

KRZYSZTOF MARTENS

**VIRTUAL
EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP
part 1**

Acknowledgements

My special thanks go out to Irena Chodorowska for her work on translating this book into English.

Special thanks also go to Irena and Janek Chodorowski for valuable observations that I have used in this book.

My sincere thanks to the brilliant bridge writer, David Bird, for his insights and profound remarks that have significantly contributed to more accurate and clear presentation of the bidding concepts in this book.

Krzysztof Martens

GARSŲ PASAULIS

Vilnius - 2006

Copyright ©
Krzysztof MARTENS

Translated by:
Irena CHODOROWSKA

Editors:
David BIRD and Jan CHODOROWSKI

Cover design by:
Aleksandra BERKOWSKA

Garsų Pasaulis – Vilnius

ISBN 9955-9415-5-3

CONTENTS

Dynamic Declarer Play	5
Round 1 - Match against Croatia	10
Solutions of the play problems 1-10.....	12
Round 2 - Match against Bulgaria	22
Solutions of the play problems 11-20.....	24
Round 3 - Match against Spain	34
Solutions of the play problems 21-30.....	36
Round 4 - Match against France	47
Solutions of the play problems 31-40.....	49
Round 5 - Match against San Marino	60
Solutions of the play problems 41-50.....	62
Round 6 - Match against Lebanon	72
Solutions of the play problems 51-60.....	74
Round 7 - Match against Israel	85
Solutions of the play problems 61-70.....	87
Round 8 - Match against Belgium	97
Solutions of the play problems 71-80.....	99

Round 9 – Match against Ireland.....	109
Solutions of the play problems 81-90.....	111
Round 10 – Match against Russia.....	121
Solutions of the play problems 91-100.....	123
Round 11 – Match against Liechtenstein.....	134
Solutions of the play problems 101-110.....	136
Round 12 – Match against Scotland.....	147
Solutions of the play problems 111-120.....	149
Round 13 – Match against England.....	159
Solutions of the play problems 121-130.....	161
Round 14 – Match against Latvia.....	175
Solutions of the play problems 131-140.....	177
Round 15 – Match with Austria.....	191
Solutions of the play problems 141-150.....	193
Round 16 – Match against Ukraine.....	203
Solutions of the play problems 151-160.....	205
Round 17 – Match against Portugal.....	219
Solutions of the play problems 161-170.....	221

DYNAMIC DECLARER PLAY

Dear readers!

In my time I have trained many national teams in preparation for championship events. Declarer play was one of the most attractive and favoured elements of this training. A player who has ambition to be on par with the best must have extensive knowledge in this area. The time available at a bridge table is limited. A player who wastes too much time on technical analysis of the hand will not be able to concentrate fully on these aspects:

1. Analysing the opening lead.
2. Operating skilfully with small cards to obstruct the defenders' signals.
3. Making psychological plays.
4. Demonstrating table presence.
5. Camouflaging his intentions.

Spending more time on analysis also gives the defenders more time for their own analysis. If declarer plays efficiently and promptly, this can provoke the defenders into routine moves. Finally, prolonged analysis over many deals can cause a deterioration in the player's condition, unnoticeable during the beginning of the championship but more apparent at a further stage.

How can we handle this? An outstanding bridge player should be aware of all the technical problems he may encounter in a given deal after a few seconds. He should not have to spend some time trying to spot them and analyse. The situation is similar to mathematical classes at school. After solving fifteenth mathematical problems of the same kind, students can do it automatically. Once all the standard techniques are known, the only thing to be done is to input different data. Not knowing the techniques, they have to be calculated afresh each time. How much effort does this waste? Practising declarer play can be compared with learning mathematics at school. First we learn formulae and techniques and then we

acquire the skill of analytical thinking. It is essential that the bridge problems we solve serve the supreme objective of learning declarer's play – developing the skill of creative and critical thinking and precise analysis.

Even a beginner knows a little about playing out the hand. But one cannot learn the declarer play instinctively, in the way we acquire the mother tongue. **To learn to play the hand we need an informed effort to be made.** By an intelligent and appropriate learning process every player may improve his declarer's play and some may even demonstrate a special talent. Maybe you are such a talented person. How can we find that out?

Even talented people must regularly devote some time on play. Even if it is only 15 minutes every day you will see the progress after a couple of weeks. **Learning declarer play is a job** to be done systematically. You have to learn and memorise the basic techniques, know and get to the bottom of their meaning and understand what they are for. You have to come back to the same hands, questions and problems and explore them from different angles. Discussions with other players and reading bridge publications serve this purpose. Some techniques have to be practised – squeezeplay, for example.

Bridge teachers try to persuade their students that good play requires long analysis. Psychologists from the University of Amsterdam maintain that the more difficult a problem is the shorter should be the analysis. Our brain has a limited capacity for informed and rational analysis. The more concepts keep going through one's head the more difficult it is to make the best choice.

What happens when we make a decision fast? in that moment the power of subconscious processes goes through our mind. The brain works although we are unaware of it. Each bridge player learns subconsciously while playing or watching others play. A subconscious system of acquiring information makes instinctive decisions are more often accurate than would result from the theory of probability.

Both parts of this book contain 340 hands covering almost all problems that you may encounter at the table.

It is not my intention to flatter the reader. Analyses of the problems in this book do not cover all stages of the declarer play. They somehow force the reader to work while reading the book. It is like

with counting IMPs - often unjust. However, we are playing in the European Championships and the standards are set very high.

I suggest that you tackle no more than ten problems daily. When you have gradually made your way through all the problems, I recommend that you repeat the process. You will remember many of the hands and that is the point. The others will be easier to analyse than during the first encounter.

Let's look at a typical safety play. It is a problem on declarer play composed by Paul Lukacs.

♠ A K 8 6 5 3	N W E S	♠ 7 4 2
♥ A		♥ Q 6 5
♦ K 8 4		♦ 7 3 2
♣ 8 5 3		♣ A K Q J

Contract 4♠ by W. Lead 3♥.

This is solution suggested by the author:

1. Play the queen of hearts from dummy. If this is covered with the king, the opponents will have more problems in running their tricks - they may try to collect a heart trick, first thing.

2-3. Play a club to dummy's honour and lead a spade. If South follows with ♠9, then duck the trick into the safe North hand. This manoeuvre will gain when South holds three spades such as the Q-10-9 and would otherwise have gained the lead to play a diamond through the king. Additionally, South must hold maximum club doubleton (or you could have discarded a diamond on the fourth club). North must also hold the diamond ace.

South holding in spades:

All these reservations make us to look for security at the level of 2-3%, often losing an overtrick. Also, following the recommended line will occasionally result in going down in a cold game. Suppose the North hand is as follows:

♠ J 10
♥ J 9 3
♦ A 10 9
♣ 10 7 6 4 2

South will ruff the second round of clubs play through the king of diamonds, beating the contract by two tricks. We may argue to what extent safety play makes any sense. In my opinion, wasting your energy and causing fatigue by long analyses is more harmful than the possible losses resulting from faulty assessment of risk.

So, this is my advice – do not concentrate on looking for ultra safe solutions, that may result in lost overtricks or additional undertricks. In the long run it does not pay. Focus your attention on the atmosphere at the table, make your judgement of the situation and analyse opening leads.

I have divided the problems on declarer play into four categories.

- clubs ♣.
The problems do not require long analysis. It is enough to know the main theme.
- diamonds ♦.
You have to have an idea of the required technique. Once you find your way, you will not encounter any problems.
- hearts ♥.
Knowledge of the required technique and good analytical skill are needed to handle these problems.
- spades ♠.
Problems marked as spades are difficult, complicated and multi-variant. Solving such a problem will give you a lot of satisfaction.

I would like to make your problem solving more attractive and all bridge players love the atmosphere of competition. The European Team Championships in Tenerife were held from 17 to 30 June 2001. Some 35 teams took part in the Championships. You will play 10-board matches against each of the teams. You will not play against your own country. If you are, for instance a Portuguese, the match against Portugal can be treated as a match against Poland. The actual hands have been composed by me and do

not come from these Championships. You face your opponents in the Open Room and then compare your results with those achieved in the Closed Room. On each hand you may win or lose a lot of IMPs.

The defenders will play natural leads against you:

- a) **fourth best**,
- b) **high** from the doubleton,
- c) **second best** from three and more cards.

The number of IMPs that you win (or... lose) will be calculated into Victory Points. Good luck!

ROUND 1 - MATCH AGAINST CROATIA

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 1	♠ 5 3 ♥ A K 3 2 ♦ K Q 9 8 4 2 ♣ A	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">N</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♠ A K ♥ J 6 5 ♦ A 7 ♣ Q 8 7 4 3 2
W	N	E							
S									

Contract 6♦. Lead ♥10. You play the jack and win the trick.

Board 2	♠ Q J 4 ♥ A K J ♦ A 9 7 6 5 2 ♣ A	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">N</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♠ 10 9 8 7 ♥ 4 3 2 ♦ K 4 ♣ K J 4 3
W	N	E							
S									

Contract 4NT. Lead ♥6.

Board 3	♠ A K Q 10 ♥ 5 ♦ A K J 9 4 ♣ A 7 2	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">N</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♠ 4 3 2 ♥ Q 9 8 ♦ Q 10 8 5 2 ♣ Q 6
W	N	E							
S									

Contract 6♦. Lead ♥A and a switch to ♦6.

Board 4	♠ A Q J 9 7 ♥ 4 2 ♦ Q 9 6 5 ♣ 10 9	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">N</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♠ 10 8 2 ♥ A 10 9 ♦ A K ♣ A K Q J 2
W	N	E							
S									

Contract 6♠. Lead ♥Q.

Board 5	♠ K Q 9 6 ♥ A 10 9 ♦ A J 2 ♣ A 3 2	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">N</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♠ J 10 8 2 ♥ K J 8 3 ♦ 10 3 ♣ K 9 6
W	N	E							
S									

Contract 4♠. Lead ♠Q.

Board 6	♠ K 8 4		♠ 7 3									
♦	♥ A 5 4 3	<table border="1" style="text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♥ K Q
	N											
W			E									
	S											
	♦ A 8	♦ K 7 6 5 3										
	♣ K 6 5 2		♣ A 9 4 3									

Contract 3NT. South opened 1♠. Lead ♠J, winning, followed by ♠10, South playing low.

Board 7	♠ K		♠ Q J 4									
♦	♥ K J 8 4	<table border="1" style="text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♥ –
	N											
W			E									
	S											
	♦ A K J 4 2	♦ Q 10 9 8										
	♣ A K 2		♣ 9 8 7 5 4 3									

Contract 6♦. Lead ♠A and ♦3 switch. S plays ♦5.

Board 8	♠ Q J 9		♠ A									
♣	♥ A 3	<table border="1" style="text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♥ 10 9 8 5 2
	N											
W			E									
	S											
	♦ 4 2	♦ A K Q J 10										
	♣ A K 10 9 8 4		♣ Q 2									

Contract 6♣. Lead ♠4.

Board 9	♠ K J 6		♠ A 5									
♣	♥ A Q	<table border="1" style="text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♥ 4 2
	N											
W			E									
	S											
	♦ K 10 4 2	♦ A Q 9 8										
	♣ A Q 10 8		♣ K J 9 4 2									

Contract 6NT. Lead ♠7.

Board 10	♠ K 9 4 2		♠ 8 7 5									
♣	♥ K Q 10 9 7 5	<table border="1" style="text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♥ A J 8 2
	N											
W			E									
	S											
	♦ 3	♦ A 8										
	♣ J 10		♣ A Q 9 8									

Contract 4♥. Lead ♦K.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with Croatia

BOARD 1

♣	♠ Q 10 8 7 6 ♥ Q 10 9 8 4 ♦ 3 ♣ 10 5										
♠ 5 3 ♥ A K 3 2 ♦ K Q 9 8 4 2 ♣ A	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K ♥ J 6 5 ♦ A 7 ♣ Q 8 7 4 3 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J 9 4 2 ♥ 7 ♦ J 10 6 5 ♣ K J 9 6										

Contract 6♦. Lead ♥10, you played the jack, which won the trick.

The main point – If you ruff the fourth round of hearts, maybe South will overruff from a four-card trump holding.

Order of play:

2. Ace of diamonds, small safety play against a singleton diamond with South.
3. A heart to the ace.
4. A spade to the king.
5. A heart to the king, if South ruffs, then we draw trumps.
6. Heart ruffed.

The result from the Closed Rooms:

Contract 3NT: +430 for **EW**.

Correct play: +920 = +10 IMP.

Down one: -50 = -10 IMP.

BOARD 2

♦	♠ K 2 ♥ Q 9 7 6 ♦ J 10 8 ♣ 9 6 5 2										
♠ Q J 4 ♥ A K J ♦ A 9 7 6 5 2 ♣ A	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 9 8 7 ♥ 4 3 2 ♦ K 4 ♣ K J 4 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A 6 5 3 ♥ 10 8 5 ♦ Q 3 ♣ Q 10 8 7										

Contract 4NT. Lead ♥6.

The main point – You must maintain your communications. In particular, you must arrange how you can cash the king of clubs.

Order of play:

2. Win the club ace.
3. Concede a diamond trick. If the diamonds break 3-2, the contract is cold.

The result from the Closed Room:

Contract 3NT: +430 for Croatia.

Correct play: tie.

One off -50 = -10 IMP.

BOARD 3

♦		♠ J 9 6 5 ♥ A K 7 ♦ 7 6 ♣ K 10 9 3			
♠ A K Q 10 ♥ 5 ♦ A K J 9 4 ♣ A 7 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 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	♠ 4 3 2 ♥ Q 9 8 ♦ Q 10 8 5 2 ♣ Q 6
N					
W E					
S					
		♠ 8 7 ♥ J 10 6 4 3 2 ♦ 3 ♣ J 8 5 4			

Contract 6♦. Lead ♥A and a switch to ♦6.

The main point – A squeeze can often give you an extra chance.

Order of play:

2. Win the trick in the dummy (with the eight).
3. Ruff a heart with the diamond ace.
4. Enter the dummy with ♦10.
5. Ruff a heart with the diamond king.
6. Play the club ace.
- 7-8. Play two top spades (in case North has a singleton, or the jack falls).
9. Reach the dummy with ♦Q and run the remaining trumps – the squeeze is ready.

