judgment. The first two bids are obvious but South has an interesting decision on the second round. In terms of losing trick count and trick taking potential it's a little too strong for a single raise and not ideal for any number of spades.

After 4♦ it's North's turn. You have rather too many losers to underwrite 5♦. Partner will have at least five spades so that could be the answer. And so it is.

If South were to make a weaker rebid it's not inconceivable to see them missing game altogether. Despite the twelve points, North can't be too confident. If North does bid on, 3NT is an option but, as it happens, not a good one.

Board 12 ♠ K 6 5
 West Deals ♥ 6 5
 N-S Vul ♦ A K J 10
 ♣ 10 9 5 2

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



	♠	A J		
N	3 3 2 - 2	♥ A 9 8 7		11
S	3 3 1 - 2	♦ 9 4 3		5 10
E	- - - - -	♣ K Q 7 4		14
W	- - - - -			

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	Pass	1NT
All pass			

Not vulnerable, North might upgrade that hand to a weak no trump, but not at this vulnerability. It's certainly wise for East to open at the score, which temporarily (?) silences South. For similar reasons, West scrapes up a response and it's back to South.

You can't just lie down and let non-vulnerable opponents take you for a ride. If you are going to bid, 1NT looks the obvious choice.

On a heart lead there are eight potential tricks. Say you win the second round, play a diamond to dummy and a club. If East ducks you have a problem. The answer is to cross to the king of spades, giving up any prospects there, and play another club.

On a not unlikely spade lead you can get an extra trick.

Board 13

North Deals ♠ J
 Both Vul ♥ Q
 ♦ 8 4 3 2
 ♣ A Q 9 7 5 3 2

♠ 7 6 3
 ♥ K 7 6 5 2
 ♦ 7 5
 ♣ J 8 4

	N	
W	↑	E
	S	

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

	♠ K Q 9 5			
N	2 4 2 1 2	♥ A 10 9 8 3	♦ K J 10 9	♣ —
S	2 4 2 1 1			
E	- - - - -			
W	- - - - -			
West	North	East	South	
	3♣	?		

With a bit of extra shape, North has a very sound pre-empt; not vulnerable, you might even have tried 4♣. Now, are you going to bid as East?

Either 3♠ or 3NT is fraught with danger, but we know players hate giving in to a pre-empt. If you do stick your neck out, I prefer 3NT.

Will South wield the axe? It looks a good proposition; after all, where are they going for tricks? In this case, not very far, though there will be a lot of ebb and flow in the play.

And all that trouble to stop North-South from playing a contract they can't even make, though in practice I expect they usually would. It takes an unlikely diamond lead and subsequent defensive ruff to beat 3♣.

Board 14

East Deals ♠ 10 7 6
 None Vul ♥ 2
 ♦ A Q J 8 7 3
 ♣ Q 9 5

♠ 5
 ♥ A K 10 8 7 6 5 4 3
 ♦ K 5
 ♣ K

	N	
W	→	E
	S	

♠ A K J 8 4
 ♥ Q J 9
 ♦ 6 2
 ♣ 8 7 3

	♠ Q 9 3 2			
N	4 4 - 1 -	♥ —	♦ 10 9 4	♣ A J 10 6 4 2
S	4 4 - 1 -			
E	- - 4 - -			
W	- - 4 - -			
West	North	East	South	
		1♠	2♣	
2♥	3♦	Pass	4♦	
4♥	5♦	Pass	Pass	
?				

What a lot of interesting decisions we're getting today! East has another marginal opening but most of us will bid, and quite right too. Get your retaliation in first. South hasn't really got a bid either, but does so for the same reason. Conversely, West has a real hand.

With some support in clubs to fall back on, North decides to mention the diamonds. East has heart support but decides that's enough for now. South raises and West, of course, isn't done yet.

It looks right for North-South to take the sacrifice and indeed it is. As West you can only gnash your teeth; many will bid on but you shouldn't make 5♥.

Board 15

South Deals ♠ A K Q 8 5
 N-S Vul ♥ K Q 9 7
 ♦ J
 ♣ K Q 2

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

	N	
W	↓	E
	S	

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

	♠ J 6 3			
N	- - 1 3 1	♥ 5 4 3	♦ 9 7 6 2	♣ J 9 5
S	- - 1 3 1			
E	1 2 - - -			
W	1 2 - - -			
West	North	East	South	
			Pass	
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass	
Dbl	Rdbl	Pass	2♠	
Pass	Pass	2NT	Pass	
3♦	3♠	All pass		

Most will pass out 1♠ as West, but a real tiger doesn't throw in the towel (sorry, mixing my metaphors). North scents blood but South is having none of it. East's 2NT is not natural but suggests two possible places to play.

