

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

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ QJ74 ♥ K64 ♦ QJ9 ♣ K74</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ A32 ♠ K10875 ♥ 10953 ♥ AQJ72 ♦ K864 ♦ 10 ♣ 108 ♣ 96</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 9 ♥ 8 ♦ A7532 ♣ AQ532</p> <table border="1" style="margin: 5px 0; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">12</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">7</td><td style="text-align: center;">10</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">11</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin: 5px 0; 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 style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td></td></tr> </table>	HCP		12		7	10	11		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	4	3				S	4	3				E			3	3		W			3	3		<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Nil All</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>1NT</td> <td>2C</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dble</td> <td>5C</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dble</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>North opens a weak NT and East interferes to show the Majors. South now shows the minors with 4NT – hoping North has at least one Major suit Ace and some good cards in the minors.</p> <p>Over to West. Holding an Ace, a certain trick in diamonds AND a balanced hand, defending is best. West should double South’s 4NT to stop East bidding and also double the final contract of 5C.</p> <p>East leads their singleton ten of diamonds. As long as declarer is careful and rises with the Ace, draws trumps and plays on diamonds, the defence will only make three tricks and -100 for a decent start.</p>	West	North	East	South		1NT	2C	4NT	Dble	5C	Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass		
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<p style="margin: 0;">♠ 73 ♥ A10743 ♦ J92 ♣ 1042</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ A95 ♠ KQ1042 ♥ QJ65 ♥ K9 ♦ 8 ♦ 7654 ♣ KJ865 ♣ A3</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ J86 ♥ 82 ♦ AKQ103 ♣ Q97</p> <table border="1" style="margin: 5px 0; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">5</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">11</td><td style="text-align: center;">12</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">12</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin: 5px 0; 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></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 style="text-align: center;">5</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> </table>	HCP		5		11	12	12		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N						S						E	5		2	5	1	W	5		2	5	1	<p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS 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>1S</td> <td>2D</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dble</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2S</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4S</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Playing four card Majors has its drawbacks and this hand shows these up. With some shape and a very nice suit of spades, East opens the bidding with 1S. South should really have a six-card suit for an overcall but the quality of the suit helped make up for that. West made a negative double and East improvised to show a six-card spade suit by re-bidding that suit. West now jumped to game with an 11 count, three card trump support and a shortage - all told, an opening hand when supporting spades.</p> <p>On the King of diamonds lead North plays the Jack to signify a heart shift. South obliges and leads the eight to Norths Ace who returns a heart, declarer's King holding. After a quick count of the tricks, declarer sees that a diamond needs to be ruffed. Once that job is done, declarer draws the trumps and throws his two diamonds on the winning hearts in dummy and claims. Making 11, 450 to E/W.</p>	West	North	East	South			1S	2D	Dble	Pass	2S	Pass	4S	All Pass		
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♠ K943 ♥ Q106 ♦ J7 ♣ KJ103																															
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N	3		3	2	2																										
S	3		3	2	2																										
E		1																													
W		1																													
9 7																															
14																															

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1NT

All Pass

South opens 1NT and plays there. West leads the two of diamonds, somewhat tentatively, as is the way with fourth best leads. East Inserts the ten and returns the suit when it scores. On the run of diamonds, declarer throws a spade from hand and two spades from dummy.

The spade exit from West is won in dummy and the queen of hearts led and run. This loses to West who again exits in spades, won in hand. After running the clubs another heart is finessed, this time successfully.

Eight tricks and a decent score of 120 for N/S.

♠ K108 ♥ K2 ♦ J3 ♣ KQ10654																															
♠ QJ97 ♥ 1087 ♦ 10985 ♣ A2	♠ 632 ♥ J9653 ♦ AK62 ♣ J																														
♠ A54 ♥ AQ4 ♦ Q74 ♣ 9873																															
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N	4			1	3																										
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12																															

Board 4 : Dealer West : All Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT

All Pass

In Pairs tournaments we try and play in NT or maybe the Major suits - we avoid playing in a minor unless we absolutely have to. The North hand is a 1NT bid every day of the week. The weak NT is a type of pre-empt that sometimes can keep the opponents out. The East hand is a pass and after such, South simply jumps to the NT game.

East is on lead and might try the Ace of diamonds looking for a positive attitude card before switching to a heart when the Queen of diamonds appears in dummy – unlucky! Declarer wins the heart, extracts the Ace of clubs and claims 10 tricks.

As you can see continuing diamonds at the outset would have netted four tricks for the defence.