The result from the Closed Rooms:

Contract 4♠: +620 for EW.

You played for the squeeze: +1370 = +13 IMP.

Going down: -100 for EW = -12 IMP.

BOARD 4

♦	♠ 6 5 3 ♥ Q J 8 6 ♦ J 8 3 2 ♣ 7 5	♠ 10 8 2 ♥ A 10 9 ♦ A K ♣ A K Q J 2			
♠ A Q J 9 7 ♥ 4 2 ♦ Q 9 6 5 ♣ 10 9	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 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	♠ K 4 ♥ K 7 5 3 ♦ 10 7 4 ♣ 8 6 4 3
N					
W E					
S					

Contract 6♣. Lead ♥Q.

The main point – Do not play the ace of Trumps before seeking discards on the clubs.

Win the heart lead and immediately play clubs. If South ruffs a club, overruff, play the spade ace, go to the table with the diamond ace and play the fourth club. If South ruffs, you overruff enter the dummy with the king of diamonds and pitch a heart on the fifth round of clubs. If North ruffs the third round of clubs, you can try to finesse the spade king.

Closed room: Contract 6♠ +1430 for **EW**.

Play of cards followed the above analysis: – no swing.

Incorrect play (even if you happen to make the contract – for example the heart ace was followed by the spade finesse): -100 = -17 IMP.

BOARD 5

♣	♠ 5 4 ♥ 7 6 2 ♦ 9 7 5 4 ♣ Q J 10 4	♠ J 10 8 2 ♥ K J 8 3 ♦ 10 3 ♣ K 9 6									
♠ K Q 9 6 ♥ A 10 9 ♦ A J 2 ♣ A 3 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 7 3 ♥ Q 5 4 ♦ K Q 8 6 ♣ 8 7 5
	N										
W		E									
	S										

Contract 4♠. Lead Q♣.

The main point – Make sure you try all the options.

Win the first trick with the king of clubs and lead the Three of diamonds. If South has both diamond honours, you can pitch your losing club on the jack of diamonds. If not, then you will have to find the queen of hearts.

Closed room – Contract 3NT: +400 for **EW**.

Play a diamond at trick 2: +420 = +1 IMP.

If not (even if you think you would have guess right in hearts!): -50 = -10 IMP.

BOARD 6

♦	♠ J 10 6 ♥ 10 9 7 6 ♦ 10 9 2 ♣ J 8 7										
♠ K 8 4 ♥ A 5 4 3 ♦ A 8 ♣ K 6 5 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 7 3 ♥ K Q ♦ K 7 6 5 3 ♣ A 9 4 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A Q 9 5 2 ♥ J 8 2 ♦ Q J 4 ♣ Q 10										

Contract 3NT. South opened 1♠. Lead ♠J, winning, followed by ♠10.

The main point – Remember the squeeze. If you cannot set up a squeeze yourself, get the defenders to help you.

Ducking a second spade by South practically guarantees that the suit breaks 5-3.

Defenders do not like to enable a declarer to throw them in.

Win the second spade and concede a spade trick to South. In this way the communication between the defenders is broken. If South runs his winning spades North will have problems with discards. You discard two clubs from your hand and two diamonds and a club from the dummy. According to the cards North throws, you will know which squeeze to execute. You can play for any of three squeezes:

- a) heart-club squeeze against North,
- b) diamond-club squeeze against North,
- c) A double squeeze, diamond-club squeeze against North and diamond-heart squeeze against South.

Closed room – Contract 5♣ +600 for EW.

You played a spade in a third trick, I presume that you have handled this one: +600 – no swing.

You tried some other option: – down one –100 = –12 IMP.

BOARD 7

♦	♠ A 8 7 6 2 ♥ A Q 9 5 ♦ 7 6 3 ♣ 6	♠ Q J 4 ♥ – ♦ Q 10 9 8 ♣ 9 8 7 5 4 3			
♠ K ♥ K J 8 4 ♦ A K J 4 2 ♣ A K 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 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	♠ 10 9 5 3 ♥ 10 7 6 3 2 ♦ 5 ♣ Q J 10
N					
W E					
S					

Contract 6♦. Lead ♠A and switch to ♦3. S plays ♦5.

The main point – Protect the contract against unfavourable distribution whenever possible.

Order of play:

2. Win the diamond in the dummy.
- 3-4. Pitch two clubs to two spades.
5. Play a club to the ace.
6. Enter dummy with a diamond.
7. Ruff a club with the ace of diamonds.
8. Enter dummy with a diamond.
9. Ruff a club.

You have made the contract against a 3-1 distribution of both diamonds and clubs (3 diamonds with a singleton club).

Closed room: Contract 3NT, +600 for EW.

If you played successfully: +1370 = +13 IMP.

If you failed: -100 = -12 IMP.

BOARD 8

		♠ 10 8 7 4										
	♣	♥ Q J 4										
		♦ 9 8										
		♣ J 7 5 3										
♠ Q J 9		<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">N</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">W</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">S</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ A 3			♥ 10 9 8 5 2									
♦ 4 2			♦ A K Q J 10									
♣ A K 10 9 8 4			♣ Q 2									
		♠ K 6 5 3 2										
		♥ K 7 6										
		♦ 7 6 5 3										
		♣ 6										

Contract 6♣. Lead ♠4.

The main point – Concede a trump trick when it is safe to do so.

At the second trick lead ♣2 and finesse ♠10!

To make the contract you need only five trump tricks, to go with five diamonds and the major-suit aces. You should lose a trump trick while dummy has a trump to protect you against a spade continuation. North is powerless.

Closed room – Contract 6♦ +940 for EW (Lead ♣6).

You finessed the Ten of clubs: +920 = -1 IMP.

You played carelessly: one off -50 = -14 IMP.

BOARD 9

♣	♠ Q 10 9 4 2										
	♥ K 8 7 5 2										
	♦ 3										
	♣ 7 3										
♠ K J 6	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 5
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A Q		♥ 4 2									
♦ K 10 4 2		♦ A Q 9 8									
♣ A Q 10 8		♣ K J 9 4 2									
	♠ 8 7 3										
	♥ J 10 9 6										
	♦ J 7 6 5										
	♣ 6 5										

Contract 6NT. Lead ♣7.

The main point – When you have a two-way finesse, choose your play so that you will have a second chance if you guess wrongly.

Play the ace and queen of diamonds. If South holds four diamonds to the jack, you can finesse on the third round. If North holds four diamonds, you can remove his clubs and throw him in on the fourth round of diamonds. He will then have to give you a twelfth trick in one of the major suits.

The result from the Closed Room – Contract 6NT, +1440 for **EW**.

You made the correct play of the ace and queen of diamonds: +1440 – no swing.

If not: -100 = -17 IMP.

BOARD 10

	♣		♠ A 6 3									
			♥ 6									
			♦ K Q 10 7 5 2									
			♣ 6 4 2									
♠ K 9 4 2		<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 8 7 5
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ K Q 10 9 7 5			♥ A J 8 2									
♦ 3			♦ A 8									
♣ J 10			♣ A Q 9 8									
			♠ Q J 10									
			♥ 4 3									
			♦ J 9 6 4									
			♣ K 7 5 3									

Contract 4♥. Lead ♦K.

The main point – Keep the dangerous opponent off lead.

With the intention of keeping South off lead, and preventing a lead through the king of spades, you should allow the king of diamonds to win the first trick. You can then pitch a club on the ace of diamonds and, after drawing trumps, take a ruffing club finesse into the safe hand.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, +620 for EW.

You conceded the king of diamonds – no swing.

You took the first trick with the ace of diamonds: -100 = -12 IMP.

The first match with Croatia has finished. How did you fare in the European Championships? Faultless declarer’s play would bring you an impressive 36 IMP. In this event the teams play 20-board matches. After converting it to VP, a 36-IMP win would produce a 22-8 score in VPs. This is the conversion table:

0-3 = 15-15	17-21 = 19-11	37-41 = 23-7	60-65 = 25-3
4-8 = 16-14	22-26 = 20-10	42-47 = 24-6	66-72 = 25-2
9-12 = 17-13	27-31 = 21-9	48-53 = 25-5	73-79 = 25-1
13-16 = 18-12	32-36 = 22-8	54-59 = 25-4	+80 = 25-0

Your next match will be played against Bulgaria.

ROUND 2 – MATCH AGAINST BULGARIA

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 11	♠ K 9 6 ♥ A J 10 2 ♦ Q 9 ♣ Q J 10 9	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♠ A 10 8 ♥ 6 5 ♦ K 10 7 ♣ A 8 7 4 3
W	N	E							
S									

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥4. South plays the queen.

Board 12	♠ 7 4 ♥ A K 9 2 ♦ A K J 6 ♣ A K 9	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♠ A Q 5 ♥ J 4 ♦ Q 8 7 4 ♣ Q J 10 4
W	N	E							
S									

Contract 6NT. Lead ♦10.

Board 13	♠ A Q 10 9 5 4 ♥ 9 ♦ A 6 5 3 ♣ K 2	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♠ K J ♥ K Q 2 ♦ K 7 4 2 ♣ 8 7 6 4
W	N	E							
S									

Contract 4♠. Lead ♥J.

Board 14	♠ K Q J 8 7 ♥ J 8 ♦ K Q 4 3 ♣ 10 9	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♠ A 10 2 ♥ 9 6 5 ♦ A 6 5 ♣ A 4 3 2
W	N	E							
S									

Contract 4♠. Lead: Three rounds of hearts.

Board 15	♠ K 6 ♥ Q J 10 9 4 2 ♦ K ♣ 10 8 6 4	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♠ A 4 3 ♥ K 8 7 3 ♦ A Q 4 2 ♣ K 7
W	N	E							
S									

Contract 4♥. North opened 3♠. Lead ♠Q.

Board 16	♠ Q 3		♠ A 9 8
♥	♥ A K J 2	N W E S	♥ 9 8 7 6 4
	♦ Q J		♦ 6 4 2
	♣ K Q 5 3 2		♣ A 6

Contract 4♥. Lead ♣J.

Board 17	♠ K 8		♠ Q 6
♥	♥ A Q 6	N W E S	♥ K 8 3 2
	♦ 7 6 5		♦ A Q 8 2
	♣ A Q 10 4 2		♣ 9 8 7

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠4.

Board 18	♠ K Q 6		♠ J 10 5 3
♦	♥ A J 5	N W E S	♥ Q 3 2
	♦ A K Q 3 2		♦ 8 6
	♣ K 6		♣ Q J 4 2

Contract 3NT. South opened 3♥. Lead ♦J, on which S pitches ♥4.

Board 19	♠ K 10 4		♠ A
♣	♥ A K 10 4	N W E S	♥ Q J 6
	♦ K 8		♦ Q J 6 4 3
	♣ K 7 5 3		♣ Q 8 6 2

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠Q.

Board 20	♠ A 10 9 8 5		♠ 2
♥	♥ Q 6	N W E S	♥ J 5
	♦ 6		♦ A K Q 9 7 5 2
	♣ A K J 9 5		♣ Q 10 2

Contract 5♣. Lead – two rounds hearts and the spade queen.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with Bulgaria

BOARD 11

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

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥4. South plays the queen.

The maint point – Break the communication between the opponents.

Concede the trick with the queen of hearts. This is a non-routine move. However, let's see what will happen if you win the first trick with the ace and run the queen of clubs. South will win with the king and play a heart back to 10 and king. North will then establish the heart suit and reach the setting trick with his ace of diamonds.

The result from the Closed Room – Contract 3♣, +130 for EW.

You ducked the first heart: +400= +7 IMP.

You took the trick with the ace of hearts: one down -50= -5 IMP.

BOARD 12

♣	♠ J 9 8 2 ♥ 10 6 5 ♦ 10 9 2 ♣ 6 5 2	♠ A Q 5 ♥ J 4 ♦ Q 8 7 4 ♣ Q J 10 4									
♠ 7 4 ♥ A K 9 2 ♦ A K J 6 ♣ A K 9	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K 10 6 3 ♥ Q 8 7 3 ♦ 5 3 ♣ 8 7 3										

Contract 6NT. Lead ♦10.

The main point – Combine as many chances as possible.

Win the diamond lead in the West hand and play ♥2 to the jack, hoping that North holds the queen. If South wins with the queen of hearts, win the return and cash two heart tricks in case the ♥10 drops. Finally, you will finesse the spade king or play for a heart-spade squeeze. The fall of the cards in the suits outside spades will often give you a clue as to which option to try.

Closed Room – Contract 6♦, +920 for EW.

You played well: +990 = +2 IMP.

Wrong declarer’s play: -50 = -14 IMP.

BOARD 13

♣	♠ 8 7 ♥ J 10 8 7 4 ♦ Q J 8 ♣ A 9 3	♠ K J ♥ K Q 2 ♦ K 7 4 2 ♣ 8 7 6 4			
♠ A Q 10 9 5 4 ♥ 9 ♦ A 6 5 3 ♣ K 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 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 3 2 ♥ A 6 5 3 ♦ 10 9 ♣ Q J 10 5
N					
W E					
S					

Contract 4♠. Lead ♥J.

The main point – Make a plan before playing to the first trick.

Play low from the dummy. If South overtakes with the ace, to switch to a club, you will have two discards for your diamond losers. Otherwise you will take the ruffing finesse in hearts and establish a heart trick to discard a club.

Closed room – Contract 4♠, +620 for EW after the opening lead with the ace of clubs.

You ducked the jack of hearts: no swing.

You failed to do so: -100 = -12 IMP.

Henry also had an idea to concede the trick with the jack of hearts. His opponent, Miss Zula, looked coquettishly his way. Taking opportunity of his long hesitation she whispered passionately:

– If you play beautifully I shall be yours this night.

– Queen of hearts, please – instructed harshly Henry.

