

Commentary for the 2024 Northants CBA

Monday 9th September

Commentary by Robert Miller

Board 1	♠ 3	Dealer N
	♥ Q1032	Vul: None
	♦ Q3	
	♣ Q107654	
♠ AQJ87		♠ K62
♥ 64		♥ J75
♦ 862		♦ AK74
♣ AK3		♣ J98
	♠ 10954	
	♥ AK98	
	♦ J1095	
	♣ 2	

North	East	South	West
P	INT	P	2♥
P	2♠	P	3NT
P	P	P	

After a weak no trump opening and a transfer to hearts west gives east the choice of contracts with 3NT, West should've with a second suit shown it so east can rely west to be 5332 of some sort, fairly flat, and therefore with a totally flat hand themselves east does best to pass 3NT, It is highly unlikely they will get a ruff in the short trump hand. 4♠ should fail and 3NT should make the same nine tricks, anyone making game will score very well. Strong no trumps will open one minor and rebid INT but should resist showing three card support for the same reasons. A spade contract by West after a minor opener by east might be let through on an opening club lead, if this happened to you defending you may feel it's not going to be your night after just board one! 😞 .

Makeable Contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	-	1	-	-
S	1	-	1	-	-
E	-	3	-	3	3
W	-	3	-	3	3
		=====			

Board 2	♠ 763	Dealer E
	♥ A1064	Vul: N-S
	♦ Q983	
	♣ KJ	
♠ J1084		♠ AKQ2
♥ 8732		♥ K
♦ 4		♦ J106
♣ Q832		♣ A10974
	♠ 95	
	♥ QJ95	
	♦ AK752	
	♣ 65	

North	East	South	West
	1♣	1♦	X
2♣*	3♠	P	P
P			

*Good Diamond raise

After 1♣ 1♦ west has a decision, the club support to fall back on makes it just about worthwhile to double (any playing short club and unaware of the fit should pass). Norths 2♣ is showing a good raise in partners diamonds, West is close to bidding 4♠ but the heart king and diamond holding are not attractive. Trumps break and clubs are friendly so ten will make. 3♠ should score ok for East/West any who bid and make game will score very well indeed. Any North/Souths that steal the hand and make a diamond contract should score very well, even -100 might be ok.

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

Board 3 ♠ QJ93 Dealer S
 ♥ K862 Vul: E-W
 ♦ Q875
 ♣ 4

♠ 1085 ♠ K6
 ♥ A1073 ♥ QJ94
 ♦ 6 ♦ AJ932
 ♣ 76532 ♣ Q8

♠ A742
 ♥ 5
 ♦ K104
 ♣ AKJ109

North	East	South	West
-	-	1♣	P
1♦	P	1♠	P
3♠	P	4♠	P
P	P		

North should bid their suits up the line so a one diamond response it is which shuts east out. With a singleton club north is worth 3♠ on the second round and south has an easy raise, If north chooses just 2♠ south is worth a try and game should be reached anyway. I wouldn't be surprised though if some are more cautious and miss this one. The singleton diamond lead looks normal, and East/West should take a diamond a trump via a ruff and a heart with North/South the rest. If north elects to respond 1♥ instead of 1♦ east may bid 2♦ themselves now, south is worth a reverse of 2♠ and the same contact should be reached by the same hand. 4♠ making ten should be normal any who do better in either direction will score well. Any North/South who, with a singleton in both hands, manage to play in No Trumps (yes at pairs someone always does!) can also make ten with a good view in the spade suit (run the queen, if covered finesse the ten, if not covered small felling king next round) and can consider themselves very lucky or inspired. I just hope you are not the ones defending if it happens!

