


Board 1

North Deals

None Vul

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

EW 3♠; NS 2♥; EW 3♣; NS 1♦; Par -140

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1 NT	Pass	2♥ ¹	Pass
2♠	All pass		

1. Transfer

Bidding: This is a straightforward Strong No Trump / Transfer auction.

Opening Lead: South is marked with values on this auction. This information should make it an easy opening lead but the problem is that north has too many choices. Partner did not double 2♥ transfer bid, but they could still hold ♥QJx(x). If you decide to lead a trump, you should not lead the ace. Instead, lead a small trump so that you may retain trump control and the option to play two rounds of trumps later. Holding Axx of trumps, opposite a partner with values, it is certainly reasonable to try for a club ruff.

Although a reasonable choice, a diamond lead happens to give up a second diamond trick on this lay of the cards. The only lead to give declarer pause may be a heart lead. The specter of a 4-1 trump break coupled with a forcing game may cause declarer to lose control.

Defense: Club lead appears to locate the queen. This is not a setback for the defense because in the absence of clear information, when holding eight cards in a suit, it is correct to finesse against the queen. After a club lead, north has to be on their toes to win the trump ace in order to play a second round of clubs otherwise because partner's only sure entry is the ♠K. The defense can also hold declarer to nine tricks on a non-diamond lead by drawing trumps, leaving declarer with two diamond losers.

Play: After a diamond lead, declarer is likely to take ten tricks via three spades, one heart, two diamonds and four clubs. After a non-diamond lead, declarer must plan to ruff a diamond in hand. Playing the ♦A and a small one will alert defense to playing three rounds of trumps. Declarer can disguise their plan by leading a diamond towards the JT3 first. Playing ♦A and another would be a sneaky way to get defense to break a frozen suit if declarer did not hold the ♠10.

Most declarers will take nine tricks and some will even score a second overtrick.

Board 2

East Deals

N-S Vul

♠ A 8 7 6		♠ J
♥ 6 3		♥ J 7
♦ K J 7 6 2		♦ 5 4 3
♣ 9 8		♣ A K 10 7 5 4 3
♠ Q 10 9 2	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> N W E S </div>	
♥ A K 10 9 8		
♦ A 10		
♣ Q J		
♠ K 5 4 3		
♥ Q 5 4 2		
♦ Q 9 8		
♣ 6 2		

EW 6♣; EW 5N; EW 5♥; EW 1♠; EW 1♦; Par -920

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		3 ♣	Pass

3 NT	All pass
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Bidding: East's 3 ♣ opening is at the top end of the range for a first seat preempt at favorable vulnerability. This is a wide range preempt situation and that makes West's response a bit more difficult than it would have been opposite a second seat or vulnerable preempt. East could have a pretty bad hand with a mediocre suit like KT9xxxx, and very little outside. Against a 3 NT contract, defense could simply hold up the Ace once to keep the club suit from running.

A flexible choice is to bid 3 ♥ (forcing) in order to find the best game or settle in 4 ♣ partscore if partner is not able to cooperate and rebids clubs. Opener can always bid 3 NT with a solid preempt and something in the pointed suits. In this case, opener has a solid preempt with nothing in a side suit. Holding secondary heart support, opener simply raises to 4 ♥.

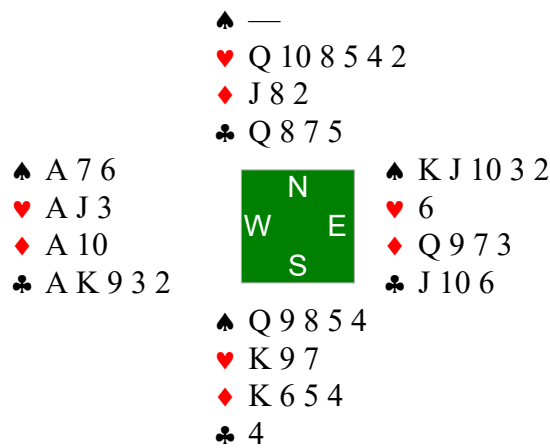
We expect most Easts to simply bid 3 NT ending the auction.

Opening Lead: Lacking an honor sequence, fourth best from longest and strongest is usually a good lead against No Trump contracts. We would lead the ♦ 6.

Defense & Play: The lead appears to have struck gold but running a seven card suit exerts enormous pressure on the defense. Declarer can pitch everything except hearts. South can come down to ♠ Kx and ♥ Qxx. That is not enough. South must be also be prepared to duck smoothly when declarer leads the ♥ J from dummy at trick 9. In that case declarer is likely to cash out their ten tricks. However; we believe that several declarers will bring home all thirteen tricks due to a defensive miscue.

Alternate: 3 ♥ by west would be forcing and draw a 4 ♥ response from opener. A low diamond is still the correct lead against 4 ♥. Declarer can now overtake the first club with the ♣ A and run the ♥ J followed by a repeated finesse against the ♥ Q. Declarer can then draw trumps and overtake the second club to take all thirteen tricks. Playing ♥ AK hoping for good luck is too much to ask.

Board 3
 South Deals
 E-W Vul



W 4N; EW 4♠; E 3N; W 5♣; E 4♣; W 3♦; E 2♦; Par -630

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 NT	Pass	3 ♥ ¹	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	3 NT	Pass
4 ♣ ²	Pass	4 ♠	All pass

1. Transfer
2. Cue-bid for spades

Bidding: Super-accepts are less common after a 2 NT opening and most would not super-accept the transfer with this power house hand due to the 3-card support. However; after responder offers a choice of games, opener should reveal the strength of this hand in support of spades by cue bidding their lowest control. This is necessary in case responder has a hand that requires a fit to have a chance of slam (else 3 NT is high enough).

East is not broke but cannot visualize a slam opposite a hand that could not super-accept. We usually have two chances to win a hand; bidding and play. If we lose the board in bidding, we cannot make up for it during the play. On touch and go slams, taking 12 tricks may garner almost as many matchpoints as bidding and making a slam. If there is a light slam, it is more likely to be in a 4-4 or 5-4 diamond fit. After 4 ♣ cue-bid, spades are trumps and there is no way back to another suit contract.

