

## Food for Thought - Comments on Donegal Pairs First Session

### Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 (FOB)

We send our best wishes, thoughts and prayers to Eilish and Gay Keaveney who are unable to join us in Donegal this weekend. To keep Gay's enthralled audience amused, I have written a few personal comments on the hands you have just played....maybe cheekily trying to second guess what Gay himself might say. I am basing my comments on a Weak No-Trump, 4-card major system and will mention other systems should they make a difference. The idea here is just to give you a bit of food for thought when you are discussing the hands with your partner. If you have any questions please feel free to ask me anytime. Fearghal.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ AJ54 ♥ Q4 ♦ 107643 ♣ 73</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ Q6                      ♠ K1032 ♥ KJ986                 ♥ 103 ♦ Q95                     ♦ AJ8 ♣ 1095                    ♣ KQ62</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 987 ♥ A752 ♦ K2 ♣ AJ84</p>	<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 15%;"><b>West</b></th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 15%;"><b>North</b></th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 15%;"><b>East</b></th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 15%;"><b>South</b></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>All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>East can make 2♥ or 1NT. This will be a keenly fought battle between declarer and the defenders no matter what the contract is. Every trick won will be precious. It's never over 'til the fat lady sings.'</p> <p>It does look like declarer in 2♥ should make 8 tricks 2 Spades, 3 Hearts, 2 Diamonds and 1 Club and lose just 5 tricks i.e. 1 Spade, 2 Hearts, 1 Diamond and 1 Club. The Strong No-Trumpers might find it more difficult to land in 2♥ after the auction starts 1♣-1♥-1NT-? Do you Pass or rebid 2♥? Do you decide on a case by case basis or do you always do the same thing every time you face this decision? Good advice is to always do the same thing rather than waste mental energy each time deciding whether to Pass or repeat your major.</p> <p>There are 7 tricks available to declarer in 1NT but equally the defenders can take 7 tricks if declarer takes his eye off the ball. Those who keep their focus and count their tricks will get a plus score.</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>		Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥	All Pass
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>										
	Pass	1NT	Pass										
2♦	Pass	2♥	All Pass										

  

HCP		Makeable contracts				
7	13	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
8	12	N	S	E	W	-
		-	-	2	-	1
		1	-	1	-	1

♠ A852  
 ♥ Q764  
 ♦ AJ3  
 ♣ K9  
 ♠ Q6                      ♠ KJ973  
 ♥ A1085                ♥ J93  
 ♦ K954                 ♦ 1087  
 ♣ 1043                 ♣ 82  
 ♠ 104  
 ♥ K2  
 ♦ Q62  
 ♣ AQJ765

HCP	
14	
9	5
12	

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

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

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

3NT by North will be the contract at all tables. Most Easts will lead a Spade although some will be afraid to do so. Leading 4<sup>th</sup> highest of your longest and strongest against 3NT (especially in the Spade suit) is rarely if ever wrong.

Declarer has 10 tricks, 1 Spade, 1 Heart, 2 Diamonds and 6 Club tricks. There is nothing like being declarer on hands like this and running off your 6 Club winners and watching your opponents squirm.

As usual some declarers will take their 9 top tricks and others will make 11 when West does not cover the ♦Q lead from dummy, giving declarer 3 Diamond tricks instead of the 2 to which he is entitled. On the other hand if West can smoothly refuse to cover the ♦Q he might convince declarer not to take the Diamond finesse and end up getting a great score for holding declarer to 9 tricks.

♠ 95  
 ♥ 98  
 ♦ AK109  
 ♣ AQ1062  
 ♠ Q103      ♠ J642  
 ♥ J10542    ♥ 63  
 ♦ 862        ♦ QJ43  
 ♣ 87         ♣ J93  
 ♠ AK87  
 ♥ AKQ7  
 ♦ 75  
 ♣ K54

HCP	
13	
3	5
19	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	7	5	5	5	6
S	7	5	5	5	6
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♣
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
Pass	6NT	All Pass	

There are only 12 tricks available in a No-Trump contract but 13 tricks if you play in a Club contract (by ruffing a Diamond in dummy). Of course most Wests will make the normal enough lead of a small Heart against South's No-Trump contract and now declarer has his 13<sup>th</sup> trick in No-Trumps too. Any West who finds a non-Heart lead or a top Heart lead will get a huge score.