♠ AK92
 ♥ J96
 ♦ Q85
 ♣ AQ7
 ♠ J87
 ♥ 1083
 ♦ KJ7
 ♣ K653
 ♠ 643
 ♥ AK752
 ♦ 932
 ♣ 92
 ♠ Q105
 ♥ Q4
 ♦ A1064
 ♣ J1084

HCP	Makeable contracts					
16	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
8	N	3	4	2	4	3
7	S	3	4	2	4	3
9	E					
	W					

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1S	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	3S
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

In Pairs it is normal to be somewhat conservative, however the North hand has merit to be aggressive with two nines and two tight honour positions + length – AKXX and AQx. North tries with 2NT to find South with a maximum who presses on with a thoughtful three card checkback of 3S in case North originally held a five-card suit.

West might lead a heart but a club is more normal which declarer finesses, winning in hand. A diamond is led towards the queen, West rising with his King. As long as there are no silly plays from this point on, Declarer will emerge with ten tricks and a decent score. Note how, for no reason at all, the strong NTers will only make NINE tricks and a poor score on a heart lead from East.

Isolated honours are useful but tight honour holdings with some length are excellent.

♠ KJ108752
 ♥ A4
 ♦ Q65
 ♣ J
 ♠ A
 ♥ Q1065
 ♦ J10984
 ♣ AQ10
 ♠ Q643
 ♥ J32
 ♦ K2
 ♣ 9876
 ♠ 9
 ♥ K987
 ♦ A73
 ♣ K5432

HCP	Makeable contracts				
11	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
13	N			3	
6	S			2	
10	E	1	1	2	1
	W	1	1	2	1

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1D	1S	1NT	Dble
Pass	2S	All Pass	

North has a hand that should be trying to play and not defend. Also, his/her hand is not a pre-empt and simply a constructive over-call in the boss suit. West opens a diamond in 3rd seat and North makes his/her overcall and retreats to his suit when South, not unreasonably, looks for a penalty of 1NT.

East leads the nine of clubs and West's Queen scores. West switches to the Jack of diamonds. On this, declarer must not cover with the Queen (can you see any good reason to cover?) and win with dummy's Ace. A trump from dummy follows, won perforce with the Ace, and another diamond led. Declarer should play low, East winning with his King. After all this, declarer will only lose one diamond, one club and two trumps to make 140.

If East starts with the King of diamonds, declarer will win and play on trump. In this scenario the defence will make the ten of diamonds and try to promote a trump trick without success – declarer again making nine tricks.

♠ AKQJ8
 ♥ A7
 ♦ Q5
 ♣ J643
 ♠ 53 ♠ 92
 ♥ Q5 ♥ J9864
 ♦ KJ10762 ♦ A943
 ♣ K82 ♣ 97
 ♠ 10764
 ♥ K1032
 ♦ 8
 ♣ AQ105

HCP	
17	
9	5
9	

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

Board 7 : Dealer South : All Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
2D	2S	3D	4D
Pass	4S	All Pass	

Since you have the bid in your repertoire you might as well wheel it out – West starts with a weak two in diamonds on which North makes a top end over-call of 2S showing about 11-17 and 5+ spades. East makes a squeak, noting the vulnerability, and South shows a diamond shortage, spade support and about 8-ish points.

North thought about slam for a few seconds but could see that the Q of diamonds was useless and he/she would need to make sure that no club was lost in the play – a big ask holding Jxxx and known club length in the South hand. Game in spades was the final contract.

East led the Ace of diamonds and West followed with the two to signal a club shift. East duly obliged. Declarer reasonably rejected the club finesse and rose with the Ace to draw the trumps. When clubs were now played and West did indeed hold the King, declarer was delighted to write +650 on the score sheet.

♠ KJ10
 ♥ A9854
 ♦ A10
 ♣ Q54
 ♠ Q ♠ A8754
 ♥ J63 ♥ KQ7
 ♦ KQ9876 ♦ 43
 ♣ K108 ♣ A92
 ♠ 9632
 ♥ 102
 ♦ J52
 ♣ J763

HCP	
14	
11	13
2	

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

Board 8 : Dealer West : Nil All

West	North	East	South
			Pass
2D	2H	2S	
3D	All Pass		

West reasonably opened a weak two in diamonds with his/her 11 count, not valuing the Queen of spades as a high card. North over-called in hearts, over to East. Options. Options. East wanted to show his/her spade suit, also wanted to maybe play in NT or, best of all, make a 'competitive double' offering West the option of penalising 2H. For me in PAIRS the clear winner is the competitive double which West will accept holding a max, a singleton and a few trumps. Trying to play in 2NT is unavailable in the system. If East bids 2S, the final contract will be 3D which will make on the nose when North probably goes after a heart ruff in the South hand, a good plan holding trump control.

Against 2H doubled, the defence will probably be unable to make the eight tricks that are available for them. However, E/W should make two trumps, ONE spade ruff, the Ace of spades, two clubs and a diamond for -2 and the great score of -300.