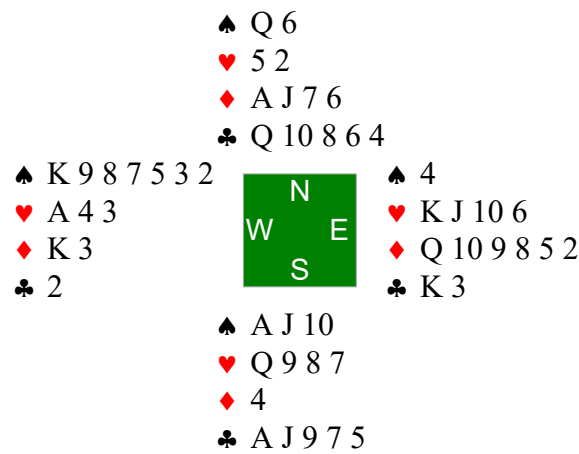
Even without the slam overture by opener, South should not double the game. Yes, the spades are a surprise but only if there is no double. A good declarer would use that information well. Besides, the red Kings are less potent because they are located under the big hand.

Opening Lead: The cue-bid should warn North off of a club lead and favor the heart suit. Some may lead a diamond and declarer will have a guess at trick one.

Defense: There is not a lot to do but watch how declarer plays, there are lots of variations.

Play: On a heart lead, declarer takes the King with the Ace. Even if the club finesse works, there will always be a diamond loser. Therefore, there is no need to play on diamonds now. Most trump splits would allow time to draw some and then play on clubs, eventually losing one diamond, one club and one spade. Starting with the ♠ A is simplest...5-0! At this point it would be best to give up drawing trumps (since the tap in hearts would later hurt) and just switch to a cross ruff and guess well in diamonds. This play would be easier to prepare for if South doubles 4 ♠ (based on long trumps and good intermediates behind responder). Declarer should cash one high club, then ♥ A followed by a heart ruff. This allows declarer to lead the second club from the dummy in order to avoid her ♣ A or K getting trumped by south.

Board 4
 West Deals
 Both Vul



NS 4♣; NS 2N; EW 2♠; EW 2♦; Par +130

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT ¹	2 ♣
2 ♠	4 ♣	4 ♦	All pass

1. Forcing

Bidding: I am not convinced of the 2 ♣ overcall but my tendency is to throw in some interference at a low level when I can, as the benefit of taking the opponents out of their book can be useful. Those Souths that do not overcall will probably defend 2 ♠ for a poor result because balancing with 3 ♣ *after* letting the opponents have a cooperative auction is far more dangerous than overcalling at the 2-level *before* the opponents have discussed.

North's shape and defense does not lend itself to an immediate 5-level call, but a vulnerable jump raise can always stray into the constructive range. If the opponents bid game, partner will still bid 5 ♣ when it is right a good chunk of the time.

Back to East, most 1 NT responses would not be this distributional, but it is worth taking a chance for +130 in order to avoid -130, or +100, defending 4 ♣. Is there any chance for +200? It is difficult to double with the ♣ K likely in the slot. Perhaps the opponents have misguessed to bid 4 ♣ when 3 ♠ was going down. Trying for +200 is at best a gamble with the east hand. 4 ♦ offers the "down 1 is good bridge" advantage.

North may be tempted to double 4 ♦ in light of partner's vulnerable 3 ♣ overcall. However; there are several warning signs. We may cash one club trick at best; we may clue declarer in on the location of ♦ J; we may convince a West with good spades to revert to a possibly making 4 ♠ contract (not on this hand).

Opening Lead: South appears to have a normal top club lead, given partner's vulnerable jump raise and the lack of any other good options. A singleton trump lead should be avoided because it often solves a guess for the declarer.

Defense: Whenever declarer leads a spade up, it is definitely a singleton. If East had two spades, she would have raised spades and not bid diamonds.

Play: Declarer can play on diamonds, losing eventually one club, two diamonds, one spade, and try to guess the hearts for down 1. As North will show up with long diamonds and clubs, it would be a good percentage play for South to hold the missing heart honor.

Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

♠ J 7 6 5 2 ♥ A Q 2 ♦ J 7 4 ♣ 9 8	♠ A 9 8 4 ♥ 7 ♦ A K Q 5 ♣ K Q 6 3	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; margin-bottom: 5px;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K 10 3 ♥ J 9 8 5 4 3 ♦ 8 3 ♣ 4 2
♠ Q ♥ K 10 6 ♦ 10 9 6 2 ♣ A J 10 7 5			

NS 6♦; NS 6♣; NS 4N; NS 1♠; S 1♥; Par +1370

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1♦	Pass	2♦ ¹
Pass	3♥ ²	Pass	3♠ ³
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦ ⁴
Pass	6♦	All pass	

1. Inverted minor, forcing one round
2. Splinter, game forcing
3. Cue-bid
4. 1 or 4 key cards

Bidding: Opening 1♦ with 4441 hands with four diamonds is necessary in order to unpack all suits. Most partnerships do not have a standard "constructive" minor suit raise, so picking this as a limit raise is less of a stretch than a simple raise would be. After a fit is found (2♦ denies a 4-card major), a jump shift is a splinter. North should have 5 diamonds but the extra strength makes up for it.

South should avoid 3NT with weak diamonds, single heart stopper and a side singleton. The singleton ♠Q is an interesting double-value asset, as the splinter implies spade strength (helping the Queen) and the singleton means that the weaker trumps can be used for something important (ruffs). Cue-bidding should be for Aces and Kings (Italian style, used by most top players now), but it just seems right to encourage partner without using up a lot of room. Also, it lets partner cue-bid the ♣K if desired.

The spade cue was all that North really needed. It could be good to cooperate with a club cue, but RKC helps North's hand make a decision about the correct final place.

Opening Lead: North is weak in hearts and South veered away from 3NT, so the safest lead is a heart. The other option is a trump, as a splinter often helps make use of cross ruffs.

Defense: After a 4th best heart to the Queen, West knows North is now out of hearts because of the splinter. The RKC auction means North has the missing keycards, but it is possible North is missing the ♦Q and could not ask for it (the reason for playing Kickback RKC, or Minorwood, or Redwood is to avoid this problem). Also, there may be a guess for the ♣Q. Safest is to exit with a trump.