BOARD 14

♦	♠ 6 4 ♥ K Q 10 2 ♦ J 10 7 2 ♣ Q 7 5										
♠ K Q J 8 7 ♥ J 8 ♦ K Q 4 3 ♣ 10 9	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 10 2 ♥ 9 6 5 ♦ A 6 5 ♣ A 4 3 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 9 5 3 ♥ A 7 4 3 ♦ 9 8 ♣ K J 8 6										

Contract 4♠. Lead - hearts in three rounds.

The main point - Remember the dummy reversal.

Order of play:

3. Ruff the third round of hearts.
4. Concede a club.
6. After winning the return, play the ace of clubs and ruff a club.
- 8-9. Spade king and a small spade to 10 - if spades break 3-2, ruff the last club and enter dummy to draw the last trump. If spades break 4-1 play the diamonds and if the suit is 3-3 you bring the contract home.

Closed room - Contract 3♠, +140 for **EW**.

You played dummy reversal: +420 = +7 IMP.

You tried to ruff a diamond in the dummy: -50 = -5 IMP.

BOARD 15

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

Contract 4♥. North opened 3♠. Lead ♠Q.

The main point – Discard in the suit where a ruff is threatened.

Order of play:

1. Win with the king of spades.
- 2-3. Overtake the king of diamonds with the ace and pitch a spade on the diamond queen.
4. Now it is safe to play trumps.

Closed room – your teammates played in 4♠ doubled, down two: +500 for EW.

You discarded a spade +420 = -2 IMP.

You allowed the defenders to score a spade ruff: -50 = -11 IMP.

BOARD 16

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

Contract 4♥. Lead ♣J.

The main point – Maintain communication between the hands.

Order of play:

1. The ace of clubs.
2. The ace of hearts.
- 3-4. The king and queen of clubs, discarding a spade.

If North ruffs with the queen, you discard a spade from dummy and (with the trump entries to your hand intact) can set up a club for a spade further spade discard.

You lose against these two layouts:

- ♥ Q 10 x with two clubs with North.
- ♥ Q x x with two clubs with South.

In both these situations, it will not help you to draw a second round of trumps before playing clubs.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, +620 for EW (Lead ♠2).

Proper play +620 = no swing.

You did not follow the correct line -100 = -12 IMP.

BOARD 17

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

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠4.

The main point – Do not bother about small additional chances, specifically when it may cost you an overtrick or an extra undertrick.

The author of this problem recommends playing three rounds of hearts and, if they break 3-3, finessing the queen of clubs, then finessing the king of diamonds. This provides an additional chance, he says, if North holds a singleton jack of clubs singleton. What rubbish! In the long run, you will score more losses than profits by following such lines, not to mention overburdening the mind. Make the simple and obvious play – the double club finesse.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, +450 for EW.

You played for double club finesse: +460 = no swing.

You were looking for a miraculous solution: -50 = -11 IMP.

BOARD 18

♦	♠ A 8 4										
	♥ –										
	♦ J 10 9 7 5 4										
	♣ A 9 5 3										
♠ K Q 6	<table style="margin: 0 auto;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 10 5 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A J 5		♥ Q 3 2									
♦ A K Q 3 2		♦ 8 6									
♣ K 6		♣ Q J 4 2									
	♠ 9 7 2										
	♥ K 10 9 8 7 6 4										
	♦ –										
	♣ 10 8 7										

Contract 3NT. South opened 3♥. Lead ♦J. S discarded ♥4.

The main point – Remember the bidding when you seek an entry to dummy.

Order of play:

1. Win the diamond lead.
- 2-5. Play spades. North takes his ace on the third round and exits with a diamond.
- 6-7. After winning the diamond return, play the king of clubs and another club.
8. North wins the second club trick and plays a diamond for the third time. You pitch a club from the dummy.

And now comes the key play. You play the five of hearts from your hand (North pitches a club) and the two of hearts from the dummy! South wins with the five of hearts and has to concede an entry to dummy, either in hearts or clubs.

Funny, isn't it – South gave away the contract away on the first trick when he discarded the four of hearts.

Closed room – Contract 2♥ doubled (NS), +500 for EW.
 You found the extraordinary endplay: +420 = -2 IMP.
 You failed in finding this difficult play: -50 = -11 IMP.

BOARD 19

♣	♠ QJ986										
	♥ 9872										
	♦ 107										
	♣ 104										
♠ K 10 4	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K 10 4		♥ QJ6									
♦ K 8		♦ QJ643									
♣ K 7 5 3		♣ Q862									
	♠ 7532										
	♥ 53										
	♦ A952										
	♣ AJ9										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠Q.

The main point – Make it expensive for the dangerous defender to gain the lead.

Order of play:

1. Ace of spades.
2. A diamond to the king.
3. A heart to the jack.
4. A club to the king.
5. A diamond to the jack.

In this way you can establish nine tricks before South gets a chance to gain the lead.

Closed room – Contract 3NT, +600 for **EW**.

An accurate play produced no swing.

A mistake was expensive -12 IMP.

BOARD 20

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

Contract 5♣. Lead – two rounds of hearts and the queen spade.

The main point – Try to combine all chances.

At first it may seem that you have to guess which of the minor suits is distributed 4-1. A precise analysis allows you to combine all the chances. It turns out that it is enough to assume that four clubs are not with North to drive the contract home. We play the ace of diamonds and ruff a diamond next we cash the ace of clubs and a club to the ten. Both minors can break 4-1 as long as four clubs are with South. By playing diamonds we shall pick up all the trumps. When South ruffs, you overruff in the West hand and cross to dummy, drawing the last trump.

Closed room – Contract 3♦, +130 for **EW**.

You win: 5♣ +600 = +10 IMP.

You go down: -100 = -6 IMP.

You could collect only 22 IMP in this difficult match, which is translated into 20-10 VP win.

In the next round you will encounter an ambitious Spanish team.

ROUND 3 – MATCH AGAINST SPAIN

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 21

♠ 5 3
♥ K Q 9 3 2
♦ K 8 4
♣ A J 10

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A Q 9 4
♥ A J 10 6 5
♦ 7 2
♣ 4 3

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠J.

Board 22

♠ 4
♥ K J 10 9 7 5
♦ Q 5 2
♣ A J 10

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 10 7
♥ A Q 8
♦ A 8 7 6 4
♣ 4 3

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠Q.

Board 23

♠ A K J 8 7 4
♥ A K 10
♦ 3
♣ K 4 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q 10 9 5 3 2
♥ J
♦ A 10 6
♣ 10 9 8

Contract 6♠. Lead ♦Q.

Board 24

♠ K 6 5 2
♥ 8
♦ K J 10 6 5
♣ 9 6 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q 8 7 3
♥ A J 9 4 3
♦ A Q 4
♣ 3

Contract 4♠. Lead ♠10.

Board 25

♠ A 10 9 7
♥ K J 8 3
♦ 8 7
♣ J 5 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ –
♥ A Q 10 2
♦ A K Q J 10 4
♣ A 8 2

Contract 7♥. Lead ♣3.

Board 26	♠ 9 6 3 2	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A Q
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♣	♥ A K	♥ 6 5										
	♦ K Q J 10 8	♦ 9 7 5 2										
	♣ K 9	♣ A 8 7 4 3										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠5.

Board 27	♠ A K	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 9 8
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♥	♥ A K 6	♥ 7 4 2										
	♦ A K Q J 10 9	♦ 8 3										
	♣ 4 3	♣ K Q J 10 9										

Contract 6♦. Lead ♥Q.

Board 28	♠ J 4 2	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 7 5
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♣	♥ K 4 3 2	♥ A Q 9 6										
	♦ A K Q 7 2	♦ 10 9										
	♣ K	♣ A 9 4 3										

Contract 6♥. Lead ♣2. You play a heart to the queen. South plays the ten.

Board 29	♠ A 4 3 2	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 9 7 6 5
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♣	♥ A K 6	♥ Q 7										
	♦ A 7 4 2	♦ J 6 5 3										
	♣ K 5	♣ A Q 4										

Contract 4♠. Lead ♥J.

Board 30	♠ A K Q	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 7 6 4
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♣	♥ A Q J 10 8 6 4	♥ 9 7 5 3										
	♦ A Q	♦ 7 6 4										
	♣ J	♣ A Q 6										

Contract 6♥. Lead ♠8. You played the ace of hearts and South discarded ♦2.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with Spain

BOARD 21

	♦												
		♠ J 10 7											
		♥ 8 7											
		♦ A J 9 5											
		♣ Q 8 6 2											
♠ 5 3		<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S			♠ A Q 9 4
	N												
W		E											
	S												
♥ K Q 9 3 2				♥ A J 10 6 5									
♦ K 8 4				♦ 7 2									
♣ A J 10				♣ 4 3									
		♠ K 8 6 2											
		♥ 4											
		♦ Q 10 6 3											
		♣ K 9 7 5											

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠J.

The main point – Keep the dangerous defender off lead.

You should play the four of spades from dummy. If South overtakes with the spade king, to switch to diamonds, you will be able to finesse the nine of spades and pitch two clubs. Let's assume that South does not overtake and North continues with the spade seven.

Order of play:

2. The ace of spades.
3. A spade ruffed. You may figure out about the spade distribution and play the right card; queen or the nine. A spade trick would be useful if hearts were 3-0.
4. A heart to the dummy.
5. The last spade ruffed.
6. A heart to the dummy.
7. A club to the ten.

North will be end-played when he wins the first round of clubs. You would go down only when South holds both missing club honours and the ace of diamonds is with North.

Closed room – Contract 4♥ (East), lead ♠2, +420 for **EW**.

You ducked the jack of spades: – no swing.

Your card play was different: –50 = –10 IMP.

BOARD 22

♦	♠ Q J 9 8 3 ♥ 4 3 ♦ K 3 ♣ K Q 8 5										
♠ 4 ♥ K J 10 9 7 5 ♦ Q 5 2 ♣ A J 10	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 10 7 ♥ A Q 8 ♦ A 8 7 6 4 ♣ 4 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A 6 5 2 ♥ 6 2 ♦ J 10 9 ♣ 9 7 6 2										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠Q.

The main point – Once again, keep the dangerous defender off lead.

You should ducked the queen of spades. Why? South is a dangerous opponent who can lead through your club tenace.

Order of play:

2-3. North switches to a heart and you draw trumps in one more round.

4-5. You then play a club to the ten. North wins with the queen and plays a club back (a spade or a diamond would give you the contract directly).

6. Cash the ace of clubs and pitch a diamond.

7-8 Play the ace of diamonds and a diamond to the queen – this is an extra chance to find the king of diamonds doubleton with North, who will be end-played.

If hearts are 3-1 with North holding three hearts then the defender will draw trumps after winning a trick with a club honour. The chance of a doubleton king of diamonds with North has vanished.

Closed room – Contract 3NT (East), Lead ♠2: +600 for EW.

You played accurately: +620 = +1 IMP.

You failed: -100 = -12 IMP.

BOARD 23

♦	♠ – ♥ Q 6 5 2 ♦ Q J 9 7 2 ♣ A J 5 3	♠ Q 10 9 5 3 2 ♥ J ♦ A 10 6 ♣ 10 9 8									
♠ A K J 8 7 4 ♥ A K 10 ♦ 3 ♣ K 4 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 6 ♥ 9 8 7 4 3 ♦ K 8 5 4 ♣ Q 7 6										

Contract 6♣. Lead ♦Q.

The main point – Give the opponents a chance to go wrong.

Win the diamond lead in dummy and play a club to the king.

- North may hold up the ace, hoping to give you a guess if you hold ♠K Q x.
- Even if North wins the club ace, he may not to play a club back unless he holds the queen.

There is a fair chance that you will be able to use your second chance – a finesse against the queen of hearts, to set up two club discards from the dummy.

Closed room – Contract 4♣, +680 for EW.

You played a club to the king and you are rewarded – a shrewd Spaniard holds up the ace.

Result: +1430 = +13 IMP.

You played differently: -13 IMP.

BOARD 24

♦	♠ 10 4 ♥ Q 7 6 2 ♦ 7 3 ♣ A Q 10 4 2	♠ Q 8 7 3 ♥ A J 9 4 3 ♦ A Q 4 ♣ 3									
♠ K 6 5 2 ♥ 8 ♦ K J 10 6 5 ♣ 9 6 5	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A J 9 ♥ K 10 5 ♦ 9 8 2 ♣ K J 8 7										

Contract 4♠. Lead ♠10.

The main point – When making a plan, look a couple of tricks ahead.

Play the queen of trumps on the first trick. If the trumps behave 3-2, that it is enough to make the contract. Eric Rodwell ran the trump lead to his king and could not make the contract. Why? When North won the first round of clubs, he had played another trump. Two more rounds of trumps then killed the contract. Playing the queen forces the South's ace and gives you control over the trumps. You can win a trump return with the king and play on diamonds.

Closed room – Contract 2♠, +170 for EW.

If you played the spade queen: +420 = +6 IMP.

You let it run to the king: -50 = -6 IMP.

BOARD 25

♦	♠ K J 8 3 2										
	♥ 5										
	♦ 9 6 3										
	♣ Q 10 7 3										
♠ A 10 9 7	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ –
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K J 8 3		♥ A Q 10 2									
♦ 8 7		♦ A K Q J 10 4									
♣ J 5 4		♣ A 8 2									
	♠ Q 6 5 4										
	♥ 9 7 6 4										
	♦ 5 2										
	♣ K 9 6										

Contract 7♥. Lead ♣3.

The main point – Guard yourself against unfavourable distributions.

Order of play:

2. The ace of hearts.
3. The queen of hearts, if South follows suit – overtake with the king.
4. Ruff a spade with the ♥10.
5. Finesse the ♥8 – if South began with ♥9 x x x.

Closed room – Contract 6♥, +1430 for EW.

You protected yourself against four trumps with South: +13 IMP.

You failed to do so: -13 IMP.

BOARD 26

♣	♠ J 10 7 5 4										
	♥ J 9 4 2										
	♦ A 6										
	♣ Q 5										
♠ 9 6 3 2	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A Q
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K		♥ 6 5									
♦ K Q J 10 8		♦ 9 7 5 2									
♣ K 9		♣ A 8 7 4 3									
	♠ K 8										
	♥ Q 10 8 7 3										
	♦ 4 3										
	♣ J 10 6 2										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠5.

