



**Commentary  
for the  
European Bridge League Simultaneous Pairs  
Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

This commentary was done by Mark Horton

**Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.**

<p>♠ A K 7 6 3 ♥ A ♦ A Q 10 6 5 ♣ A 9</p> <p>♠ Q 10 5 ♥ Q J 9 8 5 4 ♦ 4 ♣ 10 8 5</p> <p>♠ 9 8 ♥ 10 7 2 ♦ J 8 ♣ K Q J 7 4 3</p>	<p>♠ J 4 2 ♥ K 6 3 ♦ K 9 7 3 2 ♣ 6 2</p>
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*There are bids in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.*

We start with a tough deal.

North's first decision is what to open, the choice lying between 1♠ and 2♣.

If North opts for 1♠ South has an awkward hand which most players use INT to describe. After 1♠-INT North can rebid 3♦ but when South bids 3♠ the club fit may be lost. North can continue with 4♣ but I doubt South will do anything other than go back to 4♠.

It probably works better to open 2♣.

If South responds 3♣ and then bids 4♣ over North's 3♠ then North will not stop short of 6♣ (and might go higher).

6♣ is virtually cold and with spades 3-3 the grand slam might be made - as long as North is declarer. On a trump lead declarer wins, draws trumps and plays three rounds of spades, ruffing. After crossing to the ace of diamonds declarer discards a diamond on a spade and relies on the ruffing diamond finesse for the thirteenth trick.

A heart lead is even more testing as it removes a vital entry.

One way to get home is to win, cross to the jack of clubs and ruff a heart. Then declarer

needs to play three rounds of spades to get back to hand to draw trumps - phew!

6♠ by North is easy thanks to the 3-3 trump split.

**Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.**

<p>♠ 4 ♥ K J 9 8 4 3 ♦ A J 9 5 ♣ J 3</p> <p>♠ K J 9 8 6 ♥ A 10 2 ♦ K 3 2 ♣ 9 2</p> <p>♠ A Q 10 ♥ Q 7 6 ♦ 8 7 4 ♣ A 10 6 5</p>	<p>♠ 7 5 3 2 ♥ 5 ♦ Q 10 6 ♣ K Q 8 7 4</p>
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If South opens 1♣ West overcalls 1♠ and North joins in with 2♥. How many spades should East bid now?

4♠ looks about right but East has alternatives. One possibility is to bid 3♠, planning to bid 4♠ if NS go on to 4♥. Another is to bid some number of clubs - 3♣ would be a fit non jump and 4♣ a fit jump.

If East opts for 4♠ South might be tempted to double, hoping that East will have a spade honour. If East bids 3♠ South does not really have enough to bid 4♥ but North will probably try something, maybe 4♦ or a game try double.

If East bids 3♣ South can go 3♥ and then anything might happen - it would be quite easy to go on to 5♥ over 4♠ with the North hand.

If South starts with a 12-14 INT West might stretch to overcalling 2♠. Now North will have options depending on agreements - my favourite is to play Rubensohl, North bidding 3♦ to show a transfer to hearts with at least invitational values. I'm not a betting man, but it's a pound to a penny (or should that be a cent to a euro) that if East bids 4♠ South will double.

Perhaps the unclear issue is what will happen if NS push on to 5♥?

If EW double they will be sure of +500 and a massive score, but without the double +200 might prove to be disappointing, depending on how many EW pairs reach 4♠.

4♠ should be easy enough with both spade honours onside and the jack of diamonds well placed.

**Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.**

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

When South opens 1♠ West will probably double. If North raises to 2♠ East gets into the action with 3♦ and South is sure to bid 3♠, ending the auction.

If West does not double 1♠ North might respond 1NT, when South's jump to 3♠ closes the bidding.

If West leads a diamond East wins and returns the suit and West wins and might exit with a trump. Declarer wins in hand and runs the seven of hearts to East's ace. Now a club switch is essential - but not too difficult to find.

**Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.**

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

The standards for an opening bid have gradually been eroded so it is by no means impossible that West might open 1♦ (especially playing a strong club system). It might turn out badly if North overcalls 2♣ as East will try 2♠ and even if EW find away to play in diamonds South

might well produce a red card. (You can guess I'm writing this up during the World Cup.)

If West goes quietly North opens 1♣ and East overcalls 1♠. South has enough to double and North bids 2♣, probably ending proceedings.

