

DUPLICATE ANALYSIS 28TH DECEMBER 2011

Comments were made at the end of the evening that many of the hands were very interesting and several discussions took place concerning the variety of results achieved. I decided to undertake a detailed analysis of both the bidding and play of the hands to gain a better view of the reasons for the good and bad results. The results are presented here.

Unsurprisingly, there are a number of common themes so here are the main ones.

- 1) 1-level openings are being made on hands that are too weak. The basic minimum — and it is a minimum — is 10 HCPs and 12 total points (including length only, not shortages). A growing tendency is to make an opening 1-level bid based principally on suit length with inadequate regard to hand strength. This may be because more are playing weak two openings which are pre-emptive, not sound openings. A hand may well be suited to a weak two opening but is grossly inadequate for a 1-level opening.
- 2) Bidding has stopped at the 1-level where the opponents have failed to compete with strong hands. No reason for this is evident.
- 3) There are many examples of no-trumps bids by both responder and opener missing out intermediate 4+ card suits. The worst example results in a final contract of 1NT whereas a making 4♥ is biddable should the correct intervening suit bid have been made. The prevalent view is that ‘I was just given a point count’. I suspect that whoever makes this comment had a suit bid but for spurious reasons failed to make it.
- 4) There is a tendency to overbid based on the length of the trump suit and taking little account of overall strength of the hand. In a competitive auction, using overall trump length is a sound, established principle but in an uncontested auction it is not enough.
- 5) Overcalls are being made in suits having less than the required 5 cards and on hands that are not strong enough overall for the level at which they are made.
- 6) Vulnerability seems not to be considered in competitive bidding or pre-emptive openings. Pairs are getting away with this as there is a marked reluctance to double for penalties.
- 7) Indifferent defence is endemic. Giving away one or two extra tricks is commonplace, in many instances allowing failing contracts to make.
- 8) Much of the defence weakness is in the opening lead. Leads should generally be biased towards not giving away a trick rather than trying to win a trick. The other key aspect of leading is that it gives your partner information on what cards you hold in the led suit — often a vital aspect in planning the defence.
 - a) Leading from a suit headed by an unsupported ace (ace with no king) is usually a very poor lead as the chances of giving away a trick are high. However, if you are determined to lead this suit (perhaps partner has bid it) then lead the ace. There are many examples of incorrect leads in this area.
 - b) The best leads are the top card from honour sequences. These are frequently missed.
 - c) Given a lead suit has been chosen, the lead card is a given. There are frequent occurrences of random cards being led. Without leading the right card, there is no chance your partner can infer what else you have in your suit.
- 9) Declarer card play in standard situations is often not understood leading to failures of makeable contracts. Simply leading out winners rather than establishing future tricks is commonplace.
- 10) Many errors are on the ‘Top 10 Mistakes’ list.
- 11) A lot of good results for one team are the result of poor bidding and play of their opponents, not their own skills.

The analysis follows with the results sorted in descending order of scores to north/south.

Board 1

Dealer: North Vulnerability: Nil		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ A Q 4 2		6♠	N	12	3♥	980	
♥ K 4 2		3NT	N	11		460	
♦ 10 4 3 2		3NT	N	10	♥	430	
♣ 6 4		5♣	S	12	A♥	420	
♠ K 7 6 5	♠ 9 8	4♣	S	12	A♥	170	
♥ A Q 6	♥ J 10 9 8 7 3	3♣	S	12	♥	170	
♦ 9 8 7 6	♦ Q J 5	3♣	S	11	6♥	150	
♣ 7 5	♣ K 8	4♣	S	11	♥	150	
	♠ J 10 3						
	♥ 5						
	♦ A K						
	♣ A Q J 10 9 3 2						

Suggested bidding:

(North) P : (P) : 1♣¹ : (P) ,

1♦ : (P) : 4♣² : (P) ,

5♣³

¹Too weak for 2♣ opening — only 8 playing tricks

²Now show strength and fixing trumps suit, forcing to game

³With little extra strength, sign-off

Final Contract: 5♣ by south making one over.

No one should be less than 5♣. No-trumps is just a guess and could go very badly wrong.

