

♦♠NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION ♥♣



Second Interclub – Heat A

9th - 11th November 2014

Commentary by Ian Hamilton

1

♠ AJ
 ♥ Q10864
 ♦ 103
 ♣ K543
 ♠ 1096
 ♥ K932
 ♦ KQ6
 ♣ 976
 ♠ 87
 ♥ A75
 ♦ 98752
 ♣ Q82
 ♠ KQ5432
 ♥ J
 ♦ AJ4
 ♣ AJ10

 Dealer: North
 Neither Vulnerable

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

When south opens 1♠ in third seat north is just about worth 2♥. South is awkwardly placed, with a decent hand, but a moderate suit. He could bid 3♠, or possibly 2NT, if it shows extra values. Certainly there is some danger of north passing 2♠, so that is ruled out.

N/S should reach the cold 4♠.

With a winning view in clubs 450 is possible - 480 if the diamond king has been led. No trump can also make 460, and some may be in that strain.

2

♠ AQ862
 ♥ AQJ9
 ♦ J98
 ♣ 8
 ♠ K94
 ♥ 1072
 ♦ 632
 ♣ J1052
 ♠ J753
 ♥ 5
 ♦ K1074
 ♣ AK93
 ♠ 10
 ♥ K8643
 ♦ AQ5
 ♣ Q764

 Dealer: East
 N-S Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	3	6	4	4
S	2	3	6	4	4
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

East might open 1♦, and south could overcall 1♥, simplifying getting to 4♥. However, it is not a sound overcall, having poor intermediates, so most will pass.

It is much easier if north is the opener in fourth seat. North will open 1♠, and the heart fit should be found whether south responds 2NT or 2♥.

Declarer can make 680 by double finessing diamonds, and either setting up dummy's spades, or by ruffing two clubs and taking a spade finesse. Ruffing three clubs in north sets up a trump for west.

I reckon 680 will be a top. There could be those mishandling the play and only making ten or eleven tricks, conceivably less.

3

♠ 1085
 ♥ AK8
 ♦ A95
 ♣ Q976
 ♠ KQ
 ♥ QJ53
 ♦ J103
 ♣ K1082
 ♠ J643
 ♥ 92
 ♦ KQ762
 ♣ 43
 ♠ A972
 ♥ 10764
 ♦ 84
 ♣ AJ5

 Dealer: South
 E-W Vulnerable

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

West's vulnerable weak NT can be beaten one, maybe two tricks, for a poor board. South has to find the heart TEN switch when he wins the spade ace, rather than return partner's club suit, to get 200. West is maybe wiser passing, and north will be the one opening a weak 1NT.

5 card majors probably find the same spot, though if west opens 1♠ east could declare 2♦.

This looks an unusual part-score, where conceivably the traveller will have 1NT made on both sides of the scoresheet.

As often, any plus will be good.

4

♠ AK6
 ♥ Q875
 ♦ 5
 ♣ KQ984
 ♠ 10982
 ♥ 6
 ♦ AK873
 ♣ 753
 ♠ J75
 ♥ A10932
 ♦ Q1062
 ♣ 6
 ♠ Q43
 ♥ KJ4
 ♦ J94
 ♣ AJ102

 Dealer: West
 Both Vulnerable

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

North will open 1♠ and some souths will bid 2NT, quite possibly raised to game. This will meet an early death on a diamond lead. It should be two down, unless E/W block the diamond suit, a distinct possibility.

If south makes an inverted 2♣ or value 3♣ bid and north shows his hearts south should realise there could be little by way of a stop in either of spades or diamonds. N/S could now declare clubs, possibly in game.

5♣ is a sound spot, unluckily beaten on a heart ruff (or double dummy beaten two on two heart ruffs). This defence may not be found, so some will succeed.

It is nice to see a hand where the minor suit scores better than no trumps, even if it is only conceding a smaller minus.