♠ A843
 ♥ 102
 ♦ J983
 ♣ 765
 ♠ 105 ♠ KQ7
 ♥ AQ9875 ♥ 64
 ♦ K104 ♦ A72
 ♣ J9 ♣ AK1032
 ♠ J962
 ♥ KJ3
 ♦ Q65
 ♣ Q84

HCP		
5		
10	16	
9		

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1C	Pass
1H	Pass	1NT	Pass
4H	All Pass		

East shows 15/16HCP and a balanced hand without hearts so West simply jumps to the normal spot, 4H. North leads the three of diamonds and South inserts the Queen won by declarer's King. Five hearts, two diamonds, one spade and three clubs or two spades and two clubs would be good. First job is to enter dummy to take the heart finesse – to boot, declarer needs to lead spades up towards the K-Q twice, now is as good a time as any. Declarer leads a spade up to the King which holds. The Queen of hearts is finessed successfully and the Ace cashed, all following. Another spade is led from West, this time North jumping up with his/her Ace. After all this declarer claims 450 – losing a heart and a spade, the losing diamond being discarded on the good spade. If 3NT is the final contract (as it should for me) East can make 11 tricks on a spade lead but only 10 on an unlikely diamond lead.

♠ AQJ109876
 ♥ 5
 ♦ A
 ♣ 753
 ♠ K43 ♠ -
 ♥ 1043 ♥ KJ982
 ♦ KJ864 ♦ Q1053
 ♣ 42 ♣ A1096
 ♠ 52
 ♥ AQ76
 ♦ 972
 ♣ KQJ8

HCP		
11		
7	10	
12		

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

Board 10 : Dealer East : All Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1H	Pass
1NT	4S	All Pass	

With 5-4-4 shape and a 10 count East should open the bidding. West responds 1NT and North, as you do, jumps to game in spades with his/her eight-bagger trying to buy the hand. With an eight-card suit like North's, I look to my left-hand opponent and say - ' your lead please!' East leads the three of diamonds and dummy is tabled - the best high card hand of the four and the only one not to bid! Oh well. The King of spades is probably offside so six is not a good contract and is also unbidable, missing TWO keycards. Declarer wins the diamond and plays a heart to the Ace to finesse a spade – to your surprise, it scores. A club is next led to dummy and another spade finessed. The Ace now drops the King and a club conceded – making SIX.

♠ K873
 ♥ 76432
 ♦ K7
 ♣ 76
 ♠ 10952 ♠ A4
 ♥ AK ♥ QJ1098
 ♦ J852 ♦ Q10964
 ♣ 1043 ♣ 9
 ♠ QJ6
 ♥ 5
 ♦ A3
 ♣ AKQJ852

HCP	
6	
8	9
17	

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

Board 11 : Dealer South : Nil All

West	North	East	South
			1C
Pass	1H	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

I like to play solid club suits in 3NT! West is on lead – the moment of truth.

As we have seen earlier in these hands, when holding an A-K in a suit (not your longest suit) against NT, it makes sense try that suit and see if partner likes it or not. If you put the Ace on the table you will receive the QUEEN, the Bridge SIGNAL to give a smile of approval. On the King continuation, East will play the JACK or hearts to signify where East's entry lies (SP on the trick prior to change). A spade at trick three to East's Ace gets all the matchpoints and a write up in the 'Bulletin'.

If West leads a diamond making NINE tricks will be the norm on this hand. If South can sense that the hearts are blocked, he/she can make ten tricks by working on the spade suit, assuming no madness where the defence will reasonably switch to hearts and not woodenly return a diamond!

♠ K97
 ♥ KJ42
 ♦ J
 ♣ 97542
 ♠ AQJ105 ♠ 643
 ♥ 987 ♥ Q103
 ♦ 8762 ♦ 10953
 ♣ 8 ♣ AKQ
 ♠ 82
 ♥ A65
 ♦ AKQ4
 ♣ J1063

HCP	
8	
7	11
14	

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
2S	Pass	Pass	DBLE
Pass	3H	All Pass	

This is a messy sort of hand when West, very reasonably, opens a weak two in spades – albeit only holding a five-card suit. North passes and South makes a take-out double.

N/S were playing Lebensohl SANS (slow arrival, no stop) so a bid at the three level showed a hand with 7-10HCP and that suit. North could have bid 3S to show a spade stopper AND four hearts but this would also be game forcing. Anyway, South felt he had done enough and passed 3H, as you might.

East was on lead and tabled the king of clubs and eventually shifted to a spade. When the heart finesse lost, declarer had to concede -1 and 100 to E/W.

If only N/S could sit back and defend a spade contract (would you pass the t/o double as North?) – four diamonds, two hearts, a heart ruff (throw 2 hearts on the diamonds as North) and the King of spades.