Play: The trick one duck was a good try for an extra heart, but it didn't work. There are only 10 top tricks (4 diamonds, 5 clubs, 1 spade). Two more must come from ruffs, and ruffing spades preserves the top trumps as masters. To draw first three trumps would mean losing one spade ruff, so best is to win the diamond shift, play the top spade and ruff a spade, come back to hand with a trump (they split), ruff another spade with dummy's last trump, and get back to hand with a heart ruff to draw the final trump, pitching the last heart from dummy, and dummy is good.

Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

♠ 10	♠ A	♠ K J 7 2
♥ Q 5 4	♥ A K 8 3	♥ J 10 9 6 2
♦ J 10 5 4 2	♦ A K Q 9 6	♦ 7 3
♣ Q 7 5 3	♣ A 9 6	♣ K 10
	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin: 5px;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ Q 9 8 6 5 4 3	
	♥ 7	
	♦ 8	
	♣ J 8 4 2	

NS 4♠; NS 4♣; NS 2N; NS 3♦; NS 1♥; Par +420

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 NT	Pass	5 ♣ ¹
Pass	5 ♠	All pass	

1. 0 or 3 key cards

Bidding: Favorable vulnerability is a magical thing, even in second seat, but 7114 shape is just as magical. I'm convinced opening to the max is the best. Of course, 2nd seat means it's quite often partner is the strong hand, to say the least here! Another problem is that it would be near-impossible to bid the spades later at the 3-level or higher, as that should be some sort of fit-showing call, as a passed hand.

I like a 4♣ artificial response not as keycard but just as a general cooperative try, but most will not have that option, so RKC it is. After finding partner without the ♠ K (0 key cards), it's a guess whether partner has the Queen-Jack or not (even that may fail on a 4-1 break). Asking for the Queen with 5♦ would not answer the real question. With the understanding that favorable preempts can be light, it would make sense for North to stop in 5♠.

If South passes, North can probably open 2♣ and rebid some game forcing notrump level. Then if somehow the level is still at 2NT, South can use some transfer sequence to show a slam try in spades, implying a really bad suit since she did not preempt to begin with, allowing North to settle in 4♠.

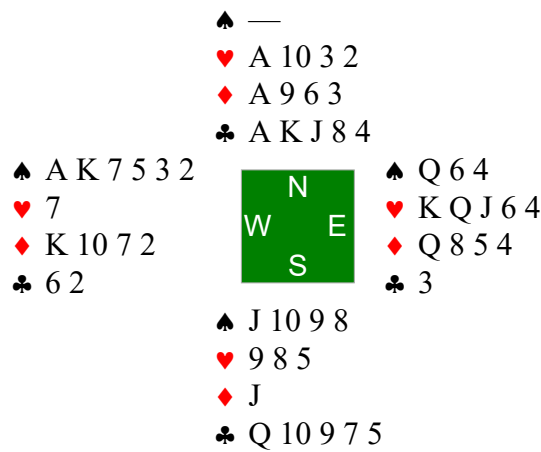
Opening Lead: West has no special reason to guess not to lead a diamond, the longest suit. East would lead a heart for the same reason.

Defense: The challenge is to hold declarer to 10 tricks in spades. If South declares, the dummy will make it clear a club shift is required (South has 6 non-spade cards, all of which are covered by North's 6 side winners), and East is the only defender to get in so must take the risk himself and lead the ♣ K. If North declares, this is much more difficult to figure out what is going on unless West encourages clubs.

Play: For 11 tricks, hopes are dim with the actual spade and diamond layout, but once the ♠ 10 comes down, Restricted Choice says it is probably not the doubleton ♠ J-10, so South should continue with the ♠ 9 and not try to squish the Jack with the ♠ Q.

Those who declare spades from North's hand will get most of the good scores.

Board 7
 South Deals
 Both Vul



NS 5♣; NS 2♥; NS 1N; EW 2♦; EW 1♠; Par +600

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Dbl	2 NT ¹	Pass
4 ♠	Dbl	All pass	Pass

1. Truscott (Jordan)

Bidding: If North begins with a heavy 2♣ overcall (to follow up with a takeout double of spades later), likely North-South will reach 5♣. If North chooses to set the controls to auto-double from the beginning, it is reasonable for South to take the money in 4♣-X, since East should treat the hand as a limit raise, with the singleton and well-placed diamond honor. West has Six-Four shape, so "Bids More".

Opening Lead: In 4♠-X, North has an easy ♣A from A-K to see the dummy.

Defense: Dummy is out of clubs after the first round, so South gives some sort of suit preference - high for hearts, low for diamonds, middle for "no special preference for either". South does not want a ruff with a natural trick unless it is to ruff twice. The ♣7 looks about right, with no desire for a heart ruff and no strong desire for diamonds, but maybe a little. The hearts are threatening, however, so it appears best to attack diamonds at some point, so now works. North will probably continue the diamonds after seeing the Jack, with the ♦9 to indicate a high side suit re-entry for another ruff, which at that point South must take, for +500.

Play: In 4♠-X, the black suits will resolve themselves quickly, but the diamond suit remains a problem (unless the defense took the first 5 tricks as above). Best is to advance a heart to tempt North to rise, and then get to dummy in diamonds, trusting North to have the ♦A for continuing to double at the 4-level without a trump stack.

In 5♣ by North-South, it may seem a simple draw trumps and ruff, but counting to begin would help. 2 clubs, 6 ruffs, 2 Aces = 10 tricks only. So, it is necessary to set up the 13th heart or otherwise not draw two trumps to begin with. Recognizing that from the beginning, and the fact the club spots are so good, it makes more sense to simply cross ruff the hand, ruffing one spade low, one diamond low, and the rest of the clubs cannot be overruffed. The key is to cash the ♥A first so in all the ruffing nobody can pitch all their hearts. "Cash and Thrash" per Rodwell.

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

♠ 10 9 7 5 4	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: green; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A J 2
♥ Q 5 2		♥ K 8 3
♦ J		♦ K Q 6 5 4
♣ K 5 3 2		♣ 9 8

W 3N; E 2N; EW 3♦; NS 3♣; NS 1♠; NS 1♥; Par -100; NS 4♣×-1

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♣	Dbl	1 ♠
1 NT	Pass ¹	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	Pass	2 ♦	2 ♠
3 ♦	All pass		

1. Denies 3 spades (else support double)

Bidding: White vs white auctions never end quickly in a partial, for there is truly no benefit to letting the opponents play when you could make or go down 1 or 2 against their partial. East's honor structure and shape favor a takeout double rather than 1♦, which could then lose a major suit fit later after not being strong enough to re-open.