6♠ is a poor contract as only 7-card fit. It requires two successful finesses to succeed (25% chance), only one of which works with correct defence. Presumably found by opening 2♣

Benji (rather risky with 5 losers and a minor suit) and 2♠ response (should promise 5+ cards; 2NT is better).

Leads:

If west is on lead, a heart lead is probably the worst possible; leading from an AQ tenace will usually give a way a trick for nothing. If hearts are to be led, then the A♥ is the only correct card, 20p fine otherwise!

If east is on lead, the ♥J is correct (top of sequence) — another 20p fine if not!

Board 2

Dealer: East Vulnerability: N/S		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ Q 9 8 4		1♠	S	9	4♥	140	
♥ K 8 2		5♣	W	9	7♣	100	
♦ A Q 6 4 3		5♣	W	9	♦	100	
♣ 7		5♣	E	9	♠	100	
♠ A 6	♠ J 10	5♣	W	10		50	
♥ A 6 4	♥ Q J 7 5	5♦	N	10	♣		100
♦ J 9	♦ 8 2	4♣	W	10	4♠		130
♣ K Q 10 9 8 5	♣ A J 4 3 2	4♦x	N	9	A♣		200
♠ K 7 5 3 2							
♥ 10 9 3							
♦ K 10 7 5							
♣ 6							

Suggested bidding:
 (East) P : P : 1♣ : 1♦ ,
 3♣¹
¹1♥ would be normal if there was no competition. With competition, supporting directly is usually preferable.

Final Contract: 3♣ by south making; good play can achieve an overtrick (only a spade lead can stop this).

Those bidding higher than 3♣ are being misled by the length of the club suit. Having 11 clubs is not enough to make 11 tricks; strength elsewhere is needed.

The contract by south of 1♠ should never be allowed to stand as it is obvious that E/W have by far the majority of the points. With such a poor hand and such a weak suit, spades should not be bid; diamond support is the correct option.

The 4♦ contract for N/S is too high at red vulnerability; it deserves to be doubled for a bottom. 5♦ is asking for trouble; it should have been doubled for a top.

In one case, east plays in clubs as presumably 1♣ was opened; the hand is way too weak to open under any circumstances.

Leads:
 ♥4 against 1♠ by south is leading away from an ace and is a poor lead. The ♣K — top of broken sequence — is by far the best and the most obvious.
 The other leads may be reasonable depending on the actual bidding.

Board 3

Dealer: South Vulnerability: E/W		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ 9 5 3		3NT	W	9	10♦		600
♥ 9 7 6 4		3NT	W	9			600
♦ 10 9 8		3NT	W	9	8♦		600
♣ 10 9 2		3NT	W	10	10♦		630
♠ Q 6 4	♠ A K J 7	3NT	W	10	♥		630
♥ A 10 8 5	♥ K 3	3NT	W	10	10♦		630
♦ K 3 2	♦ J 7 5	3NT	W	10	10♦		630
♣ A 8 7	♣ K J 6 5	3NT	W	11	♥		660
	♠ 10 8 2						
	♥ Q J 2						
	♦ A Q 6 4						
	♣ Q 4 3						

Suggested bidding:
 (South) (P) : 1NT : (P) : 2♣¹ ,
 (P) : 2♥ : (P) : 3NT
¹Stayman

Final Contract: 3NT by West making 9, which is the limit with accurate defence.

Leads:
 If the bidding — wrongly — is 1NT : 3NT, then a 7♥ lead (NOT fourth highest!) would be better. Bid as suggested, the ♦10 — top of sequence — is best.

Board 4

Dealer: West Vulnerability: Both		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ A Q 7 4 2		4♠	N	12	K♥	680	4♠
♥ 9 8 7 6 4		3NT	S	11	♦	660	3NT
♦ K 9		3NT	S	10	♦	630	3NT
♣ 9		4♠	N	10		620	4♠
♠ 10 9 5	♠ J 3	3NT	S	9	♦	600	3NT
♥ J	♥ K Q 3 2	3NT	S	9	5♦	600	3NT
♦ Q J 8 5 4	♦ 10 7 6 2	3NT	S	9	4♦	600	3NT
♣ K 7 6 4	♣ J 8 3	2♠	N	10	♥	170	2♠
	♠ K 8 6						
	♥ A 10 5						
	♦ A 3						
	♣ A Q 10 5 2						

Suggested bidding:
 (West) (P) : P : (P) : 1♣ ,
 (P) : 1♠¹ : (P) : 2NT² ,
 (P) : 3♥³ : (P) : 3♠⁴ ,
 (P) : 4♠⁵
¹higher of two 5-card suits
²17–18HCPs balanced
³show dislike of NT, probably 5–5 distribution and concern over diamonds
⁴support Responder's first suit
⁵with ruffing points, bid game

Final contract: 4♠ by north making 10, overtricks courtesy of the defence. 3NT makes 9 against accurate defence.