Some pairs will only get to 3NT because it is not easy to show these big hands using today's modern methods whereby a 2NT rebid over North's 2♣ response shows 15+. Nonetheless North should see the possibility that they might be in the slam zone and rebid 3♦. This might excite South.

The 5-card major bidders will have an advantage here because they will be forced to open the South hand with 1♣ and now when South rebids 2NT he is showing 18-20 and now it's a doddle for North to investigate 6♣, 6NT or even 7♣.

How do you get to the grand slam in Clubs? In hindsight it is very easy if South uses Keycard Blackwood – but not so easy if North is the one doing the asking – North will be able to show 5 Clubs to the AQ and the ♦K and now South will be able to count 13 top tricks.

♠ 52  
 ♥ K643  
 ♦ Q982  
 ♣ AQ5  
 ♠ AK73      ♠ Q1098  
 ♥ 1075      ♥ AQ92  
 ♦ K          ♦ 7  
 ♣ K10762    ♣ J984  
 ♠ J64  
 ♥ J8  
 ♦ AJ106543  
 ♣ 3

HCP	
11	
13	9
7	

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

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

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

Another very interesting board and one that will inspire a lot of bidding at a lot of tables. Some E/W pairs will never find their Spade fit because neither of them will be really strong enough to introduce the suit. West's double in the given auction is a 'support double' showing 3-card Heart support. The above auction is a really sensible refined auction so I don't expect it to be replicated at too many tables.

E/W might find their Spade fit and bid to 3♠ or 4♠ and then again N/S might bid to 4♦ or even take a phantom sacrifice in 5♦.

How do we hold E/W to 8 tricks in Spades? ♦A and a Club switch will get the first 4 tricks for the defence with a Heart trick to follow later on.

However if anyone bids above 3♦ then the other side can score 80%+ by doubling and collecting 200+.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ KJ64 ♥ 742 ♦ AK3 ♣ KQ3</p> <p>♠ A1075      ♠ 2 ♥ KQ10      ♥ A98653 ♦ 106      ♦ J975 ♣ A874      ♣ J5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q983 ♥ J ♦ Q842 ♣ 10962</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">16</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">13    6</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>2</td></tr> </table>	HCP		16	13    6	5	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	1	1	-	3	-	S	1	1	-	3	-	E	-	-	3	-	2	W	-	-	3	-	2	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>West</b></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>North</b></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>East</b></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>South</b></th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♥</td> <td>Dbl</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Another board where there could be fireworks. The Weak No-Trumpers will find their spade fit and they will either get to 4♠ or subside in 2♠. North's 4-3-3-3 shape is never good for suit contracts. The Strong No-Trumpers might not find their Spade fit so easily.</p> <p>In any event, E/W will eventually find their 9 card Heart fit and some will even get to 4♥ - although less so against a strong 1NT opening bid. It takes a trump lead to beat 4♥. 4♠ won't be easy to beat either!</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>		1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass	3♥	3♠	4♥	Dbl	All Pass	
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<p style="text-align: center;">♠ 64 ♥ J1053 ♦ 10985 ♣ 643</p> <p>♠ Q32      ♠ K85 ♥ 9864      ♥ K72 ♦ 72      ♦ A64 ♣ KQ92      ♣ A1087</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ AJ1097 ♥ AQ ♦ KQJ3 ♣ J5</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">7    14</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">18</td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>	HCP		1	7    14	18	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	3	-	1	-	S	-	3	-	1	-	E	2	-	1	-	1	W	2	-	1	-	1	<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>West</b></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>North</b></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>East</b></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>South</b></th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Dbl</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>The weak No-Trumpers will open 1NT and South will double. When North runs to 2♦, a wise South will let it go. North's 2♦ is saying she has 0-4 points which means there won't be too many entries to the North hand.</p> <p>However most South's will be tempted by the extra points and reasonably good Spade suit into bid 2♠. It looks like West needs to organise a Diamond ruff for himself to beat it (and East has to duck the first Diamond) – otherwise declarer only loses 2 Spades, 1 Diamond and 2 Clubs – as long as he is careful with his ♦3 – he needs that card to get to dummy at some point to take a Heart finesse.</p> <p>Life is much easier for declarer if he plays in a Diamond contract – making 9 tricks by finessing twice in Spades.</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>			1NT	Dbl	Pass	2♦	All Pass	
HCP																																																						
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Pass	2♦	All Pass																																																				