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 4 ♠ 10952 Dealer W
 ♥ AQ82 Vul: Both
 ♦ A63
 ♣ 107

♠ AQ4 ♠ K87
 ♥ K7653 ♥ 109
 ♦ 42 ♦ KQJ97
 ♣ AK5 ♣ 982

♠ J63
 ♥ J4
 ♦ 1085
 ♣ QJ643

North	East	South	West
-	-	-	1♥
P	2♦	P	2NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

If west opens a strong no trump, they should get to the same contact but in only two bids! With west showing hearts a spade looks the best lead and should hold declarer to nine, in fact, even if unaware of wests hearts and north leads one giving declarer a free trick it should still be held to nine as the defence now has four winners. Even If the contact gets played by East on a different lead the result should still be nine tricks 😊. Infact if the defence were to lead their shortest suits to 3NT which would be utterly bizarre...it should still be nine tricks!!! 😊 Dare I say the flattest board of the night? 😊 Famous last words no doubt!

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 5 ♠ K108 Dealer N
 ♥ J92 Vul: N-S
 ♦ 1098
 ♣ AKQ6

♠ Q762 ♠ AJ9543
 ♥ K ♥ AQ75
 ♦ 54 ♦ A6
 ♣ 1098532 ♣ J

♠ ♠ 108643
 ♥ ♥ KQJ732
 ♦ ♦ 74
 ♣

North	East	South	West
INT	X	3♦	P
P	3♠	P	4♠
P	P	P	

North has a boring 4333 weak NT but no one else does! After a weak INT, some may show the majors or even just spades either of which should eventually lead to 4♠, Others may start with a double to show the values first, South with that shape would like to be more of a nuisance and bid much higher but the vulnerability is wrong to do so and 3♦ is about high enough, East/West should end in 4♠ and with careful play this makes twelve. This spade holding is commonly misplayed, with north likely to have the king and only south can be void after the INT opener, leading the queen from dummy first is correct rather than small to the jack. This allows declarer to then finesse the ten and pick up the suit for no losers. I expect 4♠ making twelve to score very well for East/West just getting to game may be enough for a good score. Any souths who get carried away by their shape may suffer a big penalty. If North starts with 1♣ east should start with a double and after some number of diamonds by south bid spades next time raised to game by partner.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	2	1	-	-
S	-	2	-	-	-
E	2	-	-	6	-
W	2	-	-	6	-

=====

Board 6 ♠ A1096542 Dealer E
 ♥ J Vul: E-W
 ♦ ♣ A9743

♠ J3 ♠ KQ8
 ♥ 985 ♥ A73
 ♦ Q109732 ♦ KJ86
 ♣ 102 ♣ QJ8

♠ 7
 ♥ KQ10642
 ♦ A54
 ♣ K65

North	East	South	West
	1♦	1♥	3♦*
3♠	P	4♥	P
P	P		

*3♦ Weak

After a one diamond opener east has a very weak hand vulnerable but with six card support is worth a weak raise if it is available otherwise it may be forced to just bid two or even pass. What should north do now? 3♠ looks ok and despite its nice hand east has nothing it can say. What should south do now? Another tough choice but partner should have some heart tolerance or a hand good enough to bid again so 4♥ looks a sensible choice, this ending the auction. If west passes north can start slower with 1♠ but should still reach 4♥. On a diamond lead south should ruff on table keeping the ace as control cross to hand and play trumps, this should lead to ten tricks. Any who make the mistake of winning the diamond ace at trick one will be in trouble. Some may insist on their spades or raise partners 3♠ to 4♠ which with the suit 3-2 works fine today too.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 7 ♠ QJ5 Dealer S
 ♥ J75 Vul: Both
 ♦ K762
 ♣ A72

♠ K109742 ♠ 83
 ♥ 862 ♥ KQ93
 ♦ J ♦ AQ104
 ♣ J85 ♣ KQ9

♠ A6
 ♥ A104
 ♦ 9853
 ♣ 10643

North	East	South	West
-	-	P	P
P	1♦	P	1♠
P	INT	P	2♠

There is a time for an eleven-point INT opener but 4333 third vulnerable isn't it! Any north doing so should get doubled and a big enough minus not to do it again for a while! After a INT rebid two of a major is best played as weak and should end the auction, eight is the limit, although it takes a heart lead before declarer gets to hand for the diamond finesse, otherwise declarer can use the diamond fineness for an overtrick. East/West will score well to stop low, any making 9 will score very well indeed. Will some open 2♠ by west I expect so! Although with 2 wasted jacks and a poor suit vulnerable they are better not to. If they do I hope their partner knows their style and can stop in time to register a plus score!