If East leads a heart against 2♣ declarer wins in hand and plays a low club. East wins and plays another heart and declarer wins and plays the king of clubs, West winning and switching to a spade. Declarer puts in the ten and East wins with the jack. Now it looks natural to return the three of spades. West ruffs and returns a low diamond, hoping East will win and play another spade but declarer ruffs and takes the rest thanks to the 3-3 heart break.

To hold declarer to eight tricks East must simply return a heart. Declarer wins in dummy and must now play the master heart, discarding a spade, otherwise the contract will fail.

**Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.**

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

Although 7-2-2-2 is the worst possible distribution North is sure to open 3♥ and South has enough to go on to game.

If East leads a club declarer is unlikely to go wrong (unless East happens to be Peter Fredin) but make the opening lead a spade and declarer might easily go down as everything will depend on the club guess.

Declarer wins the spade lead in dummy, draws trumps and immediately plays a club. When East follows with a low card declarer might go up with the king, reasoning that with the ace East might have played it, fearing declarer started with a singleton.

**Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.**

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

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

If East opens 1♦ West responds 1♠ and North bids hearts - my guess is that 4♥ will be the popular choice.

However, it will not be enough to keep East quiet and 5♦ should end the auction.

Playing old fashioned Acol East has a perfect 2♦ opening, promising a powerful hand containing eight playing tricks. In theory a positive response should promise 1½ honour tricks, but North will bid 4♥ over both a negative 2♥ and a positive 2♠ and once again East goes on with 5♦.

The defenders can take two heart tricks on the go, but declarer has the rest.

Notice that if South had ♦J85 three rounds of hearts would promote a trump trick.

**Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.**

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

If West opens 1♦ East responds 1♥ and raises West's INT rebid to game.

Most players do not regard 5-4-2-2 as a notrump distribution, but if West starts with a 12-14 INT East will transfer to hearts and then bid 3NT.

If East is the declarer and South leads a club it runs to the ten and declarer plays the three of diamonds to the queen (just in case the jack is singleton) followed by the ten of hearts. Say North goes up with the ace and returns a club. Declarer wins, cashes four diamonds and then plays a heart to the jack. North will be down to ♠K10 ♥Q9 and after cashing the king of hearts a heart exit forces a spade return for eleven tricks.

If West is the declarer North might lead a spade. Declarer can win with dummy's queen,

cross to hand with a diamond and advance the ten of hearts, but North wins with the ace and plays another spade, which holds declarer to ten tricks.

**Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.**

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

Unless West has a bid that shows a weak hand with both majors (in The Mysterious Multi Jan van Cleeff and I show how 2♥ can be used for this purpose) it will be North who starts proceedings with INT. Once South has discovered there is no spade fit 3NT will be the final contract.

If North opens 1♦ South responds 1♠ and raises the INT rebid to game.

East leads a top club and declarer will probably duck, win the next club and play a spade to the queen. If West ducks declarer probably plays a diamond to the ace and a diamond. A diamond to hand for a second spade finesse sees West win and return a low heart. Declarer wins with the ace and cashes two more diamonds.

West, down to ♠86 ♥QJ is caught in a simple squeeze and declarer collects eleven tricks.

**Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.**

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

North opens 1♥, rebids 2♥ over South's 2♦ and then goes on to 3NT over South's 3♣.

On a spade lead declarer takes West's king with the ace and might try the jack of diamonds (the suit will deliver four tricks 58.22% of the time). East covers and declarer wins in dummy and plays two more diamonds, West winning with the ten and returning a spade. Assuming declarer plays low East wins and has only to avoid playing a third spade to hold declarer to nine tricks.

There is a route to ten tricks, but it is perhaps counter intuitive.

After winning the spade declarer ducks a club. If West overtakes East's nine and plays a spade declarer must win with the queen and duck a club to East's king. Now ten tricks should be taken. For example, if East cashes the jack of spades and exits with a spade declarer wins and cashes three clubs, putting West to the sword.

**Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.**

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

If South opens 1♦ North responds 2♣ and South rebids 2♦. What North should do next might make an interesting problem for a bidding panel. Let's say North bids 2♠. When South bids 3♣ North might resort to Blackwood before settling for six of a minor. (With the strong hand North might choose

clubs in case a heart lead through the ace proves awkward.)

6♣ is easy to play.

On the threatening heart lead declarer wins, plays a club to the jack and cashes the ace of clubs. When the king does not fall four rounds of diamonds allows declarer to dispose of the losing heart.

6♦ is more testing.

