

The analysis is based on 4-card Majors, Weak No-Trump (Strong NT mentioned), Transfers and Weak Two Openings in 3 suits.

<p> ♠ K65 ♥ A983 ♦ Q1074 ♣ J6 ♠ 974 ♠ QJ3 ♥ KQ752 ♥ 104 ♦ 632 ♦ AKJ95 ♣ Q7 ♣ 932 ♠ A1082 ♥ J6 ♦ 8 ♣ AK10854 </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="188 633 311 824"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>10</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="347 633 592 824"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		10		7	11	12		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	5	1	1	4	3	S	4	1	2	4	3	E						W						<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Nil All</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="614 224 1149 369"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Thoughts on the bidding</p> <p>1NT Despite only 11 HCP, most tournament players would open the East hand - with a 12-14 no-trump opening probably causing the most difficulty for South, who, if a bid of 2♣ is artificial, may have to pass initially. Note that South is more able to bid 2♣ over a 1♦ opening</p> <p>2♦ Transfer</p> <p>2♥ Required</p> <p>3♣ This is not an automatic bid when LHO's strength is totally unknown and many may prefer to pass. If South does bid, then North will surely bid 3NT</p> <p>Thoughts on the play</p> <p>Whatever the auction, unless West gets to play in 2♥ (two off), North is likely to become declarer in no-trumps and it may well be 3NT. East will probably lead a top diamond and seeing West's discouragement will want to get off lead. If they find the ♥10 switch then 3NT is in jeopardy. Declarer will play the jack and will beat West's ♥Q. Now declarer may decide to take the club finesse. If so, East will win and lead a diamond (their lowest to indicate a heart return). East wins, returns a heart, gets the diamond back and ends up with 7 tricks. Note that, if at trick two East exits with a club, then they're going to get squeezed on the run of clubs and if instead they exit with a spade then it gives declarer 4 spade tricks (unless they lead a sneaky and very risky ♠3; switching to the ♠J is much less risky)</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥	3♣	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass			
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♠ J1084
 ♥ 108
 ♦ J8
 ♣ K7652
 ♠ AK95 ♠ 6
 ♥ J75 ♥ AK632
 ♦ 9542 ♦ KQ1073
 ♣ J3 ♣ A8
 ♠ Q732
 ♥ Q94
 ♦ A6
 ♣ Q1094

HCP	
5	
9	16
10	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N					
S					
E	1	5	5	1	2
W	1	5	5	1	2

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

Thoughts on the Bidding
 When East shows 5+ hearts and 4+ diamonds, West's support of hearts may be made on a doubleton. With fewer points, East should simply pass but with this hand East is able to show their 5-5 shape. West, having extra value and a double fit, should raise partner to game.

Thoughts on the Play
 South has an ugly hand for leading, so is likely to simply lead the un-bid suit - clubs and leading the ♣10 is standard

Declarer will win the club lead and immediately discard a club on a winning spade. Declarer should realise that this contract cannot be made if South holds ♥Q-x-x-x and so there's is no safety play in hearts. That said, with the hearts and diamonds as they are, declarer should come to 11 tricks whatever line they adopt.

♠ AQJ965
 ♥ 6
 ♦ A5
 ♣ 10832
 ♠ 104 ♠ 72
 ♥ AQ543 ♥ 109872
 ♦ 1062 ♦ K987
 ♣ A76 ♣ K5
 ♠ K83
 ♥ KJ
 ♦ QJ43
 ♣ QJ94

HCP	
11	
10	6
13	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3			2	
S	3			2	
E		1	3		
W		1	3		

Board 4 : Dealer West : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Thoughts on the Bidding
 Whatever system NS are playing and no matter what EW bid, NS will probably play in the spade game.

Thoughts on the play
 This hand demonstrates why ace and kings are more valued in contracts above 3NT than queens and jacks. With the ♦K offside, this contract is doomed to fail (through probably by only one trick)

On the plus side, East is very unlikely to find the crippling lead of the ♣K. On a heart lead and heart continuation, declarer's only hopes are (a) that West holds the ♦K or (b) that East can be end-played.

The best line is to draw trumps, ending in dummy and lead a small club. If West goes up with the ♣A (afraid maybe the declarer holds a singleton ♣K) then s/he MUST return a diamond for, if they don't, East must either give declarer a ruff-and-discard or lead a diamond, both options being fatal for the defence.

♠AQ753
 ♥A
 ♦AJ62
 ♣K53
 ♠J964
 ♥QJ543
 ♦43
 ♣72
 ♠102
 ♥K102
 ♦Q1087
 ♣Q1084
 ♠K8
 ♥9876
 ♦K95
 ♣AJ96

HCP	
18	
4	7
11	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N		1			
S		1	1		1
E	1			2	
W	1			2	

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

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

Thoughts on the Bidding
 South's 2♣ response allows North to show their 16+ hand by jumping to 3♦. Holding no obvious heart stopper and without support for either of partner's suits, South will probably pass the buck back to partner by bidding 3♥ - not to show 4 hearts but to deny a heart stopper.