As the takeout double does not say much about unbid minor suits, 1 NT by West is more flexible, hoping to buy it undoubled. South and East each balance naturally and West, despite the defensive honors, should tell partner about the 9-card fit and compete 3-over-2.

Opening Lead: South can be sure of the club fit once North denies 3 or more spades, so leading a club is the safest.

Defense: After winning the first club, North can pretty much count the distribution at this point. South would have rebid clubs with 6 of them, so South has 5 spades and 4 clubs. East should have 5 diamonds exactly for passing 1 NT but backing in with 2♦ so South has 1 diamond, 5314 as a complete shape. It seems declarer has a lot of red honors but limited entries to finesse them with, and near-mirror distribution with dummy. Therefore, it makes sense to punt a club back and await developments.

Play: East can also tell much from the auction. North should have 2 spades (discussed earlier), 4 hearts (South cannot, would have rebid hearts not spades), and 4 clubs (discussed earlier) so North is 2434 12-14 HCP (maybe 11). With the 3-1 diamond split, it looks bad for some sort of elimination in clubs and leading a heart to the Eight later to force South to break a major suit or give a ruff sluff in clubs, so best is to win the second club and advance a diamond to the King. The Jack drops, so it makes sense to then play a diamond to the Ten to forge an entry (now or later) to dummy.

After drawing the final trump with the dummy's other intermediate, declarer might have already ruffed a third club, in which case the heart to the 8 could work now. In all cases, the normal finesse of North's honors wins.

Board 9

North Deals

E-W Vul

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

♠ K Q J	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 6 5 3 2
N					
W E					
S					
♥ A 6		♥ K Q 9 7 4			
♦ Q 8 6 2		♦ A K 9			
♣ 8 5 4 2		♣ J			

EW 2♥; EW 1♠; EW 1♣; Par -110

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	1♥	Dbl
1 NT	All pass		

Bidding: Over the double, West could show clubs (to direct a lead or allow partner to raise in competition) or bid 1 NT (no longer forcing over the double). 1 NT is more flexible, so if opener has a 6-card heart suit or 5-5 shape she can compete with complete safety later (or, with 1543, make a takeout double).

Opening Lead: The double promised more likely spades than any other particular suit, so a spade lead would work. However, with cards in all suits, and hearts stopped, with HCP equally-divided between the sides, a passive ♦ J is best.

Defense: South knows West does not have 4 spades, and North did not lead or bid spades, so declarer and North should each have 3. North would never lead a doubleton, which marks North for 3 or 4 diamonds, and so West must have at least 5 clubs, probably exactly 5 for not bidding, them, so West should be 3235 unless he took a view with 4 spades or similar. Therefore, South should know to stay away from the natural-looking club switch (singleton on the dummy), and instead look to continue diamonds. North is less sure, with declarer also able to have 3244 or 22(54) or similar.

Play: Declarer has only 5 sure tricks with little prospect of more outside of hearts, but the diamond lead is going to ruin the entry to the hearts even if they were 3-3. One advantage declarer has is the strong club suit opposite the singleton. A good shot would be to avoid clubs like the plague, looking like someone afraid of clubs. Thus, playing the top heart first is a good first try, in case the opponents shift away from the diamond entry, but they won't, as South takes the first heart and continues diamonds. Now, declarer can play on spades. The defense takes the spade, the 13th diamond and now is when the defense needs to understand that down 2 is the goal, not down 1, and negotiate an extra club or spade trick.

Declarers that get out for -100 should get an ok score. 2♣ actually works out not badly either, with the Q-10-x coming down setting up the nine. It looks difficult for East-West to get to 2♥ which plays well by trumping a club low first, cashing out, and exiting, waiting for 3 natural heart tricks if possible.

Board 10

East Deals

Both Vul

♠ A 8 5 3		♠ K Q 10 4
♥ A 5 2		♥ 7 6
♦ A K 2		♦ J 10 8 7 4
♣ 8 7 6		♣ K Q
♠ J 7 2	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 9 6
♥ K Q 10 3		♥ J 9 8 4
♦ 9 6 3		♦ Q 5
♣ 10 5 2		♣ A J 9 4 3

NS 3N; NS 3♥; NS 4♣; NS 1♠; Par +600

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♦	Pass
1♥	1NT ¹	Pass ²	2NT

All pass

1. Natural, 15-18

2. Denies 3 hearts

Bidding: East meets the Bergen Rule of 20, and though the club honors are weak, the quality of the 2 suits is solid. It is standard now for the sandwich seat 1 NT overcall to be natural. There are other calls for takeout (Double, 2♦ cue-bid, Unusual 2 NT jump) and the reason is that openings and responses have become so light that games can be missed without a natural 1 NT (plus, it is often a good contract). It sounds more dangerous than it turns out in practice. South could try 3 NT based on the club suit, but it pays to invite at matchpoints.

Opening Lead: East knows partner is pretty weak, with 11 HCP and the opponents have about 23, leaving only 6 HCP for partner. The hearts would be the passive lead (at least the opponents won't run too many of those) but the problem is the clubs, which do appear like a danger for the opponents to run. The diamond would combine defense and offense, since as long as partner has just the Nine, it is safe. The spade could work, but it seems it could backfire if partner's 6 HCP are not in spades. I play a diamond.

Defense: West can count 14 HCP between her hand and dummy, leaving 26 for North and East, and North promised 15, so East must have 11. East can make the same deduction about West's hand. It seems likely the play begins with East winning a club honor. Now that West is known to have nothing in the minors, the spade switch looks safer now.

Play: There are 6 top tricks, with 2 more needed in clubs. The standard play is to play East for K-10-(x) or Q-10-(x) rather than K-Q-x. It would be interesting if East had K-10 or Q-10 and popped with the King or Queen respectively on the first one. Declarer might be tempted to duck, assuming East has either K-Q-(x), or K-x or Q-x, in which case the defense gets one more trick than deserved. Without the Jack at all, it would be best to simply duck a club to start, but greed is good at matchpoints so declarer should win the first lead in hand (even a diamond) and play a club, ducking East's honor.

Eventually, North gets to hand to lead a second club, and the club suit resolves itself.

Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul

♠ 6 4 3 ♥ Q 5 3 ♦ K J 8 3 ♣ J 10 5	♠ A Q J 9 5 2 ♥ — ♦ Q 9 6 ♣ K Q 9 2 <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 10px auto; background-color: #008000; color: white; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> N </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> W E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; width: 100%;"> S </div> </div>	♠ 10 7 ♥ A J 7 6 4 2 ♦ 5 4 2 ♣ 8 3
	♠ K 8 ♥ K 10 9 8 ♦ A 10 7 ♣ A 7 6 4	

NS 6♠; NS 6♣; NS 5N; NS 4♦; NS 2♥; Par +980

West	North	East	South
			1 ♣
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 NT
Pass	2 ♦ ¹	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 ♣	Pass	3 ♦ ²
Pass	3 ♠ ³	Pass	4 ♣ ⁴
Pass	4 ♥ ⁵	Dbl	4 ♠ ⁶
Pass	4 NT	Pass	5 ♥ ⁷
6 ♣	All pass		

1. Game forcing checkback (XYZ 2-way)
2. Cue-bid for clubs
3. Cue-bid for clubs, best not to cue-bid shortness in partner's suit yet
4. Cue-bid for clubs, implies heart control (since partner denied)
5. Denies diamond cue-bid, bypassed diamonds, angling for partner to cue-bid spades
6. Cue-bid, but shows 2nd round heart control (else would redouble)
7. 2 key cards, no Queen of clubs

Bidding: It really helps to play 2-way New Minor Forcing (or XYZ). It is very difficult to explore slam otherwise, as this deal demonstrates. North has 14 HCP only opposite opener's 12-14 HCP 1 NT rebid, but the distribution is potent. If there is a slam, the field probably will not find it, and the safest slam rates to be in the 4-4 club fit rather than 6-2 spade fit, since the lighter the strength, the more needed is the long suit for developing extra tricks. In a 6-2 fit, the side 4-4 fit develops no extra tricks.

Checking back with a game forcing 2♦, North can leisurely rebid 2♠, without worry of being dropped there, to show 5 or more spades. South keeps time with 2 NT (denying 5 clubs or 3 spades, but showing 4 clubs exactly [doubleton spade implies]), and North introduces the club fit for slam purposes (else, North would have signed off in 3 NT over 2 NT). South's hand is very slammish, with 6 controls (Ace = 2, King = 1), including the valuable ♠K, so has no problem cue-bidding 3♦. North could cue-bid hearts but South had bid hearts naturally so it should be assumed to be an honor. South has the heart control (North could have xx hearts on this auction) and is still slam-oriented so cue-bids clubs. North really does not care so much about the heart honors as much as that ♠K so North tries 4♥. Over East's double, South would redouble with an Ace, so bidding 3♠ implies the 2nd round control in hearts too, giving North a complete map to the slam. North checks on keycards before signing off in 6♣

Opening Lead: West knows that the spades will be used to pitch losers so West must lead a heart per partner's request.

Defense: Nothing much to do.

Play: Even after running 6 spades to pitch 2 diamonds and 2 hearts, there are 2 hearts left to get rid of, so best is to ruff a heart, cash 2 clubs (good split, nice), play a spade to hand, ruff a second heart with dummy's last trump, get back to hand with a spade, draw the last trumps and claim.

Board 12
 West Deals
 N-S Vul

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

♠ Q 5 4	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: green; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W		E		S		♠ A J 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 10 8 7 5 4		♥ 9 6 3									
♦ 9 6		♦ A Q 8 7 4									
♣ A 7 3		♣ J 5									

EW 3♠; EW 2N; E 2♥; EW 2♦; EW 2♣; W 1♥; Par -140

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♣	Pass	3 NT	All pass

Bidding: 12 could invite normally, but the 5th diamond makes 3 NT okay. While it would be nice perhaps for partner to declare, because of the wide-open hearts, a slow auction may pinpoint the weakness for the defense as well as allow 4th seat to interfere.

Opening Lead: A heart lead is most natural from the South hand.

Defense: South can see North has some HCP but chose not to overcall so North probably does not have a diamond suit worth switching to, even though that is the weakest holding on the dummy. Also, East bid notrump directly over clubs, which could hide 4 or 5 diamonds. It looks like the lead was very good.

Play: Yuck, no diamond honor or length to help run the suit, and the opponents made their best lead, giving away nothing in spades or clubs. Also, it appears we might not have the whole field with us in game, meaning we are in top or bottom territory. Play well for down 1 is going to still be bad. The easiest layout is the diamonds coming in (4 diamonds, 2 hearts, 2 spades, and probably a 3rd spade) - playing on clubs is presuming a lot and still requires the spade and diamond anyways. After the diamonds don't come in, it seems it all collapses.

Those who stop in 2 NT should do fine, but down 1 would be fortunate. Those in 3 NT will get beaned. The best East-West can do is declare from West's side where North will probably not find the heart lead, which gets declarer off to a good start.

Board 13

North Deals

Both Vul

♠ A 5 4		♠ 8 7 6
♥ A J 7 5 3		♥ 9 4
♦ A 10 5		♦ 9 8 4 2
♣ 9 5		♣ J 6 4 3
♠ K 10 9 3	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> N W E S </div>	
♥ K 10		
♦ Q J 3		
♣ A K Q 10		
♠ Q J 2		
♥ Q 8 6 2		
♦ K 7 6		
♣ 8 7 2		

NS 3N; NS 3♥; NS 1♠; NS 1♦; EW 1♣; Par +600

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♥	Pass	2 ♥
Dbl	Pass	2 ♠	3 ♥
3 ♠	All pass		

Bidding: South should not Bergen-raise with 3433 shape, treating it as a 3-card raise.

East could use lebensohl to a likely better fit than spades, but would be at a higher level. A spade reply to a takeout double of hearts should always be able to be this kind of broke hand with 3 spades. South can compete 3-over-2 here, which means West is under pressure.

The key decision is reached. West has 18 HCP and a fit for spades, yet there could be 5 or 6 losers. 3♥ might go down. Not vulnerable, it would be a normal 3♠, but vulnerable there is risk to competing.

Opening Lead: No reason not to lead "our" suit, hearts. Length promised, a low heart would show the honor (a high heart would deny the honor).