North has to play with great imagination to make 3♠. If the defence lead diamonds you start by playing top clubs, hoping to force a second entry to dummy. When East doesn't play ball and ducks twice, you have to play for a doubleton ace of hearts, leading low from hand twice. Without a helpful heart lead, most Norths will go down in 3♠, showing how important it is to make opponents play a level higher than they wish to.

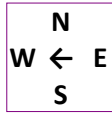
Board 16

West Deals

E-W Vul

♠ A K J 3
♥ K Q 3
♦ A J 8
♣ A J 5

♠ Q 6 5 2
♥ J 10 8 7 4
♦ 7 5 2
♣ 9



♠ 10 8
♥ 9 6 5 2
♦ Q 9 3
♣ K Q 10 7

	♠	9 7 4		
N	♣	5 5 3 5 5	♠	A
S	♥	4 5 3 5 5	♦	K 10 6 4
E	♦	- - - - -	♣	8 6 4 3 2
W	♣	- - - - -		

23
3 7
7

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

AJx is a poor holding, needing a lot of help from partner to develop tricks, so I would treat the North hand as weaker than its nominal 23 points. It's academic here, as all roads will lead to 3NT.

A not unreasonable top club lead is fatal for the defence. Declarer can win and force out East's other two club winners making eleven tricks with a successful finesse in spades or diamonds. On a neutral heart lead you probably start with a club to the jack and queen. When the clubs don't break you have to read the cards well to make the same eleven tricks.

Mind you, it looks clear to finesse both suits the right way, unless the defenders can somehow persuade declarer that the queen of spades might be doubleton offside.

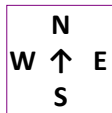
Board 17

North Deals

None Vul

♠ Q J 3
♥ 4
♦ K J 10 8 6
♣ K 9 7 4

♠ 8 7 6 4
♥ 10 3 2
♦ 9 2
♣ Q J 8 3



♠ A K 5
♥ J 9 7 6
♦ Q 5 4
♣ A 10 6

	♠	10 9 2		
N	♥	1 4 3 - 3	♠	A K Q 8 5
S	♦	1 3 2 - 1	♥	A 7 3
E	♣	- - - - -	♦	5 2
W	♠	- - - - -		

10
3 14
13

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

Yet another marginal opening bid and, once again, I would lean towards bidding, which propels North-South to a somewhat precarious game. It's unlikely on this bidding that either North or South has four spades, so East may start with a neutral defence of ace king and another, even though partner probably has no entry.

You can make 3NT by guessing the diamonds, but the odds favour playing West for the queen. If you play ace and low to the jack, East can win and put paid to any awkward discarding problem by switching to a heart. If, as East, you just passively return a diamond you can be subjected to a so-called "squeeze without the count", whereby you can't keep a heart stop without coming down to a bare ace of clubs.

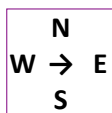
Board 18

East Deals

N-S Vul

♠ 9 7 4
♥ A 10 6 4 3
♦ A J 2
♣ 8 6

♠ Q 5 3
♥ 9 5
♦ K 8 4
♣ Q 9 7 5 3



♠ A K 10 2
♥ J 8
♦ 7 6 3
♣ K J 10 2

	♠	J 8 6		
N	♥	- 4 4 - 3	♠	K Q 7 2
S	♦	- 4 4 - 3	♥	9
E	♣	1 - - - -	♦	7 12
W	♠	1 - - - -	♣	12

West	North	East	South
		1NT	All pass

Ah, the strange vagaries of match points. One should make every effort not to let opponents play in a weak no trump, but there are just too many downsides for North to get in the act, vulnerable against not, with only one possible place to play. On some auctions when East can't open 1NT, North-South will be able to compete. They won't bid game but will make 170 in a heart part score.

So what happens to East's 1NT? The defence can take ten tricks for a penalty of 200, better than they would have got from bidding a part score in hearts. But an inaccurate or over-passive defence and you lose a whole bundle of match points.

Board 19 ♠ A J 6 5 2

South Deals ♥ J 10 7 2

E-W Vul ♦ 8

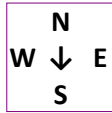
♣ A 7 5

♠ Q 4

♥ 8 4 3

♦ A 6 5 4 3

♣ Q J 4



♠ 8 7 3

♥ A K 6

♦ 9 7

♣ 10 8 6 3 2

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

♠ K 10 9

♥ Q 9 5

♦ K Q J 10 2

♣ K 9

10

9 7

14

West North East South

Pass 1♠ Pass 1NT

Pass 2♣ Pass 2♠

Pass 4♠ All pass

With a powerful five card suit and great intermediates, South is far too good for a weak no trump. Strong no trumpers will surely upgrade it.

On this auction North uses checkback and South shows lower range (of 15-17) with three spades and North bids game. It's a bit of a disappointment to find it's on the spade guess, but most will get that right.

