CBAI Novice & Intermediate Congress – Sligo 21st February 2015 Commentary on the hands from Saturday Night Session

As President of the Contract Bridge Association of Ireland, I am very pleased to welcome you to my home town of Sligo for the 16th CBAI Novice and Intermediate Bridge Congress. The venue for this Congress rotates with CBAI President and is held in the President's Region every year. I hope you have a wonderful time here in the beautiful 'Yeats Country' and that you might even decide to come back again sometime....maybe for our Yeats Country Congress on the weekend of May 22nd.

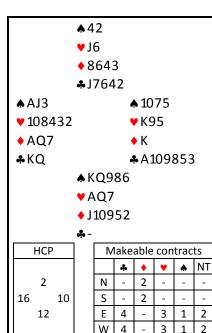
This Congress was set up to allow Novice and Intermediate players play at their own level in a relaxed setting against their own peers with the aim of improving their game and making the transition to Open Congresses. This fits nicely in with the theme for my own year – that of 'Bridge Improvement for all' where I hoped to help and encourage players of all grades, especially Novice and Intermediates, to take a fresh look at their game and take at least one conscious step to either read a bridge article, learn a convention, discuss a few hands with their partner or attend an improver class etc. This commentary on tonight's hands is one such attempt to help you improve your game.

I also welcome the Master players who came along this weekend to lend their support by playing in the Open Pairs – their help and guidance is much appreciated. Special welcome also to my successor – next year's President Mrs. Freda Fitzgerald and also a big welcome to 'Mrs. CBAI HQ' Valerie Mathers.

I am indebted to the local Sligo clubs, especially the Acol and Phoenix, for their never-ending support in my busy year and in particular I would like to acknowledge the enormous generosity of the Yeats Country Bridge Congress in sponsoring tonight's supper.

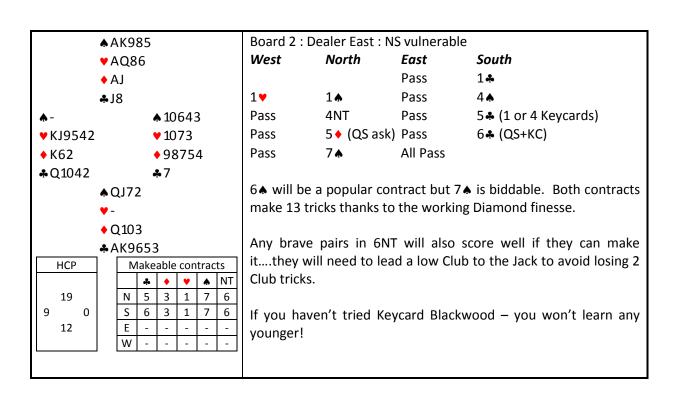
If I can be of any help to any of you, now or later on in the year, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am only too happy to help and encourage newer players. Thank you all for attending this event and I hope that you have enjoyed yourselves and maybe you have learned a little too? Bridge is a great game — a 'life-changing' game — Little did we know when we took it up, the effect it would have on us.

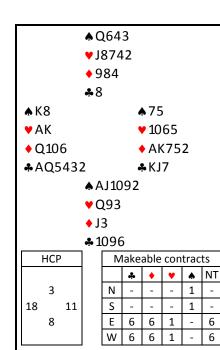
Or as our own W.B. Yeats said "a Terrible Beauty is Born!". Fearghal O'Boyle



Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all West North East South Pass Pass 1 1NT Pass 3NT All Pass 4♥ and 3NT are reasonable contracts but it's probably easier to get to 3NT than 4♥. It takes a Spade lead to beat 3NT by West. A Spade or Club lead will beat 4♥ by West. I don't reckon too many will make game although many will be given the opportunity. Any plus score will score well. The real question is what should West bid after South opens 1 .? 1♥ is not great with such bad Hearts and Double just seems to be wasting time. I like 1NT because it shows the most important

feature of your hand – the likely double Spade stopper.





Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

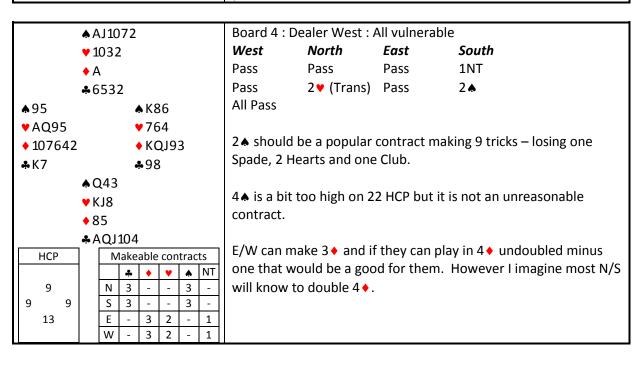
West North East South
Pass

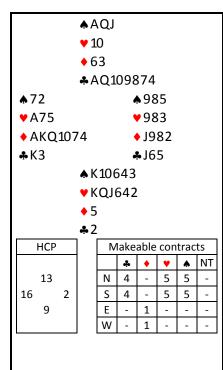
1♣ Pass 1♦ 1♠

3NT All Pass

E/W can make an easy 12 tricks in Clubs, Diamonds or No-Trump but minor suit slams are never easy to bid so most pairs will land in 3NT.

If South makes a 1 overcall he will be rewarded with a Spade lead from his partner. Taking the Ace of Spades will be worth a bundle of matchpoints to N/S as most declarers will rattle off 13 tricks if they get a chance.



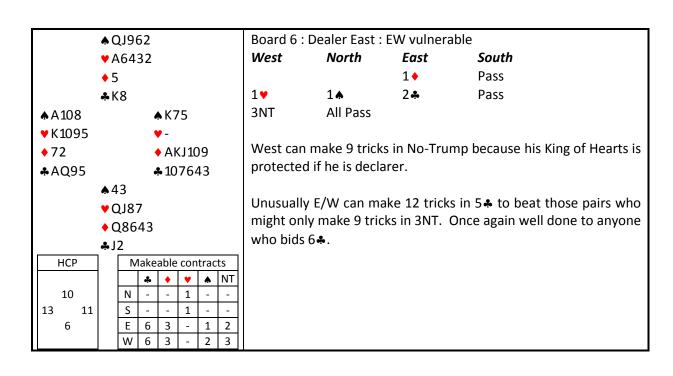


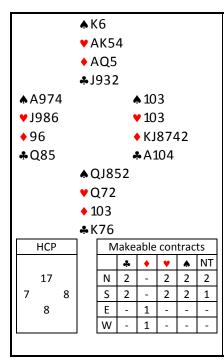
Board 5	: Dealer North	able		
West	North	East	South	
	1♣	Pass	1♥	
2 •	3♣	Pass	3♠	
Pass	4 🆍	All Pass		
			th-South can make	

With the Hearts breaking 3-3, North-South can make 11 tricks in either major. So bidding game in either one will be a good result for them. Not everyone will get to game on this one.

The trick will be for North to eventually stop bidding his Clubs and support one of his partner's major suits. Game in a major is always easier to make than game in a minor. And sometimes bidding 4 of a major on a 4-3 fit will work out ok especially if the hand with 3-card support has a singleton or doubleton side suit.

West might think he is going to be declarer on this board when he picks up his hand. If he gets away in 5 -4 undoubled he will be happy....or even 5 x-3 on a misdefence...but remember not everyone will get to game with the N/S cards?



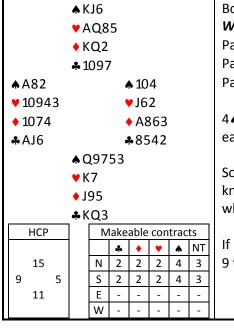


Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable				
West	North	East	South	
			Pass	
Pass	1.	1♦	1 🛦	
Pass	1NT	Pass	2NT	
3NT	All Pass			

With 25 HCP, 3NT is a reasonable contract by N/S and most table will bid it. So the pressure will be on E/W to defeat it.

It will be 'cat and mouse' for a while and the play of the Spade suit will be very important for both sides. When declarer leads a small Spade towards his King, West must play small and East must unblock the 10 under declarer's King. If East fails to unblock, declarer can succeed by letting East's 10 win the second Spade trick.

As in all pairs games, 'the play's the thing' and making 9 tricks whether you are in 1NT or 3NT will do well.