5

♠ K87
♥ A85
♦ 10742
♣ J43

♠ A10532
♥ J106
♦ AJ
♣ 1052

♠ J94
♥ K9732
♦ K6
♣ Q96

♠ Q6
♥ Q4
♦ Q9853
♣ AK87

Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

When N/S find their diamond fit and E/W their spade fit, it is simply a question of judging how high to go.

When they have nine diamonds it suggests N/S are safe at the three level, and so they are, since one light, losing 100, is better than letting E/W make their 110 in spades.

This should be a finely balanced part-score battle, with no guarantee of judging accurately.

6

♠ AJ72
♥ A8
♦ AK987
♣ 86

♠ K108
♥ QJ9732
♦ 103
♣ A10

♠ 954
♥ 106
♦ Q54
♣ J9753

♠ Q63
♥ K54
♦ J62
♣ KQ42

Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

West might Multi or bid a weak two in hearts. However, as the cards lie 2♥ could go three light, -800 if doubled. Alternatively, north may open 1♦. When south dredges up 2NT or 2♣ it looks like N/S will end up in game, 3NT by south the most obvious spot.

So long as declarer makes the standard play of ducking the first heart, before playing diamonds, he is in no danger, and should make exactly nine tricks.

It is possible to make 4♠, thanks to the lucky layout, but few will find this spot.

7

♠ A10853
♥ A62
♦ Q3
♣ AQ9

♠ J4
♥ J4
♦ A107654
♣ K86

♠ KQ92
♥ Q987
♦ KJ2
♣ 43

♠ 76
♥ K1053
♦ 98
♣ J10752

Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

North's 1♠ or strong NT could be passed out. The former can just squeak home, but the latter suffers from six diamonds potentially being run against it. However, east may not lead the suit, or may block it, so declarer has chances, and should not finish more than one light unless he plays clubs from hand after winning a spade opening lead.

E/W perhaps do better to attempt to play 2♦, which makes with a correct trump guess.

However, facing a strong NT south may now venture 3♣ in competition, which is unbeatable. Note that after pulling trumps, the best play in hearts is king, ace, then low towards the ten.

It will be interesting to see who wins this part-score battle.

8

♠ A1064
♥ K102
♦ 94
♣ A872

♠ Q75
♥ 764
♦ 103
♣ KQ1064

♠ J93
♥ J98
♦ KJ765
♣ 53

♠ K82
♥ AQ53
♦ AQ82
♣ J9

Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

I would open the prime north hand 1♣ playing 5 card majors, alternatively a weak NT. However, many will pass.

Whoever opens it looks like 3NT will be the spot.

With south declaring the probable lead is the club king, and with the friendly lies 430 should be the result.

If east is on lead a diamond is more testing, and most will only manage 400, though 430 is still possible. I cannot see anyone contriving to go light.

9

♠ AQ104
 ♥ AJ10
 ♦ A
 ♣ Q10942
 ♠ K865
 ♥ KQ52
 ♦ QJ93
 ♣ 6
 ♠ 974
 ♥ 108654
 ♦ AJ875
 ♠ J9732
 ♥ 863
 ♦ K72
 ♣ K3

Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

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

South is likely to declare 4♠ after scraping up a response to north's 1♣ opener. North may bid 4♠ directly, or splinter in diamonds, though this is not recommended with the singleton ace.

4♠ is defeated on ace and a club ruff, west then switching to the heart king. Declarer can't get to hand to take the trump finesse.

West might lead a top diamond, declarer slip through a club to the king, then pull trumps, starting with the 9. He now can get home when he finds both heart honours onside, ruffing out east's club knave.

I wonder how many will succeed in 4♠?
Will anyone bid and make 3NT?