Actually, with the spades coming in, you might as well be in no trumps, so long as you take care to knock out the ace of diamonds before cutting off your entries to hand. If North knew South's diamonds were very strong you just might forego checkback and simply raise to 3NT, a better spot as it happens.

Board 20 ♠ K 10 8 4

West Deals ♥ J 9 6 3

Both Vul ♦ 10 2

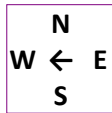
♣ 8 7 4

♠ A Q 7 6

♥ Q 8

♦ A 8 4

♣ K Q J 6



♠ 9 2

♥ A K 10 7 2

♦ Q 9 5

♣ 10 3 2

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

♠ J 5 3

♥ 5 4

♦ K J 7 6 3

♣ A 9 5

4

18 9

9

West North East South

1♠ Pass 2♥ Pass

2NT Pass 3NT All pass

Playing a weak no trump, East is just about worth a 2♥ response. If you imagine West having a balanced 15 count you'd probably want to be in game.

West has quite a bit more than that, as it happens. On this auction North will lead a minor suit, but which one? The ten of diamonds allows declarer to build a second trick in due course, whereas on a club South will simply go passive and return the suit.

Declarer will have a hard time on that defence, but an even harder one if South withholds the ace of clubs, denying declarer an entry to dummy. There will be many twists and turns. If you can divine from the passive lead that North has length in the majors you might get the hearts right, for a very good score.

Board 21 ♠ A Q 9

North Deals ♥ A 10 5 2

N-S Vul ♦ K Q 8 5

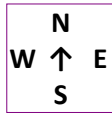
♣ A Q

♠ J 8 6 4 3 2

♥ 8 7 6

♦ A 3

♣ K 7



♠ 7

♥ J 9 4 3

♦ J 10 9 4

♣ J 8 4 2

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

♠ K 10 5

♥ K Q

♦ 7 6 2

♣ 10 9 6 5 3

21

8 3

8

West North East South

2NT Pass 3NT

All pass

Once again a near-universal 3NT contract, but with plenty to play for. As South has denied any interest in the majors, East might just choose to lead a heart, but most will be swayed by the diamond sequence, which does declarer no harm at all.

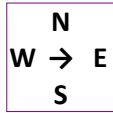
It looks as though you can use dummy's three entries in the majors to finesse the queen of clubs, cash the ace, cross to dummy again and force out the jack for an easy eleven tricks.

In practice you didn't need the help at trick one as three spades, three hearts, one diamond and four clubs still add up to eleven. It just needs a bit more sorting out.

Board 22

♠ 6 5 4
 East Deals ♥ K 10 7
 E-W Vul ♦ A 10 2
 ♣ K Q 9 2

♠ J 9
 ♥ A Q 8 5 4
 ♦ 8 6 5
 ♣ A 8 4



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

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

♠	K 3	12
♥	J 9 6 3 2	11 6
♦	K Q J 7	11
♣	J 10	

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

Bridge can be a cruel game sometimes. East has a rock-solid weak two; non-vulnerable you might be even more aggressive. South hasn't quite enough to bid, but what about North? It's a horribly flat hand but, more often than not, one side or other can make something.

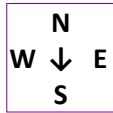
Not this time, I'm afraid. Having been so restrained on the first round, you can hardly blame South for bidding game, even though it is only a protective double. West rubs salt in the wounds.

Tipped off by the double, South might take a deep finesse in trumps by finessing the 7 on the first round and escape for just one down. But East can scupper that plan by ducking the first round of spades and effecting a trump promotion.

Board 23

♠ J 10 6 3
 South Deals ♥ Q 6 3
 Both Vul ♦ 8 7 5 2
 ♣ J 8

♠ A Q
 ♥ K 9 8 5 4
 ♦ J 4 3
 ♣ A 3 2



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

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

♠	K 9 4	4
♥	A	14 5
♦	A K 6	17
♣	K 10 9 7 5 4	

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

Ever heard of trap bidding? Here's a perfect example and it's one of my pet hates. East may know about the competitive principle "bid to the level of the fit" but is too cowardly to do so. What's the outcome? South can compete at the two level but is conscious that partner may have been forced to bid with a very weak hand and only four spades. Hence the second double, which says in effect "I can't bid 3♠ myself so I'm giving you the option". "No thanks", says North. "Let's take our chances in defence."

See what happens if East bids 3♥ on the first round. South still doubles but North doesn't have the same information and will probably play "safe" and bid 3♠. Not so safe, as it happens, as neither side can make nine tricks.

