

E-W Vul
Dealer North

♠ QJ75
♥ J54
♦ 432
♣ A74

♠ K93
♥ Q107
♦ AKJ8
♣ 932

♠ 104
♥ 862
♦ Q95
♣ QJ1086

25

♠ A862
♥ AK93
♦ 1076
♣ K5

South may well open 1NT in third seat and play there. So long as West does not lead hearts at some point, declarer should make exactly seven tricks. Those of you who play a strong no-trump (in third seat) can improve on this. A suit opening will allow you to find the spade fit and make eight tricks for 110. You can even make 110 in hearts, courtesy of the 3-3 heart split. East-West can make 2C.

Love All
Dealer South

♠ QJ3
♥ Q93
♦ K864
♣ AJ4

♠ AK65
♥ KJ108
♦ 97
♣ 1032

♠ 10972
♥ 2
♦ AQJ1052
♣ Q7

27

♠ 84
♥ A7654
♦ 3
♣ K9865

As on hand 26, the deal theoretically belongs to East-West even though neither of them has an obvious opening. If North opens 1NT and South transfers into hearts, East will want to take some action on the second round. A double, planning to convert 3C to 3D, works best as the cards lie because West holds four spades. 140 is possible if you play in spades. Eight tricks are the limit for East in diamonds or for North-South in their suits.

Game All
Dealer East

♠ 106
♥ J9
♦ AKQJ104
♣ Q102

♠ K75
♥ 10432
♦ 75
♣ AK53

♠ AQJ2
♥ Q876
♦ 962
♣ 76

26

♠ 9843
♥ AK5
♦ 83
♣ J984

North has 13 HCP and two spades, which is just enough to open (1D) in fourth seat on the rule of 15. After South responds 1S, West may come in with a double. Even if not, after North rebids 2D, West surely doubles at that point. This allows East-West to find their heart fit, where they can make eight tricks. To hold a diamond contract to eight tricks, East will need to score a club ruff.

N-S Vul
Dealer West

♠ J10753
♥ QJ3
♦ 984
♣ Q5

♠ Q986
♥ AK876
♦ Q1075
♣ ===

♠ A
♥ 92
♦ A632
♣ A109642

28

♠ K42
♥ 1054
♦ KJ
♣ KJ873

If West opens 1H and rebids 2D over the 2C reply, East may simply raise to 3D. The cards lie well from declarer's point of view, with eleven tricks possible if you time the play right. The friendly splits mean that 4H is also makeable - you make two black aces, four hearts, three diamonds and a spade ruff. A no-trump contract fares less well, yielding only eight tricks and 120.

Hand records for additional hands 29-32 are available at ECatsBridge.com

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Love All
Dealer North

♠ AKQ863
♥ A
♦ 854
♣ K104

♠ 742
♥ 87432
♦ K9
♣ J32

♠ 5
♥ KQJ6
♦ QJ7
♣ AQ875

1

♠ J109
♥ 1095
♦ A10632
♣ 96

The bidding is likely to go 1S from North, double from East, 2S from South and 4S from North. East surely leads the K♥. To make 4S you need an avoidance play. Use a trump and the A♦ as entries for throwing diamonds on the 10-9♥. You can then ruff out the diamonds without letting West in to lead a club. Although you appear to be an entry short, East has to help. 5H doubled is down only 300 but many pairs will fail in 4S.

E-W Vul
Dealer South

♠ QJ7
♥ 10
♦ K87652
♣ QJ9

♠ A654
♥ A863
♦ AJ93
♣ 3

♠ K109
♥ 75
♦ 104
♣ AK10862

3

♠ 832
♥ KQJ942
♦ Q
♣ 754

If South opens a weak 2H or a Multi, East scrapes up a 3C overcall and West bids 3NT. Left to their own devices, it is not so clear that the players would reach game. The fact that South cannot get in means that West might make as many as eleven tricks: three top winners in the majors, three diamonds and a five clubs. 660 will be huge and even 630 may score quite well. 4S and 5C are on too.

N-S Vul
Dealer East

♠ 103
♥ Q654
♦ AJ1086
♣ 86

♠ AQ87
♥ J972
♦ K3
♣ J43

♠ 65
♥ AK8
♦ Q92
♣ A10952

2

♠ KJ942
♥ 103
♦ 754
♣ KQ7

East-West are likely to play in 2NT or even 3NT after a weak 1NT opening and Stayman. On the normal spade lead, the defenders take six tricks – three spades, two clubs and a diamond. A diamond lead produces the same number of tricks – four diamonds and two clubs. Suit contracts play rather better, with ten tricks on in clubs and nine in hearts.