Defense: The low heart promises an honor so North can finesse if necessary. Assuming East is not 5323, the diamonds are never going away so there is no need to cash them quickly. The defense should strain to dummy-lock declarer after the first 2 hearts. North can shift to a club.

Play: Not so good the prospects in 3♠. It almost makes sense to give up on finessing at all, and just play off 3 clubs after the first 2 hearts. The defense ruffs but now it is they that are endplayed into breaking spades or diamonds (a heart gives a ruff sluff and an entry). North ruffs the third spade and the defense again dummy-locks declarer with a third diamond. A low spade out to South's Jack and later another spade to drop the Ace. -300.

The only East-Wests to get anything are those where West chooses to go quietly over 3♥.

It's only worse if South jump-raises to start and West doubles. East may as well fake a family emergency.

There are lots of possible results here, and the only real winners will be East-West's that can forget a bad board and move on.

Board 14
 East Deals
 None Vul

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

♠ 4 3	♠ 4 3
♥ 10 8 4 3 2	♥ 10 8 4 3 2
♦ 8 7 5	♦ 8 7 5
♣ A Q 3	♣ A Q 3

W 4N; EW 4♠; E 3N; EW 3♥; EW 4♦; EW 3♣; Par -430

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

Bidding: If East were weaker, running to 2 ♠ would be safer, but with 10 opposite 12-14, and honors in the side suits, 1 NT should play okay.

Opening Lead: Nothing looks great, the unbid suits are hearts and diamonds, the longest being diamonds, so that is the most likely.

Defense: The lead did not hurt. The first hurdle is to duck the second spade quickly so declarer might play for 3-3 spades, or maybe South with Q-x or J-x. As declarer has the 10-9-8, it does no good to cover anyways. North gets in with the third spade (South pitching a discouraging heart). It seems West is on track for 3 spades, 4 diamonds, and 1 or 2 hearts for 8 or 9 tricks, on passive defense (like exiting with the ♦ K in a bid to mess up transportation, but it falls short).

If South has nothing in spades, hearts or diamonds, but is marked for about 6 HCP (West's 1 NT rebid is about 13, dummy has 10, 23 total, leaving 17 for North-South, so 6 for South), it would make sense to switch to clubs now. That works, and holds declarer to 8 tricks (defense takes 2 spades, 2 clubs, 1 heart).

Play: Hope the defenders don't switch to clubs.

Board 15
 South Deals
 N-S Vul

♠ K 9 6	♠ J 4	♠ A 10 5 3 2
♥ K J 9 7 4	♥ 10	♥ A Q 2
♦ A J 5	♦ K 7 6 4	♦ Q 10 3
♣ K 5	♣ Q 10 9 7 3 2	♣ 8 4
	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin: 5px;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ Q 8 7	
	♥ 8 6 5 3	
	♦ 9 8 2	
	♣ A J 6	

EW 5♠; EW 4♥; EW 3N; EW 3♦; NS 1♣; Par -450

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			Pass
1 NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	3 NT	Pass
4♠	All pass		

Bidding: North at unfavorable vulnerability opposite a passed hand should tread lightly. 3♣ would be asking for -500.

East might per agreement play that a minor suit rebid after a transfer promises slam interest, in which case East for the 3 NT jump could be slightly distributional. Therefore, West should prefer to 4♠ with any 3-card fit, but here too because of the 5-card heart suit.

Opening Lead: Even though South did not double 2♥ there is just too good a chance for a heart ruff not to lead the singleton.

Defense: It is not clear to South that it is a singleton, and that would mean West had five hearts for the 1 NT opening (possible but not more likely than having 4 or 3 hearts). Declarer wins in dummy (South should discourage) and it is up to declarer now whether North-South gets a ruff in hearts or not. If North is looking for an entry to South's hand, suit preference in trumps may help determine South has the ♣ A and not the ♦ A.

Play: This is a normal contract. The lead smells like a singleton (the Ten without the Nine). The hearts can pitch the clubs (or diamonds) but the danger also is that South gets in and switches to clubs. It seems unlikely that both South can get in *and* the club is offside, while the ruff is a real risk. Better than an avoidance in spades (low spade to the Nine at trick 2 in hopes North does not find the club shift for the ruff), cashing two top spades is better as it takes care of the ruff and allows immediately playing on hearts. If the North has the long spades, all is well and in fact must find the club shift else they go away. If South has the long spades, it's still ok as they have 4 hearts so they cannot ruff in until the clubs are pitched.

Board 16

West Deals

E-W Vul

♠ A 6 2		♠ K 4 3
♥ 9 8		♥ A K
♦ K Q J 9 3		♦ 5 4 2
♣ A J 8		♣ 9 7 6 3 2
♠ J 10 8 5	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> N W E S </div>	
♥ Q 10 7 6 4 2		
♦ A 6		
♣ Q		
♠ Q 9 7		
♥ J 5 3		
♦ 10 8 7		
♣ K 10 5 4		

EW 3♥; NS 2♦; NS 2♣; EW 1♠; Par -140

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

Bidding: West should not strain to open a weak two with so many flaws. Reopening, it depends on system. With Mathe 2♣ to show both majors, it would allow some safety so partner could prefer with 3 cards or ask for the longer major with 2-2 or similar. But without that ability, such as 2♦ (Cappelletti) or 2♥ (DONT), it would be wiser to pre-select hearts rather than risk partner having to guess with 2-2. As a passed hand, a penalty double makes little sense, so even those that play Cappelletti normally should have an alternative meaning for the double (or switch to another system entirely).

If West does open a Weak Two, North should double to cater to all three side suits in case South has a 5-card suit, and still come out ok in a 4-3 black suit fit if required.

Opening Lead: ♦ K is normal.

Defense: The idea would be to avoid breaking spades, and leaning on diamonds as long as possible. A small risk is that declarer has 2 clubs and will eventually set up clubs and use them to pitch spade losers, accessing via the ♠ K.

In a spade partial, the defense should notice declarer avoiding trumps and trying to ruff minor cards in dummy (West), so should try to knock out trumps and the diamond entry to the good hearts.

Play: From the opening, it's likely hearts are breaking (if South had a singleton heart, she probably would have balanced at favorable vulnerability. However, setting up clubs will be difficult, as drawing 3 trumps and ruffing 3 clubs leaves none left to handle more diamonds. Therefore, spades should be set up directly. To attack them too soon would risk a ruff, so best to draw two trumps first. On the actual spade layout, there is no way to go wrong (even the Nine is onside).