The main point – Block the suit that has been led against you.

The opening lead was made from one of these combinations:

- 1) J 10 7 5 4
- 2) K J 8 5 4
- 3) K 10 7 5 4

If instead North held:

- 4) K J 10 5 4

he would have led the jack (or ten, depending on the lead convention) instead.

Taking the first trick with the ace is effective in all three cases. Playing the queen will fail against case (a) when the ace of diamonds is with spades. So, winning the first trick with the ace is correct although in the long run the profits will not be high.

Closed room – Contract 3NT (East) +600 for **EW**.

You played the ace – no swing.

You played the queen –12 IMP.

BOARD 27

♥	♠ Q 7 2										
	♥ J 3										
	♦ 7 4 2										
	♣ A 8 7 6 2										
♠ A K	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">W</td><td></td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 9 8
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K 6		♥ 7 4 2									
♦ A K Q J 10 9		♦ 8 3									
♣ 4 3		♣ K Q J 10 9									
	♠ J 6 5 4 3										
	♥ Q 10 9 8 5										
	♦ 6 5										
	♣ 5										

Contract 6♦. Lead ♥J.

The main point – Do not surrender when the situation looks bad.

When Titanic was sinking, this hand had just been dealt in the bridge room.

- “Gentlemen, we have crashed into an iceberg. Every man for himself!” shouted the second officer to the players.

Lord Williams (West) was truly surprised. “You want me to run and waste this hand?”

Win the heart lead and play five rounds of trumps. Cash the ace and king of spades and play a club to the king, which will hold. Ruff a spade, cash the king of hearts. Play a club and maybe miraculously you will find the perfect layout: 3-2-4-4 or 3-2-3-5 shape, including the ace of clubs.

There is also a possibility that you will make the contract because the opponents throw the wrong cards.

Closed room – an incredible contract 6♣, easily made despite that the trumps break 5-1: +920 for EW.

You found your way to win: +990 = +2 IMP

You went down: -14 IMP.

BOARD 28

♣	♠ K 8 3										
	♥ J 8 7 5										
	♦ J 4										
	♣ Q 10 8 2										
♠ J 4 2	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 7 5
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K 4 3 2		♥ A Q 9 6									
♦ A K Q 7 2		♦ 10 9									
♣ K		♣ A 9 4 3									
	♠ Q 10 9 6										
	♥ 10										
	♦ 8 6 5 3										
	♣ J 7 6 5										

Contract 6♥. Lead ♣2. You play a heart to the queen spade plays ♥10.

The main point – Plan your play accurately.

Order of play:

3. Ruff a club (do not cash the ace)

4-6. Cash all hearts (finesse the jack if the break is 4-1)

7. Concede a diamond (finesse the jack).

Note that a small inaccuracy, such as a heart to the king instead of ruffing a club, will ruin the precise plan (taking into consideration the 4-1 trump break).

Closed room – Contract 6♥, +980 for EW.

You made the game: – tie.

You went down: -14 IMP.

BOARD 29

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

Contract 4♠. Lead ♥J.

The main point – Camouflage your plans and the defenders may go astray.

Order of play:

- 2-3. Concede a trump, the opponents will continue hearts.
- 4. Cash the ace of diamonds at an early stage to make it difficult for North to unblock the queen of diamonds. Cash your ace of trumps, eliminate clubs and hearts and exit with a trump.

Closed room: Contract 4♠, +620 for EW.

The ace of diamonds cashed at an early stage secured you a tie on the hand.

If you did it too late, North unblocked the diamond queen: -12 IMP.

BOARD 30

♣	♠ 8 5										
	♥ K 2										
	♦ K 10 9 3										
	♣ K 9 8 4 3										
♠ A K Q	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 7 6 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A Q J 10 8 6 4		♥ 9 7 5 3									
♦ A Q		♦ 7 6 4									
♣ J		♣ A Q 6									
	♠ J 10 9 3 2										
	♥ –										
	♦ J 8 5 2										
	♣ 10 7 5 2										

Contract 6♥. Lead ♠8. You played the ace of hearts, South discarded ♦2.

The main point – Let the opponents take finesses for you.

Order of play:

3. The jack of clubs (North does not cover) to the ace.
- 4-5. Cash your spades.
6. End-play North with the king of hearts.

In this way you take your chance of two finesses. North must play a club to avoid leading in to the diamond tenace and you can try dummy's queen.

Closed room – Contract 6♥, +980 for **EW**.

You played a club to the ace, cashed the spades in three rounds and a heart: – no swing.

You played in a different way: –14 IMP.

An interesting match with Spain has come to an end.

A perfect play has brought you +35 IMP, which makes: 22-8 VP.

The first day of the Championships has ended well. A total of 64 VPs ranks you third on the table. Next match is with France.

ROUND 4 - MATCH AGAINST FRANCE

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 31	♠ 7 5 4 ♥ AKQJ10 ♦ Q 3 2 ♣ Q 3	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ K Q J 10 3 ♥ 6 5 2 ♦ K J 10 9 8 ♣ –
	N											
W		E										
	S											

Contract 5♥. Lead ♣7.

Board 32	♠ A 4 ♥ A Q 10 8 6 2 ♦ A J ♣ A 8 7	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q J 10 9 ♥ J 9 7 4 ♦ 6 4 ♣ 9 4 3
	N											
W		E										
	S											

Contract 4♥. Lead ♣Q.

Board 33	♠ A K J 5 ♥ 3 ♦ J 10 9 8 7 ♣ K 6 4	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 6 ♥ Q J 7 6 5 2 ♦ A Q ♣ A Q 5 2
	N											
W		E										
	S											

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠3, S plays the queen.

Board 34	♠ A 4 2 ♥ A 6 ♦ A ♣ A Q 10 8 7 5 2	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 10 3 ♥ J 10 3 2 ♦ J 6 5 ♣ K J 9
	N											
W		E										
	S											

Contract 5♣. Lead ♦2.

Board 35	♠ A J 7 2 ♥ A K Q ♦ K 6 5 ♣ A K 9	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 6 4 3 ♥ J 10 8 ♦ Q J 10 9 2 ♣ 8 7
	N											
W		E										
	S											

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥7.

Board 36	♠ –		♠ J 9 7 6 4						
♣	♥ K 8 4 2	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td>S</td><td> </td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ A Q
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ Q		♦ J 9 8 2						
	♣ A K J 10 9 7 6 5	♣ 3 2							

Contract 5♣. Lead ♠A.

Board 37	♠ Q J 10		♠ A K 9 7						
♣	♥ A K	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td>S</td><td> </td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ Q J 4 3
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ A 10 7 3		♦ 2						
	♣ A 9 4 2	♣ K J 7 5							

Contract 6♣. Lead ♦K.

Board 38	♠ A K J 7 5 3 2		♠ 6						
♥	♥ A 6	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td>S</td><td> </td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ Q 10 9
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ A Q J 4		♦ K 9 3 2						
	♣ –	♣ Q 10 9 4 2							

Contract 7♦. Lead ♣A.

Board 39	♠ K		♠ A 8 6 5 3						
♣	♥ Q 6	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td>S</td><td> </td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ A K J 10 9
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ K Q 7 5 2		♦ A 4 3						
	♣ K J 6 5 4	♣ –							

Contract 6♦. Lead ♦J.

Board 40	♠ A		♠ Q 10 8 6 3						
♥	♥ K Q J 9 8 7	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td>S</td><td> </td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ 3 2
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ K 6 5		♦ 4						
	♣ A 4 3	♣ K J 8 6 2							

Contract 4♥. Lead ♦Q. South wins with the ace, plays a heart and the king holds.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with France

BOARD 31

♦		♠ 9 2 ♥ 8 7 ♦ A 7 6 ♣ K J 9 7 4 2									
♠ 7 5 4 ♥ A K Q J 10 ♦ Q 3 2 ♣ Q 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K Q J 10 3 ♥ 6 5 2 ♦ K J 10 9 8 ♣ –
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♠ A 8 6 ♥ 9 4 3 ♦ 5 4 ♣ A 10 8 6 5									

Contract 5♥. Lead ♣7.

The main point – Destroy the defenders’ communications

Henry set to work fast. He was in playing in only 4♥. Henry ruffed a club, reached his hand with a trump and ruffed his remaining club. He then played a diamond to his queen and North’s ace. When North returned a spade South hold up the ace. South won the next spade and returned his remaining diamond. Although spades and diamonds both broke 3-2, declarer suffered a ruff in each suit to go one down in 4♥.

Result – one off.

A declarer must be careful with the communication. It is enough on this hand to play a diamond to the queen and the opponents are helpless.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, +450 for EW.

You played a diamond to the queen after ruffing a club – no swing.
You played it differently -50 = -11 IMP.

BOARD 32

♦	♠ 8 7 3 ♥ K 3 ♦ K 10 9 7 2 ♣ Q J 6										
♠ A 4 ♥ A Q 10 8 6 2 ♦ A J ♣ A 8 7	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q J 10 9 ♥ J 9 7 4 ♦ 6 4 ♣ 9 4 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K 6 5 2 ♥ 5 ♦ Q 8 5 3 ♣ K 10 5 2										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♣Q.

The main point – play in line with the odds. Plan you declarer's play carefully.

There is no doubt that the spade finesse chance is much bigger than the singleton heart king.

Play ♥10 in the second trick and take over with the jack in the dummy in case the king of hearts third lies third with the North. then everything is easy we have three entries to the dummy, which is enough to establish a third trick in spades.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, Lead ♠7, +620 for EW.

You played ♥10 in the second trick: – ties on the deal.

You played the ace of hearts first: one down –12 IMP.

BOARD 33

♣	♠ 10 8 7 3 2 ♥ K 10 9 ♦ 5 4 3 ♣ 9 3										
♠ A K J 5 ♥ 3 ♦ J 10 9 8 7 ♣ K 6 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 6 ♥ Q J 7 6 5 2 ♦ A Q ♣ A Q 5 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ Q 9 4 ♥ A 8 4 ♦ K 6 2 ♣ J 10 8 7										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠3. South plays the spade queen.

The main point – Look for a way to discard blocking cards.

Order of play:

1. Duck the spade queen. Do not worry. South will continue spades.
- 2-3. Pitch two diamonds to two spades.
4. Concede the trick to the king of diamonds.

Closed room – the French have landed in a lucky contract 4♥. The spade finesse worked and heart distribution brought the contract home.

Result: +420 for EW.

You withheld the queen of spades: +400, you lost only 1 IMP.

Otherwise: -10 IMP.

BOARD 34

♣	♠ K Q 9 8 ♥ Q 7 5 ♦ K 9 4 2 ♣ 6 4	♠ J 10 3 ♥ J 10 3 2 ♦ J 6 5 ♣ K J 9									
♠ A 4 2 ♥ A 6 ♦ A ♣ A Q 10 8 7 5 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 7 6 5 ♥ K 9 8 4 ♦ Q 10 8 7 3 ♣ 3										

Contract 5♣. Lead ♦2.

The main point – Let the opponents do the work for you.

Order of play:

2-5. Enter dummy twice in clubs to ruff two diamonds.

6-7. Play the ace of hearts and a heart.

Of course there is a layout of cards when you may lose but in this way you give yourself the best chance.

Closed Room:

This time the French played a much better contract – 3NT, +430 for **EW**.

If you played correctly: -1 IMP.

You failed: -10 IMP.

BOARD 35

♣	♠ K 9										
	♥ 9 7 5 2										
	♦ A 4 3										
	♣ J 6 4 2										
♠ A J 7 2	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 6 4 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K Q		♥ J 10 8									
♦ K 6 5		♦ Q J 10 9 2									
♣ A K 9		♣ 8 7									
	♠ Q 10 8 5										
	♥ 6 4 3										
	♦ 8 7										
	♣ Q 10 5 3										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥7.

The main point – Combine all you chances.

Order of play:

2. Concede a spade trick.
3. Win the next heart trick.
4. Play the king of diamonds.
5. Cash the ace of spades.
6. Play a diamond to the dummy.
7. Play a spade to the jack.

You win when the ace of diamonds is doubleton (or singleton), when spades break 3-3 or North holds a doubleton honour.

Closed room: The French rarely make technical mistakes.

Contract 3NT, +600 for EW.

You have found a proper line: +600 – draw.

You have failed: -12 IMP.

BOARD 36

♣	♠ A K 10 5										
	♥ 10 6										
	♦ K 7 5 4										
	♣ Q 8 4										
♠ –	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 9 7 6 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K 8 4 2		♥ A Q									
♦ Q		♦ J 9 8 2									
♣ A K J 10 9 7 6 5		♣ 3 2									
	♠ Q 8 3 2										
	♥ J 9 7 5 3										
	♦ A 10 6 3										
	♣ –										

Contract 5♣. Lead ♠A.

The main point – Kill the link between the defenders to avoid a trump promotion.

Order of play:

1. Pitch the queen of diamonds, to kill the link between the defenders.

After any continuation:

3-6. Cash the ace of clubs and two heart tricks. Return to your hand with a ruff and ruff a heart in dummy. If North ruffs in front of the dummy, he will not be able to cross to partner's hand with a diamond to receive a trump promotion.

Closed room – Your teammates played the contract 4♠ doubled.

Result: two down, +300 for EW.

You made 5♣: +7 IMP.

You failed to break the communication in diamonds: it cost you -9 IMP.

BOARD 37

♣	♠ 6 4 ♥ 10 8 7 ♦ K Q 9 8 ♣ Q 10 8 6	♠ A K 9 7 ♥ Q J 4 3 ♦ 2 ♣ K J 7 5									
♠ Q J 10 ♥ A K ♦ A 10 7 3 ♣ A 9 4 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 8 5 3 2 ♥ 9 6 5 2 ♦ J 6 5 4 ♣ 3										

Contract 6♣. Lead ♦K.

The main point – Play safely but with sense.

Senseless safety play means knowing the appropriate techniques but not knowing how to apply them in a specific case.

Order of play:

2. A club to the king.
3. A heart to the ace, and not a club to the nine. Why? The queen of clubs with the ten with North will kill the contract, because North will be able to force the dummy to ruff when he wins with the club queen.
4. A club to the jack.