After a heart lead declarer wins in dummy and should play to ruff two hearts in dummy. West wins the heart return and probably switches to a trump. Declarer wins in dummy, plays a club to the jack, ruffs a heart, comes to hand with a club and ruffs a heart. Three rounds of spades, ruffing the last of them allows declarer to draw trumps.

**Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.**

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

South is sure to open 3♣, leaving West to ponder between some number of hearts, a double and 3NT.

4♥ will attract a double from North. Starting with a double will be an improvement if West passes East's

3♦ or more likely bids 3♥, as will a direct 3♥.

3NT is hopeless, but North is unlikely to double, and with careful play declarer can take seven tricks.

The defence to a heart contract is straightforward - North leads a club, ruffs the return and must score four more trump tricks. It looks as if there is also a spade loser, but North will have to lead a spade at some point for the ten, jack and king and will then run out of exit cards and eventually have to play another spade into the split tenace.

**Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.**

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

If North starts with INT South transfers to hearts. After INT-2♦\*-2♥ a bid of 3♦ by South will see North jump to 4♥.

There is a case for North to break the transfer, although that is not a possibility if you think you must have four card support.

If North opens 1♣ South responds 1♥. If North now tries 3♣ South will have to choose to bid 3♦ in order for the heart game to be reached.

The play in 4♥ is easy enough. On a spade lead declarer wins with the ace, cashes two clubs discarding a spade and plays a trump. West wins and plays a spade but declarer ruffs and plays another trump. All the defenders take are the three top hearts.

**Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.**

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

If East opens 1♥ South overcalls 2♣. East rebids 2♦ and now South can try 2♠. With six card support North will bid 4♠ whatever West might do.

If West leads a heart East cashes two tricks in the suit and then tries a top diamond. Declarer ruffs, and will probably play the ace of clubs and ruff a club. When the king appears declarer can draw trumps and ruff another club establishing the suit.

Alternatively declarer cashes a top spade before starting on the clubs. However, the first

line is best, as it also caters for the situation where East has a singleton spade and two small clubs.

It is not impossible that EW might try to save in 5♦. If NS decide to take the money they have to defend very well to collect 800.

South leads a top spade and must then switch to the jack (or ten) of hearts. Declarer wins, cashes a top diamond and ducks a diamond to North who switches to a club allowing South to take two tricks in the suit. North discards a heart on the ace of clubs and can then ruff a heart.

**Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.**

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

East opens 1♦ and if West responds 1♠ North will probably try a double, despite the lack of a fourth heart.

East rebids 2♦ and West might make a defensive raise to 3♦, ending the auction unless North tries another double which would force South to bid 3♠. That would leave EW to decide between the merits of trying for a penalty of going on to 4♦. If West doubles 4♠ East will probably let it go, but if West passes then East may take the push to 4♦.

If EW play in diamonds as long as the defenders lead a club in good time, either at trick one, or when North comes in with the ace of diamonds they will hold declarer to ten tricks.

If NS play in spades EW may need to be careful. On a diamond lead declarer wins and plays the king of spades. West takes the ace and forces dummy with a diamond. Declarer ruffs, plays a club to the jack, takes the marked spade finesse, cashes the queen of spades and plays the king of clubs. East wins and must now exit with a low heart. Declarer win and plays a club, but West ruffs and plays a heart to give the defenders five tricks.

**Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.**

♠ A 7 4 2

<p>♥ Q 4          ♦ Q J 9          ♣ K Q 9 6</p> <p>♠ J 9 5          ♥ J 7 6          ♦ 8 4 2          ♣ 10 8 5 2</p> <p>♠ K Q 10 3          ♥ K 8 3 2          ♦ 10 7 3          ♣ 4 3</p>	<p>♠ 8 6          ♥ A 10 9 5          ♦ A K 6 5          ♣ A J 7</p>
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If North opens 1♣ East overcalls INT. South is just short of the requirements for a penalty double, but some pairs will be armed with a gadget that will enable South to contest the part score.

The idea is to use a conventional bid, just as if East had opened INT. One possibility would be to

use 2♣ to show both majors and 2NT both minors.

Another is to adopt a scheme outlined in Partnership Bidding at Bridge, where 2♣ is both majors, 2♦ is one major (multi style) 2♥/2♠ is 5/4 with that major and a minor (usually the one partner has opened) and 2NT is a strong distributional raise of partner's minor.

If NS have no methods at their disposal then South will either pass, or chance a double.