10

♠ AQ
 ♥ J85
 ♦ K103
 ♣ KQ965
 ♠ 9754
 ♥ A92
 ♦ Q8765
 ♣ A
 ♠ K106
 ♥ 7643
 ♦ AJ94
 ♣ J8
 ♠ J832
 ♥ KQ10
 ♦ 2
 ♣ 107432

Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

North has a strong NT or a 1♣ opener. He is likely to play the former. A heart lead allows the defence to pick up the diamond suit, taking the first seven tricks. However, east may lead the diamond 4, ceding a trick, and blocking the suit. Declarer now plays a club to west, who must switch to a spade. Declarer can win the ace, cash clubs, then play a heart. The defence cannot untangle their tricks and declarer gets home.

Playing acol, south is unlikely to allow north to play 1NT, instead putting him back to 2♣, an easy make with an overtrick. However, this lets east protect in the passout seat, finding E/W's diamond fit, 110 possible if the diamonds are picked up.

Who will win this part-score battle for a plus score?

11

♠ K63
 ♥ A32
 ♦ A6
 ♣ 109865
 ♠ QJ95
 ♥ 10
 ♦ QJ1073
 ♣ QJ2
 ♠ 82
 ♥ K9875
 ♦ K942
 ♣ AK
 ♠ A1074
 ♥ QJ64
 ♦ 85
 ♣ 743

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

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

East may open 1♥, or overcall in the suit after north opens light.

E/W should find their diamond fit, and N/S their club fit if north has opened the suit.

E/W have the balance of points, and a better fit, so should go plus here.

In theory 110 is the limit, but some will sneak past the heart ace or manage to get a spade away from the east hand on the club queen, and so score 130.

12

♠ AKQ1086
 ♥ J3
 ♦
 ♣ Q10963
 ♠ 2
 ♥ Q876
 ♦ 987432
 ♣ 54
 ♠ 754
 ♥ 52
 ♦ AKJ106
 ♣ A87
 ♠ J93
 ♥ AK1094
 ♦ Q5
 ♣ KJ2

Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

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

North opens 1♠ and east overcalls 2♦. South will content himself with 2♥ for the moment.

If west puts on maximum pressure by bidding 5♦ now, it is very hard for N/S to find the cold slam without guessing.

North will probably bid 5♠ over 5♦, but it will take a brave south to give it one for the road, not being entirely sure there is a diamond void and enough controls opposite.

I suspect there will be a lot of 680s N/S, though some will doubtless manage the slam.

There could be a fair few penalties. 7♦x, light 800, is theoretically par. 6♦x, minus 500, is a paying save against game, though at the risk of pushing the opponents into their winning spot.

13

♠ J732
 ♥ 108
 ♦ Q10
 ♣ J10432
 ♠ KQ
 ♥ KQ53
 ♦ A763
 ♣ K76
 ♠ A109654
 ♥ 94
 ♦ K8
 ♣ 985

Dealer: North
Both Vulnerable

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

South might make a weak jump overcall in spades if east has opened an acol 1♥. He shouldn't come in over east's alternative strong NT.

E/W, left to their own devices, just could get overboard when the heart fit comes to light, it perhaps not being clear that east's KQ spades are virtually valueless opposite west's singleton.

It looks like a lot of 650s E/W, and some 680s when the defence miss their spade ace at trick one. There could be some getting 800/1100 from 4♠.

14

♠ 6
 ♥ KJ8
 ♦ 9732
 ♣ A10654
 ♠ A1052
 ♥ Q93
 ♦ 1065
 ♣ K32
 ♠ KQ93
 ♥ 1064
 ♦ AKQ
 ♣ J98
 ♠ J874
 ♥ A752
 ♦ J84
 ♣ Q7

Dealer: East
Neither Vulnerable

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

Another strong NT, or 1♠ opener, this time by east. West is likely to make a game try in spades over the strong NT, once the fit is established. East should decline, with his sterile shape, and minimum.

Acol goes 1♠ - 2♠. East does best to pass, since game is unlikely to be on with his flat 15HCP opposite no more than 9HCP.

With the 4:1 trump break, which could be mis-guessed, declarers may as well be playing in no trump. All the finesses are wrong, though the club queen does fall doubleton, if that can be divined (or is led).