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	1	1	2	2	1
W	1	1	2	2	1

=====

Board 8 ♠ Q93 Dealer W
 ♥ Vul: None
 ♦ Q74
 ♣ AQJ9632

♠ KJ84 ♠ A1075
 ♥ Q43 ♥ AJ1052
 ♦ J5 ♦ 986
 ♣ K854 ♣ 10

♠ 62
 ♥ K9876
 ♦ AK1032
 ♣ 7

North	East	South	West
-	-	-	P
1♣	1♥	2♦	2♥
3♣	P	P	P

At first glance west's 2♥ looks like an underbid (you would like to bid 2♣ good raise but South's 2♦ is awkward) but with only three card support and the Jack of diamonds and king of clubs wasted it is enough here. North could support partners diamonds but with such good clubs three clubs is fair too. With only an eight-card fit and minimum overcall east should resist bidding three hearts. If they do, I will probably hear souths double from Leicester! 😊 If north pulls any penalty double due to their shape, I may hear souths anger from Leicester too! a plus score in clubs should be ok though with a few penalties for East/West I suspect.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 9 ♠ 962 Dealer N
 ♥ A103 Vul: E-W
 ♦ AQ98
 ♣ Q53

♠ 85 ♠ AK104
 ♥ QJ7 ♥ K964
 ♦ K2 ♦ 105
 ♣ AKJ1084 ♣ 976

♠ QJ73
 ♥ 852
 ♦ J7643
 ♣ 2

North	East	South	West
INT	P	P	3♣
P	P	P	

Alot will depend here on East/West defensive methods to a weak INT, they may be able to bid 2♣ naturally and play there, most play 2♣ however as artificial and so will be forced to bid 3♣ if anything. Clubs should make ten by west as south cannot get in to lead a diamond through before they go dummies hearts. No doubt with good six card suit and fourteen points some will venture a double, South should run to diamonds and East/West may now get too high as east will know values for game exist unfortunately game doesn't! 😊 If North/South play a strong NT, on a 1♦ opener, 1♦-3♦ weak may steal the auction and score well for North/South, a short club may make it even harder to find their club fit. In the modern game of short club suits, you may even see some 1♣ P P P! north won't enjoy playing that, but west will enjoy defending it! 😊

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 10 ♠ A9732 Dealer E
 ♥ QJ10 Vul: Both
 ♦ Q9853
 ♣

♠ 4 ♠ K86
 ♥ A8652 ♥
 ♦ AJ42 ♦ K76
 ♣ A86 ♣ KJ107543

♠ QJ105
 ♥ K9743
 ♦ 10
 ♣ Q92

North	East	South	West
-	1♣	1♥	P
1♠	2♣	2♠	3♥*
P	3NT	P	P

*3♥ showing a stop

Its only 10points but the seven card suit makes it worth a 1♣ opener, South has a grotty overcall but with both majors at the one level just about ok, West may pass hoping for a penalty, North should resist supporting straight away and show their spades as this fit maybe, and is, better, West can no longer double for penalties so will now bid game but in what? Five clubs maybe an option but 3NT may score better at pairs, when the opponents have bid two suits it is better to play bidding one of theirs as showing a stop rather than asking, when west shows a heart stop east with a spade stop can now bid 3NT. This is a hairy contract on a spade lead of course, if East loses a club they will go off, making ten or eleven if they don't, but every time trumps are two one 3NT is easy so it should be the pairs contract. With such a ropey stop and a heart void east may prefer 5♣ this is a safer contract and can make even getting the club wrong but won't score as well. West may even just bid game on the first round and not bother hoping for a penalty. Any game bid and made should score well.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 11 ♠ 74 Dealer S
 ♥ 1054 Vul: None
 ♦ AQ5
 ♣ J9876

