

Sligo and Friends – 2nd May 2022

The month of May is usually our ‘Revision’ Month in Sligo – so we are inviting all our friends to join in the fun and take a fresh look at their game.

The comments below are based on a Weak No-Trump, 4-card major system but other systems will be mentioned if relevant. 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;"> <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>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </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 of the ball. Those who keep their focus and count their tricks will get a plus score.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥	All Pass
West	North	East	South										
	Pass	1NT	Pass										
2♦	Pass	2♥	All Pass										

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
7	-	-	-	-	-
8 13	-	-	-	-	-
12	1	-	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 4th 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 13th 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>♠ A 1075 ♠ 2 ♥ KQ10 ♥ A98653 ♦ 106 ♦ J975 ♣ A874 ♣ J5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q983 ♥ J ♦ Q842 ♣ 10962</p>	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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>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>	West	North	East	South		1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass	3♥	3♠	4♥	Dbl	All Pass	
West	North	East	South														
	1♠	Pass	2♠														
Pass	Pass	3♥	3♠														
4♥	Dbl	All Pass															

HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
16	1	1	-	3	-	
13 6	1	1	-	3	-	
5	-	-	3	-	2	
	-	-	3	-	2	

<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>	<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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>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 bidding 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>	West	North	East	South			1NT	Dbl	Pass	2♦	All Pass	
West	North	East	South										
		1NT	Dbl										
Pass	2♦	All Pass											

HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
1	-	3	-	1	-	
7 14	-	3	-	1	-	
18	2	-	1	-	1	
	2	-	1	-	1	

♠ 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

West	North	East	South
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 Twos' 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

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♣	1♦	Pass	2♣
Dbf	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 4th 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

West	North	East	South
			4♥
Pass	Pass	Dbf	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.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ A982 ♥ 2 ♦ KQJ3 ♣ A1053</p> <p>♠ QJ3 ♠ 10764 ♥ AJ10973 ♥ 85 ♦ - ♦ 109862 ♣ KQ96 ♣ 42</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ K5 ♥ KQ64 ♦ A754 ♣ J87</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>13</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>4</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>4</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		14		13	0	13		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	3	4	-	2	3	S	4	4	-	3	4	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 12 : Dealer West : 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>1♥</td> <td>Dbl</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> </table> <p>All Pass</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	West	North	East	South	1♥	Dbl	Pass	3NT
HCP																																																					
14																																																					
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1♥	Dbl	Pass	3NT																																																		

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ A1042 ♥ K106 ♦ Q975 ♣ K5</p> <p>♠ J98653 ♠ K ♥ 72 ♥ AQJ43 ♦ K10 ♦ J8 ♣ A74 ♣ J10962</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q7 ♥ 985 ♦ A6432 ♣ Q83</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>8</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>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>	HCP		12		8	12	8		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	2	-	-	-	S	-	2	-	-	-	E	3	-	2	2	1	W	3	-	2	2	1	<p>Board 13 : Dealer North : All 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>1NT</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>This is another interesting partscore battle and as always whoever can get a 'plus' score will score very well.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	West	North	East	South		1NT	2♥	All Pass
HCP																																																					
12																																																					
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	1NT	2♥	All Pass																																																		

♠ 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♥	Dbl	4♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	5♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	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 9th 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%;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></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>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	1♣	1♥	1♠	2♦	3♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl	All Pass		
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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%;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></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>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>		Pass	Pass	1NT
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♠ Q9872
 ♥ 4
 ♦ Q109
 ♣ KJ65
 ♠ A105 ♠ J64
 ♥ K87 ♥ AQJ952
 ♦ A32 ♦ KJ
 ♣ A1093 ♣ Q7
 ♠ K3
 ♥ 1063
 ♦ 87654
 ♣ 842

HCP	
8	
15	14
3	

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1♥	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

If you bid and made a slam on this then – Respect!
 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.
 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.
 Maybe the route to slam starts something like 1♥-2♣-3♥? However I’d be very happy with 3NT+2.