Board 1

After a pass from North, East should not bother counting her points.

Points are a guide to how many tricks are likely to be made. Here East can count her tricks *directly and precisely*.

There are 8.

Because the hand few defensive tricks (two at the most) against an opponents contract in any other suit East should open 4.

If West has nothing 4♥ will be two down (-300 if doubled), but if that is the case North-South would be able to make a game (-400 or worse for East-West).

Actually West has the ideal hand; two tricks and "adequate trump support" (!) so 4 can be made.

East's best chance to make an overtrick is to lead out **all** the trumps.

The opponents will struggle to find the right discards and, if they both part with a diamond, that suit will give East another trick (or two if she is really lucky)

DATUM: NS: 570 EW: 70

East should start with 1♠ and West, with "nearly enough points for game" but not sure which game, should bid 2♠ seeking some guidance from East's rebid.

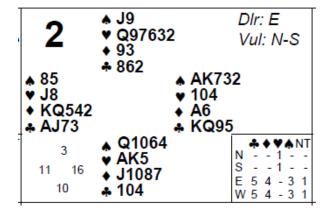
East, with her 16 points, is strong enough to bid her second suit at the 3-level so she should bid 3.

If her hand was any weaker she would have to rebid 2 to avoid going above the "barrier" and miss out on a possible club fit.

On knowing partner has 5 spades, 4 clubs and 16 points West can agree the suit and bid 4. That is better than bidding 5. immediately just in case East wants to look for a slam.

On this hand East, with no extra values and two small cards in the only suit they haven't bid, will have no slam interest so will just sign off in 5.

East makes 5 by trumping a diamond in her own hand, which sets up the last diamond for her eleventh trick.



DATUM: NS: 490 EW: 170

What should South to open: $1 \checkmark$ or $2 \checkmark$? There is no easy answer!

This is in the "twilight zone" where her options are:

- (a) **Open at the 1-level** and miss a game if partner passes with 4-5 points, or
- (b) **Open 2**♣ and get into a hopeless game if partner has no points.

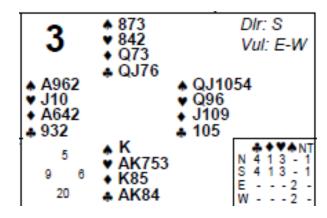
The choice will decide whether the hand is played in $1 \checkmark$ or $4 \checkmark$.

Nine tricks in hearts is the limit unless West gifts declarer a trick with a poor opening lead.

A suit with the ace but not the king is often a poor lead so here a lead of a club or a trump is best.

To lead the ♠A doesn't do the defenders any harm here (but to lead a *small* spade certainly does!) but a diamond lead gives declarer tricks with both the ♠K and ♠Q and 10 tricks in all.

On any other lead declarer can only make one diamond trick as the \triangle A will capture the \triangle K.



DATUM: NS: 230 EW: 460

points.

Board 5

West's hand is too strong to open 1NT so she must bid a suit first planning to bid NT on the second round, showing 15-17

The textbooks say "open the lower ranking suit" but West might balk at opening such a weak suit and bid 1.

If she does partner will bid 2♥ and she can forget about notrumps and pass (there is not enough for game with her 15 points with partner's 6 to 9).

If West opens 1 ← East-West will probably reach an inferior contract. Neither player has the values to bid hearts later and, if they do, they will probably bid too high.

If West were to open 1 ◆ then rebid 2 ♥ over partners 1 ♠ that would show at least 16 points (and 5 diamonds!).

And for East to bid 2♥ after 1NT by West would be a bit of a shot in the dark.

1NT by West doesn't fare very well either provided North isn't put off leading her best suit (diamonds) by West opening that suit

DATUM: NS: 300 EW: 320

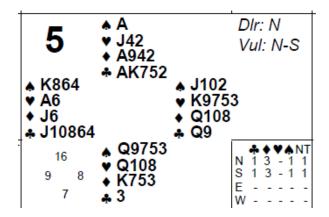
North should open $1 \stackrel{\bullet}{•}$ and South respond $1 \stackrel{\bullet}{•}$.