♠ KQ76  
 ♥ 10985  
 ♦ Q832  
 ♣ 7  
 ♠ A10432      ♠ 5  
 ♥ KQ            ♥ AJ764  
 ♦ 96            ♦ AJ4  
 ♣ 10642      ♣ AKJ5  
 ♠ J98  
 ♥ 32  
 ♦ K1075  
 ♣ Q983

HCP	
7	
9	18
6	

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

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

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

A nice bidding hand for E/W. With 27 points between the two hands it's hard to see how E/W will not get to game. Most will get to 3NT – some getting there by simply bidding it and other cautious pairs using fourth suit forcing to check for a Diamond stopper before bidding it.

East's 3♣ rebid is game forcing showing 18-20 points. A simple 2♣ rebid would be one way of missing game.

Over 3♣ some will just bid 3NT and hope for the best. Others will try 3♦ asking for more information. ♥KQ is as good as ♥432 any day of the week so I like the 3♥ bid by West because it still keeps all other options open.

As it turns out it takes a Spade lead to hold declarer to 9 tricks. The normal Diamond lead leads to 10 tricks and if South leads a Club at any stage declarer ends up with 11 tricks.

In a 4♥ contract you have 10 tricks by way of 1 Spade, 5 Hearts, 1 Diamond and 3 Clubs.

♠ Q9764  
 ♥ K9754  
 ♦ -  
 ♣ 1073  
 ♠ K10832      ♠ A5  
 ♥ J              ♥ 106  
 ♦ K10863      ♦ J942  
 ♣ 64             ♣ AQJ52  
 ♠ J  
 ♥ AQ832  
 ♦ AQ75  
 ♣ K98

HCP	
5	
7	12
16	

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

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
Pass	Pass	1♣	1♥
1♠	4♥	All Pass	

A lot of players will be itching to bid on this hand. Some will have their favourite gadgets like 'Tartan' and 'Weak Twos' and 'Ekrens'. Others won't have any gadget and as is often the case they will be glad they don't have a gadget because playing in a Spade contract will not be a pleasant experience for either side.

Most N/S pairs will bid to 4♥ and make 10 easy tricks, losing 2 Clubs and 1 Spade or else a Club, a Diamond and a Spade. Those brave E/W pairs who manage to find the good 5♦X -2 sacrifice will get the good score they deserve.

The modern trend with the South hand is to make a simple 1♥ overcall on the first round and then to show your extra strength on the next round. North's 4♥ bid might look at first sight to be a bit frisky but it has a lot going for it....10 trumps 10 tricks and all that.

♠ Q1054  
 ♥ 4  
 ♦ KQ642  
 ♣ Q82  
 ♠ KJ3                      ♠ 98762  
 ♥ AKJ5                    ♥ Q1032  
 ♦ 105                      ♦ J3  
 ♣ A965                    ♣ J3  
 ♠ A  
 ♥ 9876  
 ♦ A987  
 ♣ K1074

HCP	
9	
16	4
11	

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♣	1♦	Pass	2♣
Dbl	2♦	Pass	3♦

All Pass

The 'strong No-Trumpers' might be able to buy this hand in 2♥ (1NT-2♣-2♦-2♥-P). The Weak No-Trumpers will probably open 1♣ giving North a chance to bid a cheap 1♦ and now there will be no keeping N/S out of the auction.

South's 2♣ bid in the given auction is the 'Unassuming Cue Bid' showing a good raise to 3♦. North doesn't have much to shout about so there won't be anyone in 5♦.