When North starts with a 12-14 INT East doubles. Here too South is just short of the values for a redouble (and many pairs now use it to start a rescue manoeuvre) but if West runs to 2♣ South can double for takeout on the next round and EW will be in trouble.

How serious will it be if NS fail to locate their spade fit?

+110 is a racing certainty and with careful play declarer can record +140. For example, if East starts with three rounds of diamonds declarer wins and plays the queen of hearts. East wins and exits with a trump and declarer wins in dummy and plays a club to the king and ace. Declarer takes the trump return in dummy and plays a cross ruff for nine tricks.

If NS defend INT they will need to double and take eight tricks. If they start by cashing four rounds of spades declarer will be in good shape as long as a club or heart is discarded from hand on the fourth spade. With diamonds 3-3 the location of the honours in the other suits

should see declarer emerge with six tricks, a top for EW.

**Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.**

<p>♠ 10 5 3          ♥ A Q 5          ♦ 9 7 5          ♣ K 9 8 7</p> <p>♠ 9 4          ♥ J 6          ♦ A K Q J 10          ♣ J 10 3 2</p> <p>♠ A K Q J 6 2          ♥ K 7 3          ♦ 3 2          ♣ 6 5</p>	<p>♠ 8 7          ♥ 10 9 8 4 2          ♦ 8 6 4          ♣ A Q 4</p>
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West opens 1♦, East responds 1♥ and South comes in with 1♠. If West tries 2♣ North might try 2♦ (or 2♥) suggesting a good raise in spades. (You could play that 2♦ showed three spades and 2♥ four.) If East competes with 3♦ South goes on to 3♠.

If West passes over 1♠ North can bid 2♦\* and then pass South's 2♠.

There is nothing to the play, the defenders taking just four tricks.

**Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.**

<p>♠ 9          ♥ J 8 4 2          ♦ K Q 8 6 4          ♣ Q 8 5</p> <p>♠ A 8 6          ♥ 10 3          ♦ 5 2          ♣ K J 9 7 4 3</p> <p>♠ K J 10 5 2          ♥ A 9 6 5          ♦ 9 7 3          ♣ 10</p>	<p>♠ Q 7 4 3          ♥ K Q 7          ♦ A J 10          ♣ A 6 2</p>
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If East starts with INT South can come in with a bid to show both majors. Absent any methods, West simply bids 3NT, hoping the clubs will run. (You will remember I advocated the use of Rubensohl - here West would for example bid 2NT over South's 2♣ to show clubs and at least invitational values and East would bid 3NT.)

If East opens 1♠, Acol style, West must choose between INT and 2♣. I much prefer the latter, but both responses will lead to 3NT, albeit with different declarers.

If East is declarer and South (having shown both majors) leads a spade (a low spade works better than the jack or ten on this layout) declarer wins in hand and will want to tackle

the club suit. One possibility is to start with a low club. When the ten appears declarer will have the option winning with the king and running the jack. The danger is that if South then wins with the queen a top spade will remove dummy's entry and leave the club suit blocked.

In practice declarer is likely to start with the ace and then duck a club to North's queen.

One possibility now would be for North to switch to the jack of hearts, hoping South started with something like ♥AQ96. However, assuming South has the jack of spades that would leave East with only 14 points for the INT opening, so if North is going to switch to a heart, a low card is best. If declarer puts up an honour South wins and returns a heart and declarer should be held to nine tricks.

If declarer plays low, South can win with the ace, but declarer must score an important overtrick.

In this scenario you see how important the choice of lead is at trick one. If South led the jack or ten of spades the fall of North's nine means that declarer can afford to play low on the heart switch. If South led a low spade then playing low risks South winning with the jack and playing spades, establishing five tricks for the defence.

If East is declarer and South has not bid then the situation remains much the same, although now declarer will not even consider taking an unusual line in clubs.

If West is the declarer with no opposition bidding North might start with a low diamond. Declarer wins in dummy and plays clubs, ducking the second round to North's queen. North can simply continue with a high diamond to hold declarer to nine tricks.

I did spot a way for East to take eleven tricks on a spade lead - win with the queen, get the clubs right and after three rounds of the suit exit with the jack of diamonds - but who could find that line of play?

**Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.**

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

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

If South opens 1♥ West can choose between an overcall of 1♠ and a shape suitable double.

After 1♥-1♠ North jumps to 4♥. It is asking a lot for West to reopen with a double, but perhaps a recollection of one of Albert Einstein's quotes will come to mind - Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere.