Game All
Dealer West

♠ 83
♥ AKJ7
♦ A10
♣ 107642

♠ AKQJ6
♥ 95
♦ KQ9
♣ AJ8

♠ 104
♥ Q86
♦ J765432
♣ 9

4

♠ 9752
♥ 10432
♦ 8
♣ KQ53

West is likely to open 2NT and play there. Few East players will have a way to get out into diamonds. The cards lie extremely well for declarer. With both top hearts in the North hand and the suit 4-4, not to mention a friendly layout in the club suit too, 3NT is on. You can set up the diamonds in time. The safer contract of 4D is an easy make. Nine tricks are the limit in a spade contract.

N-S Vul
Dealer North

♠ AK10853
♥ 96
♦ 107
♣ Q63

♠ 4
♥ K
♦ KQJ932
♣ AJ974

♠ J2
♥ A10853
♦ A64
♣ 852

21

♠ Q976
♥ QJ742
♦ 85
♣ K10

This time, despite having a big spade fit, North-South cannot necessarily control the auction. The vulnerability is against them, as is the fact that their hands are relatively flat. If North opens 2S and South raises to 4S, their opponents can in theory collect 500. In real life, West will come in with 4NT to show a two-suited hand, after which East bids 5C. Eleven tricks are on playing in either minor, twelve on a non-spade lead.

Game All
Dealer South

♠ K
♥ AK1073
♦ Q108632
♣ 8

♠ J6
♥ QJ54
♦ 954
♣ K762

♠ AQ98752
♥ 62
♦ AKJ
♣ 9

23

♠ 1043
♥ 98
♦ 7
♣ AQJ10543

It seems likely that South opens 3C and that, whatever North does, East overcalls 4S. One way to beat this is a heart lead, a club switch and two more rounds of hearts. This promotes South's 10♠. If North has not bid hearts, South probably leads a diamond. This works too. A lack of entries to dummy forces declarer to play for the drop in trumps. However, even when the king falls, there is no quick way back to hand. 3C is one down.

E-W Vul
Dealer East

♠ QJ965432
♥ ===
♦ 84
♣ J74

♠ 108
♥ 10872
♦ K9
♣ AKQ108

♠ K7
♥ AJ9
♦ Q10752
♣ 532

22

♠ A
♥ KQ6543
♦ AJ63
♣ 96

3NT is a lucky game for East-West: North can never get in to make any spades. With 22 HCP between the hands, few will bid it. I guess that some tables will see North open 3S, West reopen with a double and East bid 3NT. East does not want to be bidding 5D! South would know what to do about that. North can make 3S by setting up a heart while South still has an ace as an entry.

Love All
Dealer West

♠ AJ10432
♥ A84
♦ 94
♣ K2

♠ 95
♥ J1095
♦ J62
♣ Q1095

♠ KQ86
♥ Q
♦ AKQ873
♣ 84

24

♠ 7
♥ K7632
♦ 105
♣ AJ763

After North opens 1S and East overcalls 2D, much depends upon South's choice of action. A negative double leads to a spade contract by North (or a diamond contract by East). Only 2H will result in finding the 5-3 heart fit and the chance of scoring 140. Even 2S might fail if the defenders are careful. 3D fails by a trick so long as the defenders do not allow declarer in to draw trumps.

Love All
Dealer North

♠ 983
♥ 52
♦ J10843
♣ AQ5

♠ 102
♥ J10743
♦ AK
♣ J1063

♠ KQJ74
♥ KQ98
♦ Q6
♣ 98

17

♠ A65
♥ A6
♦ 9752
♣ K742

Much depends upon West's response to 1S. 9 HCP, three tens and a 5-card suit will be enough for a 2H response for many. East might well raise 2H to 4H (six-loser hand). If West responds 1NT, it will be easier to apply the brakes. As the cards lie, nine tricks are on whether you play in hearts or spades. North-South can make eight tricks in a diamond contract but will rarely get the chance.

E-W Vul
Dealer South

♠ Q74
♥ AK82
♦ QJ732
♣ J

♠ A106
♥ 10754
♦ K8
♣ 7542

♠ K85
♥ J963
♦ A965
♣ 96

19

♠ J932
♥ Q
♦ 104
♣ AKQ1083

The auction 1C-1D-1S-3NT puts North at the helm in 3NT. East leads the unbid heart suit. If declarer plays a diamond, the defenders might cash their top diamonds and exit with a club to endplay dummy. A better idea is to run some clubs. Depending upon what the defenders keep (best is for East to keep two in each major and three diamonds) you may then need to abandon the last club.