Leads:
 Against 4♠, the ♦2 (the unbid suit) looks harmless but nothing looks good. Should the contract be 3NT, the ♦5 is the clear choice.

Board 5

Dealer: North Vulnerability: N/S		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ K 7		3♠	W	6		150	
♥ K 10 8		2♠	W	6	8♥	100	
♦ A J 10 8 5		4♣	E	9	A♥	50	
♣ 6 4 2					Passed out		
♠ A Q 10 6 5 2	♠ 4	2♣	E	8	♦	90	
♥ 9 6 2	♥ 7 5 3	3♦	N	8	♣	100	
♦ K	♦ Q 9 6 4	2♦	N	7	A♠	100	
♣ Q 7 5	♣ A K 9 8 3	3♥	S	7	♠	200	
	♠ J 9 8 3						
	♥ A Q J 4						
	♦ 7 3 2						
	♣ J 10						

Suggested bidding:
 (North) (P¹) : P : (P) : 1♠ ,
 (2♦²) : P³ : (P) : 2♠⁴
¹Really too poor to open, but it does meet the minimum standard in the Introduction
²But good enough to overcall
³Suspects a misfit so passes
⁴With good distribution raises to the 2-level

Final contract: 2♠ by west. This one of those hands where neither 2♦ or 2♠ can make (both one off against reasonable defence), so 2♠ one off is optimum in a competitive auction. 3♣ actually makes easily but cannot be found by basic bidding technique except by accident/error.

Leads:
 Against 2♠ lead the ♣4, against 2♦ (if left) lead ♣A. The ♠A and ♥A leads above are awful, both leading from tenaces.

Board 6

Dealer: East Vulnerability: E/W		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ K		4♦	W	11	♥		150
♥ A J 7 5 4		4♦	W	11	♦		150
♦ 8		6♥x	S	10	♦		300
♣ A J 10 5 3 2		5♦	W	11	A♣		600
♠ A Q 9 5	♠ 10 8 7	5♦	W	12	K♣		620
♥ Void	♥ 10 6 3	5♦x	W	11	A♣		750
♦ A K Q J 6 5 3 2	♦ 10 9 7	6♦x	W	12	K♣		1540
♣ 6	♣ K Q 9 8	6♦x	W	12			1540
	♠ J 6 4 3 2						
	♥ K Q 9 8 2						
	♦ 4						
	♣ 7 4						

Suggested bidding:
 (East) P : (P) : 2♣¹ : (P) ,
 2♦² : (P) : 3♦³ : (P) ,
 4♦⁴ : (P) : 4♠⁵ : (P) ,
 5♦⁶

¹The hand has 11 playing tricks, you probably have game in our own hand — no other opening will do 1♦, 2♦, 3♦, 4♦ and 5♦ are all incorrect!
²Deny 8+ HCPs or 1½ quick tricks
³Show your long diamonds
⁴Agree diamonds
⁵Cue bid spade control. If unfamiliar with cue bids, bid 5♦ to show the limit of the hand
⁶Shows east has no first round controls

Final contract: 5♦ by west. This makes 11 exactly, the overtrick is by virtue of the defence discarding too many spades.

Leads:
 No attractive lead.