If West starts with a double and North bids 4♥ the situation is much the same, but after an overcall East will bid 4♠, whereas after a second double 5♣ is likely to be the bid of choice.

If West plays in 4♠ (almost certainly doubled) declarer ruffs the heart lead, plays a diamond to the queen and a spade to the eight. North wins and forces declarer with another heart. After ruffing declarer crosses to the ace of diamonds and plays the eight of clubs. This is the critical moment; if declarer runs it North wins and plays another heart leaving the contract in ruins. If declarer guesses to go up with the king he can exit with the jack of clubs, ruff the heart return, draw a round of trumps and then play on clubs, losing only to the master trump.

If East plays in 5♣ declarer ruffs the heart lead, plays a diamond to the queen and a club. To be in with a chance declarer must get the suit right, going up with dummy's king. Then a diamond to the ace is followed by a spade to the ace and the jack of diamonds. If North does not cover declarer throws a heart, exits with a club and loses only one more spade.

If North covers the diamond, declarer ruffs, exits with a club and subsequently discards a heart on the ten of diamonds, again losing only one more trick.

**Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.**

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

If West opens 1♦ North is not really worth 2♣, although it will still attract some support. After 1♦-(2♣) East might bid 2♥ if it is not forcing or try to get both suits into play with a double, risking losing the heart suit.

If North passes East responds 1♥ and if West bids 1NT rebids 2♥.

When West starts with a 12-14 INT East again has a choice, to transfer into hearts or use Stayman, intending to bid 2♥ over a possible 2♦ response.

The key to scoring well on this deal is for EW to locate their heart fit.

So far as the defenders are concerned they must avoid conceding a tenth trick. If South is on lead and starts with a passive trump declarer will be able to take advantage of the 3-3 diamond break.

If West is the declarer and North leads a top club then the defenders should always collect the four tricks they are entitled to.

**Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.**

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

If North opens 1♥ East might come in with a double, although it is less attractive facing a passed partner. After 1♥-(Dbl)-Pass West bids 1♠ and North comes again with 1NT.

If East passes over 1♥ South responds 1NT and passes North's invitational 2NT.

If the defenders lead a spade against a notrump contract declarer might win with the ace and play a low heart towards the jack. East can go in with the king and clear the spades but declarer has eight tricks.

If the contract were 3NT declarer might lay down the ace of clubs at trick two, hoping for an honour to appear. When it does not declarer would probably play a low heart but here if East goes in with the king declarer would have to unblock the jack and subsequently finesse against West's ten to be sure of eight tricks - lest East finds the diamond switch, removing a vital entry to declarer's hand.

**Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.**

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

If North opens 1♦ East can double. If South bids 1♥ West joins in with 1♠ and North bids 2♥. If West comes again with 2♠ South is a little more likely than North to take the push to 3♥.

If West leads a spade against 3♥ it looks as if East can save a trick by switching to a diamond at trick two, but see what happens.

Declarer wins with the ace, takes a heart finesse and plays the jack of diamonds. West wins and can try the king of hearts but declarer takes dummy's ace, ruffs a diamond, crosses to the ace of clubs and ruffs another diamond. Then the ten of spades sets up a tenth trick.

To hold declarer to nine tricks West has to start with a club. After winning perforce with dummy's ace declarer might try two rounds of diamonds. West wins and must keep up the attack on dummy's entries by playing another club.

**Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.**

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

If West opens INT North will come in with whatever conventional method the partnership employs. One method that has gained in popularity in recent years is to double with this type of hand, promising a four card major with a longer minor. Then East might simply jump to 3NT, giving up any idea of playing for a penalty because of the vulnerability.

If West starts with 1♥ and North doubles East might bid 2NT to show a good raise to 3♥ and West will go on to the doomed game. After 1♥-(Db1)-2NT\*-(Pass)-4♥ if North doubles again it will be clear for South to pass, trusting the 5-0 split will be more than declarer can cope with.

3NT is the interesting contract.

If North leads a club declarer wins with the jack and cashes seven red winners. If North has pitched the ♠J10 it will be clear to exit with a spade, and this also works if North has come down to ♠AKJ ♣AQ. Indeed, as the cards lie declarer can exit in either suit and get home.

Even if North finds the safe lead of a diamond declarer can prevail, simply cashing seven red winners and then leading a spade towards dummy's queen.

**Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.**

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

East opens 1♠ and if West raises is sure to go on to game.

If East's 1♠ could be based on a four card suit (Acol style) West might respond 2♦. Then it will be up to West to raise East's rebid of 2♠ to 3♠, again leading to the spade game.

With trumps 2-2 declarer should not find it difficult to arrive at ten tricks.

**Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.**

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

When West opens 1♦ it is just possible a few cavaliers will try a weak jump overcall with the North hand. That might produce a sequence like 1♦-(2♠)-3♥-(3♠)-3NT-(Pass) when East will have to choose between a Pass and 4♥.

Given a free run EW could bid 1♦-1♥-2♣-3♥-4♥.

With an awkward hand to lead from suppose South tries a club.

Declarer wins in dummy and plays a heart to the jack and king. The next club goes to dummy's ace and another heart allows declarer to draw trumps. After unblocking the clubs declarer crosses to dummy with the ace of spades and throws a spade on the master club. After ruffing the queen of spades declarer only needs to guess the diamonds for eleven tricks.

I'm not sure this is any easier if North has bid 2♠, but if declarer thinks North has the ♠K then it looks logical to play South (having raised) for the ace of diamonds.

If South leads a spade at trick one declarer is obliged to finesse. Then a heart goes to South's king. If South now switches to a diamond declarer can score twelve tricks by going up with the king. Not easy, but in general a defender is more likely to lead away from the ace than the queen.

If West plays in 3NT a spade lead should see declarer emerge with eleven tricks and a good score.

**Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.**

♠ A Q 8 6 2

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

♠ K 7 4  
 ♥ A K Q 2  
 ♦ K J 8 4  
 ♣ Q 7

East opens 1♦ and when West responds 1♥ jumps to game. If North has chipped in with 1♠ South might bid 4♠, but it will prove to be very expensive.

The importance of bidding 1♠ is clear if NS defend 4♥. On a club lead declarer has eleven tricks, but a spade allows North to win and switch to diamonds, giving the defenders the tricks they are entitled to.

**Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.**

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

When East opens 1♦ West responds 1♥ (Some partnerships favour a response of 2♥ with this type of hand) and North overcalls 1♠ ('for the lead partner'). When East rebids 2♦ South has an awkward hand to express - aside from the fact that few people play them a fit non jump of 3♣ does not feel right with only three card support, so South may try 2♥, suggesting a good raise in spades. When North bids 2♠ a raise to 3♠ by South might be enough for North to go on to game, but in practice I doubt 4♠ will be bid very often.

If East leads a top diamond against a spade contract declarer wins with dummy's ace, crosses to hand with a heart and plays a spade. If East goes in with the ace, cashes a diamond and plays a third round of the suit West ruffs with the queen and exits with a heart, declarer ruffing and playing a spade.

When East follows with the two declarer must decide if it is right to finesse. The theory of

restricted choice suggests that is the correct play (if West had started with ♠QJ5 the ruff can be taken with either honour) but it is quite easy to go wrong.

If East leads the queen of clubs declarer wins in hand and plays a spade. If East plays low declarer must put up the king to prevent East scoring a club ruff.

**Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.**

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

When North opens 2NT South will raise directly to 3NT, or, if the methods are available, look for a 5-3 fit in a major before settling for 3NT.

On a diamond lead declarer goes up with dummy's king and, with fingers crossed, takes a club finesse. When it holds the lack of entries to dummy dictate that the ace of clubs must be cashed. When the king does not appear declarer cashes the ace of hearts, crosses to the king of hearts, plays a heart to the nine and the queen of hearts. East, down to ♠KJ ♦AJ64, wins the diamond exit and puts West in with a diamond to ensure a one trick defeat.

**Board 28. NIS Vul. Dealer West.**

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

If West decides to open the choice lies between 1♣ and 3♣ (unless you are playing a Strong Club, when 2♣ comes into the equation).

After 1♣ North overcalls either 1♥ or 2♥ according to taste and East bids spades. If South

supports hearts the possibility of a singleton with West will be apparent, but bidding a slam may still be a hit and miss affair.

For example, after 1♣-(1♥)-1♠-(3♥)-Pass-(Pass) how should East continue?

If West opens 3♣ a lot will depend on the style of preempts that the partnership have agreed to employ. Even if they are sound East will have to be able to discover that West has a heart control. I have a recollection that the late Joe Amsbury suggested that in this type of situation East could jump to 4♦ to ask West about a heart control, but it never became established theory.