N-S Vul
Dealer East

♠ 83
♥ 987542
♦ 4
♣ AKQ10

♠ AJ104
♥ AJ6
♦ J82
♣ 862

♠ KQ9765
♥ 3
♦ 10973
♣ 94

18

♠ 2
♥ KQ10
♦ AKQ65
♣ J753

As on board 13, the side with the spade fit has a competitive edge. If East opens a weak 2S, South doubles and West bids 4S, it will hard for North to refrain from bidding 5H. So long as the defenders take their spade trick quickly, West's trump tricks beat 5H. 4S doubled is a cheap sacrifice against 4H, down only 300.

Game All
Dealer West

♠ A983
♥ 1085
♦ Q1086
♣ 32

♠ J7
♥ Q76
♦ J32
♣ AKQ105

♠ KQ4
♥ KJ943
♦ K9
♣ J84

20

♠ 10652
♥ A2
♦ A754
♣ 976

Playing a weak NT and transfers, West is likely to reach 4H: 1NT-2D-2H-3NT-4H. The likely lead of the 6♦ gives declarer an immediate guess. Since most people do not rush to lead from an ace at trick one, it is normal to play low from dummy. If declarer has to face the diamond guess later in the play, is not quite so clear-cut to get it right. A diamond lead beats 3NT by force.

N-S Vul
Dealer North

♠ ===
♥ AQ8
♦ 1094
♣ AKJ10852

♠ 109852
♥ J752
♦ 753
♣ 7

♠ Q74
♥ K1063
♦ K86
♣ Q96

5

♠ AKJ63
♥ 94
♦ AQJ2
♣ 43

6NT by North is a very good contract. You need either the clubs to come in or the K♦ to be with East. 6C has great chances too, though does not score so well. The diamond position means that you can make 7D from the North seat - I bet nobody manages to bid that. Reaching a slam at all will prove beyond some pairs, especially if North decides not to start with a 3C jump shift.

Game All
Dealer South

♠ K63
♥ 9
♦ K10875
♣ AQJ3

♠ J752
♥ KQJ105
♦ Q9
♣ 54

♠ 1084
♥ A876
♦ A6
♣ 10986

7

♠ AQ9
♥ 432
♦ J432
♣ K72

South has a tricky response to North's 1D opening. A jump to 3D is unattractive with ten losers, yet 2D is an underbid with ten HCP. 1NT seems a fair compromise given the flat shape. North then rebids 2C and South gives jump preference to 3D. The perfect fit (three low hearts facing the singleton) and favourable trump layout allows eleven tricks to be made. 1NT plays nowhere near as well, just making.

E-W Vul
Dealer East

♠ KQ1074
♥ A6
♦ A94
♣ 984

♠ 3
♥ QJ9832
♦ K1083
♣ 62

♠ 862
♥ 1054
♦ 762
♣ AK107

6

♠ AJ95
♥ K7
♦ QJ5
♣ QJ53

Reaching 4S via a weak no-trump opening and a transfer will be common. On the Q♥ lead, you can draw trumps (ending in the North hand) and set up the clubs. This way you avoid a slow diamond loser and make eleven tricks. If North declares, the lead of either minor gives the defenders a third trick: a club gives a ruff; a diamond sets up a winner. 3NT yields only nine tricks for a poor score.

Love All
Dealer West

♠ 2
♥ KQJ1083
♦ ===
♣ AJ9873

♠ J543
♥ A9
♦ AJ98
♣ KQ4

♠ Q
♥ 7654
♦ Q105432
♣ 106

8

♠ AK109876
♥ 2
♦ K76
♣ 52

The cards lie well for North-South again. In a club or heart contract, with only one entry to dummy (in spades), you are going to play a club to the jack and strike lucky. Of course, South, who holds a strong seven-card spade suit, may take some convincing that North should be declarer. If West opens 1D, East-West will find their diamond fit and may sacrifice in 5D doubled, losing only 300.

E-W Vul
Dealer North

♠ 95
♥ 432
♦ 10983
♣ QJ96

♠ K6
♥ Q6
♦ QJ642
♣ K1084

♠ Q108743
♥ AK9
♦ A7
♣ 72

9

♠ AJ2
♥ J10875
♦ K5
♣ A53

Suppose East opens 1S, West responds 2D and East rebids 2S. West probably rebids 2NT but may prefer 3S. East is likely to go on to game in whichever denomination West chooses. To make 3NT you need to let the Q♣ win the first trick and may need to take the backward finesse in spades as well. To make 4S again you need to decide to attack spades by leading the ten. I can see no real reason why you would find that.