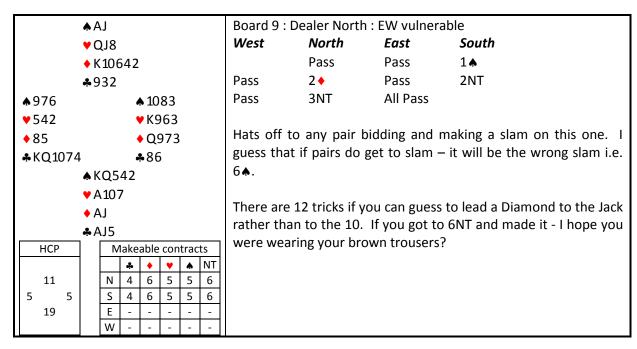


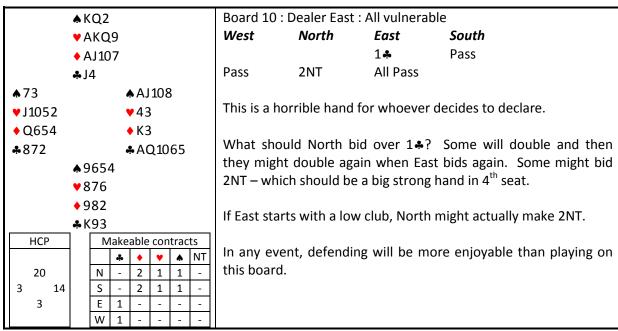
Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all					
West	North	East	South		
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠		
Pass	1NT	Pass	3♠		
Pass	4♠	All Pass			

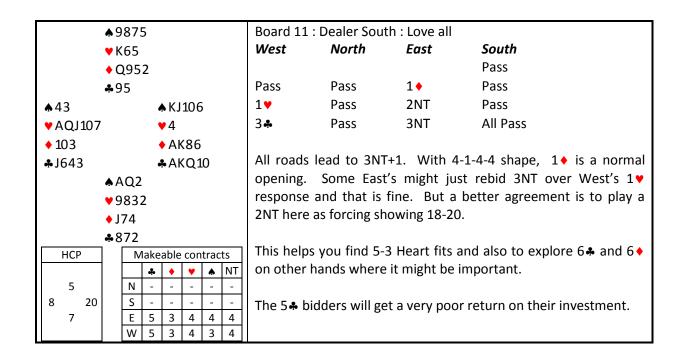
4♠ is a good contract – an 8-card fit and 26 HCP. There are 10 easy tricks available – losing to the 3 Aces.

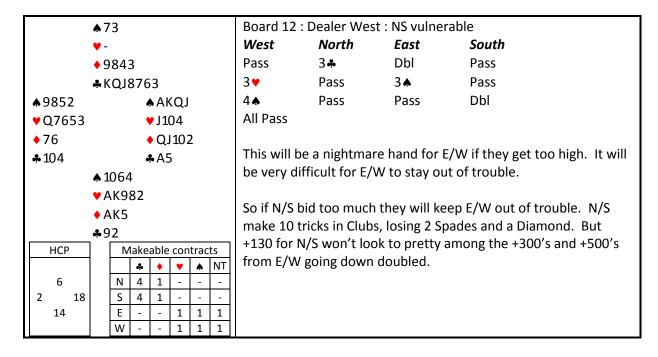
Some pairs will miss their Spade fit and land in 3NT – others will know about the Spade fit but decide to play in 3NT anyway – which is also a reasonable shot.

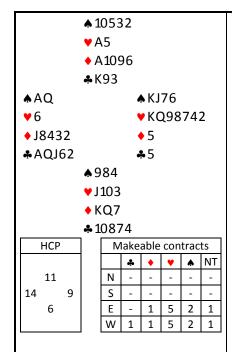
If East leads anything other than a Spade, declarer will only make 9 tricks and lose out to the pairs playing in 4 .









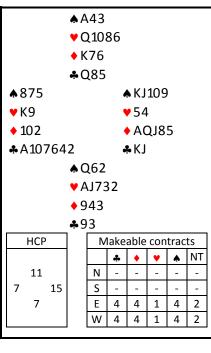


Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable					
West	North	East	South		
	Pass	Pass	Pass		
1♦	Pass	4♥	All Pass		

There is no right thing to do here. Most might open 3♥ with the East hand while the rest of us will either pass or maybe open 1♥. The textbooks tell us that it is a good idea to pre-empt holding a side 4-card major.

Whether you do or you don't open 3♥, you will be faced with a similar decision on the second round when West opens 1♦. You may as well bid 4♥ because you can't really tell what's right. Partner has opening points and you have a good 7-card suit and a side suit so it feels like we are going to finish in 4♥ so we may as well bid it directly.

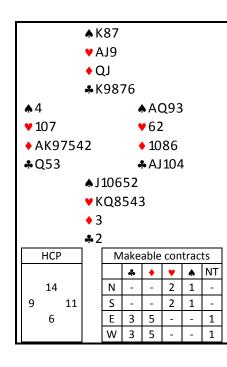
Bidding 4♥ will be a good result as there will be many Wests who (not unreasonably) pass 3♥.



	Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all					
	West	North	East	South		
			1♦	1♥		
	1NT	2♦	Dbl	2♥		
	3♣	3♥	All Pass			
	This hand	shows the e	normous m	erits in overcalling. Left to	כ	
	their own devices, E/W would play in 3♣ or 3♦ making 10 tricks.					
	But when South overcalls 1♥ it creates confusion and takes E/W					
	out of their comfort zone.					
	On the other hand, E/W might not need any help from their					
ı	opponents to get confused. If West overbids by responding 2.					
	to East's 1	opening bi	d then it will	I be hard for E/W to stay ou	t	
	_			,		

their g 2♣ y out of 3NT. A Heart lead will beat 3NT.

4♠ is a lovely unbeatable contract for E/W and hats off to anyone who bids it.

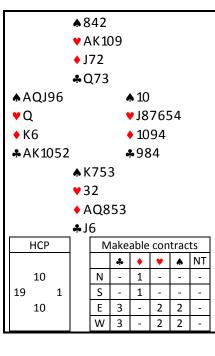


Board 15	Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable				
West North		East	South		
			Pass		
3♦	Pass	Pass	3♥		
Pass	4♥	All Pass			

This could be a lively board at some tables. South might open a weak two or he might pass hoping to show his weak two-suiter later on.

It will be very difficult for E/W to win this auction because N/S will keep bidding Hearts. 4♥-2 will still be a good board for E/W and it will be even better if they can double it.

5 • makes for E/W but with all the N/S interference it won't be easy to get there. But E/W should be happy to take any +500's that come their way instead.

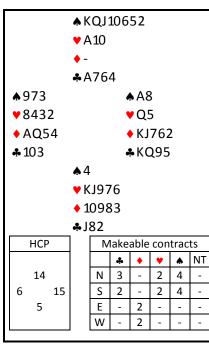


West	North	East	South
1 .	Pass	Pass	Dbl
1 ♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣	All Pass
E/W migh	nt have troub	ole staying o	ut of trouble

E/W might have trouble staying out of trouble on this one. Their problems will start with West's choice of opening bid.

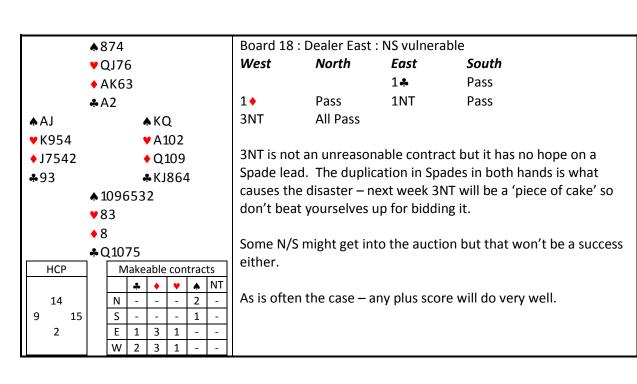
Some might open a Strong 24, others an Acol 24, others a simple 14 while the rest of us will settle for the textbook 14 opening. Ideally E/W want to play in 24 or 34.

N/S might be tempted into the auction at some point but they need to be careful not to bid higher than 2 ◆ or it might get messy for them.