However, the sequence 3♣-3♠-4♣-4♦ should see West bid 4♥ and now East might take a shot at a slam, probably 6♣.

If West starts with a disciplined pass North might open 2♥ (or a Multi 2♦). If East overcalls 4♠ it is hard to see West taking a bid. If East doubles and South raises to 3♥ West might jump to 5♣, when there is some chance that East might add one for the road.

Not an easy deal, so well done if you reached 6♣ or 6♠.

**Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.**

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

If North opens 1♠ East doubles and South raises spades, with both 2NT and 4♠ attracting support. (You could make a case of sorts for a tactical underbid, but that is a minority approach.)

However, West is sure to bid 4♥ over 2NT or 5♥ over 4♠. In the first case if NS go on to 4♠ West is likely to bid 5♥. If NS go on to 5♠ (which they might also do in the second scenario) then East might decide to double.

4♥ is straightforward - declarer ruffs the spade lead, plays a diamond to the king, draws trumps, plays another diamond, ruffs the spade return, cashes two diamonds ending in hand

and advances the nine of clubs. Running it delivers eleven tricks.

If EW defend 5♠ East must avoid a diamond lead. However, that is by no means the end of the matter. For example if East leads the king of hearts West must overtake it and switch to a club.

If West allows the king of hearts to hold, wins the next heart and switches to a club declarer puts in the ten and ducks in dummy when East covers with the jack. That forces East to exit with a trump and declarer wins and rattles off four more spades. On the last of these, East, down to ♦KQ6 ♣K7 has to throw a diamond and declarer can choose between pitching a club from dummy and playing ace and another diamond, or throwing a diamond and playing ace and another diamond. Either way there are nine tricks and that is vital if the contract is 5♠ doubled.

There is another trap to be avoided.

If East leads a low heart and West wins with the ace and switches to a club the ten is covered by the jack and declarer ducks. If East now exits with a trump declarer wins in dummy and plays a heart. West must be alert and go up with the queen in order to play a second club, a neat variation on the Crocodile Coup.

**Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.**

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

If South opens 1♦ North responds 1♠ and raises South's 1NT rebid to game.

If South starts with a 12-14 INT North looks for a spade fit before settling for 3NT.

If spades have been bid West may well start with a heart. Declarer wins in hand and plays a spade, putting in the nine when West plays low. This gives a 44.75% chance of scoring three tricks in the suit.

If West starts with the queen of spades declarer simply wins in dummy, comes to hand with a heart and plays another spade.

**Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.**

<p>♠ J 2 ♥ A K 9 8 6 ♦ 8 4 ♣ A 10 9 4</p> <p>♠ 9 6 4 ♥ 4 ♦ A K Q 10 6 ♣ J 7 6 3</p>	<p>♠ A K Q ♥ 7 2 ♦ J 5 3 2 ♣ K Q 5 2</p> <p>♠ 10 8 7 5 3 ♥ Q J 10 5 3 ♦ 9 7 ♣ 8</p>
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If West opens 1♦ North overcalls 1♥ and East probably tries 2♥\*, looking for the notrump game. If South raises to 3♥ West passes and East might simply take a pot at 5♦.

If West elects to pass North opens 1♥ and East doubles. If South now bids 2♥ West bids 3♦. If South bids 3♥ West bids 4♦. East can bid 3♥ over 3♦ and 5♦ over 4♦.

Assuming EW play in diamonds North leads a top heart and must then switch to the ace of clubs and a club to be sure of holding declarer to ten tricks.

If North tries to cash a second heart declarer ruffs, draws trumps, cashes the spades and plays a club to the jack. North wins with the ace and must return the four of clubs.

At this point declarer knows South started with five spades, two diamonds and at least one club. If declarer can place South with five hearts (perhaps South jumped to 3♥ and/or showed an odd number on the first round of the suit) then it will be clear to run it to the six.

**Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.**

<p>♠ A 4 3 2 ♥ — ♦ K 7 6 ♣ A K 8 6 4 3</p> <p>♠ Q 10 7 5 ♥ A K 8 7 3 ♦ A J 10 ♣ 7</p>	<p>♠ 9 8 ♥ Q J 10 2 ♦ Q 8 4 3 2 ♣ Q 2</p> <p>♠ K J 6 ♥ 9 6 5 4 ♦ 9 5 ♣ J 10 9 5</p>
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It is worth comparing this deal with numbers 4 & 13.