North is strong enough to bid 2♦ now. A new suit bid by opener above "the barrier" (that is above 2 of the first bid suit) shows 16-17 points. With less than 16 points she would have to bid 2♣ now.

An alternative second bid for North is 1NT showing "balanced" 15-17. Although calling a hand with a singleton in partner's bid suit "balanced" is not a serious distortion, here the more descriptive bid of 2 is better.

Despite that show of strength South will not be interested in game and should pass, being sure they are the best suit. Defending a diamond contract East is likely to lead a heart (the only unbid suit) which will have West trumping the third round.

After that declarer can lead just the two top trumps then cross-trump the black suits making at least eight tricks.



DATUM: NS: 320 EW: 250

Board 6

After pass by East, South should open 2♥ and should West bid?

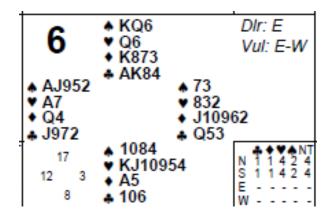
No!!

She is vulnerable the suit is weak (5 cards being the minimum for an intervening bid) although she could have opened with this hand. Also East's pass means North must have a fairly strong hand.

North is strong enough to bid game. As two cards guarantees a fit 4 is preferred although 3NT can be made rather fortuitously.

If West bids 2♠ North is best to "take the money" and double for penalties rather than attempt a marginal game. Here "the money" will be worth more than the game.

If West did bid 2♠ she would have an unhappy time. She would lose two trumps, a heart and two tricks in each minor suit, and would likely have a club trumped as well. That is down 3 tricks which, if doubled, is 800 points compared to just 420 for North-South's game.



DATUM: NS: 70 EW: 700

Board 8

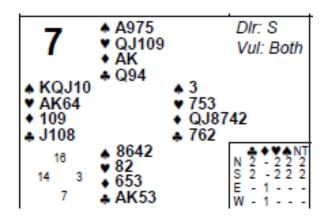
Board 9

West should open 1NT and North should double. This is **not** for takeout but shows values to be "fairly sure 1NT is going to fail".

East will be even surer West's 1NT will fail but thankfully she can run to the relative safety of her long suit and bid 2.

South now has a problem but, apart from a highly speculative penalty double, she can only pass, as should West and North. East can't make 2 and needs to set up the spades by losing to North's A before drawing trumps or she might lose a heart as well and go two down. And North must lead Q at her first opportunity; to cash A sets up dummy's spades for a heart discard.

Declarer must be careful to trump the third heart high (the ◆7 will do) otherwise she might have the embarrassment of being over-trumped by South's ◆5.



DATUM: NS: 300 EW: 420

After West passes North might consider opening the bidding but to do so is most unwise. 11-point hands may be opened with long suit(s) or lots of 10s and 9s but those features are absent here.

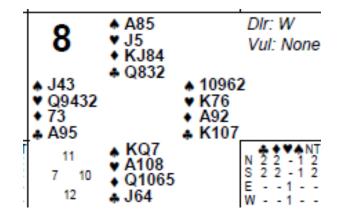
So South should open 1NT and North can invite game with 2NT which South should pass.

On the likely heart lead South must play a **low** heart from dummy. If the ♥J was squandered at trick 1 a heart return from East allows West to run four more heart tricks.

That, along with ♣AK means declarer would be two down.

After winning with **V**A South must lead a diamond immediately to set up three tricks in that suit.

South's ♥10 and dummy's ♥J (if it is still there!) will together be a second stopper in the heart suit, as well as being declarer's 8th trick.



DATUM: NS: 270 EW: 300

North $1 \triangleq$ and South $2 \triangleq$ should be the only bidding.

The defenders are likely to lead three rounds of diamonds then the ♥Q.

Declarer must win the heart in the **North** hand (why? – that will become apparent later) and lead **A**K followed by **K**.