Thoughts on the Play
 If East is tempted to lead one of their 4-card suits then declarer is going to romp home with overtricks. The diamond lead runs around to declarer's Jack and then the spade suit can be set up for 4 tricks; otherwise a 4th highest club lead should be run around to West's ♣7 and declarer's King and now declarer has a chance to shine. Using the Rule of 11, West is known to have nothing left in clubs higher than the card led (take the value of the card led from 11 (11-4=7) and count how many cards you can see higher than that card (4 in dummy and 2 in hand plus the 7 played by West = 7). The result is the number of higher cards held by RHO (7-7=0). So the ♣9 can be finessed and then the ♣J for 4 club tricks.
 It's a different story if a heart is led. Declarer will have a major decision after they discover that the spade suit isn't breaking and will (a) hope the hearts are 4-4 and just give up a spade (b) take the club finesse or (c) take the diamond finesse. Only option (b) succeeds.
 Note that 4♠ is likely to succeed as declarer has time to try both finesses.

♠AQ8
 ♥AJ653
 ♦6
 ♣J873
 ♠765
 ♥102
 ♦AQJ82
 ♣Q94
 ♠K10942
 ♥97
 ♦K4
 ♣K1062
 ♠J3
 ♥KQ84
 ♦109753
 ♣A5

HCP	
12	
9	9
10	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N			4		1
S			4		1
E				1	
W				1	

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♥	1♠	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Thoughts on the Bidding
 When supporting a major suit, you should add value for short suits. I recommend the following (Doubleton = 1 pt, Singleton = 3 pts, Void - 5 pts). South's hand is therefore worth 12 points and an invitational raise.

Non-vulnerable and with a strong second suit, West is likely to compete but North goes to game with their 15 count (also able to add shortage value now that a fit has been found). Having pushed the opponents into game it is generally wrong to sacrifice.

Thoughts on the Play
 It's going to be tough for East not to lead a spade - which looks awful at first but actually the trick comes back because Declarer cannot ruff a spade and 2 clubs. So 10 tricks no matter what the defence.

♠ -
 ♥ QJ1053
 ♦ A98632
 ♣ K5
 ♠ AKQ6 ♠ 10874
 ♥ - ♥ K862
 ♦ QJ54 ♦ K
 ♣ QJ732 ♣ 10864
 ♠ J9532
 ♥ A974
 ♦ 107
 ♣ A9

HCP	
10	
15	6
9	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N		4	5		2
S		4	5		2
E	3				
W	3			1	

Board 7 : South : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♣	2NT	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Thoughts on the Bidding
 If North has the means to show two suits then that's what they should do. A jump overcall to 2NT is used to show 5-5 in the lower ranking suits. South's raise to 4♥ is primarily pre-emptive but West doesn't know that and may choose to pass. If West does bid then 4♠ is their best option as double would be penalties. Note that on a slower auction, EW are more likely to find their profitable 5♣ sacrifice

Thoughts on the play
 East is likely to lead partner's suit - clubs and declarer should win and immediately play to set up their diamond suit. When the suit splits so badly, declarer should switch to a cross-ruff strategy - ruffing spades in hand and diamonds in dummy. 11 tricks.

♠ 5
 ♥ K10853
 ♦ 9863
 ♣ 1083
 ♠ AQ4 ♠ K10762
 ♥ - ♥ QJ62
 ♦ AKQ102 ♦ J
 ♣ KQ742 ♣ J96
 ♠ J983
 ♥ A974
 ♦ 754
 ♣ A5

HCP	
3	
20	8
9	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N			1		
S			1		
E	5	5		5	4
W	5	5		5	3

Board 8 : Dealer West : Nil all

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Thoughts on the Bidding
 Unless you can almost see game in your own hand, it's generally best to open highly distributional strong hands at the 1-level - not that doing so helps particularly on this hand. West's 3♦ rebid is game-forcing showing 19+ points and East is faced with a stark choice - bid 3♥ to show 5 spades or bid 3NT to show the heart stopper. Playing for 3 of partner's 4 unknown cards to be spades is a high risk strategy though.

West is unlikely to be happy in no-trumps and is likely to bid out their shape. Because East bid 3NT earlier, East's 4♠ bid now must show precisely 5 and a willingness to go to game in one or other of opener's minors.

Thoughts on the play
 My heart-felt commiserations if you got to the excellent spade slam and failed because of the 4-1 spade break, offside! The chances of success are nearly 85 percent. This game can be really unkind sometimes. The club slam, though statistically inferior, is more likely to succeed as it requires North to lead their singleton spade in order to defeat it.