Board 7

Dealer: South Vulnerability: Both		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ Q 9 6 5 3		4♠xx	E	9		400	
♥ K 10 6		3NT	W	6	6♥	300	
♦ 7		4♠x	E	9		200	
♣ K 10 6 5	♠ A J 10 8 7 4 2	4♣	E	9	10♦	100	
♠ Void	♥ A 9 2	4♥	W	9	♦	100	
♥ Q 8 5 3	♦ 4 3	4♣	E	9	♦	100	
♦ A Q J 2	♣ 4	4♥	W	10	A♦		620
♣ A Q 9 7 2		3♦x	S	4	♥		1400
♠ K							
♥ J 7 4							
♦ K 10 9 8 6 5							
♣ J 8 3							

Suggested bidding:
 (South) (P) : 1♣ : (P) : 1♠
 (P) : 2♦¹ : (P) : 3♠²,
 (P) : 3NT³ : (P) : 4♠⁴
¹Reverse showing 16+ points
²Shows 10+ points and 6+ cards in spades
³No-trumps is not comfortable but reasonable on the point count
⁴No-trumps looks bad

Final contract: 4♠ by east. This should go at least one off owing to the 5–1 spade break. Despite having 5 spades, north is too weak to assume a double is correct.

Leads:
 Nothing special

Board 8

Dealer: South Vulnerability: Nil		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
<p>♠ 5 ♥ 5 4 ♦ A Q 10 9 4 3 ♣ 9 8 5 4</p> <p>♠ J 10 9 6 ♥ K Q J 2 ♦ 2 ♣ A K Q 7</p> <p>♠ A K 8 7 4 2 ♥ 9 6 ♦ 7 ♣ J 10 6 3</p>	<p>♠ Q 3 ♥ A 10 8 7 3 ♦ K J 8 6 5 ♣ 2</p>	4♥	W	8	♠	100	
		4♥	E	9		50	
		4♥	W	9	♦	50	
		4♥	E	10	7♦		420
		4♥	E	10	♠		420
		4♥	W	10	♠		420
		4♥	W	10	A♦		420
		4♣x	S	6	A♣		800

Suggested bidding:
 (West) 1♣ : (1♦) : 1♥ : (P) ,
 4♥¹
¹19 total points so bid game

Final contract: 4♥ by east. This makes if played correctly and should not go one off. West plays in hearts only if the 'suit below the red singleton' rule is not followed.

After west's bidding game, east would be justified in investigating a slam with 4NT but finding insufficient controls signs-off in 5♥, unfortunately going one off. If slam investigations are not made, they will be missed in the long run. With the points and heart length as they are, not making 5♥ would be exceptional.

South's 4♠ bid can often pay off as it is known north has points and that E/W has a fit, so N/S also has a fit. The fit is clearly expected in spades but unfortunately it is in clubs, hence the poor result this time.

Leads:
 With west in 4♥, the clear lead is the 5♠ singleton. The ♦A lead when holding AQ10 is about the worst imaginable but luckily this time it does not cost.
 With east in 4♥, the clear preference is for the ♠A with the ♦7 plausible.

Board 9

Dealer: North Vulnerability: E/W		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
<p>♠ 10 7 ♥ J 9 8 2 ♦ 10 9 ♣ K Q 9 6 2</p> <p>♠ K 2 ♥ 3 ♦ A 6 5 4 2 ♣ A J 7 4 3</p> <p>♠ J 6 5 ♥ K Q 7 6 5 4 ♦ Q 7 3 ♣ 5</p> <p>♠ A Q 9 8 4 3 ♥ A 10 ♦ K J 8 ♣ 10 8</p>	5♦x	W	7	♠	1100		
	3♣	W	6	♠	300		
	4♦	W	7	10♠	300		
	2♥	E	6		200		
	3♥	E	7	♠	200		
	2♠	S	9	3♥	140		
	2♠	S	8	3♥	110		
	2♠	S	7	3♥		50	

Suggested bidding:
 (North) P : (P) : 1♠ : (P) ,
 1NT : (P) : 2♠

Final contract: 2♠ by south. Makes exactly with good play by declarer and defence.
 Those playing weak two openings as east could plausibly open with 2♥ but it is a bit weak for this vulnerability, after which south should overcall 2♠.

Another possibility is that west overcalls the 1♠ opening with the Unusual 2NT, again a bit iffy, after which east bids 3♦. This actually makes 8 tricks and so is the optimum contract.

Leads:
 The 3♥ lead against 2♠ by south is best.