Declarers will do well to make eight tricks, so it looks like acol gains on this one, as they will be a level lower.

15

♠ AJ103
 ♥ A1092
 ♦ 952
 ♣ K2
 ♠ KQ7
 ♥ K87
 ♦ Q1073
 ♣ A73
 ♠ 98642
 ♥ 653
 ♦ A6
 ♣ 964
 ♠ 5
 ♥ QJ4
 ♦ KJ84
 ♣ QJ1085

Dealer: South
N-S Vulnerable

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

When west opens a weak NT and east transfers to spades then passes, south knows north has values, and should double. North has a close decision between passing for penalties, bidding hearts, or trying 2NT.

2♠x can be beaten 800, so that is the winner. 3NT is unbeatable on 22HCP, scoring 400/430.

At some tables west's opening 1♦ could be passed out. This spot is not a thing of beauty, but unlikely to lose more than 150. Some norths will make a takout double of 1♦. Now south probably bids a heavy 1NT, and plays there.

Expect a wide range of scores here.

16

♠ 107
 ♥ AQ7654
 ♦ 9865
 ♣ 7
 ♠ AK54
 ♥ J10
 ♦ AJ4
 ♣ 10962
 ♠ QJ963
 ♥ K8
 ♦ Q2
 ♣ KQ85
 ♠ 82
 ♥ 932
 ♦ K1073
 ♣ AJ43

Dealer: West
E-W Vulnerable

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

North is unlikely to bid 2♥ over west's weak NT, though he may make a weak jump overcall if the opener is 1♠.

No intervention is likely to prevent E/W from playing 4♠, though the declarer may differ.

With east declaring the only winning lead is a heart to the ace, and club back, north ruffing the return. South still makes the club knave.

West has theoretically a harder time on the singleton club lead, though south may not return the suit, away from his knave, lest north has led a doubleton. Thus some declarers will get home, when all the red cards prove friendly.

17

♠ 853
 ♥ K86
 ♦ 98
 ♣ AJ1094
 ♠ A9
 ♥ AQ5
 ♦ QJ1072
 ♣ K87
 ♠ KQ1072
 ♥ 432
 ♦ A5
 ♣ Q53

Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

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

At white south has enough for 1♠ over east's 1♦, or 2♠ over his strong NT.

West can support diamonds, but after the strong NT and overcall will pass.

E/W easily make 130 declaring diamonds, so need to beat 2♠ by three tricks if they fail to find their part-score. This looks improbable, as the maximum seems to be four red tricks and three black - two down.

Maybe east should bid 3♦ after south overcalls his 1NT with 2♠. Selling out at the two level at love all rarely pays.

18

♠ 6
 ♥ AQ104
 ♦ AKQ5
 ♣ 10974
 ♠ AK9742
 ♥ 63
 ♦ 93
 ♣ K32
 ♠ Q108
 ♥ 97
 ♦ J1087
 ♣ AJ86
 ♠ J53
 ♥ KJ852
 ♦ 642
 ♣ Q5

Dealer: East
N-S Vulnerable

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

West has a very good Multi or weak two in spades in third seat. Some will open 1♠, since it is a bit too good for most people's idea of a weak two. North will double either.

Raises by east could make it awkward for N/S to find their cold 4♥. Some may sell out to 3♠, makeable with an inspired view in clubs, or maybe north will switch to the club ten after two top diamonds if west declares.

Expect a few 620s N/S here, several inadequate penalties, plus a few E/Ws making spade contracts.

19

♠ A63
 ♥ KQ9
 ♦ K65
 ♣ Q754
 ♠ K4
 ♥ J10873
 ♦ Q3
 ♣ AJ63
 ♠ QJ7
 ♥ A642
 ♦ J1072
 ♣ K8
 ♠ 109852
 ♥ 5
 ♦ A984
 ♣ 1092

Dealer: South
E-W Vulnerable

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

If west opens 1♥, north may pass, and east will raise to 3♥ or make some other other heart limit raise with the same result. 3♥ looks likely to buy the contract, and should be one light, unless the defence play spades, then fail to find their two diamond tricks.