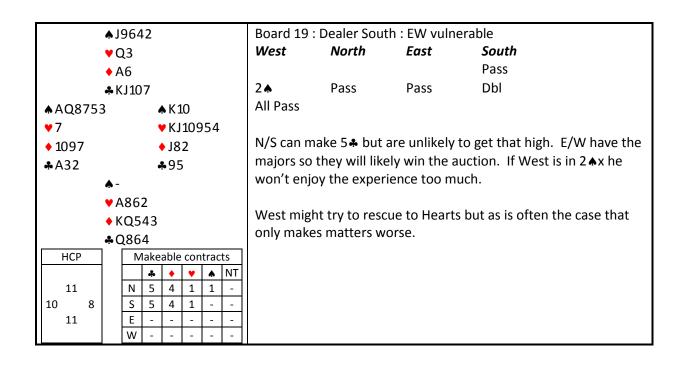


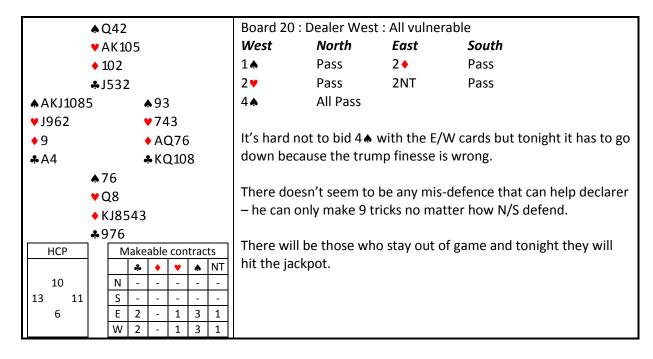
Board 17: Dealer North: Love all West North East South 4♠ Dbl Pass 5 • Dbl All Pass Another hand where there could be fireworks. North may as well open 4♠ if only because it feels like a 4♠ hand. Of course a 1 hbid is probably better (but not as much fun) and even an Acol 24 isn't too wrong. But whatever North opens, he is probably going to bid 4♠ the next time. 4♠ is an easy make –losing one Spade and 2 Clubs – and if he doesn't get a Club lead he might even make 12 tricks! 5 ♦ x-3 will not be a good E/W score but it will be better than 4 ♠ x

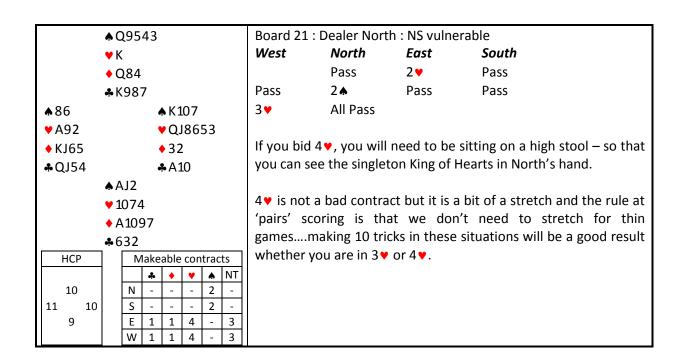
made or +2. And not every N/S will find the defence to beat 5 ◆

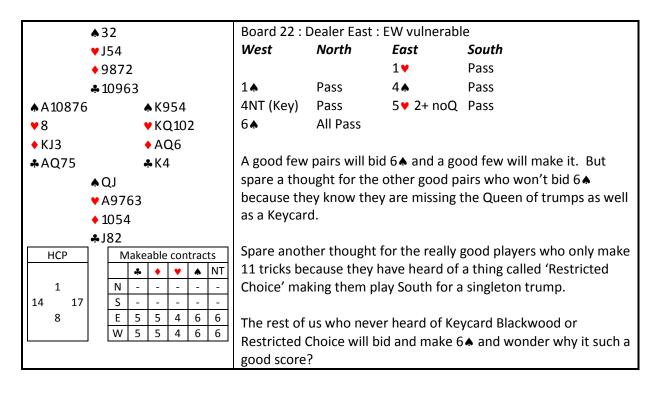


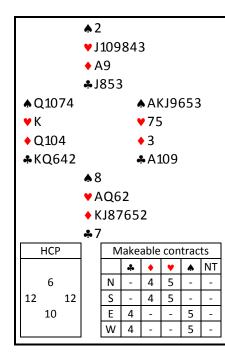
by 3 tricks.











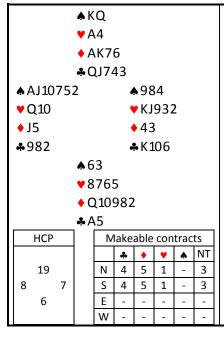
Board 23	Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable					
West	North	East	South			
			Pass			
1.	Pass	1♠	2 ♦			
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass			
	d could be ver to enter the a		ve if N/S can summo	ΟI		

on up the

E/W have an easy route to 4 making 11 tricks if N/S take their 2 tricks fast! Otherwise E/W make 12 or 13 tricks.

N/S can make 11 tricks in Hearts if they can drop the singleton King of Hearts. But even making 10 tricks by N/S will be a good score if they can get to play the hand.

Some E/W might try for 6♠ and this will really test the N/S defense.



Board 24: Dealer West: Love all West North East South 2 🏚 Dbl 3♠ Pass 3NT All Pass Pass

E/W might try to jostle N/S but N/S should still manage to bid game in No-Trump or Diamonds. Of course both games require declarer to take the Club finesse and that will be a nervous moment for declarer.

So there will be some who will go down in 3NT. There will be some E/W's who win the auction in Spades probably doubled and they are still going down.