Closed room – Contract 6♣, +920 for EW.

You played accurately: you tied on the hand.

A mistake will cost: -14 IMP.

Overheard

Two partners discuss boards at lunch.

- Look at this contract. Do you think I would make it?
- Of course not. Even if you played it correctly, you would have gone down.

BOARD 38

♥	♠ Q 10 4	
	♥ J 8 5 2	
	♦ 8 7 5	
	♣ A J 6	
♠ A K J 7 5 3 2	N W E S	♠ 6
♥ A 6		♥ Q 10 9
♦ A Q J 4		♦ K 9 3 2
♣ –		♣ Q 10 9 4 2
	♠ 9 8	
	♥ K 7 4 3	
	♦ 10 6	
	♣ K 8 7 5 3	

Contract 7♦. Lead ♣A.

The main point – Combine all your chances.

The diamonds must break 3-2. The key question is how to play the spade suit. Finessing is the correct play but is there an extra chance?

Order of play:

1. Ruff the ace of clubs with the four of trumps.
- 2-3. Play the ace and queen of diamonds, overtaking with the king. If ♦10 drops, ruff another club and establish the spades with the ruff. If ♦10 did not fall, then draw the last trump and finesse the spade. Note that playing the diamond grand slam, you need five trump tricks and seven spade tricks or six trump tricks and six spade tricks.

Closed room – Contract 6♦, +1370 for **EW**.

You have found the correct line: +13 IMP.

You relied on the spade finesse: -16 IMP.

BOARD 39

	♣		♠ J 9 4	
			♥ 7 5	
			♦ J 10 9 8	
			♣ Q 10 8 2	
♠ K ♥ Q 6 ♦ K Q 7 5 2 ♣ K J 6 5 4	N W E S	♠ A 8 6 5 3 ♥ A K J 10 9 ♦ A 4 3 ♣ —		
			♠ Q 10 7 2	
			♥ 8 4 3 2	
			♦ 6	
			♣ A 9 7 3	

Contract 6♦. Lead ♦J.

The main point – Concede a round of trumps when it is safe to do so.

Concede the jack of diamonds in both hands! After any continuation, ruff a club and draw the trumps.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, +650 for **EW**.

The trump safety play produced +12 IMP.

If you were not prudent, it cost you -13 IMP.

BOARD 40

		♠ K 9 7 2										
	♥	♥ 5										
		♦ Q J 10 9 7 2										
		♣ 9 7										
♠ A		<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">N</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">W</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">S</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 10 8 6 3
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ K Q J 9 8 7			♥ 3 2									
♦ K 6 5			♦ 4									
♣ A 4 3			♣ K J 8 6 2									
		♠ J 5 4										
		♥ A 10 6 4										
		♦ A 8 3										
		♣ Q 10 5										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♦Q. South takes his ace and plays a heart. The king holds the trick.

The main point – The way the opponents play often indicates the break of the suits.

The opponents did not play the ace of hearts and a heart, which suggests that the trumps will break 4-1.

Order of play:

3-5. Cash the ace of spades, play the king of diamond and ruff a diamond.

6. Ruff a spade.

7. Play the queen of hearts, discovering that South holds ♥A 10 x x.

Thanks to your early spade ruff, you can score all the low trumps in your hand. Assume that South holds up the ace of trumps.

8-10. Cash the king and ace of clubs, ruff another spade and concede a club.

You make five trump tricks in your hand, one diamond ruff and four side-suit winners.

Closed room – Contract 4♥ doubled +590 for EW.

You played the trump coup and lost only 5 IMP. Lack of accuracy: - 12 IMP.

This interesting match with France could bring you a win of +35 IMP = 22-8 VP.

A nice team of players from San Marino will be your next opponents.

ROUND 5 – MATCH AGAINST SAN MARINO

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 41 	♠ QJ5 ♥ 9832 ♦ A 6 5 ♣ A 4 3	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> W N S E </div>	♠ A 6 ♥ KJ10 ♦ KQJ ♣ KJ975
---------------------	---------------------------------------	---	-------------------------------------

Contract 3NT. Lead 4♠. S plays ♠9.

Board 42 	♠ 754 ♥ – ♦ AJ9752 ♣ AK43	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> W N S E </div>	♠ AK32 ♥ AJ1065 ♦ 4 ♣ 652
---------------------	------------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠Q.

Board 43 	♠ K862 ♥ 943 ♦ AJ2 ♣ KQ5	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> W N S E </div>	♠ 107 ♥ AK65 ♦ K4 ♣ A10873
---------------------	-----------------------------------	---	-------------------------------------

Contract 3NT. Lead ♦7.

Board 44 	♠ AQ42 ♥ AQ ♦ AQ106 ♣ Q98	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> W N S E </div>	♠ 53 ♥ KJ1094 ♦ KJ ♣ A1032
---------------------	------------------------------------	---	-------------------------------------

Contract 6NT. Lead ♦8.

Board 45 	♠ KJ4 ♥ 1062 ♦ AQJ9843 ♣ –	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> W N S E </div>	♠ 853 ♥ A943 ♦ K102 ♣ AK9
---------------------	-------------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

Contract 6♦. Lead ♠Q.

Board 46 ♠ AK4
 ♣ ♣ 6
 ♦ J6532
 ♣ AJ104

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J109
 ♥ A95
 ♦ AQ4
 ♣ KQ96

Contract 6♦. Lead ♥K.

Board 47 ♠ 97542
 ♥ ♥ 76
 ♦ 7
 ♣ AQJ97

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ AK
 ♥ AK853
 ♦ Q104
 ♣ K102

Contract 6♣. Lead ♦A and ♣3.

Board 48 ♠ KJ102
 ♦ ♦ J82
 ♦ AQ96
 ♣ J6

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A3
 ♥ AKQ4
 ♦ J872
 ♣ AKQ

Contract 6NT. Lead ♥10.

Board 49 ♠ A65
 ♣ ♣ J872
 ♦ AKJ10
 ♣ Q4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K9
 ♥ Q93
 ♦ Q876
 ♣ J532

Contract 1NT. Lead ♠2: fourth best.

Board 50 ♠ AQ10
 ♣ ♣ QJ4
 ♦ J65
 ♣ AKJ4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 64
 ♥ K752
 ♦ KQ10
 ♣ Q532

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠5.

Solutions of problems from the match with San Marino

BOARD 41

♣	♠ K 10 8 4 2										
	♥ Q 7 4										
	♦ 10 8 7 3										
	♣ 2										
♠ Q J 5	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 6
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 9 8 3 2		♥ K J 10									
♦ A 6 5		♦ K Q J									
♣ A 4 3		♣ K J 9 7 5									
	♠ 9 7 3										
	♥ A 6 5										
	♦ 9 4 2										
	♣ Q 10 8 6										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠4.

The main point – Combine all your chances and remember to maintain communication.

Order of play:

1. Win a trick in the hand.

2-3. A club to the king and a club to the ace.

If it turns out that South holds Q-10-8-2 in the club suit, you will be in the right hand to take your second chance in hearts, finessing the queen. Prudent play of the clubs will allow you to finesse hearts twice.

Closed room – Contract 3NT, one off: +100 for NS.

You played maintaining the communication: +12 IMP.

You did not think about it: no swing.

BOARD 42

♣	♠ Q J 10 8										
	♥ Q 9 7 4 2										
	♦ 10 6										
	♣ 10 9										
♠ 7 5 4	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K 3 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ –		♥ A J 10 6 5									
♦ A J 9 7 5 2		♦ 4									
♣ A K 4 3		♣ 6 5 2									
	♠ 9 6										
	♥ K 8 3										
	♦ K Q 8 3										
	♣ Q J 7 4										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠Q.

The main point – Play with the odds.

Play a diamond to the jack in the second trick – your best chance is that South holds the king-queen. This is difficult because in your imagination you see the layouts: K-10, Q-10, K-Q offside. Playing the ace of diamonds gives around a 5% chance to win the contract. The worst possible move is to play the nine.

Closed room – Contract 4♠ +620 for EW.

A diamond to the jack: -1 IMP

Otherwise: -12 IMP.

BOARD 43

♣	♠ A Q 4										
	♥ Q 10 7 2										
	♦ Q 9 8 7 3										
	♣ 9										
♠ K 8 6 2	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 9 4 3		♥ A K 6 5									
♦ A J 2		♦ K 4									
♣ K Q 5		♣ A 10 8 7 3									
	♠ J 9 5 3										
	♥ J 8										
	♦ 10 6 5										
	♣ J 6 4 2										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♦7. South plays ♦10.

The main point – Preserve your communications.

Order of play:

1. Win with the jack of diamonds.
2. Play a diamond to the king.
3. Get back to you hand with the king of clubs.
4. Play a club to the ten.

In this way we maintain communications and can score a trick with the ace of diamonds. The opponents may establish only three spade tricks at the most.

Closed room – Contract 3NT +400 for **EW**.

Safety play has brought you no swing board.

If you did not: -10 IMP.

BOARD 44

♣	♠ K 10 8 7										
	♥ 6 5										
	♦ 7 5 4										
	♣ J 7 6 4										
♠ A Q 4 2	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 5 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A Q		♥ K J 10 9 4									
♦ A Q 10 6		♦ K J									
♣ Q 9 8		♣ A 10 3 2									
	♠ J 9 6										
	♥ 8 7 3 2										
	♦ 9 8 3 2										
	♣ K 5										

Contract 6NT. Lead ♦8.

The main point – Combine all your chances.

Order of play:

2. A club to the nine (South may play the king or hesitate).
4. The ace of clubs and play for a club-spade squeeze or spade finesse.

You combined the chance of a favourable location of the jack of clubs, king of club doubleton in either hand or a spade finesse.

Closed room – Contract 6NT, +990 for **EW**.

You have made the contract: no swing.

You have not combined your chances: -14 IMP.

BOARD 45

	♦		♠ 10 7 6 2					
			♥ K Q 8 5					
			♦ 7					
			♣ Q J 8 5					
♠ K J 4		N	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td></tr> </table>	W	E	S		♠ 8 5 3
W	E							
S								
♥ 10 6 2				♥ A 9 4 3				
♦ A Q J 9 8 4 3				♦ K 10 2				
♣ –				♣ A K 9				
			♠ A Q 9					
			♥ J 7					
			♦ 6 5					
			♣ 10 7 6 4 3 2					

Contract 6♦. Lead ♣Q.

The main point – Plan the communications in your play. Do not give up just because you are in a poor contract.

Order of play:

1. Win the trick with the king of clubs and pitch your heart.
2. Play the spade to the jack.

Why? This is typical chess problem.

If you try to establish a heart you will not have enough entries to lead towards your spade honours twice. The odds for the ace and queen of spades with the South are 25%. If South has only the queen then you have to find a 3-3 heart break.

Closed room – a pair from San Marino stopped quite rightly in 3NT.

Result 12 tricks, +690 for **EW**.

You played a spade to the jack on the second trick: +12 IMP.

You tried to establish hearts: -13 IMP.

BOARD 46

♣	♠ 8 6 3 ♥ K Q 10 4 ♦ 10 9 8 7 ♣ 3 2	♠ J 10 9 ♥ A 9 5 ♦ A Q 4 ♣ K Q 9 6									
♠ A K 4 ♥ 6 ♦ J 6 5 3 2 ♣ A J 10 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ Q 7 5 2 ♥ J 8 7 3 2 ♦ K ♣ 8 7 5										

Contract 6♦. Lead ♥K.

The main point – Once again, you need to play a poor contract in the best possible way.

Run the jack of spades on the second trick. If the queen is onside, play the ace of diamonds next (a safety play against a single king of diamonds). If the spade finesse fails, you may still find the king of diamonds doubleton onside.

Closed room – Contract 6♣ +920 for EW.

You played accurately: no swing.

You failed to make the slam: -14 IMP.

BOARD 47

♥	♠ Q 10 6 3										
	♥ Q 9 4										
	♦ A K 8 2										
	♣ 4 3										
♠ 9 7 5 4 2	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0 auto;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 7 6		♥ A K 8 5 3									
♦ 7		♦ Q 10 4									
♣ A Q J 9 7		♣ K 10 2									
	♠ J 8										
	♥ J 10 2										
	♦ J 9 6 5 3										
	♣ 8 6 5										

Contract 6♣. Lead ♦A and ♣3.

The main point – Try to combine all your chances.

Order of play:

3-5. Cash the ace and king of hearts and ruff a heart.

If hearts break 3-3 you can play the dummy reversal. If instead heart break 4-2, then the spades must be 3-3.

Closed room: 3NT +430 for **EW**.

Establishing the hearts (finding them 3-3) and a dummy reversal:
+10 IMP.

Some other line: -10 IMP.

BOARD 48

♦	♠ Q 9 7 5 ♥ 10 9 7 3 ♦ 3 ♣ 9 5 4 2										
♠ K J 10 2 ♥ J 8 2 ♦ A Q 9 6 ♣ J 6	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 3 ♥ A K Q 4 ♦ J 8 7 2 ♣ A K Q
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 8 6 4 ♥ 6 5 ♦ K 10 5 4 ♣ J 10 8 7										

Contract 6NT. Lead ♥10.

The main point – Play one suit to leave you the best remaining chance in another suit.

Order of play:

- 1-2. Ace of heart and a diamond to the ace.
- 3-4. A club to dummy and a diamond to the queen.

The unfavourable diamond break will not prevent you from making the contract.

- 5-6. A spade to the ace and finesse the jack of spades of spades. This way you manage to collect 12 tricks.

Cashing the ace of diamonds and playing a diamond to the jack is wrong. If you find four diamonds with the king and ten with N, you will not be able to safely finesse the queen of spade. (You would want to run the jack of spades into the safe South hand but the entry position would prevent this.)

Closed room – Contract 6♦, +1370 for EW.
 You made 6NT: +2 IMP.
 You took another line of play: -16 IMP.

BOARD 49

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

Contract 1NT. Lead ♠2: fourth best.

The main point – You do not know which way to finesse ♥10? It does not really matter, the opponents will do the job for you.