♠ Q862 ♠ J103
 ♥ KJ763 ♥ A8
 ♦ 7 ♦ 98643
 ♣ A53 ♣ KQ4

♠ AK95
 ♥ Q92
 ♦ KJ102
 ♣ 102

North	East	South	West
-	-	P	INT
2♣*	P	2♦**	P
2♥	P	P	P

*Majors**Asking for 5Card Suit

If south opens a weak NT east should overcall showing the majors if they have it available, a natural 2♥ if not. If east bids 2♣ then west should have a way of asking partner for their longer major, as 5-2 is generally better than 4-3. 2♥ will probably win the auction a fair amount of the time and score well for East/West. North may be tempted at love all to compete and not let the opposition play at such a low level and if they get away with -100 they may score ok for this, North should lead its doubleton spade to 2♥, as partner has opened INT there is a fair chance of a ruff, here rewarded very well with partner having ace and king, This will hold declarer to nine which I think should be normal, any declarers avoiding the ruff and making ten scoring very well. A diamond lead forces declarer and can in fact hold it to eight tricks, but I don't see anybody leading from either of these diamond holdings.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	1	-	-	-
S	-	1	-	-	-
E	1	-	2	2	1
W	1	-	2	2	1

=====

Board 12 ♠ K42 Dealer W
 ♥ QJ10 Vul: N-S
 ♦ 983
 ♣ A1087

♠ J1097 ♠ 65
 ♥ K6 ♥ 9873
 ♦ Q105 ♦ A764
 ♣ Q432 ♣ KJ6

♠ AQ83
 ♥ A542
 ♦ KJ2
 ♣ 95

North	East	South	West
-	-	-	P
INT	P	P	P

After a weak NT opener north should resist any thoughts of a game try and pass. The jack of spades looks the safest lead (yes a club is better here but dangerous) when partner can't produce the ace or king of spades at tick one and declarer seems to have the heart ace when they finess, a club switch now looks reasonable, declarer will now have to guess the diamond right for eight. South should win in dummy and immediately take the heart finess, later using the other hearts in dummy to play a diamond, this gives declarer a chance if the defence don't find a club switch early to play diamonds twice and maybe scramble to eight even if guessing the first one wrong. Eight will score well for North/South. Strong no trumps should settle in INT too, after a minor opener, maybe by North after one minor INT. This should also make eight on the diamond guess.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	1	2	2	2
S	1	1	2	2	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

=====

Board 13 ♠ QJ7 Dealer N
 ♥ Q10864 Vul: Both
 ♦ J95
 ♣ 63

♠ 1092 ♠ A8653
 ♥ AK9 ♥ 5
 ♦ A108 ♦ K64
 ♣ AK109 ♣ QJ52

♠ K4
 ♥ J732
 ♦ Q732
 ♣ 874

North	East	South	West
P	P	P	1♣
P	1♠	P	2NT
P	3♣	P	3♠
P	4NT*	P	5♦**
P	5♥***	P	5♠****
P	P	P	

*Roman Keycard Blackwood

** 0 or 3

*** Do you have the queen of trumps?

**** No sorry

Slam is close but the spades are so poor you must lose two tricks. If easts bidding is natural west knows east is unbalanced and should show his three-card support, Easts hand is nice and some will sensibly pass 4♠ but with the singleton heart I like the hand enough to move, Keycard Blackwood will tell that the king and queen of trumps are missing and eleven is the limit. Spades making eleven should be normal, any playing normal blackwood maybe unaware how poor the trumps are and get too high. Some pairs may play 3♣ as some sort of checkback and west, unaware of partners shapely hand, may not show the support as 4333. On a heart lead this will not score well today 😞

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 14 ♠ 854 Dealer E
 ♥ Q852 Vul: None
 ♦ 962
 ♣ A106

♠ AKQJ ♠ 109
 ♥ 103 ♥ K976
 ♦ KQ ♦ 10743
 ♣ KQ853 ♣ 972

♠ 7632
 ♥ AJ4
 ♦ AJ85
 ♣ J4

North	East	South	West
-	P	P	1♣
P	P	P	

Some may open the 5422 east hand 2NT, whilst 5422 is not the worst hand to open a no trump on this one with king queen doubleton and two small hearts is not a great one to do so, if partner can't bid over 1♣ little will be missed. Modern theory also suggests that you are better to play a two-point range for a 2NT opener (21-22) as there is no room for an invite, this makes life easier for responder, this hand shows exactly why 😊 When playing 20-22 East feels they should move if partner maximum but doesn't want to when partner minimum. 😊 Today it doesn't matter whether east moves over 2NT or not they are already too high!