I suspect the good N/S scores will come from E/W getting too high and losing 200+.



♠ KQ53  
 ♥ K10632  
 ♦ 53  
 ♣ J2  
 ♠ AJ102      ♠ -  
 ♥ Q4          ♥ A987  
 ♦ AKJ76      ♦ Q1092  
 ♣ 97          ♣ AKQ86  
 ♠ 98764  
 ♥ J5  
 ♦ 84  
 ♣ 10543

HCP	
9	
15	15
1	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	5	7	4	2	5
W	5	7	4	2	5

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♦	All Pass		

Do you play 'Fourth Suit Forcing' at the 1-level? Well if you didn't know before tonight - you know now.

Regular partnerships should be able to bid 6♦ on this board and might well contemplate bidding 7♦. (Please don't tell me you landed in 5♦.)

There will be a few trying their luck in 6NT. 6NT will not make unless North leads his 4<sup>th</sup> highest Heart or Spade. When you have 9 HCP and your opponents are in 6NT you should know that you hold all the defensive assets so do not give declarer a soft trick by leading away from your picture cards.

At the end of the day anyone scoring 3NT+3 will score nicely.

♠ K108765  
 ♥ K  
 ♦ 93  
 ♣ J1076

♠ 3                      ♠ AQJ9  
 ♥ 642                  ♥ 10  
 ♦ KQJ765            ♦ A1084  
 ♣ 932                  ♣ KQ54

♠ 42  
 ♥ AQJ98753  
 ♦ 2  
 ♣ A8

HCP	
7	
6	16
11	

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

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
			4♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

Another great hand that will separate the brave from the good. Most South's will cut the messing and open 4♥. Some might prefer 1♥ because they hold an outside Ace.

The problem with opening 4♥ is that it will most likely push E/W into their nice 5♦ contract, whereas opening 1♥ we might somehow talk E/W into letting you play in 4♥. Then again not every West in their 5♦ contract will realise that the Spade finesse is definitely working - when South opens 4♥ and then turns up with the ♣A he sure as hell don't have the ♠K as well.

Those N/S pairs who bid 5♥ over 5♦ will have to console themselves that they have judged the bidding well even though 5♥x-2 might not prove to be a great result in practice.

♠ A982  
 ♥ 2  
 ♦ KQJ3  
 ♣ A1053  
 ♠ QJ3                      ♠ 10764  
 ♥ AJ10973                ♥ 85  
 ♦ -                             ♦ 109862  
 ♣ KQ96                    ♣ 42  
 ♠ K5  
 ♥ KQ64  
 ♦ A754  
 ♣ J87

HCP	
14	
13	0
13	

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
1♥	Dbl	Pass	3NT

All Pass

It's hard to imagine any other auction other than the one above and even if there is another one I'm sure it will still end in 3NT played by South.

The trick will be to make 10 tricks. Making 9 tricks will be a very poor matchpoint score for N/S. Once you realise that West has all the missing high card points then 10 tricks will fall into your lap. West is practically endplayed at trick 1 and if you play your cards right you can endplay him again at trick 8 so that you end up winning 2 Spades, 2 Hearts, 4 Diamonds and 2 Club tricks.

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

HCP	
12	
8	12
8	

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

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
	1NT	2♥	All Pass

This is another interesting partscore battle and as always whoever can get a 'plus' score will score very well.

If North opens a Weak No-Trump then E/W might be afraid to come in especially because they are vulnerable. Despite their nice shapes, neither East nor West will particularly like their hand. However fortune favours the brave and if they can bid and make their 2-level contract they will score well.

If N/S play a Strong No-Trump then North will probably open 1♦ and now East has an easy 1♥ overcall. But then N/S will probably compete to 3♦. Left to his own devices, North might drift 2 down for a really bad score.

Those Norths who manage to buy the contract in 1NT will make 7 tricks if they get a Heart lead and 6 tricks if they don't.