<p>♠ Q6542 ♥ 53 ♦ Q63 ♣ KQ3</p> <p>♠ KJ973 ♠ 108 ♥ J84 ♥ A97 ♦ A9 ♦ K84 ♣ A86 ♣ J7542</p> <p>♠ A ♥ KQ1062 ♦ J10752 ♣ 109</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>	HCP		9		13	8	10		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N		2	1			S		2	1			E	3			2	1	W	3			1	1	<p>Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Thoughts on the Bidding It's standard for responder to prefer to play in the known 5-2 fit rather than in the 4-3 fit - it just doesn't happen to work here - unless...</p> <p>Thoughts on the Play West has a most unpleasant lead and if they choose to lead ♦A and another hoping for a ruff then they'll be preening themselves when partner wins with the king and plays a 3rd diamond. With 3 tricks in the bag, West now has to get off lead and with nothing looking attractive, may well lead ♥J. End of defence. Even without this switch, declarer can still guess to drop the ♥J, though that's not so likely.</p> <p>Oddly enough, the only defence guaranteed to defeat this contract is a low spade lead and a spade back from East when in with the ♥A.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠	1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass	Pass			
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<p>♠ Q6 ♥ J875 ♦ A87 ♣ 8764</p> <p>♠ A1054 ♠ 9732 ♥ A10964 ♥ KQ2 ♦ QJ9 ♦ 532 ♣ 2 ♣ J93</p> <p>♠ KJ8 ♥ 3 ♦ K1064 ♣ AKQ105</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>16</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>5</td><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>5</td><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr> </table>	HCP		7		11	6	16		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	5	4			3	S	5	4			1	E			1	1		W			1	1		<p>Board 10 : Dealer East : Both vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dbl</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Thoughts on the Bidding Pretty much the only times a minimum hand should double holding a 5-card major is either when they have 4 cards in the other major or when their 5-card suit is very weak</p> <p>If South's 1♣ opening is natural then North should raise clubs immediately - don't bother bidding a major if you don't have enough points to show your support later. It's different of course if NS are playing 5-card majors.</p> <p>It's almost impossible for North to end up as declarer in no-trumps or for either to bid to 5♣ - both of which are unstoppable because, although EW can set up the 5th heart while holding the ♠A, s/he is squeezed on the run of clubs and must either discard their winning heart or discard a diamond - the latter giving declarer an overtrick!</p> <p>Well done if you managed to make any game.</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	1♣	Dbl	2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass	Pass	Pass			
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♠ J109742
 ♥ 9
 ♦ Q5
 ♣ 10762
 ♠ Q65 ♠ 83
 ♥ A53 ♥ J864
 ♦ J987 ♦ A1062
 ♣ J85 ♣ AKQ
 ♠ AK
 ♥ KQ1072
 ♦ K43
 ♣ 943

HCP	
3	
8	14
15	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1			1	
S				1	
E		1	1		2
W		1	1		2

Board 11 : Dealer South : Nil All

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	1 NT
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Thoughts on the Bidding

This is a difficult hand for weak no-trumpers. If South opens a strong 1NT then North will get able to get out into 2♠. Otherwise, North has a nasty decision over a 1♥ opening. Typically, with a rebiddable suit like the spades here (which can be bid at the one level) and a singleton or void in partner's (possibly 4-card) suit, it's best to bid and then rebid your suit as low as is possible (unless partner makes the worst possible rebid of 3♥, which you should pass)

This will shut out East, who, as you can see is able to make 8 tricks in no-trumps, so going one or two off in something is better than that.

If North passes, East will be a protective 1NT, showing 10-14 points which South should pass and North may well elect to compete with 2♠ anyway.

Thoughts on the Play

If East plays in 1NT, South is going to be unable to resist leading hearts and with these cards the ♥K is usually best, though not this time oddly. If declarer wins in dummy and finesses a diamond, 8 tricks roll in.

If NS play in 2♦, I'm finding it hard to visualise a defence that won't collect 6 tricks!

♠ AQJ84
 ♥ 853
 ♦ AQ
 ♣ 854
 ♠ 975 ♠ 103
 ♥ K1042 ♥ Q96
 ♦ K1054 ♦ J8762
 ♣ K6 ♣ Q107
 ♠ K62
 ♥ AJ7
 ♦ 93
 ♣ AJ932

HCP	
13	
9	5
13	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4		1	4	3
S	5		1	5	5
E		1			
W		1			

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Thoughts on the Bidding

No matter what no-trump you play you'll be faced with this dilemma at some point: you have a balanced hand and the correct range for a 1NT opening but you have a 5-card major. If you open 1NT you can't show your 5-card suit and if you open your major you can't then bid no-trumps to show your shape. The generally accepted solution is to open your major when you have 2 of the top 3 honours and one more honour - in other words a suit good enough that you don't mind if partner mistakes it for a 6-card suit, as in this auction. When North is unable to bid diamonds or hearts or to support clubs, then South is going to assume a six card spade suit. Note that a rebid of 3♣ from North promised 4-card support

Thoughts on the Play

East is unlikely to find the best lead of the ♥6 and on a natural diamond or trump lead declarer is able to win, draw trumps and play a club to dummy's ♣9, win the return and finesse the ♣J later for 12 tricks.

♠ 75
 ♥ K93
 ♦ J432
 ♣ AK42
 ♠ AKQJ9 ♠ 842
 ♥ Q764 ♥ 52
 ♦ 106 ♦ KQ985
 ♣ Q5 ♣ J87
 ♠ 1063
 ♥ AJ108
 ♦ A7
 ♣ 10963

HCP	
11	
14	6
9	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3		2		
S	3		1		
E		1		1	
W		1		1	

Board 13 : Dealer North : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Thoughts on the Bidding
 The one offered is for 4-card major bidders, for those playing 5-cards majors the sequence is 1♠-2♠. West can upgrade their hand for the shortages but should downgrade it again for the two un-supported queens and not make an invitational raise

Thoughts on the Play
 In theory 2♠ should always fail but in practice it's very difficult for North not to be intimidated by the diamond suit in dummy and so rush to take tricks in the side-suits. But the known threat is in allowing declarer to ruff hearts and it's generally best to work on the known threat rather than an imagined one.

If North leads a trump or switches to one after leading a top club (and South doesn't take their ♦A on the first round) then declarer cannot make more than 7 tricks.