Any pairs who open 1♣ may well play there and west will be crest fallen when it's passed out but will cheer up distinctly when it chalks up a very good score on the traveler! 😊

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	1
E	2	1	1	1	-
W	2	-	1	1	-

=====

Board 15 ♠ J85 Dealer S
 ♥ 1054 Vul: N-S
 ♦ AQ7
 ♣ J1092

♠ K1097643 ♠ AQ2
 ♥ 632 ♥ QJ7
 ♦ 2 ♦ J1083
 ♣ A5 ♣ K83

 ♠ AK98
 ♥ K9654
 ♦ Q764
 ♣

North	East	South	West
	-	-	1♦
3♠	P	P	P

After souths 1♦ opener how many spades does west bid? With seven bad spades four seems too many and two too tame so three it is. East should resist raising as 4333 and a lot of queens and jacks. If North/South are careful with hearts, nine should be the limit I wouldn't be surprised for ten to slip through though. South may be tempted to back in with a double, the right shape but very light in values, the vulnerability should put them off, but a double does work well here as 4♣ makes and may push East/West to 4♠. Any North/South going plus will score very well, Any East/West making ten in spades likewise.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 16 ♠ A108 Dealer W
 ♥ 9 Vul: E-W
 ♦ KJ832
 ♣ Q732

♠ KJ654 ♠ 973
 ♥ AK72 ♥ QJ4
 ♦ 65 ♦ 9
 ♣ J9 ♣ AK10865

 ♠ Q2
 ♥ 108653
 ♦ AQ1074
 ♣ 4

North	East	South	West
-	-	-	1♠
2♦	3♣	5♦	P
P	X	P	P
P			

After a 1♠ opener and a 2♦ overcall west has a tricky call, not enough for 3♣ but nothing else seems sensible, they may bid some number of spades if playing five card majors, three looks about right. South should not mess around at this favourable vulnerability and just bid 5♦, it appears double dummy to be a phantom sacrifice but in practice I suspect a lot of East/West will make ten in Spades losing two spades and a diamond, A club lead and securing the ruff is what it takes to hold it to nine. With no great fit for East/West there is no reason to go onto the five level themselves but letting North/South away undoubled seems weak so double ends the auction. I wouldn't be surprised if some North/Souths played 5♦ undoubled though. If North/South stop on the nose in 4♦ they will score very well.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	4	-	-	-
S	-	4	-	-	-
E	5	-	2	3	1
W	5	-	2	3	1

=====

Board 17 ♠ A7 Dealer N
 ♥ 93 Vul: None
 ♦ A1063
 ♣ K9652

♠ K964 ♠ J10853
 ♥ A876 ♥ K52
 ♦ J752 ♦ Q4
 ♣ Q ♣ 1083

 ♠ Q2
 ♥ QJ104
 ♦ K98
 ♣ AJ74

North	East	South	West
1♣	P	1♥	P
2♣	P	3NT	P
P	P		

Now this time it's a nice eleven and worth opening. two aces and a king. This will inevitably lead to 3NT by south, which with very careful defense goes down but I would expect to make a lot of the time because west has a horrid lead, a spade giving nine straight away, and a diamond, small queen king sets up a fineness of the ten for another trick that way, the defense need to lead declarers suit hearts and east when in with a heart needs to find the spade switch or declarer can set up a heart instead for nine. Very hard to see, if you managed this take a bow. On this auction I would lead a spade 😞 3NT making will be common. Any whose system ends up playing it by north will not score well as the spade lead is easy now.



Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 18 Dealer E
Vul: N-S

♠ AK106	♠ Q9
♥ K	♥ Q87642
♦ Q87	♦ 5
♣ KQ862	♣ A1054

♠ J2	♠ 87543
♥ AJ1053	♥ 9
♦ K1094	♦ AJ632
♣ 73	♣ J9

North	East	South	West
-	2♥	P	4♥
X	P	4♠	5♥
X	P	P	P

East should open a weak two and west has good enough support to pre-empt to four. North should double and this is best played as take out of 4♥, South has an easy 4♠ and with the 5th heart west is worth one more, bidding to the level of the fit. North should double as the heart king looks wasted in offence. Can

south resist removing to 5♠ when five five?, the old adage of not bidding five over five says they should pass and with a defensive trick they really should, but I wouldn't be surprised to see some five spades going down. Any East/West pushing their opponents too high and getting a plus score will score very well.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 19 Dealer S
Vul: E-W

♠ 743	♠ KQ	♠ 1052
♥ 84	♥ 109763	♥ QJ52
♦ AQ1042	♦ 75	♦ K93
♣ 1083	♣ KJ64	♣ Q92

♠ AJ986
♥ AK
♦ J86
♣ A75

North	East	South	West
-	-	1♠	P
1NT	P	2NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

North/South have enough for game and no fit, so 3NT is the obvious contract but this unfortunately has 5 cashing diamonds against it, Alot could depend on who ends up declaring the contract, after a 1♠ opener with such poor hearts and minimum values north is best to bid 1NT, South will invite and north has an easy raise, East now has no reason to lead a diamond and north has nine top tricks. If south opens a strong no trump or north decides to bid 2♥ at their first turn south could become declarer and west has an easy lead to beat the game. Any norths who don't receive a diamond lead may be tempted into the club finesse for an overtrick, giving east, a second chance to find the diamonds, if you are tempted by this its best to do it as early as possible while east knows as little about the hand as possible.

North/South will probably score ok for any plus score and those making game very well indeed.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 20 ♠ A64 Dealer W

♥ Q95 Vul: Both

♦ 32

♣ Q10864

♠ KJ932
♥ J82
♦ J10984
♣

♠ Q1085
♥ A763
♦ K5
♣ J92

♠ 7

♥ K104

♦ AQ76

♣ AK753

North	East	South	West
-	-	-	P
P	P	1♣	1♠
3♣	3♠	4♠	P
5♣	P	P	P

West's five five shape make it worth an overcall and the 5th club just about makes north worth 3♣ (or some sort of good raise if this is weak), West will support spades and south has a nice hand and six could be making if partner has suitable cards, 4♠ is a sensible way to show a good 5♣ bid, North has little extra to offer and should stop. Although today with the diamond fineness working and a good guess for the jack of hearts six can make. I would expect however any who bids game and makes twelve will score well enough to not need to bid the slam. Some easts may open a weak two suiter raised to three by west, South should double, and north will probably only bid 4♣ it is now unclear how strong they are and south fearing a very weak hand may pass, but as game can make opposite very little south should still raise to five.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	6	2	2	-	2
S	6	2	2	-	2
E	-	-	-	2	-
W	-	-	-	2	-

=====

Board 21 ♠ K953 Dealer N

♥ KQ1084 Vul: N-S

♦ Q

♣ K105

♠ Q102

♥ J5

♦ J1052

♣ AQ32

♠ A6

♥ 762

♦ AK7

♣ J9764

♠ J874

♥ A93

♦ 98643

♣ 8

North	East	South	West
1♥	P	1♠	X
2♠	3♣	P	P

P

Easts clubs vulnerable aren't worth a two-level overcall, do you want this suit led? after a 1♠ response from south, with both the other suits and values east should compete with a double. West has an easy free bid now, because of the vulnerability and only an eight-card fit, this should win the auction. If North/South are playing five card majors and south raises to 2♥ instead of 1♠ this may well win the auction. Part score battle at pairs and as always a plus score in either direction should score ok.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 22 ♠ K65 Dealer E
 ♥ AK Vul: E-W
 ♦ 9652
 ♣ J532