Board 24

♠ A Q J
 West Deals ♥ K 8
 None Vul ♦ 8 7 2
 ♣ 10 9 7 5 2

♠ K 10 8 4 3
 ♥ 6 5 4 3
 ♦ 9 3
 ♣ A 8



♠ 9 7 6
 ♥ J 10 9 7
 ♦ K 6
 ♣ K J 4 3

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

♠	5 2	10
♥	A Q 2	7 8
♦	A Q J 10 5 4	15
♣	Q 6	

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

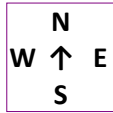
I've put in another bid that may have popular support but, once again, I don't approve. There's little point in West trying to be a nuisance; the horse has bolted. North knows that partner doesn't have spades, and one tends not to open a minimum hand in fourth seat without something there, so North stretches a little to 2NT.

With both finesses working, you can make twelve tricks unless the defenders lead clubs. They're not going to on this auction but, to be fair, not on many others either.

490 will be a very common score.

Board 25 ♠ 6 3
 North Deals ♥ K 9 6 2
 E-W Vul ♦ J 7 6 3
 ♣ Q J 2

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



	♠	5		
N	-	-	2	-
S	-	-	2	-
E	6	4	-	7
W	6	4	-	5

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	4♥
Dbl	5♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♥	Pass	7♠	All pass

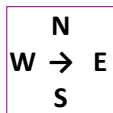
Wow! The auction I've given is a bit tongue in cheek but then, does anyone have an idea of how this should go?

If East were to open a weak 2♠ then surely West would drive to a grand slam, maybe putting in the odd smokescreen in a vain attempt to get doubled. But I really don't like it, second in hand, vulnerable, with a terrible suit. It's left for South to open proceedings.

As West, are you scared that your double will be passed out when you can make a slam? You shouldn't be; it's essentially for takeout and partner can see the vulnerability too. North would like to raise the ante but not too much; you don't want to force them into a slam. What next? Who knows!

Board 26 ♠ A 8 4 2
 East Deals ♥ A 7
 Both Vul ♦ J 6 4 3
 ♣ K Q 10

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



	♠	K J 10 5		
N	3	6	-	6 4
S	3	6	-	6 4
E	-	-	2	-
W	-	-	2	-

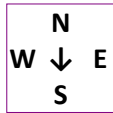
West	North	East	South
		3♥	Dbl
4♥	4♠	All pass	

Has the computer got stuck on spectacular competitive auctions in the majors? This one is a rather more modest offering. East's pre-empt is not textbook, with an ace on the side, but a reasonable choice. South's double is clear and it's a moot point whether West should bid. Again you may push opponents to a slam they can make. The upside of supporting hearts is that it takes away North's possible cue bid. North has a good hand but too many losers to get excited and there the case may rest.

It's possible to make twelve tricks on the lie of the trumps, even after an inspired lead of the king of hearts, and most pairs would be delighted with 680.

Board 27 ♠ K 3 2
 South Deals ♥ A K
 None Vul ♦ Q J 10 9 3 2
 ♣ J 3

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



	♠	J 9 8 4		
N	-	2	-	-
S	-	2	-	-
E	-	-	3	-
W	-	-	3	-

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

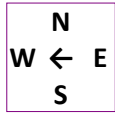
That's a pretty meagre opening bid but I'm sticking to the policy of aggression. North has a very sound overcall. Anyone for 1NT on the North hand? It will make a lot of tricks if South has a diamond honour but not many otherwise. East is worth nearly two-and-a-half hearts. It's not quite a raise to three and has too much defence for a pre-emptive raise, so 2♥ it is.

South is in an interesting situation. Double is for takeout and suggests values in the other suits or a good raise in diamonds. It's a bit thin but, as usual, you don't want to sell out at the two level. Over to West; you just can't stop yourself, can you? But all is well; partner has a good hand and nothing untoward happens.

Board 28

♠ —
 West Deals ♥ 6 5
 N-S Vul ♦ A Q 10 7 6 4
 ♣ J 8 7 5 4

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



	♣	♦	♥	♠	N		♠	A J 10 9 7 6 4		7
N	1	2	-	1	-		♥	J 4		19
S	1	2	-	1	-		♦	K 3		5
E	-	-	1	-	-		♣	10 2		9
W	-	-	2	-	-					

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♥	3♦	3♥	Pass
?			

North's is a pretty wild jump overcall, vulnerable against not, but stressing the main suit is a better choice than an unusual no trump. East is fully justified in competing – after all, you would have made a pre-emptive raise in an uncontested auction. It's not inconceivable for South to compete in spades, but it could backfire badly if, as is the case, partner doesn't like them. Now what about West? We have nineteen points and partner has supported. What could be more obvious than bidding game?

Here's what. If North finds the lead of ace and another diamond it's carnage. South continues with ace and another spade, North ruffs and continues with the queen of diamonds. That gets the defence two more ruffs, unless declarer has the wit to discard the remaining top spade on the third diamond. It all depends who has that pesky jack of hearts. On a passive lead there are still only nine tricks.