♠ 3
 ♥ Q98754
 ♦ 10753
 ♣ KJ
 ♠ AQJ97 ♠ K10642
 ♥ A6 ♥ J2
 ♦ A9 ♦ KQ86
 ♣ Q852 ♣ 64
 ♠ 85
 ♥ K103
 ♦ J42
 ♣ A10973

HCP	
6	
17	9
8	

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

Board 13 : Dealer North : All Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1S	Pass	4S	All Pass

The most straight forward hand of the night so far. West opens 1S in 4th seat and East jumps to game with their five-card support and some smattering of values. North is on lead and tries the nine of hearts – a lead from length and broken suit against a suit contract is to try and avoid giving a trick or opening up a suit for declarer. The nine of hearts hits 'gold', South allows this to run, losing to West's Ace. Five spades, one heart, three diamonds and two club ruffs – 11 tricks. First job is to draw the trumps. After two rounds, declarer plays three rounds of diamonds, discarding a heart before playing a club from dummy. The rest is easy.

For me, I only consider my losers when I have to lose the lead to the opponents and they can do me damage – therefore I discard that heart before playing on clubs.

♠ 93
 ♥ Q109
 ♦ KQ742
 ♣ A83
 ♠ K8 ♠ Q762
 ♥ A8532 ♥ KJ4
 ♦ 63 ♦ J9
 ♣ KQJ7 ♣ 9642
 ♠ AJ1054
 ♥ 76
 ♦ A1085
 ♣ 105

HCP	
11	
13	7
9	

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

Board 14 : Dealer East : Nil All

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1H	Pass	1S	Pass
2C	2D	2H	3D
3H	Pass	Pass	4D
All Pass			

A lively auction. West did well to push on to 3H. East had 3 hearts in the bidding so counting the tricks – five hearts, three clubs and a spade looked like the nine tricks for E/W.

N/S also did well – North should not overcall the first time – only a five-card suit and minimum values for a 2-level overcall. However, when the opportunity comes back to him on the second round, no problem.

If East decides to lead a heart it must be the four. You need to use your higher cards to hit theirs! West wins with the Ace and switches to the King of clubs. Now there won't be any accidents and the contract will fail by one trick.

♠ Q2
 ♥ Q108753
 ♦ 1092
 ♣ 93
 ♠ AK8754 ♠ 3
 ♥ 4 ♥ A9
 ♦ AK5 ♦ QJ863
 ♣ 762 ♣ AKQJ4
 ♠ J1096
 ♥ KJ62
 ♦ 74
 ♣ 1085

HCP	
4	
14	17
5	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N					
S					
E	7	7	1	5	7
W	7	7	1	5	7

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1S	Pass	2D	Pass
2S	Pass	3C	Pass
3D	Pass	4NT	Pass
5D	Pass	5NT	Pass
6D	Pass	7NT	All Pass

A big hand full of the key points for slam bidding. In the above auction I omitted a cue bidding sequence where East might bid 3H over 3D, get a reply of 3S and then over 4C hear 4H. All is plain sailing from there. East doesn't need cue bids as he had all the suits covered – i.e. They can't cash two quick tricks in any suit. 5D was 0 or 3, obviously three, and 6D showed ONE King. When bidding slams or grand slams you need the big hand in charge as it is far better placed to count the tricks. When West showed AKx in diamonds and the Ace of spades via 5D, East could count five diamonds, five clubs, a heart and a spade. When West showed one King – the king of spades or hearts, this was the 13th trick. With thirteen top tricks and playing pairs you have to bid 7 NO TRUMP. Seven diamonds should only be getting a moderate reward on this deal.

♠ 10854
 ♥ KQ53
 ♦ 1084
 ♣ J6
 ♠ J962 ♠ KQ3
 ♥ 1094 ♥ AJ2
 ♦ K75 ♦ AJ3
 ♣ Q87 ♣ A1053
 ♠ A7
 ♥ 876
 ♦ Q962
 ♣ K942

HCP	
6	
6	19
9	

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

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1C	Pass
1S	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Stone Age stuff - East showed a balanced hand with 19HCP via the 3NT rebid and played there. I am a big believer in protecting my honours and lead positioning - I like their honours in 2nd seat and mine in 4th! When leading against NT, in particular your 4th highest, their honour is likely to be in the 4th seat. So, when you make a choice of a lead against NT from length, try and check whether it is worth the risk. This is one of these hands. East has nearly half the pack of HCP so your lead away from an honour is very risky. The lead of the two of diamonds will make life easy for declarer and should be avoided. Leading the seven of hearts has plenty of merit. After protecting the heart position and trying the spade suit, declarer plays on clubs by a club to the Queen and a club to the Ace. When North shows up with the Jack of clubs on the second round and South shows out on the third round of spades, the hand is an open book. South started with four diamonds so is favourite to have the Queen. Declarer throws South on lead in clubs with no major suit card left. The diamond return provides the ninth trick. Well played declarer!