♠ AJ73  
 ♥ -  
 ♦ AQ865  
 ♣ KJ85  
 ♠ K102      ♠ 6  
 ♥ QJ5432    ♥ AK1087  
 ♦ J4            ♦ K1073  
 ♣ 72            ♣ 1063  
 ♠ Q9854  
 ♥ 96  
 ♦ 92  
 ♣ AQ94

HCP	
15	
7	10
8	

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

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
2♥	Dbf	4♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	5♥	Pass
Pass	Dbf	All Pass	

A real bidder's hand. E/W will have no problem getting to 4♥ and they will get there quicker if East opens 1♥ or some gadget like 2♥ (♥ and a minor 6-10).

So the bidding might already be at 4♥ by the time it reaches North who has the strongest hand at the table.

It is high-level decisions like these that separate the 'Gay Keaveney's' from the rest of us. The top players have a nose for doing the right thing at 'high altitude' but even they will be torn between 'The 5-level belongs to the opponents' and 'The Law of Total Tricks'.

♠ 9765  
 ♥ J9876  
 ♦ 642  
 ♣ 7  
 ♠ 84                      ♠ A 102  
 ♥ Q5432                ♥ A 10  
 ♦ AJ975                ♦ KQ8  
 ♣ 9                        ♣ KQ1065  
 ♠ KQJ3  
 ♥ K  
 ♦ 103  
 ♣ AJ8432

HCP	
1	
7	18
14	

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

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

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

A hand where both sides need to be careful not to get over board. South and East will be very keen to bid and if they get any encouragement from their respective partners there will be no holding them back – and for sure N/S who are vulnerable cannot afford to get too high.

On the face of it, E/W have 25 HCP and they don't have an 8-card fit in a major so they should arrive in 3NT. All this is fine afterwards but at the table in real life it is not so clear cut. East can make 9 tricks if she stops to count her tricks. She has 1 Spade, 1 Heart and 5 Diamonds on top. She will try the Club suit for two more but when she learns of the bad break there she will have no option but to cash her 8 winners and in so doing she will drop the ♥K for her 9<sup>th</sup> trick.

What a player!

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ J3 ♥ AK8432 ♦ 42 ♣ Q75</p> <p>♠ AK95      ♠ Q10862 ♥ 97          ♥ J1065 ♦ A10         ♦ 875 ♣ J8642      ♣ K</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 74 ♥ Q ♦ KQJ963 ♣ A1093</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">10</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">12</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">12</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%;"> <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>-</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		10		12	6	12		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	3	2	-	1	S	2	3	2	-	1	E	-	-	-	3	-	W	-	-	-	3	-	<p>Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <th><b>West</b></th> <th><b>North</b></th> <th><b>East</b></th> <th><b>South</b></th> </tr> <tr> <td>1♣</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Dbl</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dbl</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>There are one or two boards in every event that decide the winner and in this event this is one of those boards. A good score here and you will do well in the event as a whole.</p> <p>There will be a lot of bidding at all tables on this board and both sides have a lot of tough decisions to make.</p> <p>Should North overcall 1♥ or 2♥? If North does overcall 2♥, should East Pass or bid 2♠? Should West rebid 2♠, 3♠ or 4♠? Has North any chance of getting the club suit right? Or does he have enough tricks coming from the Diamond suit that he doesn't need extra Club tricks?</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>	1♣	1♥	1♠	2♦	3♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl	All Pass		
HCP																																																																	
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<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>																																																														
1♣	1♥	1♠	2♦																																																														
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<p style="text-align: center;">♠ J943 ♥ J84 ♦ 86 ♣ KQ94</p> <p>♠ K862      ♠ Q107 ♥ A963      ♥ K102 ♦ A97        ♦ K542 ♣ J7         ♣ 1063</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ A5 ♥ Q75 ♦ QJ103 ♣ A852</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">7</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">12</td><td style="text-align: center;">8</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">13</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%;"> <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>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		7		12	8	13		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	-	-	-	-	S	2	-	-	-	-	E	-	1	1	1	-	W	-	1	1	1	-	<p>Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <th><b>West</b></th> <th><b>North</b></th> <th><b>East</b></th> <th><b>South</b></th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> </table> <p>All Pass</p> <p>There is a wise adage that says that at Nil All you want to play your partscore contracts in 1NT. It looks like 1NT played by South will be the final contract no matter whether you play weak or strong No-Trump – although 2♣ would be a lovely contract to get to.</p> <p>Getting a plus score whether my making your own contract or by defeating theirs will earn your side a big matchpoint score. In 1NT South after a Heart lead has 6 top tricks. Although his Diamonds look like they should produce a seventh trick, the defence should be able to switch to Spades after they take their 3 Heart tricks to set up their own 7 tricks before declarer gets his.</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>		Pass	Pass	1NT
HCP																																																					
7																																																					
12	8																																																				
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W	-	1	1	1	-																																																
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	Pass	Pass	1NT																																																		