♠ J987
 ♥ A96
 ♦ A53
 ♣ Q42
 ♠ A10532 ♠ KQ
 ♥ 754 ♥ 8
 ♦ J102 ♦ KQ974
 ♣ AJ ♣ K10963
 ♠ 64
 ♥ KQJ1032
 ♦ 86
 ♣ 875

HCP	
11	
10	13
6	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N			1		
S			1		
E	5	5		3	
W	5	5		3	

Board 14 : Dealer East : Nil all

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

Thoughts on the Bidding
 South has the ideal hand for a weak jump overcall, if you play them. Otherwise you'd have to settle for a simple 1♥ bid.

North must be careful not to bid too high. If North bids a pre-emptive 4♥, East is unlikely to have any problem getting to the game. If North just bids 3♥, then with this ace-less hand, East will do no more than bid 4♣ which West has to raise to 5♦. My guess is that not everyone will reach this game

Thoughts on the Play
 Declarer will ruff the second round of hearts and will see that they're going to be forced to trump again when the ♦A wins. A good tip in declarer play is - if you are in danger of being short trumped then set up your side-suit before drawing trumps. So, play a club to the ace and a club back (note that if South started with a singleton club then this contract would have been scuppered by an initial club lead). Now a 3rd club ruffed high in dummy. As it happens the queen falls and declarer can simply draw trumps. If it doesn't, declarer can return to hand with a spade and ruff another club high and then draw trumps.

♠ Q1052
 ♥ AJ10432
 ♦ K3
 ♣ 9
 ♠ K63 ♠ J8
 ♥ 6 ♥ Q975
 ♦ J10875 ♦ AQ642
 ♣ AK108 ♣ 42
 ♠ A974
 ♥ K8
 ♦ 9
 ♣ QJ7653

HCP	
10	
11	9
10	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N			2	2	
S			2	3	
E	1	5			3
W	1	5			3

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

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

Thoughts on the Bidding
 I DO NOT recommend the auction I've shown above. It's far too aggressive. I put it in simply to show how one might get to 3NT with these hands. In practice, East should rebid 3♦ if West bids 3♣.

Regarding West's initial pass: the diamond suit is too weak to overcall and having length in a suit bid against you is generally a disadvantage (as it's unlikely to set up for tricks). East's overcall however is more lead-directional than intended to steal the contract and at this vulnerability is unlikely to cost.

If East had overcalled a major then a cue-bid from West would have shown a good raise to three but when it's a minor suit a cue bid is either stopper showing or stopper asking. The golden rule is: if there's only one suit bid against you then it's stopper asking. If more than one (as here) then it's stopper showing.

People who refuse to open with fewer than 12 High Card Points please note how many tricks can be made with these hands - in both directions

Thoughts on the Play
 3NT requires a lot of cards to be right. The ace of spades needs to be with South as must the ♣Q-J and North has to hold the ♦K. A 5♦ contract needs the ♠A and the ♦K to be well placed, so bidding game of any sort is very pushy and very lucky!

♠ Q854
 ♥ Q753
 ♦ K10
 ♣ 965
 ♠ AK9 ♠ J1073
 ♥ A64 ♥ J9
 ♦ J842 ♦ 97653
 ♣ Q83 ♣ K2
 ♠ 62
 ♥ K1082
 ♦ AQ
 ♣ AJ1074

HCP	
7	
14	5
14	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2		2		
S	2		2		
E		2			
W		2			

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	Pass	?

Thoughts on the Bidding
 Depending on the systems being played, the bidding is going to start 1NT - Pass - Pass or 1♦ - Pass - 2♦. In either event South is likely to feel mighty uncomfortable. Both 1NT and 2♦ are likely to make because North is likely to lead a major against 1NT which gives declarer a tempo; 2♦ makes against any defence.

Thoughts on the Play
 North has nothing to guide their lead against 1NT except that the spade suit is fractionally stronger than the heart suit. Declarer wins and leads a diamond to South's queen. Seeing dummy's spades and not wanting to give declarer a trick with the ♣K, South is likely to return the ♥2. This card is great news for declarer. With the heart suit 4-4 it means there are only 3 heart losers.

So they persist with a second diamond and when the suit is 2-2 can claim 7 tricks.

Any NS who can show a 4-card major and a longer minor against a 1NT (e.g. using ANTI) will pick up a load of match-points by getting to a 2♥ contract.