♠ J94
 ♥ K9853
 ♦ KJ62
 ♣ J
 ♠ AK1085 ♠ Q762
 ♥ 106 ♥ J7
 ♦ AQ5 ♦ 107
 ♣ A94 ♣ Q10763
 ♠ 3
 ♥ AQ42
 ♦ 9843
 ♣ K852

HCP	
9	
17	5
9	

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

Board 17 : Dealer North : Nil All

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1S	Pass	3S	Pass
4S	All Pass		

If you are playing 'Tartan' or 'Lucas' two openings – this North hand is one of those!

Playing weak twos, for me the North holding in Hearts is terrible, I have three spades and some defence against various contracts. Anyway West opens with 1S and East makes a pre-emptive raise of 3S (very popular these days) to show a poor defensive hand, some trumps and not much else. West decided to push on when many would (should) pass.

North is on opening lead. Leading away from either King does NOT look attractive (see the proceeding hand in this regard). Remember the Garozzo remark – 'when they don't lead a singleton, they don't have one' (Italian accent required). North leads the Jack of clubs - unlucky for him! Declarer covers with the Queen, South correctly ducking. Trumps are drawn and a diamond finessed. North wins with the King and has seen South signal in hearts during the trump drawing. After two winning hearts and a diamond return, declarer can ruff a diamond and play a club to the nine for a lucky 10 tricks and 420.

♠ 10862
 ♥ 765
 ♦ K107
 ♣ 942
 ♠ KQ73 ♠ J54
 ♥ 103 ♥ AKQ94
 ♦ 543 ♦ QJ2
 ♣ K1075 ♣ AJ
 ♠ A9
 ♥ J82
 ♦ A986
 ♣ Q863

HCP	
3	
8	18
11	

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1H	Pass
1S	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Another lead problem. With one Ace trying a club makes some sense – set up the suit and get in with the outside Ace. Leading from a suit with an Ace against NT is less risky than leading from a Queen. When the analysis paralysis is done a diamond is the chosen lead (sure isn't it the 4th highest from me longest and strongest I hear you say!).

North wins with the King and returns the ten which declarer covers, South winning with the Ace to play the nine. East wins this with the Jack as North follows.

Knowing that the diamonds are 4-3 and hoping the defence has severed their link in diamonds, declarer plays a spade. However, South wins and cashes the last diamond, the fourth trick for the defence. With the hearts behaving, nine tricks are home and dry but only a moderate score of -400 is recorded.

♠ 985
 ♥ Q975
 ♦ Q43
 ♣ Q98
 ♠ Q742 ♠ AK1063
 ♥ AJ42 ♥ K86
 ♦ - ♦ K102
 ♣ KJ542 ♣ A3
 ♠ J
 ♥ 103
 ♦ AJ98765
 ♣ 1076

HCP	
6	
11	17
6	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N					
S					
E	5	1	5	7	4
W	5		5	7	3

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			3D
Dble	Pass	6S	All Pass

When the opposition opens a pre-empt, life can be tough. Best thing to do is be as pragmatic as one can. West makes a take-out double of 3D and you have that rock crusher as East – you are probably sure that slam is on, could grand slam be there too? After the 3D start to the bidding, the grand is near nigh impossible to reach.

South leads the ten of hearts which declarer wins with the King to ruff a diamond. A club to the Ace allows another diamond ruff. Next declarer cashes the Queen of spades from dummy, noting the Jack from South. This makes things easier. The King of clubs can be cashed and a club ruffed low in hand, North dropping the Queen. The club suit is good so declarer draws the rest of the trumps and uses the Ace of hearts as access to the winning clubs to claim all 13 tricks.

♠ J105
 ♥ Q1082
 ♦ AJ1054
 ♣ 6
 ♠ AK86 ♠ Q74
 ♥ 7 ♥ J96
 ♦ KQ83 ♦ 72
 ♣ A1092 ♣ QJ754
 ♠ 932
 ♥ AK543
 ♦ 96
 ♣ K83

HCP	
8	
16	6
10	

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

Board 20 : Dealer West : All Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1D	Pass	1NT	2H
Dble	4H	Pass	Pass
Dble	All Pass		

West held the dreaded 4-1-4-4- hand and started with 1D which gives plenty of options for a rebid. When you hold a 4-4-4-1 hand, just assume that partner will bid your singleton as a reply and plan your rebid accordingly – do NOT lie about your length in a major or over-state your values.

South created the problem here by making a frisky bid of 2H (I see this error all the time) sandwiched between an opening bid and a response - South should have a six card suit and at least another King or so. Yes, North should be able to read a bit more into the auction, playing West for a decent hand for his take-out double showing extras and thus not jump to the dizzy heights of 4H.

In the play West leads the Ace of spades, East encouraging. The score recorded was -500 in double quick time N/S hoped against hope that everyone got to 5C which is a make for E/W and -600.