Board 10

Dealer: East Vulnerability: Both		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
<p>♠ K 7 5 4 ♥ A K 9 6 ♦ Q 4 2 ♣ A 8</p> <p>♠ 8 6 ♥ J 8 5 3 ♦ A J 10 3 ♣ J 10 4</p> <p>♠ Q 10 3 ♥ Q 10 7 2 ♦ K 8 6 ♣ K 9 7</p> <p>♠ A J 9 2 ♥ 4 ♦ 9 7 5 ♣ Q 6 5 3 2</p>	4♠	S	10	A♦	620		
	4♠	S	10	10♦	620		
	1NT	S	11		210		
	1NT	N	9	6♦	150		
	3♠	S	9	A♦	140		
	1NT	S	8	♦	120		
	1NT	S	8	♦	120		
	2NT	N	7	♦		100	

Suggested bidding:
 (East) (P) : P : (P) : 1♥ ,
 (P) : 1♠ : (P) : 3♠ ,
 (P) : 4♠

Final contract: 4♠ by south. Makes exactly with good play by declarer.
 It is evident from the results that south has frequently bypassed the 1♠ bid (20p fine!) after north's 1♥ opening and has bid 1NT instead — 'I was just giving a point count'. Ugh! With 16 HCPs and a balanced hand, north's only rebid is 'pass', so missing a making 4♠ contract. North's being in a no-trumps contract is inexplicable.

Leads:
 From the bidding, the best lead seems to be the ♣J — unfortunately it was never led! The ♦A is poor but in this case does not cost a trick. The ♦10 is wrong under any circumstances.

Board 11

Dealer: South Vulnerability: Nil		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ 10		4♥	N	10	♣	420	
♥ K J 10 4 3 2		3NT	S	9	5♦	400	
♦ 9 2		2♠	S	9		140	
♣ A J 10 7		4♥	N	9	4♦		50
♠ 6 5 2	♠ K 8 4 3	4♥	N	9	K♦		50
♥ 7 6 5	♥ A 9	3NT	S	8	♦		50
♦ J 8 7 5	♦ K Q 4 3	3NT	S	8	5♦		50
♣ K 4 3	♣ Q 8 2	3♥	N	8	♦		50
	♠ A Q J 9 7						
	♥ Q 8						
	♦ A 10 6						
	♣ 9 6 5						

Suggested bidding:
 (South) 1♠ : (P) : 2♥¹ : (P) ,
 2♠ : (P) : 3♣² : (P) ,
 3♥³ : (P) : 4♥³
¹Promises 5+ hearts
²Try a different suit, useful as it is forcing
³South prefers hearts as it is the first suit bid by north
⁴Enough for game

Final contract: 4♥ by north. Whatever happens, game should be bid. If south does ever bid no-trumps, north should always escape to hearts.

Leads:
 The clear lead is ♦K. The ♦4 makes no sense at all. The lead made against those in no-trumps are good.

Board 12

Dealer: West Vulnerability: N/S		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ K Q J 8		4♣	N	10		620	
♥ 3		3♣	N	9	A♣	140	
♦ A J 7		3♠	N	9	2♦	140	
♣ Q J 10 6 3		2♣	N	9	♣	140	
♠ 9 2	♠ A 7 4	1♠	N	8	♣	110	
♥ A 10 7 4	♥ J 8 6 2	1NT	N	7	2♥	90	
♦ Q 10 8	♦ K 5 4 2	2♥	E	7	♣	50	
♣ 9 5 4 2	♣ A 7	4♣	N	8	2♦		200
	♠ 10 6 5 3						
	♥ K Q 9 5						
	♦ 9 6 3						
	♣ K 8						

Suggested bidding:
 (West) (P) : 1♣ : (X¹) : 1♥ ,
 (P) : 1♠ : (P) : 2♠ ,
 (P) : 3♠² : (P) : 4♠³
¹Minimum takeout double — club shortage 3+ cards in other suits 12HCPs
²17 total points with a spade fit
³On points, strictly correct but the double may suggest PASS is better

Final contract: 3♠ or 4♠ by north. Despite having enough points for game, only 9 tricks can be made without help from the defence. You have 4 guaranteed losers, one in each suit. The 2♥ contract presumably came about by east doubling and south bypassing the majors and bidding 1NT, allowing the heart bid. It does very well for E/W showing the folly of south's failing to bid a suit.

1NT by north can only come about in a similar fashion by failing to bid the spade suit first. After 1NT by north, south correctly passes. Again, the failure to bid a suit first leads to a poor result.