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q9872 ♥ 4 ♦ Q109 ♣ KJ65</p> <p>♠ A105      ♠ J64 ♥ K87      ♥ AQJ952 ♦ A32      ♦ KJ ♣ A1093    ♣ Q7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ K3 ♥ 1063 ♦ 87654 ♣ 842</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">8</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">15</td><td style="text-align: center;">14</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; 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 style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td></tr> </table>	HCP		8		15	14	3		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	3	3	6	3	6	W	3	3	6	3	6	<p>Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>If you bid and made a slam on this then – Respect!</p> <p>If you bid 3NT and made 11 or 12 tricks then ‘hats off’ to you too. Another wise adage is that we should play all our Game contracts in 3NT if we have 28+ HCP.</p> <p>I imagine this slam got way from most of us and maybe those who didn’t miss it wish they had missed it because the play for 12 tricks is far from obvious.</p> <p>Maybe the route to slam starts something like 1♥-2♣-3♥? However I’d be very happy with 3NT+2.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass		
HCP																																																									
8																																																									
15	14																																																								
3																																																									
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West	North	East	South																																																						
		1♥	Pass																																																						
3NT	All Pass																																																								



<p style="margin: 0;">♠ AJ83 ♥ KJ7 ♦ Q2 ♣ 10432</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ K10                      ♠ Q9762 ♥ 10                        ♥ Q9832 ♦ AJ653                  ♦ 9 ♣ AQJ87                ♣ K5</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 54 ♥ A654 ♦ K10874 ♣ 96</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <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>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr> </table>	HCP		11		15	7	7		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	2	1	1	3	1	W	2	1	1	3	2	<p>Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 15%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 15%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 15%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 15%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Every session has one 'nightmare' hand – this is the E/W one or maybe it's the N/S one too if they mess up the defence? West will want to bid more and East will be trying to 'get off the bus.'</p> <p>Respect to any E/W pairs who found the above auction. After 1♦-1♠-2♣, the one thing that East cannot rebid is 2♥ as that would be 'Fourth Suit Forcing' showing 11+ points (and now there would be no stopping West who is already too much 'in love' with his hand.) 2♦ is 'false preference' although an extreme version of it. And 2♠ is a 'master bid' showing honour doubleton in Spades.</p> <p>There will many be E/W pairs in 3NT and 4♠ and then the spotlight turns on N/S to defeat these beatable contracts in order to avoid having their own 'nightmare.'</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠	All Pass		
HCP																																																																	
11																																																																	
15	7																																																																
7																																																																	
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	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																												
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E	2	1	1	3	1																																																												
W	2	1	1	3	2																																																												
West	North	East	South																																																														
			Pass																																																														
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass																																																														
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass																																																														
2♠	All Pass																																																																

**Comment from the man himself (Gay Keaveney).**

I think most of our bidding panel would go back to 2♦ since they cannot bid 2♥ game forcing. Most wests then would pass 2♦ but there is nothing hugely wrong with rebidding 3♣ except that partner hasn't responded 2NT so he is marked with a weak hand. If East had 4 Hearts and 4 Spades he would have responded 1♥. He doesn't have 4 Clubs as he would have raised or passed (which he shouldn't do) the 2♣ bid. Thus West should strongly suspect that East has 5 spades and he could go back to 2♠. Note, if West had 5Ds, 4Cs and 3S's, he would have bid rebid 2♠ and not 2♣ on the previous round. Therefore 2♠ now strongly suggests of a doubleton. However very few would do that or even think of it.