♠ Q7 ♠ 10832
 ♥ 9765432 ♥ 8
 ♦ QJ7 ♦ A84
 ♣ 6 ♣ AQ1097

♠ AJ94
 ♥ QJ10
 ♦ K103
 ♣ K84

North	East	South	West
-	P	INT	P
2NT	P	3NT	P
P	P		

If North/South have a free auction after a weak no trump opener, they should reach 3NT. Strong no trumps may end up after a minor opening playing by the north hand. It's not a thing of beauty but with both minor kings a trick and a highly unlikely view in spades (cash ace and king and then finesse the nine!) nine tricks can be made, by south on a heart lead however I would expect most declarers to play spades normally and fail, it's just a question by how many. If played by north, the obvious club lead (other than the inspired queen) will give declarer two tricks in the suit and a chance of making now. Any North/Souths that stop low enough to get a plus score will do ok.

I'm sure some East/West will scupper the above by bidding 😊 but seven hearts to the nine vulnerable should just lead to trouble! 😊😊 East may get a club overcall in depending on North/Souths bidding (1D-1NT maybe) but this should just lead to 3NT by North/South anyway.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 23 ♠ 762 Dealer S
 ♥ 73 Vul: Both
 ♦ AQJ952
 ♣ J4

♠ KQJ5 ♠ 98
 ♥ 986 ♥ AJ542
 ♦ 3 ♦ 1064
 ♣ A10976 ♣ Q32

♠ A1043
 ♥ KQ10
 ♦ K87
 ♣ K85

North	East	South	West
1♠	P	2♦	P
2NT	P	3NT	

Another failing 3NT 😊 The dealing machine is being cruel. Stopping low may well score well again. After a four-card major 1♠ west should pass with good cards in the oppositions suit and poor clubs, North with six good diamonds is worth 2♦ and after souths 2NT a wise person may pass but with potentially six diamond tricks I would find it hard to do! 😊 A club lead will beat it. Some easts may stick a 2♥ bid in over 2♦, this is thin vulnerable and both opposition bidding and will only serve to give partner a chance to go wrong on the opening lead, a club beats it leading hearts wins the postmortem but lets the game through!! 😊 Strong no trumps will open the south hand INT and north has a similar dilemma, if they can transfer to diamonds and partner show a high card (1N-2N diamonds-3C good diamonds) this will surely lead to 3NT too, failing on the inevitable club lead.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 24 ♠ A10 Dealer W
 ♥ 876 Vul: None
 ♦ Q6
 ♣ J98743

♠ 9643 ♠ J2
 ♥ A10953 ♥ Q2
 ♦ 985 ♦ AK1072
 ♣ A ♣ Q1062

 ♠ KQ875
 ♥ KJ4
 ♦ J43
 ♣ K5

North	East	South	West
P	1♦	1♠	2♥
P	3♣	P	3♦
P	P	P	

West is just about worth 2♥ as it has diamond support to fall back on, this should lead to 3♦ by east, barring any defensive calamities making nine. If east deems the hand not worth 2♥ then double is best. North may bid clubs now or even raise spades with just ace small but East/West should still get to 3♦. Any North/Souths who steal the hand and concede only fifty or even a hundred should score well.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 25 ♠ Q63 Dealer N
 ♥ A653 Vul: E-W
 ♦ A3
 ♣ J1093

♠ A109 ♠ J874
 ♥ J9 ♥ 1082
 ♦ K864 ♦ 1097
 ♣ Q874 ♣ K65

 ♠ K52
 ♥ KQ74
 ♦ QJ52
 ♣ A2

North	East	South	West
P	P	1♦	P
1♥	P	3♥	P
4♥			

South may choose a more conservative 2♥ on its second bid, but ace doubleton and four good hearts I'm for three, either way, North should invite game over two anyway and game should always be reached. Strong no trumps may play it from the south hand after a stayman enquiry. The play is tricky, there is two spades to lose and a club, and if trumps are drawn only nine winners, five trumps one spade one club two diamonds, to make declarer must either choose to try and ruff two diamonds in the north hand, which fails here, or ruff two clubs in the south hand, which works. Ruffing clubs looks slightly better as the suit offers more possibilities of something good happening, for instance if they run the jack with the king coming down in three, they can set up the extra trick with just one ruff of clubs. Played by south, west has a nasty lead and may make it easier for declarer by leading a club from the start, but with values in every suit a trump lead is best. Anyone who bids and makes game should score well.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 26 ♠ 5 Dealer E
 ♥ 98742 Vul: Both
 ♦ QJ84
 ♣ J109