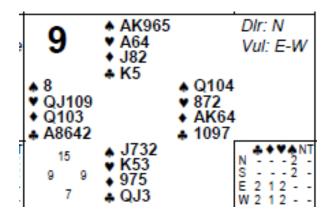
It is important declarer does not lead a third spade as that will give the defence time to set up a heart winner before declarer's clubs are set up.

East can win A and lead another heart but declarer can now discard her heart loser on dummy's third club.

She will lose to riangle Q sooner or later but still make 2 riangle riangle

If declarer had not retained ♥K in dummy on the first heart lead she could be cut off from dummy if West plays ♣A on the **second** round of that suit.

Declarer would then lose a heart trick and go down.



DATUM: NS: 260 EW: 300

Board 11

Board 12

East should open 1♥ intending to bid NT on the next round showing a balanced 15-17 points.

But here West will pass gloomily and North should compete with 14.

What should East do now?

The answer is emphatically **pass**!

If East bids 2♥ (or anything else) she will go down badly.

Against 2♥ South will lead a spade (partner's bid suit of course) and trump the third round. That will be followed by three rounds of diamonds (down already! and declarer still has to lose a trump and a club).

West has seen the bidding and if there is any playable contract for her side she can bid something at her turn. Note West here is in the upper range of the 0-5 points she has indicated!

But that's not enough for West to bid here so North will play in 1 where she should be able to scramble 7 or 8 tricks. But taking East-West down 2 would be better if they get the opportunity.

10	AK874 ♥ QJ9 • Q95		Dlr: E Vul: Both
▲ J105 ♥ 82 ♦ J103 ♣ J10954	. 86	♣ Q92♥ AK64♦ 762♣ AQ	3
12 3 15 10	4 63▼ 1075◆ AK84♣ K732		* • • • NT N 1 2 1 1 2 S 1 2 1 1 2 E W

DATUM: NS: 260 EW: 370

A lively battle should start with South opening 1♥ and West bidding 1♠ with both the others able to support their partner's suit.

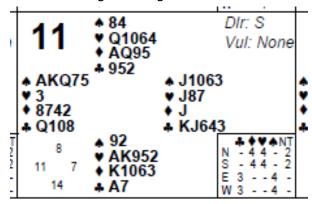
East's hand, although the weakest of the four, looks very good in the sequence 1♥, 1♠, 2♥ as she can "see" partner must be short in hearts when both opponents bid that suit.

That is because the opponents have probably 9 hearts, West has 3, therefore East will only have one, which means there will only be one loser in that suit where opponents have *AKQ.

What neither side will be aware of is they have a secondary fit in their other suit. That means more tricks can be made than the number of points would suggest.

"Happiness is finding a fit; double happiness is finding a double fit"

Any side which competes to the 4-level may be surprised they can make their contract and gain the game bonus.



DATUM: NS: 550 EW: 330

After two passes East should open 1♥ and rebid 1NT over West's 1♠ showing a balanced 15-17 points.

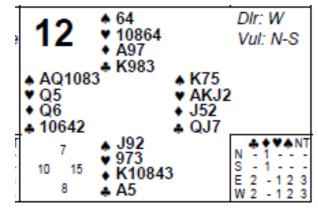
West's 10 points is enough for game so she should bid 3NT. With her completely balanced hand 4♠ is unlikely to be better than 3NT even if partner has a 5-card suit.

4♠ is not a happy contract here. Not only are there four top losers it is also likely a club will get trumped.

There is a trap East must avoid as declarer in 3NT on the likely diamond lead. She must play a **low** card from dummy not the ◆Q.

If she plays the ◆Q, and North wins and returns another diamond, her ◆J will be smothered and the defenders will win the first five tricks (not to mention the ♣AK after that). Retaining the ◆Q in dummy avoids that fate.

It would also be essential to play low from dummy on a diamond lead if dummy were to hold ◆K6 rather than ◆Q6.



DATUM: NS: 580 EW: 160