<p>♠ 1094 ♥ 7543 ♦ AJ872 ♣ 8</p> <p>♠ 753 ♠ 862 ♥ AJ1092 ♥ Q8 ♦ Q64 ♦ 1093 ♣ K9 ♣ J10764</p> <p>♠ AKQJ ♥ K6 ♦ K5 ♣ AQ532</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	HCP		5		10	3	22		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	3	2	5	2	S	3	5	3	6	5	E						W						<p>Board 17 : Dealer North : Nil All</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Thoughts on the Bidding</p> <p>South's options are to open 2NT or to open 1♣ and risk being passed out in that contract. Generally semi-balanced strong hands with stoppers in the short-suits are opened 2NT</p> <p>North goes looking for a major fit and subsides in 3NT when none emerges.</p> <p>Thoughts on the Play</p> <p>West starts by leading the ♥J and East should play the ♥Q - it's almost always correct to play your honour card when holding a doubleton. In this way, partner will know that all their hearts are now winners once the ♥K has gone.</p> <p>Taking the ♥K, declarer has just 8 tricks. The ninth can come from taking the club finesse or the diamond finesse, so which one?</p> <p>Both offer exactly 50-50 chance of success but the diamond finesse offers the chance of overtricks, so that's the one South should try (and 11 tricks come rolling home)</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass			
HCP																																																																	
5																																																																	
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Makeable contracts																																																																	
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<p>♠ AJ3 ♥ Q32 ♦ K4 ♣ Q10852</p> <p>♠ K9 ♠ Q7542 ♥ K10864 ♥ A9 ♦ A103 ♦ QJ9762 ♣ 974 ♣ -</p> <p>♠ 1086 ♥ J75 ♦ 85 ♣ AKJ63</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td></td><td>5</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>5</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr> </table>	HCP		12		10	9	9		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	3				1	S	3				1	E		5	2	2		W		5	2	2		<p>Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>?</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Thoughts on the Bidding</p> <p>At this vulnerability, East may well be tempted to open the bidding. If not, they'll surely compete against North's opening bid.</p> <p>If they can show both suits, then 3♦ is likely to be the final contract – otherwise 2♠</p> <p>Thoughts on the Play</p> <p>With the spades and diamond suits splitting (but with the ♦K offside), 11 tricks in diamonds will automatically follow.</p> <p>If NS manage to steal the contract in clubs, then two finesses (spades and diamonds) will garner 9 tricks (the ♠K falls on the ace after the finesse) and if EW fail to find their heart ruff, 10 tricks.</p>	West	North	East	South			?	
HCP																																																					
12																																																					
10	9																																																				
9																																																					
Makeable contracts																																																					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																
N	3				1																																																
S	3				1																																																
E		5	2	2																																																	
W		5	2	2																																																	
West	North	East	South																																																		
		?																																																			

♠ QJ7632
 ♥ 2
 ♦ Q632
 ♣ Q5
 ♠ K4
 ♥ AJ4
 ♦ K10985
 ♣ K96
 ♠ 1098
 ♥ K1097653
 ♦ -
 ♣ A102
 ♠ A5
 ♥ Q8
 ♦ AJ74
 ♣ J8743

HCP	
7	
14	7
12	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N				1	
S					
E	1	1	6		4
W	1	1	6		4

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1 ♣
1NT	2 ♠	4 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Thoughts on the bidding
 West should upgrade their hand to 15 points because of the good 5-card diamond suit.
 North's 2 ♠ bid is simply competitive because, if they held more points they should double 1NT first.
 Knowing that West has at least 2 hearts, East can diagnose a fit and adds on 5 shortage points (Shortage points are a useful way of valuing a hand once you know you have a fit and are going to play with that suit as trumps - add 5 points for a void, 3 for a singleton and 1 for a doubleton). So, holding 12 points opposite partner's 15, East bids game.

Thoughts on the play
 South has nothing but unsupported honour cards in all four suits, so leading A-x in partner's seems the lesser of the evils.
 I expect every declarer to make at least 11 tricks. Only the seasoned declarer however will see the possibility of a twelfth.
 Having drawn trumps and ruffed their losing spade, declarer simply rattles off all their hearts. South is caught in a squeeze. They either hold onto 3 clubs or the ♦A – they can't do both. From declarer's viewpoint there's no problem discarding. If the ♦A has been discarded then they keep the king and, if it hasn't, they throw it away and keep all the clubs, which are now all winners!

♠ 864
 ♥ AJ653
 ♦ K42
 ♣ 95
 ♠ A7
 ♥ KQ104
 ♦ Q103
 ♣ AQ32
 ♠ K10953
 ♥ 87
 ♦ 975
 ♣ 1086
 ♠ QJ2
 ♥ 92
 ♦ AJ86
 ♣ KJ74

HCP	
8	
17	3
12	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N		1	1		1
S		1	1		1
E	1			2	
W				2	

Board 20 : Dealer West : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

Thoughts on the Bidding
 Weak no-trumpers should open 1 ♥ with this hand (always open your 4-card major in preference to a 4-card minor when thinking of rebidding no-trumps). Strong no-trumpers will open 1NT and play in 2 ♠ when East takes it out.
 The Weak no-trump auction is more interesting for this hand though. South has 12 points in the pass-out seat but they don't have a 5-card suit to bid nor do they have 4 cards in the other major which would allow them to double for takeout (note that partner is less likely to have 5 spades because they chose not to overcall). So, that leaves pass or 1NT. Some believe that a bid of 1NT in the protective position may or may not show a stopper in the suit opened and that works really well here but I'm not a fan of that approach because one of the primary reasons for partner to have passed with a strong hand is when they're strong in the suit opened but cannot double for penalties - that and the uncertainty in partner's mind as to whether no-trumps is the best place to play.

Thoughts on the Play
 If North starts by leading ♣9 then declarer can avoid going two off by ruffing a spade and getting off lead in diamonds. Otherwise it's 200 to NS.
 Note that if South doubles for takeout, West should bid 1NT (showing 17-19) and East should bid 2 ♠ as a weak-takeout – which makes, because so many cards are well-placed for declarer.