Leads:
 Assuming the bidding went as above (not a given by any means) only a diamond lead makes sense — the unbid suit.

Board 13

Dealer: North Vulnerability: Both		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ 10 8 6		4♠x	E	7	7♦	800	
♥ Q 10 7 5 4		5♦	W	6	2♣	500	
♦ K J 8 4		3NT	W	5	♥	400	
♣ 2		2♠	E	5	7♦	300	
♠ A K	♠ J 9 5 2	2NT	E	6	K♣	200	
♥ 8 6 2	♥ A J 9	1♠	E	7	♥		80
♦ A Q 6 5	♦ 10 9 3 2	1♦	W	8	♥		90
♣ A J 10 3	♣ 8 7	3♦	E	9	♥		110
	♠ Q 7 4 3						
	♥ K 3						
	♦ 7						
	♣ K Q 9 6 5 4						

Suggested bidding:
 (North) (P) : P : (1♣¹) : 1NT²
¹some may consider the hand good enough to open but a PASS would not go amiss
²16–18 HCPs balanced, opening suit stopped. With 6 HCPs balance, east must pass

(North) P : P : P : 1♣³ ,
 P : 1♦³ : 3♦⁴
³Bid lowest of 4-card suits
⁴Show level of support by jump. With nothing more, east passes

Final contract: 1NT by west or 3♦ by east. It is notable that only one of the eight teams was in a correct contract and did well as a result.

Although 1♦ did well, why it stayed at the 1-level is inexplicable; east should have bid or failing that south should have overcalled.

Any spade contract is also incomprehensible. There is a growing tendency to support partner's bid with only 2 cards just because they are good ones. There is NO substitute for length in the trumps suit that cannot be offset by two high cards.

Leads:
 The given leads all look reasonable.

Board 14

Dealer: East Vulnerability: Nil		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ J	♠ Void	5♥x	E	9	J♣	300	
♥ K 8 5	♥ Q J 10 9 7 4 3	4♥	E	8	7♦	100	
♦ A Q 9 5 2	♦ K 3	3♠	W	7	♣	100	
♣ A 8 5 4	♣ K Q 6 2	4♦	N	7	K♣		150
♠ A 10 9 8 7 6 4	♠ K Q 5 3 2	5♦x	N	9	♥		300
♥ A	♥ 6 2	4♥	E	10	♣		420
♦ 6 4	♦ J 10 8 7	4♥	E	10	K♠		420
♣ 10 9 3	♣ J 7	4♥x	W	10	♦		590

Suggested bidding:
 (East) 1♥ : (P) : 1♠ : (P) ,
 2♥ : (P) : 3♠¹
¹show a long suit with 10+ total points

Final contract: 3♠ by west. A 4♥ contract can only be bid by either east/west outbidding each other (if in a hole, stop digging!) or by east incorrectly opening with a pre-empt (too many HCPs, suit too weak). As it happens, a heart contract can make 9 tricks provided the defence play correctly but this will be difficult. The spade contract fails because of the 5–1 break.

N/S should not be competing hence the indifferent diamond results.

Leads:
 Against a spade contract, the best of a bad job is the ♥5. Against a heart contract, the ♠K is the clear choice.

Board 15

Dealer: South Vulnerability: N/S		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ 9 7		5♦	W	9		100	
♥ J 6 4		2♥	W	11	♠		200
♦ A J 3 2		3♥	W	11	♦		200
♣ K 8 7 6		4♣	E	11	A♣		450
♠ A K J 6	♠ Q 10 8 2	4♣	W	11	♣		450
♥ A K Q 8 7 5	♥ 9	4♣	W	11	A♦		450
♦ 10 4	♦ K Q 9 7 5	4♣	E	12	8♦		480
♣ 4	♣ Q 9 3	4♣	E	12	♦		480
	♠ 5 4 3						
	♥ 10 3 2						
	♦ 8 6						
	♣ A J 10 5 2						

Suggested bidding:
 (South) (P) : 2♥¹ : (P) : 3♦²,
 (P) : 3♥³ : (P) : 3♠⁴,
 (P) : 4♠⁵
¹9 playing tricks and long strong suit so a CLEAR 2♥ opening
²Show 5+ diamonds 8+ HCPs and little heart support
³Like hearts best (3♠ would not be wrong)
⁴Try another 4+ card suit and show considerable dislike of hearts
⁵Agree game in spades

Final contract: 4♠ by east or possibly west. With 2 aces out, theoretically 11 tricks can be made but, unless the aces are won on the first and second tricks (not that likely), the hearts can be established and all remaining losers discarded making 12. It is far easier to find the defence's 2 winners if south is on lead as dummy's strength is on the table, hence the differences shown in the scoring.