♠ A
 ♥ Q83
 ♦ A853
 ♣ J10853
 ♠ Q1097 ♠ J86543
 ♥ K1065 ♥ 92
 ♦ KJ97 ♦ 106
 ♣ 2 ♣ AQ9
 ♠ K2
 ♥ AJ74
 ♦ Q42
 ♣ K764

HCP	
11	
9	7
13	

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

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT
2C	Dble	3S	All Pass

When they outbid you, there is nothing to be done. East refrained from opening a weak two with such a poor suit so South was free to open a weak NT. This is a pre-empt of sorts so be prepared to get in there with somewhat sub-value hands – *however I am not a fan of being only 4-4 when showing majors.* West bid 2C for the majors and North showed values with a dble. East now tried to 'hit the money' with 3S – support bids are bid to the appropriate level and are NON forcing. This ended the auction. South is leading away from a bunch of good cards – a terrible position to be in! Eventually South tries the two of diamonds and declarer plays low from dummy, losing to North's Ace. If North doesn't return a heart declarer will make 170, discarding two hearts on the diamonds (South can ruff the fourth diamond but the trump suit is now breaking 1-1!).

♠ A83
 ♥ 10
 ♦ Q54
 ♣ J98532
 ♠ KQ106 ♠ 9742
 ♥ J42 ♥ Q973
 ♦ 732 ♦ J98
 ♣ AK7 ♣ Q10
 ♠ J5
 ♥ AK865
 ♦ AK106
 ♣ 64

HCP	
7	
13	5
15	

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1H
Dble	1NT	Pass	2D
All Pass			

West made a take-out double with nearly the right shape – acceptable when you have four cards in the other major and the values. When 2D came back to North, he knew that South was a minimum hand so a pass seemed the best chance to get a plus. West breaks with tradition and rejects the obvious A-K lead to lead a trump – clearly North has passed on the basis of heart shortage and South will be ruffing in dummy to set up the heart suit. Good analysis from West. Declarer wins East's Jack with the King, cashes the Ace of hearts and ruffs a heart on the table. The Queen of diamonds is over taken with the Ace and the ten cashed to lead the King and another heart. Making four diamonds, four hearts and a spade for 110.

♠ 96
 ♥ Q84
 ♦ AQ53
 ♣ KQ62
 ♠ Q85 ♠ AK
 ♥ A106 ♥ 97532
 ♦ J104 ♦ 98762
 ♣ A984 ♣ 7
 ♠ J107432
 ♥ KJ
 ♦ K
 ♣ J1053

HCP	
13	
11	7
9	

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

Board 23 : Dealer South : All Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2D	Pass
2H	Pass	Pass	2S
All Pass			

West opens a weak NT with their 11 count but nice cards in each suit. East transferred to hearts as you should with a 5-5 hand and passed the transfer. South knew from the auction thus far that North probably had close to an opening bid so it was now safe to bid 2S in the pass out seat. West passed and East decided to led this go with such a poor texture in the diamond and heart suits and not knowing whether West held three hearts or not.

West led the Jack of diamonds and declarer saw a chance to steal. After winning the diamond with the King he/she quickly led a club hoping to catch West napping. If West would play low, declarer could win and throw his hearts on the top diamonds and thus only lose three spades and a club. However, West saw the danger of the AQ of diamonds and jumped up with the Ace to cash the Ace of hearts and return a heart. Declarer had to also lose three trump tricks but score a decent 110. As you can see E/W are only -1 in 3H.

♠ AQ107
 ♥ Q9765
 ♦ Q65
 ♣ 3
 ♠ J8 ♠ K3
 ♥ K10 ♥ 432
 ♦ 109872 ♦ KJ4
 ♣ 7654 ♣ K10982
 ♠ 96542
 ♥ AJ8
 ♦ A3
 ♣ AQJ

HCP	
10	
4	10
10	

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

Board 24 : Dealer West : Nil All

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1S
Pass	4C	Pass	4S
All Pass			

South opened 1S in 4th seat and North showed a club shortage, spade support and 8-11HC with a bid of 4C. South held a balanced hand – not good for suit contracts and high cards opposite your shortage , both deterrents to making a move.

West led the ten of diamonds as you might and dummy was tabled. The diamond lead looks like gold dust for the defence. If only North could be playing the hand!

Declarer tried the Queen from dummy, East covering with the King, declarer winning with the Ace. A spade was now led to the Queen and East's King who cashed the Jack of diamonds and returned a diamond. A spade to dummy brought the Jack and three. Now to tackle the hearts – a heart to the Jack was beaten by West's King - declarer claimed.

Here the strong No Trumper are in with a chance of North playing the hand in spades and making the top score of 450.