North's weak NT will see south transferring to spades, then passing 2♠. In theory this should be beaten, but the defence could slip and let it home.

East could double north's 1♠ opener. Now E/W will certainly find hearts, but could get overboard.

There will be scores both ways in this competitive part-score battle, a recurring theme in this set.

20

♠ KQ64
 ♥ 96
 ♦ 853
 ♣ K952
 ♠ 75
 ♥ K3
 ♦ A10942
 ♣ QJ84
 ♠ J10982
 ♥ QJ52
 ♦ KJ
 ♣ 107
 ♠ A3
 ♥ A10874
 ♦ Q76
 ♣ A63

Dealer: West
Both Vulnerable

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

South's weak NT may be passed out, and could make, though there are only six obvious tricks. Some red-blooded easts might show both majors, and get into trouble, probably doubled. This will cost at least 200, probably more.

5 card majors open 1♥, and north responds 1♠. This will certainly keep E/W out of trouble, and probably ends in the same south 1NT spot.

Deep Finesse makes 1NT. West leads a diamond, the king and knave scoring. Irrespective of how the defence now play west is allowed to make the heart king, then cash his diamonds. This rectifies the count for a major suit squeeze on east. If west fails to cash diamonds an extra heart can be set up.

21

♠ Q107653
♥ 86
♦ 2
♣ K432

♠ A4
♥ AK10
♦ AQJ643
♣ 98

♠ J98
♥ J97
♦ K985
♣ Q107

♠ K2
♥ Q5432
♦ 107
♣ AJ65

Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

North is too light and has too poor a suit for a weak two, so east starts 1♦, west responding 1♥. East has a problem - three card support and a strong hand, with no satisfactory bid. Best is 3♥, as 3♦ could be passed, and 2NT has only one black suit stop. West could now make a slam try, and some will be there.

On a club lead 6♥ depends on hearts behaving, plus the diamond finesse winning - it doesn't. If north fails this opening lead test, maybe seduced by his singleton, 6♥ can come home, though declarer needs to play only two trumps before playing the diamond ten, lest it be ducked.

There will be those bidding and making slam, but there could be some light. 3NT, or 6NT, get the money if the club lead is missed. Both are easier to play, as ruffs aren't allowed.

22

♠ KJ42
♥ 9852
♦ KQ4
♣ J9

♠ AQ65
♥ 3
♦ 10763
♣ KQ53

♠ 7
♥ AQJ
♦ J952
♣ A10862

♠ 10983
♥ K10764
♦ A8
♣ 74

Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

East might open 1♦, more likely west 1♣. The auction could end up in game, especially if east has opened. 3NT comes home when the major suit finesses win and the clubs behave. Indeed on a heart lead ten tricks may well eventuate.

Some will be in minor suit part-scores or 2NT, so there will be a wide spread of scores, largely if not totally E/W, as usual the no trumppers ruling the roost.

23

♠ J1093
♥ Q4
♦ 865
♣ K643

♠ Q876
♥ AJ6
♦ 974
♣ J108

♠ A542
♥ 10953
♦ AK
♣ 975

♠ K
♥ K872
♦ QJ1032
♣ AQ2

Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

South opens 1♦, and north bids 1♠. South is probably best rebidding 1NT, even if a point too good for this in 5 card majors.

West needs to find a heart lead or switch to beat this. N/S are better in 2♦, but who can resist no trumps?

Some wests will double 1♦, and are likely to end up in their spade fit. It is hard to see this making more than seven tricks, so N/S should emerge plus.

With both vulnerable part-score battles are hard to judge. Here defending, collecting 100s, works best.