♠ Q2
 ♥ K86
 ♦ KQ
 ♣ A109843
 ♠ J106 ♠ A874
 ♥ A97 ♥ J542
 ♦ A8653 ♦ J1097
 ♣ 76 ♣ K
 ♠ K963
 ♥ Q103
 ♦ 42
 ♣ QJ52

HCP	
14	
9	9
8	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4		1	1	1
S	4		1	1	1
E		2			
W		2			

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
2♦	Pass	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	3♦	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Thoughts on the Bidding
 This is an interesting pairs hand. East is too weak to make an initial takeout double and South too strong to simply raise to 2♣. West shouldn't even think about entering the auction at this stage but it's different when it looks as though the opposition are happy to stop in 2♣. North could have chosen to bid 3♣ immediately over 2♦ but then won't know what to do if East bids 3♦. By allowing South to show their maximum first, North can gauge that it's time for a "pairs double". Every player must be prepared to double contracts when they feel that they're being jostled off the contract

Thoughts on the Play
 North has a difficult lead against diamonds and may well select the safe option of the ♦K over the riskier option of the ♣A. The former ensures that declarer cannot go wrong in the trump suit and whereas declarer may be tempted to take the double diamond finesse on the lead of the ace and another club. Declarer shouldn't be tempted though. S/he needs to reduce their losers in spades and will need to either discard one on dummy's last heart or take a finesse in spades. In both cases dummy's ♠A is too valuable to use as an entry early on. Besides, the correct play with this holding is to lay down the ♦A at the first opportunity and hope the suit is 2-2 or 3-1 with a singleton honour - almost 2-1 on). Having drawn trumps, declarer should ruff a club and play on hearts. The defence must either play spades themselves or give declarer a ruff and discard - 8 tricks and 100 to NS, who could do better if they bid to 4♣ and North drops the ♣K, but that's unlikely.

♠ J54
 ♥ QJ
 ♦ Q7643
 ♣ J98
 ♠ A962 ♠ Q873
 ♥ A10942 ♥ 753
 ♦ K105 ♦ AJ2
 ♣ K ♣ 732
 ♠ K10
 ♥ K86
 ♦ 98
 ♣ AQ10654

HCP	
7	
14	7
12	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3				1
S	3				1
E			3	3	
W			3	3	

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
Dbl	1♦	1♠	2♣
2♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Thoughts on the Bidding
 West has almost the perfect take-out double. They hold both majors, 13+ points and tolerance for the other un-bid suit. When valuing your hand, you can add extra value for shortages but the scale isn't as generous as when you know you have a fit – a void = 3 points, a singleton=2 and a doubleton =1). However, singleton kings, queens and jacks (which will be in the opponent's suit) should be valued as just 2 points i.e. give no value to the honour. Singleton aces are worth 6 points North should bid normally. East's 1♠ bid promises 6-7 points. With 8-10 they'd bid 2♠, with fewer points they should pass

Thoughts on the Play
 The stand-out lead of a diamond doesn't trouble declarer who'll win and probably start on trumps. When South plays the ♠10 at trick one, declarer wins with the ace and then may wonder what to do on the 2nd spade. The Principle of Restricted choice helps here. It states that you should assume that a defender played a card because they had to, rather than making a choice. Holding ♠J-10 South could have played either card but holding a singleton 10 or K-10 they had no choice. So East should play the ♠7 at trick two which forces out the king. If East stops drawing trumps now, then they'll probably get two club ruffs and end up with 9 tricks.

♠ 974
 ♥ K108
 ♦ Q762
 ♣ A105
 ♠ AK10 ♠ Q5
 ♥ 952 ♥ AJ763
 ♦ AJ83 ♦ 105
 ♣ 864 ♣ KJ97
 ♠ J8632
 ♥ Q4
 ♦ K94
 ♣ Q32

HCP	
9	
12	11
8	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N					
S					
E	2	2	3	1	2
W	2	1	3	1	2

Board 23 : South : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

Thoughts on the bidding
 Whatever your system I'd expect every East to show 5 hearts and then make an invitational raise. So the contract of 3♥ should be standard but the declarer will vary.

Thoughts on the play
 Whoever is on lead, I expect a spade to be the preferred choice. Declarer will probably win and cash two more spades, discarding a diamond from dummy.

As there's no particularly attractive option for reducing losers in trumps and because there's only one more entry in declarer's hand with a lot of work to do in clubs, declarer may decide to play on clubs before trumps. Holding this combination, the best line is to play a club to dummy's ♣9. This line results in 9 tricks when the clubs break.

If declarer plays on trumps first then South will win and switch to diamonds, forcing declarer's ace. Now declarer must lead a club and guess to play the king - not easy.

♠ J10
 ♥ K932
 ♦ J7
 ♣ 109872
 ♠ Q9742 ♠ AK6
 ♥ J765 ♥ A108
 ♦ AK82 ♦ 9653
 ♣ - ♣ J63
 ♠ 853
 ♥ Q4
 ♦ Q104
 ♣ AKQ54

HCP	
5	
10	12
13	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2				
S	2				
E		5	3	4	2
W		5	3	4	2

Board 24 : Dealer West : Nil all

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1 NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Thoughts on the Bidding
 This hand is going to be bid very differently by weak and strong no-trumpers. It's almost impossible if you're playing weak no-trump to bid to game. Strong no-trumpers however will open 1♣, West bids 1♠, East 1NT, West 2♦ or 2♥ and East bids 2♠ - promising three.

East can now add 5 points for their club void and so bid this game.

Thoughts on the play
 Both defenders will start with a club lead and West ruffs. The key to success is for declarer to realise how much work is needed in both hearts and diamonds and that they cannot afford to draw trumps too early. The best line is to play ace, king and another diamond (the suit must be 3-2 for 4♠ to have any chance). South is almost certain to play a top club and 11 tricks beckon declarer (a trump back holds declarer to 10 tricks). Declarer ruffs the club and now plays on hearts, finessing the ♥8 when North plays low (the chances of North holding K-9-x or Q-9-x are double those of them starting with K-Q-x). If South wins with the queen and persists with clubs, declarer ruffs again and can finesse the ♥10, draw trumps and claim.