Those playing in a spade partial after showing both majors in balancing will declarer from East side. Because of taps in the minors it makes more sense to abandon drawing trumps and instead attempt to ruff as much as possible in dummy, so the defenders will catch on and switch to trumps.

Board 17

North Deals

None Vul

♠ J 8 6 4		♠ 10 9 5 3
♥ K 8 5		♥ 10 9 3
♦ Q 10		♦ J 5 3 2
♣ Q 8 7 6		♣ 10 3
♠ K Q 7	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> N W E S </div>	
♥ Q J 7 6 4 2		
♦ 9		
♣ A K 9		
♠ A 2		
♥ A		
♦ A K 8 7 6 4		
♣ J 5 4 2		

NS 3N; NS 4♦; NS 4♣; EW 2♥; NS 1♠; Par +300: EW 4♥×-2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	Pass	1 ♦
1 ♥	Dbl	Pass	3 ♦
3 ♥	3 NT	All pass	

Bidding: South is in-between a 2 ♦ and 3 ♦ rebid. I go for 3 ♦ thanks to the side 4-card club suit and decent diamond suit. West should compete, both white, to 3 ♥, at matchpoints in my view, rather than allow a likely -110, with short diamonds. North's ♦ Q-10 rates to solidify South's diamonds, which tend to be AK-seventh for the jump rebid, so the chances for scrambling 9 tricks quickly is high enough to try game, despite just 8 HCP and no quick side tricks.

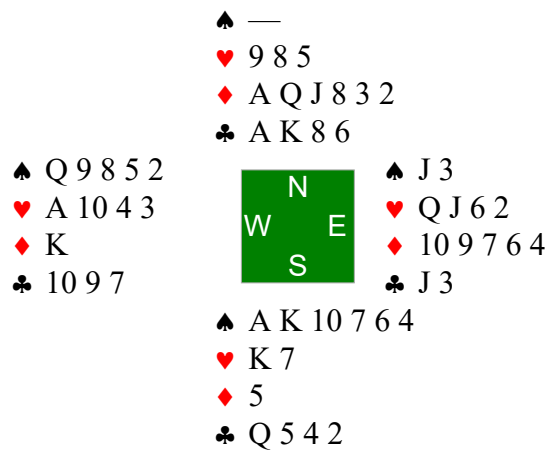
Opening Lead: Low heart. On this auction, East has given no clue as to length. Leading low allows West to know when to start cashing hearts and when to duck to maintain communication.

Defense: West knows East is broke, given West has 15 HCP and the opponents bid game. In that context, it seems unlikely East has some side quack, so rather than encourage East to switch, best to just encourage hearts at trick one, even without the King. Indeed, here East does get in, and switching to clubs might get West to consider a cashout in clubs rather than give North an entry to hand.

When East gets in with the ♦ J (West can count East for heart length thanks to the low heart lead, so can pitch one club, 1 spade, and 2 hearts on the 4 diamonds), East continues with a heart and North can do no better than to take the King eventually and get back to dummy in spades to run the diamonds for down 1.

Play: There seem to be 9 tricks if the diamonds come in. After the ♦ 9 appears on the right (and West rebid a ratty heart suit at the 3-level) it may take table presence to detect the 4-1 break. It's for this reason defenders should falsecard the Nine in many other situations too. Otherwise, there is no alternative to accepting down 1 (unless West discards a bunch of hearts, in which case it may be possible for the defense to bungle into giving declarer a club trick as well).

Board 18
 East Deals
 N-S Vul



S 4N; N 3N; S 5♣; S 3♠; S 4♦; N 4♣; N 2♠; N 3♦; NS 1♥; Par +630

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♦ ¹	Pass	2 ♠ ²
Pass	3 ♣	Pass	4 ♣
Pass	4 ♦ ³	Pass	4 ♥ ⁴
Dbl	Pass ⁵	Pass	5 ♣ ⁶

All pass

1. Game forcing
2. 6+ cards in spades
3. Cue-bid
4. Cue-bid
5. Wide open in hearts (heart lead is coming through)
6. Kx(x) in hearts

Bidding: Assuming 2/1 Game Force, some would play 2 ♠ as waiting, possibly 5 cards without extras or correct stoppers for notrump, and some natural 6+ cards. Rodwell-Grant style is to show the true shape and I prefer that style to quickly agree on a trump suit for cue-bidding if possible, and count on general high card strength to stop any suit if there is no major-suit fit or good minor-suit fit.

Over 2 ♠ responder should avoid notrump with all honors in the minors. Rebidding clubs allows partner to use 3 ♦ as a waiting bid herself if necessary, while 3 ♦ forces partner to make some more difficult choices. Opener has a heart stopper but the hand is so shapely, and spade suit so good (in case partner wants to try a 6-1 spade game), raising clubs could get to a good slam or better game.

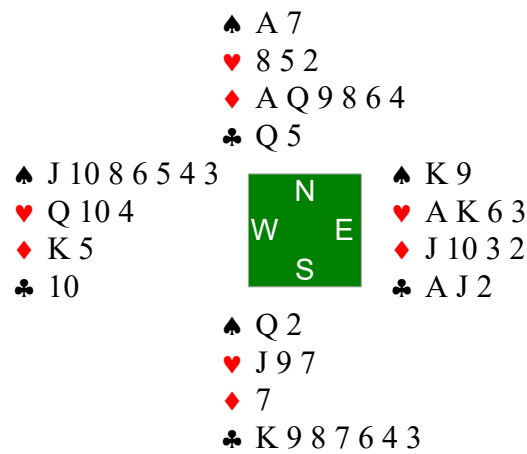
Opener is unlimited, so to sign off with 3 keycards would be unfortunate, though the void in spades and wide open hearts are negatives, so responder can cue-bid diamonds. The same logic applies for South, cue-bidding hearts. Over West's double, North would redouble with 1st-round control or bid on with no worry about losing two fast hearts, but with nothing at all in hearts, passing is best to allow opener to clarify. Opener too would redouble with 1st-round control and cue-bid with a singleton or K-Q, so runs back to clubs with K-x.

Opening Lead: The double and auction have marked the lead as the ♥ Q.