24

♠ 986
♥ Q103
♦ QJ52
♣ Q94

♠ J107
♥ KJ62
♦ 763
♣ AJ3

♠ Q432
♥ A975
♦ K9
♣ 765

♠ AK5
♥ 84
♦ A1084
♣ K1082

Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

South will open a weak NT or 1♦. Having passed, and at love all, west does best to double or make a major showing bid, finding E/W's heart part-score, which should make 110.

Now the best N/S can do is lose 50 in 3♦, and that depends on guessing clubs correctly.

Love all part-scores are for declaring, even if you go light.

25

♠ J9542
♥ AJ762
♦ 10
♣ A3

♠ AQ108
♥ K4
♦ A983
♣ KJ8

♠ K6
♥ 10953
♦ Q52
♣ Q1094

♠ 73
♥ Q8
♦ KJ764
♣ 7652

 Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

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

It is tempting to open the north hand 1♠, but with only 10HCP and poor suits, pass is wiser. South would respond 1NT and west double. Now N/S look booked for a penalty.

More likely is west opening his strong NT or 1♠ in 4th seat. E/W are likely to play in no trump now, and could bid game occasionally.

On south's diamond lead or north's major lead nine tricks are nearly guaranteed, the defence only making two hearts, the club ace and a diamond.

Those bidding game or getting decent penalties from N/S will top the traveller.

26

♠ K102
♥ J7652
♦ K43
♣ J4

♠ J953
♥ KQ98
♦ J95
♣ 32

♠ Q874
♥ 3
♦ A7
♣ AKQ985

♠ A6
♥ A104
♦ Q10862
♣ 1076

 Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

West responds 1♥ to east's 1♣ and east rebids 1♠, raised by west. Now east could play 4♠, and south will probably find the diamond lead. Assuming the defence don't allow declarer to slip past any of their winners even one light now depends on declarer guessing the position of the spade 10.

East might rebid 2NT, rather than 1♠, and could be raised to game. When south leads a diamond dummy's holding provides a second stop, and declarer can get home by leading a heart at trick two, then a spade to the 8.

I reckon most credible part-scores will make E/W, but those contracting for game will rarely do so. Not over-bidding at Pairs is usually best.

27

♠ K7
♥ A2
♦ J1097
♣ Q8432

♠ AJ32
♥ Q4
♦ 532
♣ AJ106

♠ Q1095
♥ 10986
♦ AKQ
♣ 97

♠ 864
♥ KJ753
♦ 864
♣ K5

 Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

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

West either opens a weak NT or 1♣, depending on methods, and E/W should find the spade fit directly, or via Stayman or Checkback. East has a raise to 3♠. Holding a minimum west will probably pass.

4♠ is actually a reasonable spot, requiring only a little more than the spade finesse. Today, it loses, and the conservative bidders will be rewarded, scoring 140, and a joint top, as it is near impossible to let 4♠ home.

28

♠ KQ1092
♥ J
♦ K
♣ 1098643

♠ J53
♥ A6432
♦ Q5
♣ Q75

♠ A8
♥ Q10
♦ AJ1086
♣ AKJ2

♠ 764
♥ K9875
♦ 97432
♣

 Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	3	5	3	2	6
W	4	5	3	1	6

North's shapely hand could open if his honours were all held in his long suits. They aren't.

So east will bully off with 1♦, and West bid 1♥. East bids 2NT or 3♣, and 3NT eventuates.

Unless north has unwisely butted in with one spade, south's red suit lead cedes a trick, as with limited dummy entries declarer probably plays the diamond suit himself by starting with the queen, holding himself to three tricks in the suit. At least north's top spade gives nothing.

In fact declarer can always make twelve tricks by playing diamonds double dummy, pinning the heart knave, then end-playing south with a heart to lead diamonds. Someone will doubtless cap their evening by scoring 490 on this, the last board of a fun set.

Ave HCP	N 10.61	S 9.43	E 10.32	W 9.64	Balanced	N 14	S 16	E 17	W 15
Voids/singletons	N 1/10	S 1/6	E 1/4	W 0/7	7+ suit	N 0	S 0	E 0	W 0