Love All
Dealer South

♠ A1063
♥ 8
♦ KJ4
♣ KJ1084

♠ KJ54
♥ Q105
♦ 10863
♣ 32

♠ Q97
♥ J962
♦ AQ
♣ 9765

11

♠ 82
♥ AK743
♦ 9752
♣ AQ

3NT is a thin game, makeable only from the North seat, This is in fact quite a likely spot after 1H-2C-2D-3NT. If South decides to overlook the dreadful diamonds, North may rebid 2S and finish as dummy. Even with the spade position protected, you need to take a winning view in diamonds to make nine tricks. I suspect more will go down in 3NT than make it. 3C and 3D are makeable.

Game All
Dealer East

♠ Q105
♥ 1042
♦ J53
♣ 10942

♠ A643
♥ K6
♦ AK1062
♣ 75

♠ K
♥ A753
♦ Q87
♣ QJ863

10

♠ J9872
♥ QJ98
♦ 94
♣ AK

Game is almost a certainty this time, with nine running tricks in 3NT unless North has the diamonds stopped. The lead of either major suffices to stop any overtricks in 3NT. The same 600 is available playing in 5D or, so long as you decide to play North for the 10-9 of clubs rather than the A-K, in 5C. Scores of other than 600 to East-West will be a rarity and good for one side or the other.

N-S Vul
Dealer West

♠ QJ
♥ J2
♦ AKJ1054
♣ 862

♠ 742
♥ 1093
♦ 983
♣ AKQJ

♠ K863
♥ AKQ865
♦ 2
♣ 43

12

♠ A1095
♥ 74
♦ Q76
♣ 10975

North opens 1D in second seat, East bids 1H, South doubles and West bids 2D to show a value raise. East then bids 4H. South leads a diamond. North wins and may well switch to a spade. Knowing South has exactly four spades (from the double of 1H), declarer covers. If not, South can overtake the second spade and give North a ruff – it may help in finding this defence if North switches to the J♠ rather than the Q♠.

Game All
Dealer North

♠ KQ98532
♥ J
♦ QJ43
♣ A

♠ ===
♥ 985
♦ AK
♣ Q9876543

♠ 4
♥ AK76432
♦ 10872
♣ 2

13

♠ AJ1076
♥ Q10
♦ 965
♣ KJ10

This distributional deal should generate some exciting bidding. The side with the spade suit tends to determine the auction – often North will finish in 5S after East-West have bid to 5H. 5S doubled is in fact the par contract. This goes down one (three top losers in the red suits). 5H makes eleven tricks on most lines; it could yield an overtrick on a trump lead because that lead gives declarer time to set up the clubs.

N-S Vul
Dealer South

♠ K865
♥ 932
♦ A97
♣ 1064

♠ Q109
♥ KJ5
♦ K1084
♣ KQ7

♠ J73
♥ 6
♦ J62
♣ AJ9532

15

♠ A42
♥ AQ10874
♦ Q53
♣ 8

When South opens 1H, West might upgrade to a 1NT overcall. If not, North bids 1S and South rebids 2H. Assuming that West passed reasonably smoothly over 1H, East can reopen with 3C. Even knowing that East is merely protecting, West may venture 3NT. If North leads a heart (as seems certain), South may need to win and switch to a spade to beat it. 3C and 2H are on.

Love All
Dealer East

♠ A3
♥ AQ7
♦ 10653
♣ 8642

♠ Q7
♥ K84
♦ Q9842
♣ J105

♠ K652
♥ 963
♦ AKJ
♣ AKQ

14

♠ J10984
♥ J1052
♦ 7
♣ 973

East is likely to play in 3NT after opening 2NT. A heart lead beats this – but South will no doubt lead the J♠. If declarer covers in dummy, North can beat the game by winning and switching to the Q♥ – nobody will find that. More likely, the 3♣ comes back. You can then take five top winners, overtake the third diamond and endplay North on the fourth round. There is little point in playing South, who has spades to cash, for the A♥.

E-W Vul
Dealer West

♠ AK8642
♥ 8
♦ A5
♣ Q987

♠ QJ105
♥ K976
♦ J1073
♣ 6

♠ 93
♥ Q1053
♦ KQ842
♣ 42

16

♠ 7
♥ AJ42
♦ 96
♣ AKJ1053

7C is a superb contract. It would take a 5-1 spade split and a 3-0 trump break to beat it. On normal breaks, you can set up the spades by ruffing and have enough trumps to cover any remaining losers. How do you get there? If North opens 1S and then makes a splinter in hearts over the 2C response, South will know the hands fit well and are in the slam zone. The worry is two fast diamond losers. Ten tricks are the limit in spades or NT.