Defense: The defenders know the diamonds and spades are not breaking, so a trump switch would remove two ruffs at the cost of one trick.

Play: There aren't enough entries to set up the spades, nor enough tricks on a complete cross ruff, so diamonds will have to come in. Two diamonds can be discarded on spades, one heart ruffed in dummy, and as long as the ♦ K is inside doubleton or tripleton, with one finesse and one ruff, the diamonds come in. Unfortunately, West has a singleton so can overruff (else a club sets up for the defense if ruffing high).

Board 19
 South Deals
 E-W Vul



W 4♠; EW 3N; E 3♠; EW 2♥; NS 2♣; EW 1♦; Par -500; NS 5♣×-3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	3 NT	3 ♣
4 ♥ ¹	Pass	4 ♠	All pass

1. Texas transfer to spades

Bidding: Favorable 1st seat is nearly the most aggressive time to preempt (behind only 3rd seat favorable and maybe both white). For that reason, North should not try a sacrifice in 5 ♣ - it could even go down if partner has a singleton diamond.

Opening Lead: Singleton diamond!

Defense: North should cash the second diamond as South will get an opportunity to pitch an informative card. South would love a third diamond so could use Lavinathal or odd-even to encourage a diamond. Without those, South should pitch a discouraging club to let North know that South does not have the ♣ A (the worry for North is that playing a third diamond could let declarer pitch away the club loser). Also, if South had some sort of lock on the set, South might even have ruffed the ♦ Q, but chose not to.

Thus North can continue a diamond and the defense gets 2 spades and 2 diamonds.

Board 20

West Deals

Both Vul

♠ Q 9	♠ J 7 6 5 2	♠ 10 4
♥ A K Q 9 8	♥ 10 7 5	♥ 4 2
♦ A 10 6 2	♦ K Q	♦ J 9 3
♣ 9 2	♣ A 8 6	♣ K Q J 7 5 3
	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin: 5px;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ A K 8 3	
	♥ J 6 3	
	♦ 8 7 5 4	
	♣ 10 4	

EW 3♥; NS 2♠; EW 3♣; EW 2♦; Par -140

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	Pass	1 NT ¹	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥	All pass

1. Forcing

Bidding: (5422) is a suit-oriented shape, and despite the 15 HCP, the great heart suit and easy diamond rebid makes 1 ♥ the best opening. North's spades are just too weak to overcall vulnerable any day. East should rebid 2 ♥ - despite the weakness, if West does choose to bid one more time with 16-17 HCP, if it is 2 ♠ or 2 NT, East can now run to 3 ♣. If it is 3 ♦ or 3 ♥, the fits should provide safety. If East were any weaker, passing 2 ♦ would be safer. It might be possible to rebid 3 ♣ if that is defined as a weak hand (with invite, would have responded 2 ♣ in SAYC or "2/1 game force unless suit rebid"), which would activate so many tricks for the weak hand to make it better than a mild fit at the 2-level.

Opening Lead: Spades is the unbid suit making it the most attractive lead.. Even though this is a preference auction (diamonds to hearts), dummy is ruffing diamonds behind North anyways, the diamond honors are coming down so the diamonds set up, and the heart lead may just solve the trump suit for declarer.

Defense: After two spades cashed, North has shown length so South is probably sure West is 2542 (North might have led a singleton diamond too, if West were 2551). Switching to clubs now would help cut off declarer from clubs and make it easier to help North make a decision whether to take the first club or not were West to lead them first. North obliges with a second club and now dummy is locked (before declarer knows about the diamond situation). If declarer attempts a third club, South can ruff with the Jack for an uppercut.

Play: After winning the second club, it makes no sense to pitch just one diamond when they set up by brute force anyways. One diamond finesse (in case South has both diamond honors, or a doubleton honor) would be ok as long as South were then ruffing with a natural heart trick on the third club. A good combination play might be to advance the ♦ J to tempt South to cover with a stray honor, and if not covered, rise with the Ace and draw trumps. That play (or just drawing trumps) works well as the diamonds come down quickly for a great score. If declarer finesses, North should play a third club to try to get an uppercut (it works).

Board 21

North Deals

N-S Vul

♠ K 9 8	♠ J 10 4 3	♠ Q 2
♥ A 4 3 2	♥ 10 7 6	♥ K Q J 9 8
♦ A J 3	♦ 7 6	♦ Q 10 9 4
♣ A 6 5	♣ K Q 9 8	♣ J 10
	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; padding: 5px; margin: 5px;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> N E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> W S </div> </div>	
	♠ A 7 6 5	
	♥ 5	
	♦ K 8 5 2	
	♣ 7 4 3 2	

EW 5♥; EW 3N; EW 4♦; NS 1♣; Par -450

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	1♥	Pass
2 NT ¹	Pass	4♥ ²	All pass

1. Jacoby 2 NT

2. Balanced, very minimum

Bidding: I'll bite with East's rule of 20 opening (though missing the 3 controls also required by some) at favorable vulnerability with the good suit. West may have the 3 NT response available to artificially show a 4333 4-card raise (to allow playing 3 NT when opener is 5332), but otherwise should choose the normal Jacoby 2 NT. East's jump to game should promise a very bad hand, even with 14 HCP or a 6-card suit, opener should not use that option, as it takes away all exploratory room from responder, who is unlimited.

Opening Lead: There are no clues as to side suits, but a singleton trump and unsupported Ace are never the best first choices. With both opponents balanced, it might be a good time for a passive club lead.

Defense: The club lead did well. Later, if declarer leads the ♦ Q, South should cover (not knowing who has the ♦ Ten).

Play: It looks pretty straightforward. The only chance for 12 tricks (on a non-club lead) is to tempt one defender to rise prematurely with the ♠ A ("pop"). If the defenders are listening, the auction indicated declarer did not have a singleton (would have bid 3♠ over Jacoby 2 NT), but as there is nothing else, and not all defenders listen, the best shot is to try to think who has the Ace. If the defenders don't listen, it would make sense North has the Ace because a bad defender might have led the Ace on opening lead, so declarer should try a low spade from dummy towards the Queen. But even if that fails, if the defenders have still not cashed a club, declarer can unblock the ♣ A (Vienna Coup) and run all the red tricks, and if someone has the outstanding club honor(s) and the ♠ J-10, they are squeezed. That's a big stretch.