This is not an easy line to find and many will hold themselves to just 9 tricks.

♠ -
 ♥ Q10876
 ♦ AJ76
 ♣ Q1052
 ♠ K9 ♠ QJ108765
 ♥ AKJ53 ♥ 9
 ♦ KQ10 ♦ 93
 ♣ AJ8 ♣ K93
 ♠ A432
 ♥ 42
 ♦ 8542
 ♣ 764

HCP	
9	
21	6
4	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N					
S					
E	2	1	2	5	3
W	2	1	2	5	3

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Thoughts on the Bidding
 East doesn't have the 7 playing tricks needed to open 3♠ when vulnerable but should make do with a weak-two opening instead. West should enquire as to partner's strength before heading towards slam - if East shows a minimum (playing feature showing responses East would rebid 3♠) then West signs off in 4♠. If, on the other hand, East decides to add extra value for their 7th spade, their second-round control in two suits (hearts and clubs) then West would be perfectly within their rights to ask about aces. Missing two, however should keep East-West out of trouble.

Thoughts on the Play
 Holding the ace of trumps, South may well try for a heart ruff. Declarer wins and plays the ♠K. South wins but there's nothing to be done. Declarer wins the return, draws trumps and discards a losing club on dummy's other top heart. Just a spade and a diamond lost.

♠ Q103
 ♥ 87532
 ♦ 5
 ♣ 9874
 ♠ AJ92 ♠ K86
 ♥ KQ9 ♥ A
 ♦ J8 ♦ K10943
 ♣ KJ53 ♣ AQ106
 ♠ 754
 ♥ J1064
 ♦ AQ762
 ♣ 2

HCP	
2	
15	16
7	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N					
S					
E	5	4	2	4	4
W	5	4	1	4	5

Board 26: Dealer East : Both vulnerable

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

Thoughts on the bidding
 The first 3 bids are straight-forward and West must now choose between 3NT and 2♥ (4th suit forcing). Being at the top of the 13-15 3NT range and with a minor suit fit I prefer to learn more from partner.

East should prefer to bid out their shape and show their extra strength and now West's K-Q-x of hearts don't look so valuable opposite a singleton and West should sign off in 3NT which East must respect.

If East decides to bid 3NT over 2♥, showing better than minimum with a heart stopper I expect EW to get to a slam, which requires North to have the ♦Q

Thoughts on the Play
 I suspect that all declarers will cross to dummy in clubs and lead the ♦J, running is when North plays low. 11 tricks.

♠ J9
 ♥ QJ54
 ♦ Q10876
 ♣ J7
 ♠ 104
 ♥ K10
 ♦ AJ92
 ♣ AK843
 ♠ 32
 ♥ 963
 ♦ 543
 ♣ Q9652
 ♠ AKQ8765
 ♥ A872
 ♦ K
 ♣ 10

HCP	
7	
15	2
16	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N		1	4	4	1
S		1	4	4	1
E	2				
W	2				

Board 27 : Dealer South : Nil All

West	North	East	South
			1♠
2♣	DbI	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Thoughts on the Bidding
 South's plan is to open ♠1 and rebid 4♠ at their next turn, which shows this type of hand.
 West's overcall shows 10-15 points and a good 5-card suit (West would have liked the suit to be a bit stronger for a 2-level bid but a pass seems feeble)
 North makes a negative double, guaranteeing 4 cards in the un-bid major and 8+ points. This again is a bit shaded but having 5 cards in the other un-bid suit adds value.
 South was always planning to bid game next but partner's bid brings the possibility of slam into focus. Unless you play Gerber, a bid of 4♣ here shows shortage in clubs (singleton or void) and asks partner to bid their aces outside of the trump suit. North, not having any aces signs off in 4♥. South, knowing that it's much safer to play in your long strong suit than in a 4-4 fit reverts to spades (what if hearts break 4-1 and South is forced to ruff early. Control of the hand would become difficult)

Thoughts on the Play
 Declarer will ruff the 2nd club, draw trumps and lead the ♦K. Now a heart entry to dummy is certain and the potentially losing heart discarded on the ♦Q. Unfortunately, this careful play goes unrewarded when the hearts break 3-2.

♠ J4
 ♥ AQJ6
 ♦ J83
 ♣ AK105
 ♠ 83
 ♥ K82
 ♦ K1062
 ♣ Q973
 ♠ 109765
 ♥ 1094
 ♦ AQ754
 ♣ -
 ♠ AKQ2
 ♥ 753
 ♦ 9
 ♣ J8642

HCP	
16	
8	6
10	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	5		4	1	2
S	5		4	1	2
E		1			
W		1			

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	3♣	DbI
3♦	DbI	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Thoughts on the Bidding
 If East stays silent, North is likely to become declarer in 3NT which can go one off on a diamond lead* (see below).
 If North plays 4-card majors and a weak no-trump and opens 1♥ and East shows both their suits (here 3♣ is a Ghestem bid showing the higher-ranking suits), the auction is likely to get quite high quite quickly and North is going to find themselves embarrassed - unable to bid 3NT for want of a diamond stopper and unwilling to bid clubs without promising 5 hearts and unwilling to pass with a strong hand. Hence the double which, unless otherwise agreed, is for penalty. It's often sensible when you've been pre-empted and have no clear line forward to take a certain plus score.