Any contract below game by E/W is inexcusable. The 5♦ contract is presumably slam bidding (albeit unjustified) going awry.

Leads:
 Nothing special.

Board 16

Dealer: West Vulnerability: E/W		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ 10 9 8 3		4♦	W	9	Q♥	100	
♥ Q J 10 8 5		3♣	S	8	A♦		50
♦ J		4♣	S	9	A♦		50
♣ J 9 3		2♥	E	8	♠		110
♠ 6	♠ K Q 2	4♦	W	10			130
♥ A 9 6 2	♥ K 7 4	2♦	W	10	♥		130
♦ A 9 8 6 2	♦ Q 10 5 4 3	4♦	E	10	♠		130
♣ 8 7 2	♣ A 5	3♦	W	11	Q♥		150
	♠ A J 7 5 4						
	♥ 3						
	♦ K 7						
	♣ K Q 10 6 4						

Suggested bidding:

(West) (P) : P : (1♦) : 1♠¹,

(3♦²) : 3♣³ : (4♦⁴) : 4♣

¹Suit quality a bit low but compensating extra values

²11 total points

³Good competing bid at favourable vulnerability

⁴Extra length and strength

⁵Extra strength and shape

Final contract: 4♣ by south. With best play this goes one off. 4♦ makes 10 tricks, thus ♠ is the optimum contract. No one should be in less than a 4-level contract.

Leads:

Safest is ♣7 (MUD). Leading bare aces is poor practice. Leading the only trump is dubious.

Board 17

Dealer: North Vulnerability: Nil		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ A K J 6 5		4♠	N	12		480	
♥ K 5		4♥	S	10	♣	420	
♦ A J 10 8		4♥	S	10	2♣	420	
♣ 10 6		2♥	S	10	2♣	170	
♠ 8 4 2	♠ 10 9 3	2♠	N	10	A♥	170	
♥ 9 3 2	♥ A	1♠	N	10	A♥	170	
♦ K 9 4 2	♦ Q 7 3	3♥	S	9	♣	140	
♣ K 4 2	♣ A Q J 8 7 3	4♠	N	8			100
	♠ Q 7						
	♥ Q J 10 8 7 6 4						
	♦ 6 5						
	♣ 9 5						

Suggested bidding:
 (North) 1♠ : (2♣¹) : P : (P²) ,
 2♦³ : (P) : 2♥⁴ : (P) ,
 3♥⁵
¹Plenty enough for an overcall
²Too weak for a standard 2-level bid (unless you play 'negative free bid')
³With a strong hand bid the second suit
⁴South shows a weak hand with 6+ decent hearts
⁵With an 8+ card fit north tries for game

Final contract: 3♥ by south. With the correct lead, E/W has 4 winners: 2 clubs, 1 diamond and 1 heart so a heart contract should only make 9 tricks. The extra trick is a defensive error. Those who found themselves in a 7-card spade fit by north also makes 9 tricks unless the ♥A is led in which case it makes an undefeatable 12 but the ♥K has to be played under the ace to unblock. No one should be in less than a 3-level contract.

Leads:
 Against hearts by south, the ♣2 from west is right. This shows an honour or singleton so east knows west has the king. Against spade by north, the obvious lead is the ♥A but unwittingly allows 12 tricks to be made (if the unblock happens).