Win the spade lead with the king, play four rounds of diamonds and then exit with ace and another spade. After cashing one more spade trick, the defenders will have to play hearts or clubs, giving you a seventh trick.

Closed room – You team-mates, playing NS, went down in 2♠. Result: +50 for EW.

You played correctly in 1NT: +1 IMP.

You tried to find ♥10: -3 IMP.

Finesse

Dear Editor,

An acquaintance of mine is teaching me to play bridge. Once, on our way back home from a game of bridge he told me:

– Oh, I would love to finesse you.

What does it mean?

BOARD 50

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

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠5.

The main point – Make the dangerous opponent pay a high price for gaining the lead.

It is immaterial whether South plays the jack or not. He is the dangerous opponent for you.

Order of play:

2-3. Play the ace and king of clubs

4. If club break 3-2, overtake the jack with the queen and play a heart.

a) if South raises with the ace, you have three heart tricks (the ♣5 will let you enter the dummy),

b) if you win the heart trick, switch to the diamonds.

Closed room – Contract 3NT +400 for **EW**.

Good play: – no swing.

Wrong play: -10 IMP.

Faultless declarer play will earn you +47 IMP = 24-6 VP.

The sixth match is an interesting duel against the Lebanese team.

ROUND 6 – MATCH AGAINST LEBANON

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 51	♠ KJ1094		
♦	♥ Q2	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> W N E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> S </div>	♠ A532
	♦ KJ10984		♥ AJ65
	♣ –		♦ A7
			♣ K87

Contract 6♣. Lead ♥8.

Board 52	♠ 54		
♣	♥ AKJ65	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> W N E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> S </div>	♠ K8
	♦ 652		♥ Q10432
	♣ AKQ		♦ AQ104
			♣ J4

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠J.

Board 53	♠ A6		
♣	♥ KQ7	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> W N E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> S </div>	♠ K832
	♦ QJ1093		♥ AJ10
	♣ Q75		♦ A872
			♣ K3

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠10 (top of nothing or from A-J-10-9).

Board 54	♠ AQ10		
♣	♥ QJ10942	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> W N E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> S </div>	♠ 2
	♦ K96		♥ 873
	♣ 7		♦ AJ2
			♣ A98654

Contract 4♥. Lead ♥A, ♥K, ♣10. North overcalled in spades.

Board 55	♠ A1054		
♦	♥ K65	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> W N E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> S </div>	♠ J62
	♦ 6		♥ AQ10
	♣ AJ1075		♦ AK
			♣ KQ982

Contract 6♣. Lead ♦Q.

Board 56



♠ AK5
♥ AKQJ63
♦ AK75
♣ –



♠ Q106
♥ 87
♦ J432
♣ KQ43

Contract 6♥. Lead ♥9.

Board 57



♠ KQ54
♥ AKQ6
♦ A5
♣ 974



♠ J87632
♥ J42
♦ –
♣ 10852

Contract 4♠. Lead ♦7.

Board 58



♠ AQ109653
♥ 109
♦ KJ6
♣ 9



♠ KJ2
♥ K42
♦ A7543
♣ A6

Contract 5♠. Lead ♣5.

Board 59



♠ AKQJ6
♥ 876432
♦ 43
♣ –



♠ 1032
♥ K9
♦ KJ65
♣ AQJ7

Contract 4♠. Lead ♣6.

Board 60



♠ –
♥ AKQ98742
♦ A
♣ AK102



♠ A109752
♥ –
♦ K873
♣ J95

Contract 6♥. Lead ♠K.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with Lebanon

BOARD 51

	♦											
			♠ Q 7 6									
			♥ 9 8 3									
			♦ Q 3 2									
			♣ J 10 6 4									
♠ K J 10 9 4		<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 5 3 2
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ Q 2			♥ A J 6 5									
♦ K J 10 9 8 4			♦ A 7									
♣ –			♣ K 8 7									
			♠ 8									
			♥ K 10 7 4									
			♦ 6 5									
			♣ A Q 9 5 3 2									

Contract 6♠. Lead ♥8.

The main point – Place your opponent in a difficult situation.

Order of play:

1. Win the trick with the ace of hearts and pitch the queen.
2. A spade to the king.
3. Run the jack of spades.

If South takes the trick with the queen of spades he will face a dilemma: should he cash the king of hearts or the ace of clubs? If we disclosed the void in clubs during the auction, this manoeuvre will not help. Then it will be better to play ace and king of spades for dropping the queen.

Additional chances:

- a) Q-x-x of spades with the North and a singleton heart,
- b) A singleton spade with the singleton queen of diamonds.

Closed room – Contract 6♠ (played by East) +1430 for **EW**. The contract played the right way round has not created any play problems.

You have been clever: no swing.

If not: -17 IMP.

BOARD 52

♣	♠ J 10 9 6 3 ♥ 9 8 ♦ 7 3 ♣ 10 8 5 3	♠ K 8 ♥ Q 10 4 3 2 ♦ A Q 10 4 ♣ J 4									
♠ 5 4 ♥ A K J 6 5 ♦ 6 5 2 ♣ A K Q	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A Q 7 2 ♥ 7 ♦ K J 9 8 ♣ 9 7 6 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠J.

The main point – Remember who is the dangerous opponent.

Withhold dummy's king of spades on the first trick. Switching to diamonds on the second trick will not be effective – you will pitch dummy's second spade on the clubs. If instead North continues with a spade to South's ace, the diamonds will be safe from attack and you can proceed to an elimination play ending.

Closed room: your partners sacrificed in 4♠ doubled down three. Result +500 for **EW**.

You withheld dummy's king of spades: +3 IMP.

You failed to do that: -12 IMP.

BOARD 53

		♠ J 9 4									
	♣	♥ 5 4									
		♦ 6 5									
		♣ A J 10 9 6 4									
♠ A 6		♠ K 8 3 2									
♥ K Q 7		♥ A J 10									
♦ Q J 10 9 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♦ A 8 7 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♣ Q 7 5		♣ K 3									
		♠ Q 10 7 5									
		♥ 9 8 6 3 2									
		♦ K 4									
		♣ 8 2									

Contract 3NT. Lead ♣10. (top of nothing or from A-J-10-9).

The main point – Assume that the opponents’ clubs break 6-2.

Play a low club from both hands. If clubs break 6-2, as you have assumed, you will break the communication between the opponents. If clubs are 5-3 and the king of diamonds is offside, nothing will help. An alternative play is to play the king on the first trick and cash the ace of diamonds. The chance of a singleton king of diamonds (over 6%), however, is smaller than that of North holding six clubs.

Closed room: your partners were down three playing 3♣ doubled – result +800 for **EW**.

You ducked a club in both hands: -9 IMP.

If not: -14 IMP.

BOARD 54

♣	♠ K J 9 8 5 3										
	♥ A K										
	♦ 10 8 7										
	♣ 10 3										
♠ A Q 10	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q J 10 9 4 2		♥ 8 7 3									
♦ K 9 6		♦ A J 2									
♣ 7		♣ A 9 8 6 5 4									
	♠ 7 6 4										
	♥ 6 5										
	♦ Q 5 4 3										
	♣ K Q J 2										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♥A, ♥K, ♣10. North overcalled in spades.

The main point – look for extra chance.

A successful finesse in diamonds will give you an extra trick. Is that all you can do?

Order of play:

4. Ruff a club.
5. Play the queen of spades.

If North wins the trick then he will be endplayed. Playing a club will allow you to establish that suit. North will be forced to play a diamond and this is your additional chance (running the diamond to the nine). You will go down only when the queen and ten of diamonds are with the South and clubs break 4-2.

Closed room – The Lebanese team stopped in 3♥ +140 for EW.

You found the extra chance: +620 = +10 IMP.

You finessed the diamond queen: -12 IMP.

BOARD 55

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

Contract 6♣. Lead ♦Q.

The main point – Calculate the best play in a single suit.

Draw trumps. Eliminate the red suits, ending in the dummy. Play the jack of spades, winning with the ace if South covers with an honour. Cross to the dummy with a club and play a spade to the ten. Combined chance of making the slam is over 60%:

- a) King and queen onside,
- b) King and queen offside,
- c) doubleton honour offside,
- d) singleton honour offside,
- e) South error – not covering from K-x-x or Q-x-x.

Closed room – Contract 6♣ made, +1370 for Lebanon.

You played as above: no swing.

You played it differently: -16 IMP.

BOARD 56

♣	♠ 8 4 3 2										
	♥ 9 4										
	♦ 8										
	♣ J 9 7 6 5 2										
♠ A K 5	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 10 6
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K Q J 6 3		♥ 8 7									
♦ A K 7 5		♦ J 4 3 2									
♣ –		♣ K Q 4 3									
	♠ J 9 7										
	♥ 10 5 2										
	♦ Q 10 9 6										
	♣ A 10 8										

Contract 6♥. Lead ♥9.

The main point – Keep control of the hand.

Draw trumps in three rounds and play the ace of diamonds and a diamond. North does not follow the suit, as you have feared. South plays a spade back. Run your trump suit to leave the following position:

♠ 5	♠ Q
♥ –	♥ –
♦ K 7	♦ J
♣ –	♣ K

Cross to the dummy with the queen of spades. If South holds the ace of clubs he will be squeezed.

Closed room – Contract 6♥, +980 for Lebanon (Lead ♣2).

You set up the squeeze: no swing.

You failed to play correctly: -14 IMP.

BOARD 57

♣	♠ A	♠ J 8 7 6 3 2									
♠ K Q 5 4	♥ 10 9 8 3	♥ J 4 2									
♥ A K Q 6	♦ K 10 8 7 4	♦ –									
♦ A 5	♣ A Q 3	♣ 10 8 5 2									
♣ 9 7 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 10 9										
	♥ 7 5										
	♦ Q J 9 6 3 2										
	♣ K J 6										

Contract 4♠. Lead ♦7.

The main point – Send false signals to your opponents.

Discard a heart from the dummy and play the queen of spades. Usually you discard from a suit where you have tricks to be lost. A misguided opponent may therefore switch to hearts.

Closed room – your partners were in 5♦ doubled, down one, +100 for EW.

You discarded a heart, the misled opponent let 4♠ make: +620 = +11 IMP.

You played it differently: -100 = -5 IMP.

BOARD 58

♣	♠ 8 ♥ Q 7 5 3 ♦ Q 10 8 ♣ Q 10 8 5 2				
♠ A Q 10 9 6 5 3 ♥ 10 9 ♦ K J 6 ♣ 9	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; 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	♠ K J 2 ♥ K 4 2 ♦ A 7 5 4 3 ♣ A 6
N					
W E					
S					
	♠ 7 4 ♥ A J 8 6 ♦ 9 2 ♣ K J 7 4 3				

Contract 5♠. Lead ♣5.

The main point – Keep the dangerous opponent off lead.

Duck the first round of clubs. You will pitch a diamond on the ace of clubs later, ruff a diamond and establish the diamond suit. Taking the first trick with the ace of clubs will kill the contract should the ace of hearts and queen of diamonds be offside. (You could improve your chances by cashing the ace and king of diamonds, hoping to drop the queen, but would go down as the cards lie.).

Closed room: Contract 4♠, +620 for EW.

You ducked the club: +1 IMP.

You failed to do so: -12 IMP.

BOARD 59

♣		♠ 8 4 ♥ Q 10 5 ♦ A 9 7 2 ♣ 8 6 5 3
♠ A K Q J 6 ♥ 8 7 6 4 3 2 ♦ 4 3 ♣ –	N W E S	♠ 10 3 2 ♥ K 9 ♦ K J 6 5 ♣ A Q J 7
		♠ 9 7 5 ♥ A J ♦ Q 10 8 ♣ K 10 9 4 2

Contract 4♠. Lead 6♣.

The main point – Keep it simple.

Order of play:

1. Win the trick with the ace of clubs and discard a diamond.
2. Lead the nine of hearts from dummy.

Suppose you try to finesse the king of clubs, in order to discard your two diamonds. You may end up forcing yourself. Crossing to hand with a spade to play towards the king of hearts is equally dangerous. The opponents will have a chance to draw your trumps.

Closed Room: Contract 4♠, +420 for EW.

You have made it: no swing.

You went down: -10 IMP.

BOARD 60

♣	♠ K Q 4 3		♠ A 10 9 7 5 2								
	♥ 3		♥ –								
	♦ Q 10 4		♦ K 8 7 3								
	♣ Q 8 7 6 3		♣ J 9 5								
♠ –	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 10 9 7 5 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K Q 9 8 7 4 2			♥ –								
♦ A			♦ K 8 7 3								
♣ A K 10 2			♣ J 9 5								
	♠ J 8 6										
	♥ J 10 6 5										
	♦ J 9 6 5 2										
	♣ 4										

Contract 6♥. Lead K♠.

The main point – Think before you play to the first trick.

Order of play:

1. Play low from dummy and ruff in your hand.
- 2-5. Draw three rounds of trumps and cash the ace of diamonds.
 - a) if you find four hearts with North the contract is cold.
 - b) When South has four hearts, you carefully cash the ace of clubs and concede a heart trick.

Maybe South had only one club. If South returns a low club, you will finesse the ten of clubs as your last chance.

Open room – Contract 4♥, +480 for EW.

You played accurately: +11 IMP.

Even a minor error cost you: -11 IMP.

Perfect play produced in this match +27 IMP = 21-9 VP.

In the seventh round you will play against Israel.

ROUND 7 – MATCH AGAINST ISRAEL

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 61 ♠ K 6 5
 ♡ A Q 10
 ♦ 10 9 8 4 2
 ♣ A K

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A 8 7 2
 ♡ J 6
 ♦ K J 7
 ♣ Q 8 7 4

Contract 3NT. Lead ♡4.

Board 62 ♠ A Q J 4
 ♡ 4 3 2
 ♦ A 9 2
 ♣ A Q 6

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 8 7
 ♡ Q 10 9 8
 ♦ K 4
 ♣ K 10 9 4 3

Contract 3NT. Lead ♦Q.

Board 63 ♠ A J 6
 ♡ A K Q 7 3
 ♦ A K 10 5
 ♣ 10

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 8 4
 ♡ J 2
 ♦ 9 4
 ♣ A K 8 7 5 2

Contract 6♥. Lead ♥10.