♠ A54  
 ♥ AK7  
 ♦ K3  
 ♣ Q8743  
 ♠ J                      ♠ KQ9632  
 ♥ Q9863              ♥ 2  
 ♦ Q108764          ♦ J  
 ♣ 2                      ♣ AKJ65  
 ♠ 1087  
 ♥ J1054  
 ♦ A952  
 ♣ 109

HCP	
16	
5	14
5	

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

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1♣	1♠	All Pass

I don't suppose the auction will really go this quietly at all tables?

If N/S play a Strong No-Trump then there is no reason why North would not open 1NT. East is certainly worth a bid over whatever is opened so it's only a matter of whether he bids 1♠, 2♠, 4♠ or some form of Michaels or Ghestem bid? 4♠ has to be the right bid in the long run over a 1♣ opening but not over a Strong No-Trump opening bid.

It's not all that easy to beat 2♠. N/S have 6 tricks against 2♠ i.e. 1 Spade, 1 Heart, 1 Diamond and 3 Clubs but it will not be difficult for most defenders to blow one of those tricks away. The first defensive trick might be blown away as early as the opening lead. It seems that South needs to avoid leading a Club in order to beat 2♠. Of course it's easy to beat 4♠x.

♠ QJ43  
 ♥ QJ75  
 ♦ J765  
 ♣ 9  
 ♠ A9                      ♠ K1087  
 ♥ K10643                ♥ 8  
 ♦ 4                         ♦ A832  
 ♣ KJ1043                ♣ 8765  
 ♠ 652  
 ♥ A92  
 ♦ KQ109  
 ♣ AQ2

HCP	
7	
11	7
15	

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

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

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

A Diamond contract played by N/S or a Club contract played by E/W are nice places to land.

If South opens a Strong No-Trump then West will probably just bid 2♥ and be left there. That won't be a nice experience for him.

Even if South opens 1♦, finding the Club fit E/W won't be easy. Those playing Michaels or Ghestem will have a better chance of success. Those Wests who take the time to bid both suits one at a time will be rewarded when they unearth their 9-card Club fit.

♠ J8  
 ♥ 82  
 ♦ 109843  
 ♣ KQJ3  
 ♠ 2                      ♠ 10763  
 ♥ 975                    ♥ KQ1063  
 ♦ QJ652                ♦ K  
 ♣ 10862                ♣ A75  
                          ♠ AKQ954  
                          ♥ AJ4  
                          ♦ A7  
                          ♣ 94

HCP	
7	
3	12
18	

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♥	Dbl
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

The first question for N/S is 'Are you playing Strong Jump overcalls, Intermediate or Weak Jump overcalls?'

If you are playing 'Strong' then this hand fits the bill and if you are playing 'Weak' or 'Intermediate' then you have to find another way to show your good hand. Double followed by 2♠ should show such a hand as this i.e. an old fashioned 'Acol Two' showing 8 playing tricks and plenty of points.

This should make life easy for North who surely can add two more tricks to her partner's eight to make it 10? So she raises her partner to 4♠. The fortunate lie of the ♥KQ coupled with the singleton ♦K mean that the defenders can only win one Club trick and one Heart trick against a 4♠ contract.

♠ 7  
 ♥ K74  
 ♦ 108632  
 ♣ KQJ5  
 ♠ Q1084      ♠ AK653  
 ♥ A82          ♥ QJ965  
 ♦ K4            ♦ 9  
 ♣ A1074       ♣ 82  
 ♠ J92  
 ♥ 103  
 ♦ AQJ75  
 ♣ 963

HCP	
9	
13	10
8	

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

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

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

All roads lead to 4♠. East with his lovely 5-5 shape and with all his 10 points in his two long suits has a hand worth an awful lot more than 10 HCP.

Those playing a Strong No-Trump will have it played by East and those playing a Weak No-Trump will most likely have it played by West.

If West is declarer then sadly for declarer, North has an easy Club lead and declarer will just make 10 tricks. If East is declarer, then there won't be many Souths finding the Club lead and declarer will make 11 tricks by playing a Diamond to the King setting up a discard for his losing Club.