Board 18

Dealer: East Vulnerability: N/S		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ A J 6		4♥	N	11	9♠	650	
♥ A K 10 7		4♥	N	11	♦	650	
♦ K 3		4♥	N	10	A♣	620	
♣ A J 8 4		2♣x	E	5		500	
♠ Q 3	♠ K 9 8 7 5 2	1♠	E	7	2♦		80
♥ Q 4 2	♥ 8 6	3NT	N	8	♠		100
♦ Q 9 8 6 5	♦ J 10	3NT	N	7			200
♣ 9 5 2	♣ K Q 6	2NT	N	6	♠		200
	♠ 10 4						
	♥ J 9 5 3						
	♦ A 7 4 2						
	♣ 10 7 3						

Suggested bidding:
 (East) (P) : P : (P) : 2NT ,
 (P) : 3♣¹ : (P) : 3♥ ,
 (P) : 4♥
¹Stayman must be used here. It discovers the heart fit.

Final contract: 4♥ by north. This makes exactly, the overtrick by virtue of indifferent defence. 3NT (not the correct contract but frequently played) also makes with correct declarer play.

The 1♠ contract is inexplicable. East must have opened 1♠ with too weak a hand and then north passes with half the points in the pack! North should have doubled for takeout and rebid in no-trumps.

Those who play weak two openings might contemplate opening 2♠ with east's hand but the spades are really too weak to contemplate this. Weak twos work if you have decent trump control but you are unlikely to have it.

Leads:
 The ♠7, not any other spade note (and 'yes' it DOES matter), is correct against 4♥ or 3NT. The 2♦ lead against the silly 1♠ contract is wrong — leading away from an ace!

Board 19

Dealer: South Vulnerability: E/W		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ K 10 9 3		1NT	N	10	9♥	180	
♥ K 10		2♣	N	9	♥	140	
♦ K 6 5 3		1NT	N	7	3♥	90	
♣ K J 8		1NT	N	7	♥	90	
♠ Q 6 4	♠ 8 7	1NT	N	6	3♥		50
♥ Q 4	♥ J 9 8 3 2	1NT	N	6	9♥		50
♦ Q J 10 8	♦ A 9 4	3♣	N	7			100
♣ Q 5 4 3	♣ A 10 6	4♣	N	8			100
	♠ A J 5 2						
	♥ A 7 6 5						
	♦ 7 2						
	♣ 9 7 2						

Suggested bidding:
 (South) P : (P) : 1NT
 Final contract: 1NT by north. This is likely to make although there is no line of play that can guarantee it.
 The spade contracts by north suggest that south used Stayman on an unsuitable hand. Stayman is used to find a major suit game, so with 9 HCPs plus opener's maximum of 14 game is not enough. As it happens, 2♠ makes 8 tricks if properly played.

Leads:
 Against both no-trumps and spades the ♥3 is the only correct lead, 4th highest, not the ♥9!

Board 20

Dealer: West Vulnerability: Both		Contract	By	Tricks	Lead	N/S	E/W
♠ Q 9 5		3♥	E	7	♠	200	
♥ J 5 4 2		3♠	N	9	6♣	140	
♦ K Q J 2		3♣	W	8	Q♠	100	
♣ A 10		3♣	W	9	K♦		110
♠ J	♠ A 7 6 3	3♣	W	9	♦		110
♥ 8 6	♥ A Q 10 3	3♣	W	9	K♦		110
♦ 10 7 4	♦ A 9 5	3♣	W	10	♦		130
♣ K Q J 8 7 5 4	♣ 6 2	4♠	S	7			300
	♠ K 10 8 4 2						
	♥ K 9 7						
	♦ 8 6 3						
	♣ 9 3						

Suggested bidding:

(West) P¹: (1NT) : P : (2♠²),

3♣³

¹the hand is too weak for a 3♣ pre-emptive opening; vulnerable you can only afford 2 losers doubled: you have 3. It probably didn't stop too many wests though!

²weak takeout or a 2♥ transfer to spades

³shows a hand just below a pre-emptive opening

Final contract: 3♣ by east making 10. North is ill-advised to bid a competitive 3♠, although as it turns out the cards are in the right place for it to make with correct play. East is not strong enough to bid 5♣ and definitely not 3NT as you are very likely to have entry problems to dummy, as indeed you do (dummy is cut off by the simple expedient of north holding up the ♣A for one round).

4♠ is much too far and was punished. Look at the vulnerability.

3♥ by east is incomprehensible.

Leads:

Against 3♣, the ♦K lead is the only correct card. The ♠Q, top of partner's suit maybe, is very old fashioned and has been discredited as it gives a trick away over and over again.