Board 64 ♠ A K 9 8 5
 ♡ A K Q J 2
 ♦ –
 ♣ 10 8 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 4 3 2
 ♡ 10 6
 ♦ 10 7 5 3
 ♣ J 9 5 2

Contract 4♠. Lead ♦K.

Board 65 ♠ A K Q J 8 7 4
 ♡ K 7 4
 ♦ A 10 2
 ♣ –

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 10 9 6
 ♡ A J 3 2
 ♦ J 5 4
 ♣ 4 3 2

Contract 5♠. Lead ♠K.

Board 66
 ♣ A 6 4
 ♥ J 5
 ♦ J 6 5
 ♣ Q J 10 4 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 8 7
 ♥ A K 7 6 4 2
 ♦ 8
 ♣ A K 5

Contract 6♣. Lead ♠J.

Board 67
 ♣ A J 10 4
 ♥ A K J 10 6
 ♦ K J 2
 ♣ A

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q 8
 ♥ Q 9 3
 ♦ 6 5 3
 ♣ J 7 5 4 2

Contract 4♥. Lead ♥7.

Board 68
 ♥ K Q J 4
 ♥ A 2
 ♦ A J 4 2
 ♣ A 6 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A 10 9 6
 ♥ K
 ♦ Q 7 6 5
 ♣ Q 8 4 3

Contract 6♠. South opened a weak 2♥. Lead ♥J.

Board 69
 ♦ A 10 9
 ♥ A Q J 9 8 6
 ♦ K Q
 ♣ 7 6

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 6
 ♥ 5 4
 ♦ A J 10 9 8 4
 ♣ A Q J 5

Contract 6♥. Lead ♠Q.

Board 70
 ♠ A 10 9 4
 ♥ –
 ♦ A J 10 6
 ♣ K Q 9 7 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 7
 ♥ A K 7 6 4 2
 ♦ 4 3
 ♣ A J 10

Contract 7♣. Lead ♥J.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with Israel

BOARD 61

♦	♠ J 4 ♥ K 9 7 4 2 ♦ A 6 5 ♣ J 9 2										
♠ K 6 5 ♥ A Q 10 ♦ 10 9 8 4 2 ♣ A K	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 8 7 2 ♥ J 6 ♦ K J 7 ♣ Q 8 7 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ Q 10 9 3 ♥ 8 5 3 ♦ Q 3 ♣ 10 6 5 3										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥4.

The main point – Make a fool of the dangerous opponent.

Order of play:

1. The jack of hearts wins the trick in dummy.
2. Lead the seven of diamonds to the ten – finesse the queen the other way round “from the rear”. If the queen of diamonds was with North, such a move will not hurt. he will not be able to continue hearts effectively. After taking the trick with the ten of diamonds, play a diamond to the king.

Closed room – Contract 3NT (E), Lead ♠10 +600 for Israel.

You made a fool of the opponent: +660 = +2 IMP.

You did not find this line: -12 IMP.

BOARD 62

♦	♠ 9 6 2 ♥ K 7 6 5 ♦ Q J 10 6 3 ♣ 7	♠ 8 7 ♥ Q 10 9 8 ♦ K 4 ♣ K 10 9 4 3									
♠ A Q J 4 ♥ 4 3 2 ♦ A 9 2 ♣ A Q 6	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K 10 5 3 ♥ A J ♦ 8 7 5 ♣ J 8 5 2										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♦Q.

The main point – Handle your communication problems.

The main danger is that South will hold a club trick. in that case you will need to find the spade king onside. However, you will need an additional entry to dummy to finesse spades twice.

Order of play:

1. Win the trick with the ace in your hand.
2. Play the ace of clubs.
3. Play the queen of clubs and, when North does not follow suit, overtake with the king.
4. Finesse the spade queen.
5. Concede a club trick to the jack.

Closed room – Contract 3NT, down one, +50 for **NS**.

You made the contract: +10 IMP.

You went down: no swing.

BOARD 63

♣	♠ Q 10 7 2										
	♥ 10 9										
	♦ Q J 6 3 2										
	♣ J 4										
♠ A J 6	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 8 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K Q 7 3		♥ J 2									
♦ A K 10 5		♦ 9 4									
♣ 10		♣ A K 8 7 5 2									
	♠ 9 5 3										
	♥ 8 6 5 4										
	♦ 8 7										
	♣ Q 9 6 3										

Contract 6♥. Lead ♥10.

The main point – Look for the safest way to establish a side suit.

Order of play:

1. Win with the queen of trumps.
2. Duck a round of clubs.
3. After any lead back do the following:
- 4-5. Cross to the dummy with the jack of hearts and ruff a club low. Draw trumps and reach your clubs with the king of spades.

Closed room – the Israeli pair stopped in 3 NT. Result +490 for **EW**.
 You played the slam well: +10 IMP.
 You failed: -11 IMP.

BOARD 64

♦	♠ Q 10 7 ♥ 9 5 3 ♦ K Q J 6 4 ♣ A 6	♦									
♠ A K 9 8 5 ♥ A K Q J 2 ♦ – ♣ 10 8 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 4 3 2 ♥ 10 6 ♦ 10 7 5 3 ♣ J 9 5 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J 6 ♥ 8 7 4 ♦ A 9 8 2 ♣ K Q 7 3										

Contract 4♠. Lead ♦K.

The main point – Plan your moves in advance.

You aim for an elopement play on the tenth trick.

Order of play:

- 1-3. Ruff the diamond lead and cash your ace and king of spades.
4. Cross the dummy with the ♥10.
5. Ruff a diamond! Why – you will see in a minute.
- 6-8. Play your hearts pitching clubs from the dummy. For obvious reasons, the opponents refuse to ruff the hearts, which break 3-3.
- 9-10. Ruff the last heart in the dummy and ruff a diamond.

You have to find North with one of the following layouts: 3-3-5-2 or 3-4-4-2 to succeed with your plan. A key play was ruffing the second diamond.

Closed Room – Contract 2♠, +140 for EW.

You saw the need to ruff the second diamond: +620 = +10 IMP.

You failed to do it: -6 IMP.

BOARD 65

♦	♠ 5 2 ♥ 8 6 ♦ K Q 7 3 ♣ K Q 10 7 5				
♠ A K Q J 8 7 4 ♥ K 7 4 ♦ A 10 2 ♣ —	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 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	♠ 10 9 6 ♥ A J 3 2 ♦ J 5 4 ♣ 4 3 2
N					
W E					
S					
	♠ 2 ♥ Q 10 9 5 ♦ 9 8 6 ♣ A J 9 8 6				

Contract 5♣. Lead ♣K.

The main point – Let your opponents do the job for you.

Order of play:

1. Ruff with the ace of spades.
2. Cross to dummy with the ♠9, the opponents following the suit.
3. Ruff a club.
4. Draw a second round of trumps with the king.
- 5-6. Play the king and the ace of hearts.
7. Discard a heart on the last club.

Check that the opponents are helpless, regardless of the distribution of suits and honours.

Closed room – Contract 4♠, +420 for EW.

You played accurately: +1 IMP.

You did not find the right solution: -10 IMP.

BOARD 66

	♣		♠ J 10 9 ♥ 10 9 8 3 ♦ A Q 7 ♣ 7 6 3				
		♠ A 6 4 ♥ J 5 ♦ J 6 5 ♣ Q J 10 4 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 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	♠ K 8 7 ♥ A K 7 6 4 2 ♦ 8 ♣ A K 5
N							
W E							
S							
			♠ Q 5 3 2 ♥ Q ♦ K 10 9 4 3 2 ♣ 9 8				

Contract 6♣. Lead ♠J.

The main point: Find a tiny chance to win.

Order of play:

1. Win the ace of spades in your hand.
- 2-4. Play a heart to the ace. When the queen falls, draw two rounds of trumps leaving an honour in the dummy.
5. Play the jack of hearts. Additional chance is a single queen of hearts with two trumps with the same opponent.
- 6-7. Cross to dummy with a club and ruff a heart.

You can say that I was critical about looking for additional chances. True, but if you are familiar with a technique, careful play costs you nothing. If the opponents play small cards on the first round of hearts, the suit will have to break 3-2. In that case, trumps may even break 4-1.

Closed room – Contract 6♥+980 for EW. (Lead ♣9)

You played a heart to the ace and drew two rounds of trumps -2 IMP.
You played it differently -14 IMP.

BOARD 67

♣	♠ K 9 6 3 2										
	♥ 7 5 4										
	♦ A 10 8										
	♣ Q 8										
♠ A J 10 4	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 8
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K J 10 6		♥ Q 9 3									
♦ K J 2		♦ 6 5 3									
♣ A		♣ J 7 5 4 2									
	♠ 7 5										
	♥ 8 2										
	♦ Q 9 7 4										
	♣ K 10 9 6 3										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♥7.

The main point – Communication is the key.

Order of play:

1. Win in the dummy with ♥9.
2. Play ♠8 to the ten.

If the finesse works, ruff two spades, if not, you have two entries to dummy to lead towards your diamond honours.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, +620 for EW.

If you played that way: no swing.

If you ran the queen of spades: -12 IMP.

BOARD 68

♥	♠ 8 7 3 ♥ J 10 9 5 ♦ 8 3 ♣ J 10 7 2	♠ A 10 9 6 ♥ K ♦ Q 7 6 5 ♣ Q 8 4 3			
♠ K Q J 4 ♥ A 2 ♦ A J 4 2 ♣ A 6 5	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 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	
N					
W E					
S					
	♠ 5 2 ♥ Q 8 7 6 4 3 ♦ K 10 9 ♣ K 9				

Contract 6♣. South opened a weak 2♥. Lead ♥J.

The main point – Assume that the layout that will let you make this optimistic contract.

The 2♥ opening was made with a poor suit, so you may assume that both kings are with South. Then you can make it if the king of clubs is doubleton.

Order of play:

2. Cross to your hand with a trump.
3. Cash the ace of hearts pitching a diamond.
4. Cross the dummy with a spade.
5. Finesse the king of diamonds.
- 6-7. Play the ace of clubs and a club ducking in the dummy.
8. a) if South has a spade to play back then he holds the king of diamond doubleton.
 - b) South plays for ruff and discard, ruff in your hand pitching a diamond from the dummy. Then play the ace of diamonds and ruff a diamond. Cross to your hand with a spade.

Closed room – Contract 4♣, +650 for EW.

The contract was very difficult to make and required a lot of precision: +13 IMP.

No wonder that you have failed: -13 IMP.

BOARD 69

♦	♠ QJ872 ♥ K102 ♦ 75 ♣ 1092										
♠ A109 ♥ AQJ986 ♦ KQ ♣ 76	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 6 ♥ 54 ♦ AJ10984 ♣ AQJ5
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K543 ♥ 73 ♦ 632 ♣ K843										

Contract 6♥. Lead ♠Q.

The main point – Maintain control of the hand.

Order of play:

2. Play the queen of hearts from your hand. The opponents have to hold up.
- 3-4. Ruff a spade, get back with the king of diamonds to your hand.
5. Cash the ace of hearts.
- 6-7. Overtake the queen of diamonds with the ace and discard a spade on the third diamond.

The Israeli pair bid and made 6♦ after a club lead. Result: +920 for **EW**.
 You played the queen of hearts: +980 = +2 IMP.
 Otherwise: -14 IMP.

BOARD 70

♠	♠ 8 3 2		♠ K 7								
♠	♥ J 10 9 8		♥ A K 7 6 4 2								
♠	♦ 9 7 5 2		♦ 4 3								
♠	♣ 8 6		♣ A J 10								
♠ A 10 9 4	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ –											
♦ A J 10 6											
♣ K Q 9 7 5											
	♠ Q J 6 5										
	♥ Q 5 3										
	♦ K Q 8										
	♣ 4 3 2										

Contract 7♣. Lead ♥J.

The main point – Do not give up even in hopeless situations.

Order of play:

1. Ruff a heart.
- 2-3. Cross with a club and ruff a heart.
4. Cross with a club.
- 5 – Play hearts. Three trumps with South give some hope for a squeeze or Q-J-x of spades. As you can see, if you find the layout you need, South is helpless.

Closed room – Contract 3NT, +660 for **EW**.

You executed this complicated play: +13 IMP.

You failed: -13 IMP.

You could really show your best in this match.

A gain of 59 IMP = 25-4 VP win.

Your next opponents will be a team from Belgium.

ROUND 8 – MATCH AGAINST BELGIUM

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 71	♠ K 10 8 6 4 2	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 3
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♥	♥ K 8 2	♥ J 9 6										
	♦ –	♦ A 6 4										
	♣ A 7 6 3	♣ K 10 8 5 4										

Contract 4♣. N opened 1♥. Lead ♣J.

Board 72	♠ A K Q J 9	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 8 7 2
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♣	♥ K 2	♥ 10 9 8										
	♦ A 7 6	♦ K 4 2										
	♣ J 3 2	♣ A Q 6										

Contract 4♣. Lead ♦Q. You opened 1♠ and N doubled.

Board 73	♠ Q J 10	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K 3
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♣	♥ 10 9 5 4	♥ A 6										
	♦ K Q 6	♦ A 8 7 2										
	♣ K J 8	♣ Q 4 3 2										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥3.

Board 74	♠ A J 8 7	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 9 5 4 3
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♦	♥ K 9 8 2	♥ A 4										
	♦ A 2	♦ K Q										
	♣ K J 6	♣ A 10 5 3										

Contract 6♣. Lead ♥J.

Board 75	♠ A K Q 7 2	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 10 9 6 5 4
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♣	♥ J 9 6	♥ A										
	♦ K 10	♦ A 6 4										
	♣ 8 6 4	♣ A Q 3										

Contract 6♣. Lead ♥K.

Board 76	♠ K 10 5	N W S E	♠ A J 2
♣	♥ J 10		♥ A 3
	♦ K Q 10 7 5		♦ J 9 8 4 3 2
	♣ Q J 5		♣ K 9

Contract 5♦. Lead ♠4.