♠ Q932
 ♥ 5
 ♦ A107542
 ♣ 76
 ♠ 85
 ♥ AQ64
 ♦ Q863
 ♣ A54
 ♠ A1074
 ♥ KJ82
 ♦ -
 ♣ K9832
 ♠ KJ6
 ♥ 10973
 ♦ KJ9
 ♣ QJ10

HCP	
6	
12	11
11	

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

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1C	Pass
1H	Pass	2H	Pass
4H	All Pass		

North decides to Pass and not open a weak two in diamonds. A very bad suit and four cards in spades being the reasons. 5-4-4 is a lovely shape and particularly with both majors – East opens his 11 count. West bids hearts, rejecting his diamond suit in response as one should (who cares about minors!). East supports hearts, so West bids the game.

North makes the best lead for the defence of a spade. Declarer wins with the Ace and draws two rounds of trumps with the King and Ace. When North discards, signalling interest in diamonds, declarer sees that he needs to set up the club suit for some tricks but also to draw South's trumps. Declarer ducks a club to South who plays the King and Jack of spades ruffed low. The Ace of clubs is cashed and a club led to the King to play clubs. Now no matter how South plays, declarer can over-ruff with the Queen of trumps and be able to enter dummy with a diamond ruff to draw the last trump with the Jack to run more clubs. Losing two spades and a club and making a very well deserved 420.

♠ 1032
 ♥ -
 ♦ K542
 ♣ A109432
 ♠ 98
 ♥ J9752
 ♦ Q10987
 ♣ Q
 ♠ KJ7
 ♥ Q864
 ♦ 63
 ♣ KJ76
 ♠ AQ654
 ♥ AK103
 ♦ AJ
 ♣ 85

HCP	
7	
5	10
18	

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

Board 26 : Dealer East : All Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1S
Pass	2S	Pass	3H
Pass	4C	Pass	4D
Pass	4S	All Pass	

This is a hard hand to bid and many will find themselves in a slam which is at the mercy of the Queen of diamonds being with East, diamonds no worse than 4-3 or East holding KJ stiff in spades, none of which exist.

South opened 1S and North should support spades (three cards and a void being excellent for spades) and NOT bid 1NT. South does some exploring to which North co-operates but South should eventually give up having done his best to show his/her hand by making these tries.

West leads his singleton Queen of clubs in the hope of a ruff. Declarer wins with the Ace and plays a spade to the Queen successfully. A heart is now ruffed low and a diamond led to the Ace to ruff another heart. Declarer next cashed the King of diamonds and led a diamond. East could ruff in with the Jack of spades but declarer is in control. He/She will over-ruff with the Ace of spades and lead a spade with the trumps now 1-1. Losing a trump and a club to make five spades and 650.

♠ 106
 ♥ 104
 ♦ K7643
 ♣ AJ109
 ♠ A932 ♠ J75
 ♥ Q86 ♥ AJ93
 ♦ AQ1085 ♦ 9
 ♣ 8 ♣ K5432
 ♠ KQ84
 ♥ K752
 ♦ J2
 ♣ Q76

HCP	
8	
12	9
11	

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

Board 27 : Dealer South : Nil All

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
1S	Pass	1NT	All Pass

South is on lead against 1NT where their two decent suits have been bid. Time to try something else. South leads the six of clubs which North wins with the Ace and returns the Jack which declarer wins with the King as South correctly drops the Queen. Declarer now plays on diamonds and leads the nine to the Jack, and Queen which North decides to win with his King. Two clubs are cashed and the ten of spades returned, covered by the Jack, Queen and dummy's Ace. Declarer cashes the diamond winners before playing a heart to the Jack. All in all, the defence make three clubs, one diamond, one heart and a spade for a well fought -90.

♠ J92
 ♥ Q52
 ♦ 9653
 ♣ 432
 ♠ A876 ♠ Q10
 ♥ J76 ♥ AK4
 ♦ J4 ♥ AK87
 ♣ AK96 ♣ Q1075
 ♠ K543
 ♥ 10983
 ♦ Q102
 ♣ J8

HCP	
3	
13	18
6	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N					
S					
E	6	5	4	5	5
W	6	5	5	5	5

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

When the hands are balanced you require 33/34 HCP between the two hands to make a NT slam – don't forget with balanced hands the High cards themselves are the tricks.

North is on lead and tables the six of diamonds, 2nd highest from four small. West checks the pips and sees that the six might be from Q1096 – even so, the Jack of diamonds needs to make a trick – declarer plays low from dummy, losing to South's Queen. South switches to the ten of hearts which runs to the five and dummy's King. After the Queen and Ace of clubs bring down the Jack, declarer stops playing clubs in search of a second spade and needing the clubs as a vehicle to get backwards and forwards later on in the play. A spade is led towards the Q-10 on which North plays the two. What do we know thus far? North led a diamond from four small so probably doesn't have four spades – since South is longer in spades he is favourite to hold the King – let's hope he doesn't also have the Jack! Declarer tries the 10. South wins his King and returns another heart to the Jack, Queen and King. Declarer simply untangles his winners in the endgame and makes 11 tricks.