If West opens a Weak No-Trump, East has at least three routes to game i.e. use Extended Stayman, bid 3♠ then 4♥ or Transfer to Spades and then jump to game in Hearts.

South has a nice Diamond suit but is he really worth a vulnerable 2♦ overcall? In addition if he does overcall he might well put his partner off the winning Club lead against 4♠. Still 5♦ X-2 is a nice sacrifice.

♠ A985  
 ♥ QJ9642  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ 85  
 ♠ J                      ♠ 76  
 ♥ K87                    ♥ 3  
 ♦ A9754                ♦ QJ10832  
 ♣ 7632                 ♣ AKJ9  
                          ♠ KQ10432  
                          ♥ A105  
                          ♦ K  
                          ♣ Q104

HCP	
7	
8	11
14	

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

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
Pass	2♥	3♦	4♥
5♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl
All Pass			

I don't think anyone will really know what's going on on this board – everyone will just keep bidding until the music stops!

The first decision belongs to North – whether to open a weak 2♥ holding a 4-card Spade suit or not? 20 years ago the advice was 'No' but today it looks like 'anything goes'.

South would like to use 2NT to see if his partner is maximum or not but when East comes in, South just has to make a guess – yes he might bid 3♠ on the way to 4♥ and that might get N/S to 4♠ rather than 4♥ but nonetheless it is going to be hard to stop West from bidding 5♦.

The '5-level belongs to the opponents' so N/S should not be bidding 5♥ or 5♠.

To beat 4♥ by 2 tricks, West needs to organise a Spade ruff for himself and then hope that East still has a Club entry to give him the Spade ruff when the time comes.

♠ QJ74  
 ♥ Q82  
 ♦ K4  
 ♣ 8762  
 ♠ K10852      ♠ A93  
 ♥ 954            ♥ J1076  
 ♦ 108652      ♦ J93  
 ♣ -                ♣ QJ9  
 ♠ 6  
 ♥ AK3  
 ♦ AQ7  
 ♣ AK10543

HCP	
8	
3	9
20	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	6	1	2	1	5
S	6	1	3	1	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

What does South open? 1♣, 2♣ or 2NT.

2NT is always a popular choice when you have 6-card minor suit. The problem with opening 2NT is that you will most likely miss 6♣ - but then you were probably going to go down in 6♣? If East doesn't split his Club honours (and he shouldn't) then you will be one hell of a declarer if you guess to finesse the ♣10.

3NT+2 will be as good as any slam but 3NT+1 will be a more common result.

♠ 105  
 ♥ 5  
 ♦ J10965  
 ♣ J8643  
 ♠ Q9873      ♠ 2  
 ♥ K84          ♥ AQ10763  
 ♦ 87            ♦ AKQ32  
 ♣ K95          ♣ 7  
 ♠ AKJ64  
 ♥ J92  
 ♦ 4  
 ♣ AQ102

HCP	
2	
8	15
15	

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

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
		1♥	1♠
2♥	Pass	4♥	Dbl
Pass	4NT	Dbl	5♣
Dbl	All Pass		

This will be another 'horror' board for a some pairs. East has 'ginormous' hand despite only having 15 HCP. If you are playing 'Strong 2's' then this is a 'Strong 2' and you should open 2♥....give partner any 3 Hearts and the ♦J and you are practically cold for making 4♥. Not playing 'Strong 2's' means you have to either open 1♥ and hope you get another chance to bid or else open 2♣.

If East opens 1♥ then it will be South's turn to get carried away. Does he 'double', bid 1♠, 2♠ or use some 2-suiter gadget like Michaels or Ghestem? The modern solution is to bid a simple 1♠ and to show your extra values by making another bid later on.

When E/W get to 4♥, South will probably think he is being robbed and will mostly likely double. North won't fancy his chances of beating 4♥ and rather than run to the wrong minor, he bids 4NT to say he has both minors asking South to choose where we should play.

Now the pressure is on E/W but then they remember that the '5-level belongs to the opponents' and the best they can do is collect 500 from 5Cx-2.