When West opens 1♥ North overcalls 2♣, East bids 2♥ and South raises to 3♣. If West bids 3♥ North will either bid a direct 5♣ or test the waters with 3♠ when South has an easy conversion to 5♣.

If West jumps to 4♥ (a bit of stretch, but the hand is worth 16.55 on the Kaplan-Rubens hand evaluator) North might bid 4♠ en route to 5♣, just in case there is a 4-4 spade fit.

5♣ is easy enough, declarer losing only a spade and a diamond.

**Board 33. Love All. Dealer North.**

<p>♠ K 9 4 3 ♥ 2 ♦ J 6 ♣ K Q 9 8 6 3</p> <p>♠ 7 ♥ A K Q 9 8 6 5 ♦ A K 10 3 ♣ J</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 ♥ J 10 4 3 ♦ 9 8 7 4 ♣ 10 7 5</p> <p>♠ A J 8 6 5 2 ♥ 7 ♦ Q 5 2 ♣ A 4 2</p>
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If South opens 1♠ West might simply overcall 4♥, giving up any idea that East, as a passed hand, will have the right cards for a slam. North bids 4♠ and if East is a disciple of the principle that 'if partner bids a suit and you have four card support it is generally right to raise' 5♥ will be automatic.

It certainly works this time, as 5♥ is only one down against the cold 4♠ and going on to 5♠ should result in the loss of the first three tricks.

If West adopts a more optimistic/cunning approach, overcalling only 2♥, then North jumps to 4♠ (or perhaps makes a fit jump of 4♣). Then West will surely try 5♥, once more putting NS on the spot.

**Board 34. N/S Vul. Dealer East.**

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

When East opens 1♠ South has to decide how many hearts to bid - put me down for 2♥. If North bids 3♦ then South's 3♥ should end the auction.

On a spade lead East cashes three tricks in the suit and switches to a club. Declarer goes up with the ace, takes two rounds of trumps and then discards a club on the second round of diamonds for nine tricks.

**Board 35. E/W Vul. Dealer South.**

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

If South opens 1♥ North responds 1♠ (by the way, how does your partnership play a bid of 2♥ by East in this position?) and South raises to 2♠. There is no compelling reason for North to bid on.

If South passes North might open 1♠ third in hand (or have 2♠ available as spades and a minor). If East overcalls 2♥ South could even bid a direct 4♠.

If North does not open East starts with 1♥ and if West responds 1♠ there is almost no chance that NS will get into the auction, East ending up in 2♥.

Defending 4♠ East is likely to lead the king of hearts. If declarer puts up dummy's ace it is essential to discard a diamond rather than a club, which is not an obvious play.

Nor is the continuation which must be a diamond. East wins and forces declarer with a

heart. Now a club to the jack is followed by the ace of clubs and a diamond. East wins and forces declarer for a second time. After ruffing, declarer ruffs a club and plays a spade. If West goes up with the ace and returns a spade declarer wins, cashes the queen of clubs and cross ruffs, and if West ducks declarer wins, cashes the queen of clubs and then ruffs the queen of diamonds with the queen of spades ensuring ten tricks.

If South leads a spade against 2♥ declarer can get home by pitching a club on dummy's ace and playing three rounds of diamonds. If North wins and switches to a club South takes two tricks in the suit and exits with a spade but declarer ruffs and plays a diamond, ensuring eight tricks.

Looks good on paper, but at the table declarer is more likely to try a club to the king at trick two. South wins and might exit with a spade, forcing declarer to ruff. On three rounds of diamonds South must pitch a spade and after winning North must continue with the queen of diamonds. South ruffs with the eight, puts North in with a club and now another club from North ensures two more trump tricks for South.

**Board 36. Game All. Dealer West.**

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

If West opens 1♣ North overcalls 1♥ when the simple approach for East is to bid 5♣. That puts the spotlight on South - is it right to bid 5♦? I don't think there is a sure fire answer to this, but in general terms it seems to work out well to bid in these high level situations.

5♣ is easy to play, but what about 5♦?

If West leads a top club declarer ruffs, draws trumps and must then tackle the spade suit. Given enough entries declarer starts with a low spade from dummy planning to put in the eight. If that loses to the ten declarer goes back to

dummy and leads another spade. This delivers three tricks 83.65% of the time.

If West leads the six of hearts declarer must go up with dummy's ace and draw trumps. When

East's ten come up on the first round of spades declarer is home.