Note how the defenders do their best NOT to lead away from their honours in these defences!

♠ A
 ♥ 102
 ♦ K1097
 ♣ A98764
 ♠ 9862 ♠ K1053
 ♥ J8643 ♥ 9
 ♦ 2 ♦ QJ854
 ♣ KQ2 ♣ J53
 ♠ QJ74
 ♥ AKQ75
 ♦ A63
 ♣ 10

HCP	
11	
9	7
16	

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

Board 29 : Dealer North : Game All

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1H
Pass	2C	Pass	2S
Pass	3D	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

North reasonably decides to Pass as opener and South shows 5-4 in the majors and 17-19, just about OK because of the AKQxx in hearts being upgradable. North shows a maximum for their original Pass with a 4th suit forcing 3D, South closing proceedings with "ol faithfull herself", 3NT.

This another of those hard lead hands – West's job is to make a lead that doesn't give an unnecessary trick – so leading a heart is very dangerous and should be avoided. West eventually decides to lead the nine of spades to North's Ace. Declarer plays on clubs and emerges with 10 tricks as long as East also is careful in their defence.

♠ 532
 ♥ K7532
 ♦ 52
 ♣ 1043
 ♠ 108 ♠ KQ976
 ♥ Q106 ♥ A9
 ♦ J63 ♦ KQ7
 ♣ AQJ96 ♣ K75
 ♠ AJ4
 ♥ J84
 ♦ A10984
 ♣ 82

HCP	
3	
10	17
10	

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

Board 30 : Dealer East : Nil All

West	North	East	South
		1S	Pass
2C	Pass	3NT	All Pass

East opens 1S and West bids 2C. This shows a hand with 8+ HCP and if only 8/9, they will have five/six clubs. East now bids 3NT – 17+8 = 25HCP enough for 3NT.

South is on lead where leading their long suit looks excellent – establish the suit and get back in with the Ace of spades to cash those winners. South leads the ten of diamonds – over to declarer. Five clubs, two diamonds, a spade and a heart are available. Declarer thus wins the diamond in dummy and plays a spade to the King and South's Ace who continues with another diamond. Declarer must now keep South off lead and cannot risk the spade finesse. However, if they try their luck in hearts and play South for the Jack, a tenth trick materialises.

To hold declarer to NINE tricks South needs to start with a 'double dummy' heart, ducked by North. The second diamond won by South and another heart led and again ducked. N-S have three hearts and two Aces to enjoy if declarer doesn't run for home with his two diamonds, two hearts and five clubs.

♠AQ93
 ♥Q965
 ♦982
 ♣J10
 ♠J765 ♠K842
 ♥AJ2 ♥84
 ♦AK43 ♦Q10
 ♣Q8 ♣97652
 ♠10
 ♥K1073
 ♦J765
 ♣AK43

HCP	
9	
15	5
11	

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

Board 31 : Dealer South : NS Vulnerable

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1D
1NT	2C*	Pass	2H
All Pass			

* Majors

With 4-4-4-1 South opens the bidding 1D, conscious that when partner bids 1S, South can bid 2C – never lie about your length in a major or overstate your values!

In the above auction West makes a 1NT overcall and North shows both majors and a moderate hand with 2C, good technique. 2H by South thus wins the auction.

West starts with the ace of diamonds and continues with the King – Oops! A third diamond is ruffed by East. If declarer now plays West for the Ace and Jack of hearts, he will make 140 and the top of the night.

♠J543
 ♥K98
 ♦9
 ♣QJ1075
 ♠K2 ♠AQ86
 ♥10542 ♥AQJ
 ♦10643 ♦A72
 ♣A98 ♣K32
 ♠1097
 ♥763
 ♦KQJ85
 ♣64

HCP	
7	
7	20
8	

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

Board 32 : Dealer West : EW Vulnerable

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

I wouldn't bother looking for a major suit fit with the West hand and simply play in the Pairs players specialist contract, 3NT. South is on lead and tries the King of diamonds – unlucky for him. Declarer will win and return a diamond to South's Jack who might switch to a club. Declarer will win in dummy, finesse a heart and lead another diamond. South again wins and returns a club. Declarer will win this with the King in hand, play a spade to dummy to cash the ten of diamonds and then finesse in hearts. Making ten tricks.

However, perfection is available if declarer wins the diamond and initially uses the club and spade honours in dummy to finesse hearts. If declarer now plays his winning spades and club and then leads diamonds, South will have nothing left but his diamonds and will be unable to stop declarer enjoy both red suit tens in dummy for a magical 660.