Thoughts on the Play
 When you've doubled a low-level contract for penalties, it's best to lead a trump – even South, if they're on lead. On a trump lead, East can make just 7 tricks in diamonds.
 Well done if as North-South you managed to get to 5♣, which just requires West to have the ♥K. A 4♥ contract is very lucky to succeed.
 * West must unblock the diamond suit. They're likely to win the first diamond with the king and follow with the ♦2. East wins and cashes another diamond on which West must throw their ♦10

<p>♠ 82 ♥ 52 ♦ K107632 ♣ 1075</p> <p>♠ Q73 ♠ KJ9654 ♥ AJ104 ♥ Q93 ♦ J9 ♦ AQ ♣ Q964 ♣ 82</p> <p>♠ A10 ♥ K876 ♦ 854 ♣ AKJ3</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td></td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td></td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>3</td></tr> </table>	HCP		3		10	12	15		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N		1				S		1				E	1		3	4	3	W	1		3	4	3	<p>Board 29 : Dealer North : Both vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dbl</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Thoughts on the Bidding Even if West knows that partner holds 5 spades, they should still double the 1NT overcall for penalties when holding 10 points.</p> <p>When North makes a weak takeout, East shows their extra length in spades and minimum values. West should make an invitational raise and East will do well to raise to game. A key consideration is that it is very difficult for the defence when partner is likely to have little of nothing (as North does here).</p> <p>Thoughts on the Play South will probably lead a top club (to take a look) and has no good switch when North discourages, so may well continue clubs. This allows declarer to discard their ♦Q. Trumps are drawn and a running heart finesse seals the contract.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1♠	1NT	Dbl	2♦	2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass		
HCP																																																																	
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<p>♠ 86 ♥ 2 ♦ AJ95432 ♣ Q107</p> <p>♠ KJ9752 ♠ A1043 ♥ Q1073 ♥ J8 ♦ Q ♦ 86 ♣ A6 ♣ KJ985</p> <p>♠ Q ♥ AK9654 ♦ K107 ♣ 432</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td>4</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td>4</td><td></td></tr> </table>	HCP		7		12	9	12		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N		3	1			S		3	1			E	3			4		W	3			4		<p>Board 30 : Dealer East : Nil all</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>4♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♠</td> <td>5♦</td> <td>Dbl</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Thoughts on the Bidding Most players tend to overbid these distributional hands and quite rightly on this occasion.</p> <p>East's raise to 3♠ is treated as pre-emptive these days showing 4 spade support (they bid an opponent's suit if they want to invite game). With so many points, East must then double North's sacrifice or prepare to get a poor result</p> <p>Thoughts on the Play If East makes the mistake of making a passive lead (a heart or a trump) then declarer can make this contract by ruffing dummy's heart suit good for two discards!</p> <p>A spade lead followed by three rounds of clubs sees the contract go two off.</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	1♥	1♠	2♦	3♠	4♦	4♠	5♦	Dbl	Pass	Pass	Pass		
HCP																																																																	
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1♠	2♦	3♠	4♦																																																														
4♠	5♦	Dbl	Pass																																																														
Pass	Pass																																																																

♠ J5
 ♥ A1083
 ♦ A1083
 ♣ K85
 ♠ K2 ♠ AQ10643
 ♥ KQ54 ♥ 96
 ♦ QJ654 ♦ 97
 ♣ J7 ♣ Q63
 ♠ 987
 ♥ J72
 ♦ K2
 ♣ A10942

HCP	
12	
12	8
8	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	1	2		
S	3	1	2		
E				1	1
W				1	1

Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Thoughts on the Bidding
 With both West and East showing minimum hands and neither North or South having clear-cut lines into the auction, I expect East to become declarer in 2♠ most of the time

Thoughts on the play
 South has unsupported honours in 3 suits and so should elect to lead from their weak suit - in this case trumps. Here it makes no difference which card is led This is a defensive hand. As long as the defenders play passively (i.e. keep putting declarer or dummy back on lead) and, in clubs, they follow the guidelines "2nd player plays low" and "Cover an honour with an honour", 2♠ should fail by one trick.

♠ A8532
 ♥ 7
 ♦ A6432
 ♣ J5
 ♠ QJ764 ♠ 9
 ♥ J63 ♥ 108542
 ♦ 95 ♦ 8
 ♣ Q104 ♣ AK8732
 ♠ K10
 ♥ AKQ9
 ♦ KQJ107
 ♣ 96

HCP	
9	
6	7
18	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N		5		3	1
S		5		3	1
E	2				
W	2				

Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

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

Thoughts on the Bidding

- 1♦ Natural
- 1♠ Looking for the major suit fit
- Pass (East) At this vulnerability going two off doubled is likely to get you a bottom.
- 2♥ 16+ points, forcing for 1 round
- 3♣ 4th suit forcing to game
- 3♦ Denying a club stopper
- 4♦ Slow arrival - keeping the possibility of slam alive
- 4♥ 1st round control in hearts
- 4♠ 1st round control is spades
- 5♦ Sign-off. North's inability to bid no-trumps earlier warns of the problem in clubs

Thoughts on the Play
 If the bidding had gone 1♦ : 1♠ : 2♥ : 7♦ then the grand slam would almost certainly have made, with West leading a trump! As is more likely, West will consider the bidding carefully and, realising that declarer has a club weakness, leads that suit to hold the contract to 11 tricks.