♠ AQJ8742 ♠ 1093
 ♥ A10 ♥ 3
 ♦ 72 ♦ K10963
 ♣ 64 ♣ KQ85

 ♠ K6
 ♥ KQJ65
 ♦ A5
 ♣ A732

North	East	South	West
-	-	1♥	4♠
P	P	X	P
5♥	P	P	P

East is worth 4♠ over south's 1♥ opener and north should resist bidding 5♥ this will only make south think they have more values than they do and probably raise to a failing slam. South with a good hand should double and when north removes to 5♥ south knows partner has support but is weak. I can see some East/West tempted to bid 5♠ but the rule of not bidding five over five wins again and should stop them, but rarely does! 😊 Ten tricks are the limit in each direction unless east leads the spade ace to a heart contract. Again, a small minus may score ok, anyone getting away with 4♥/4♠ scoring very well indeed.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 27 ♠ Q1052 Dealer S
 ♥ AK73 Vul: None
 ♦ J65
 ♣ J6

♠ 87643	♠ AKJ9
♥ 64	♥ 952
♦ Q1072	♦ A93
♣ Q5	♣ 1032

♠
♥ QJ108
♦ K84
♣ AK9874

North	East	South	West
-	-	1♣	P
1♥	X	3♥	P
4♥	P	P	P

Not the best shape for East to double but with an opening hand and such good spades it would be rude not too! 😊 South has an interesting second bid, it's a minimum hand points wise but the spade void and the good hearts, and the good six card club suit make it worth three.

North has an easy raise of that. If south does just bid 2♥, north should make a try with eleven points anyway and game will be reached. On a spade lead, this forces declarer straight away down to three trumps and the hand looks tricky, declarer should take the precaution of ruffing the clubs good before drawing trumps, then draw trumps ending in south and enjoy the clubs, south will be stuck in hand and sensible discards by East/West should take the last three tricks, game made. Declarer can make eleven by leading a diamond up after ruffing the club, however this is dangerous as if it loses and south is forced again in spades, they can no longer draw trumps and enjoy the clubs and are now in danger of going down. Will anyone risk this? They shouldn't as there is probably no need game bid and made on twenty-four points will probably score well enough.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	4	1	5	-	1
S	4	1	5	-	1
E	-	-	-	1	-
W	-	-	-	1	-

=====

Board 28 ♠ A5 Dealer W
 ♥ Q10983 Vul: N-S
 ♦ A7
 ♣ 10854

♠ 10982	♠ K63
♥ A652	♥ K74
♦ K64	♦ 9
♣ J2	♣ AKQ763

♠ QJ74
♥ J
♦ QJ108532
♣ 9

North	East	South	West
-	-	-	P
P	1♣	3♦	P
P	4♣	P	P
P			

Don't pre-empt with a four-card major is the rule but rules are made to be broken 😊😊

Here is a good time as partner is a passed hand and the opposition have opened the bidding. East isn't worth a double at that level and west can hardly double without either major so 4♣ is the best it can do; indeed, 3♦ might even win the auction at some tables. East/West can make 3NT but if south bids diamonds, I can't think of any sensible auction that gets there, be happy with a plus score if you manage it, it should score well.

If south bids 1♦ or passes because of the four-card major, West will bid 1♥ and after 2♣ by East south should bid diamonds now. Nine is making in both minors although if East/West lead trumps at some point, ace and another spade is safe for nine but running the queen may get south in a mess.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	3	-	-	-
S	-	3	-	-	-
E	3	-	2	2	3
W	3	-	2	2	3

=====