Board 77	♠ A Q 10 4	N W S E	♠ 8 7
♥	♥ –		♥ K J 6
	♦ A J		♦ K 9 8 5 4 3
	♣ K 9 8 7 4 3 2		♣ A Q

Contract 6♣. Lead ♥A.

Board 78	♠ A 3 2	N W S E	♠ K 8 7
♣	♥ 4 2		♥ A Q J 6 5
	♦ A K 8 3		♦ 9 6 5
	♣ A K 6 5		♣ 3 2

Contract 3NT. Lead ♦4. S plays the ♦J.

Board 79	♠ Q 10 8 3 2	N W S E	♠ A 7 4
♥	♥ K Q 4 3		♥ A 7 6
	♦ 8		♦ A 10 4 2
	♣ A Q 6		♣ K J 4

Contract 6♣. Lead ♦6. You played the ♠A, king from South.

Board 80	♠ A Q 5	N W S E	♠ 8 6
♦	♥ 10 9 5		♥ A K J 8 3
	♦ A Q J		♦ 6 4 2
	♣ A 9 3 2		♣ J 10 4

Contract 3NT. North overcalled in spades. Lead ♠J.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with Belgium

BOARD 71

♥	♠ Q J 7										
	♥ A Q 10 5 3										
	♦ K J 8 7										
	♣ J										
♠ K 10 8 6 4 2	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">W</td><td></td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K 8 2		♥ J 9 6									
♦ –		♦ A 6 4									
♠ A 7 6 3		♣ K 10 8 5 4									
	♠ 9 5										
	♥ 7 4										
	♦ Q 10 9 5 3 2										
	♣ Q 9 2										

Contract 4♠. North opened 1♥. Lead ♣J.

The main point – Keep the dangerous opponent off lead.

This is a fascinating problem since the winning move may turn out the only way to lose a cold game.

Order of play:

1. Duck the jack of clubs. Now you have to find North with three spades or a doubleton honour to drive the game home. If clubs break 2-2 and South holds Q-J-x of spades, we will go down in a game that our grandma would make.

2. Win the diamond switch with the ace and pitch a heart.

3-4. Play the ace of spades and a spade to the ten. If South raises with an honour win the trick with the king and concede a spade.

The Belgian pair stopped in 2♠, +140 for EW.

You ducked the jack of clubs: +620 = +10 IMP.

If not: -6 IMP.

BOARD 72

♣	♠ 4 ♥ A Q J 6 ♦ Q J 9 3 ♣ K 10 8 4										
♠ A K Q J 9 ♥ K 2 ♦ A 7 6 ♣ J 3 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 8 7 2 ♥ 10 9 8 ♦ K 4 2 ♣ A Q 6
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 6 5 3 ♥ 7 5 4 3 ♦ 10 8 5 ♣ 9 7 5										

Contract 4♠. Lead ♦Q. You opened 1♠, North doubled.

The main point – Keep the dangerous opponent off lead.

On the first trick you duck the queen of diamonds.
Then it is easy. You will draw trumps, eliminate diamonds and endplay North on the third round of clubs.

Closed room – Contract 4♠, +420 for EW.

You ducked the queen of diamonds: no swing.

If not: -10 IMP.

BOARD 73

♣	♠ 8 7 5 2										
	♥ K J 8 3 2										
	♦ 5 3										
	♣ A 9										
♠ Q J 10	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 10 9 5 4		♥ A 6									
♦ K Q 6		♦ A 8 7 2									
♣ K J 8		♣ Q 4 3 2									
	♠ 9 6 4										
	♥ Q 7										
	♦ J 10 9 4										
	♣ 10 7 6 5										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥3.

The main point – Block the opponents’ suit.

Take your ace of hearts on the first trick, aiming to block the opponents’ suit, and play a club. The contract is cold unless North led ♥3 from a holding such as K-Q-J-3-2.

Closed room – Contract 3NT, +600 for **EW**.

You took the ace of hearts on the first trick: no swing.

You ducked: -12 IMP.

BOARD 74

♦	♠ 6 2 ♥ J 10 6 3 ♦ 10 7 5 4 ♣ 8 4 2	♠ 10 9 5 4 3 ♥ A 4 ♦ K Q ♣ A 10 5 3									
♠ A J 8 7 ♥ K 9 8 2 ♦ A 2 ♣ K J 6	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K Q ♥ Q 7 5 ♦ J 9 8 6 3 ♣ Q 9 7										

Contract 6♣. Lead ♥J.

The main point – Let the opponents work for you.

Order of play:

1. Win the trick with the ace of hearts.
2. Play a spade and if South play an honour then we can safely eliminate hearts.
- 3-4. The king of hearts ruffed and a heart ruffed.
- 5-6. The king of diamonds and a diamond to the ace
- 7-8. A heart ruffed and a spade.

If South had king-queen doubleton in the trump suit and three hearts then we make the game without finding the queen of clubs.

Closed room – contract 4♠, +620 for **EW**.

You worked out the elimination: no swing.

If not: -12 IMP.

BOARD 75

♣	♠ 3 ♥ K Q 5 4 2 ♦ Q 9 7 2 ♣ J 9 2	♠ J 10 9 6 5 4 ♥ A ♦ A 6 4 ♣ A Q 3									
♠ A K Q 7 2 ♥ J 9 6 ♦ K 10 ♣ 8 6 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 8 ♥ 10 8 7 3 ♦ J 8 5 3 ♣ K 10 7 5										

Contract 6♣. Lead ♥K.

The main point – Combine all your chances.

Order of play:

2-3. Cross to your hand with a trump (they break 1-1). Play the jack of hearts, ruffing the queen.

4-6. Play three rounds of diamonds with a ruff.

7. Play ♥9 – if North does not cover with ♥10 discard a club and the contract is home.

8-9. Ruff ♥10 if North covers and return to your hand with a trump. Play ♣8. If North does not cover duck the eight. If North covers, take a trick with the ace of clubs.

10-11. Again enter your hand with a trump and play to the queen of clubs.

Why did we need all these club manoeuvres? This was an extra chance for the king of clubs doubleton with South.

Neatly played – no swing.

You were not too careful: -10 IMP.

BOARD 76

♣	♠ 9 4 3 ♥ Q 9 7 5 2 ♦ A ♣ A 8 6 2	♠ A J 2 ♥ A 3 ♦ J 9 8 4 3 2 ♣ K 9									
♠ K 10 5 ♥ J 10 ♦ K Q 10 7 5 ♣ Q J 5	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ Q 8 7 6 ♥ K 8 6 4 ♦ 6 ♣ 10 7 4 3										

Contract 5♦. Lead ♠4.

The main point – Plan the whole hand before playing to the first trick.

Order of play:

1. Play the jack of spades. If you make the mistake of ducking in the dummy, you will doom the contract if South raises with the queen.

2-3. Now play the king and another club.

Even if North holds up the ace of clubs for one round and switches to hearts, you will have a quick entry to your hand (the ten of spades) to discard a heart loser on the established jack of clubs.

Closed room – Contract 3NT (E), Lead 6♠, +400 for EW.

You played the jack: no swing.

You were reckless: -10 IMP.

BOARD 77

♥	♠ K J 9 2										
	♥ A 10 9 7 4 2										
	♦ Q 2										
	♣ J										
♠ A Q 10 4	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 8 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ –		♥ K J 6									
♦ A J		♦ K 9 8 5 4 3									
♣ K 9 8 7 4 3 2		♣ A Q									
	♠ 6 5 3										
	♥ Q 8 5 3										
	♦ 10 7 6										
	♣ 10 6 5										

Contract 6♣. Lead ♥A.

The main point – Make a careful plan at the beginning.

Order of play

Tricks 2,3,4: Play ace, king and another diamond, rounds ruffing with ♣9.

Analyse what may happen. North will ruff with a singleton honour. Does not matter. Cross to the dummy and play your diamonds through South trumps.

Closed room – the Belgian pair stopped in 3NT, +660 for **EW**.

Your play was effective: +12 IMP

If not: -13 IMP.

BOARD 78

♣	♠ J 9 4										
	♥ 10 8										
	♦ Q 10 7 4										
	♣ J 8 7 4										
♠ A 3 2	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 8 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 4 2		♥ A Q J 6 5									
♦ A K 8 3		♦ 9 6 5									
♣ A K 6 5		♣ 3 2									
	♠ Q 10 6 5										
	♥ K 9 7 3										
	♦ J 2										
	♣ Q 10 9										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♦4. South plays the ♦J.

The main point – Maintain your communications.

Order of play:

1. Win with the king of diamonds.
2. Concede a heart! Yes, that's correct, duck in both hands. Win the diamond return and play a heart to the queen. A 4-2 break with the king offside is not a problem anymore. (If instead you play a heart to the queen on the first round, South will defeat you by holding up.)

We all know safety play rules: – no swing.

If you forgot the rules: –10 IMP.

BOARD 79

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

Contract 6♠. Lead 6♦. You played the ♠A and the king fell from South.

The main point – Determine a defender’s shape to prepare for a trump coup.

The winning layouts with North: 4-3-3-3, 4-4-2-3 and 4-4-3-2. You have to adjust your play to these layouts. Begin with three rounds of hearts.

a) 4 - 3 - 3 - 3

Ruff two diamonds, draw clubs in three rounds and stay in your hand. Playing the fourth heart crowns the work.

b) 4 - 4 - 2 - 3

Ruff a heart and a diamond, draw clubs in three rounds and play ♠8.

c) 4 - 4 - 3 - 2

Ruff two diamonds and a heart and play clubs in three rounds.

You have to guess whether North has shape b) or c). The opponents’ discards will be helpful.

The Belgian pair stopped quite rightly in 4♠, +450 for EW.

You managed to endplay: +11 IMP.

If not: -11 IMP.

BOARD 80

♦	♠ K J 10 9 2 ♥ 7 ♦ K 8 5 3 ♣ K 6 5	♠ 8 6 ♥ A K J 4 3 ♦ 6 4 2 ♣ J 10 4									
♠ A Q 5 ♥ 10 9 5 ♦ A Q J ♣ A 9 3 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 7 4 3 ♥ Q 8 6 2 ♦ 10 9 7 ♣ Q 8 7										

Contract 3NT. North bid spades. Lead ♠J.

The main point – Attack the entry to the dangerous hand.

Order of play:

1. Win with the queen of spades.
2. Play the jack of diamonds.
- 3-4. Duck the first spade return and win the third round. Now you can safely finesse in hearts.

Playing correctly brought no swing.

If you played a heart to the ace and finessed the diamond king: -12 IMP.

Why? South will duck a heart you are going to play.

You had to work hard to stay level on the first seven boards. In the remaining three you could earn 33 IMP = 22-8 VP. On the ninth round Ireland will be your opponents.

ROUND 9 – MATCH AGAINST IRELAND

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 81	♠ 5 3	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A J 7 6 4
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♦	♥ 3 2	♥ J										
	♦ A 9 5	♦ K J 10 4 2										
	♣ A K Q 7 5 3	♣ 8 4										

Contract 5♣. Lead ♥7. South wins with the ace and switches to ♦3.

Board 82	♠ 10 8 7 2	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A J 9
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♥	♥ A 6	♥ K 2										
	♦ A J 7	♦ 10 6 5 4 2										
	♣ A K 10 5	♣ Q J 4										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥J.

Board 83	♠ K J 7 5	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 10 8
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♦	♥ K J 4	♥ A 2										
	♦ A 6 2	♦ J 8 4 3										
	♣ K J 4	♣ 10 9 8 2										

Contract 3NT. South opened a weak 2♥. Lead ♦7 and S plays the king.

Board 84	♠ K J	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A Q 3 2
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♦	♥ 7 5	♥ K Q J 10										
	♦ 4 2	♦ A 8 7										
	♣ A K Q J 10 7 5	♣ 3 2										

Contract 6NT. Lead ♦Q.

Board 85	♠ A J 10	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 8 7 5
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♦	♥ K 10 9 8 4 2	♥ A Q 7 6										
	♦ 6 4 2	♦ A J 10 3										
	♣ 3	♣ A 9										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♣Q.

Board 86
 ♣
 ♠ K 4 2
 ♥ Q 4 3
 ♦ K J 7
 ♣ A J 4 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J 10 9
 ♥ A J
 ♦ A 10 9 8 6 5
 ♣ K 8

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥5.

Board 87
 ♦
 ♠ A Q 7
 ♥ A Q J 8
 ♦ Q 6 4 2
 ♣ A Q

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 10 6 4 2
 ♥ K 5
 ♦ A J 5 3
 ♣ K 10

Contract 6NT. Lead ♥10.

Board 88
 ♦
 ♠ Q 3 2
 ♥ 10 3 2
 ♦ K 4 2
 ♣ K 9 5 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J 4
 ♥ A K 5
 ♦ A Q J 3
 ♣ Q J 4 3

Contract 3NT. North opened a weak 2♠. He leads ♠7 and S plays ♠9.

Board 89
 ♦
 ♠ J 8 4
 ♥ K 8 7 4 2
 ♦ J
 ♣ 8 6 5 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A 10 6
 ♥ A Q J
 ♦ A 4 2
 ♣ K Q J 10

Contract 4♥. Lead ♥3. South discards ♦6 on the second heart trick.

Board 90
 ♥
 ♠ K 7 5
 ♥ 8 7 6 5
 ♦ A K 5
 ♣ A K 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A 3 2
 ♥ Q J
 ♦ Q J 6 4
 ♣ 10 8 5 4

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠Q.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with Ireland

BOARD 81

♦	♠ K 9 2 ♥ K 9 8 7 4 ♦ Q 8 7 6 ♣ J	♠ A J 7 6 4 ♥ J ♦ K J 10 4 2 ♣ 8 4						
♠ 5 3 ♥ 3 2 ♦ A 9 5 ♣ A K Q 7 5 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	N		E	W	S		
N		E						
W	S							
	♠ Q 10 8 ♥ A Q 10 6 5 ♦ 3 ♣ 10 9 6 2							

Contract 5♣. Lead ♥7. South wins the ace and switches to ♦3.

The main point – Protect yourself from unfavourable breaks.

Follow with ♦9 in the second trick. If you win the trick ruff a heart, draw the trumps and if necessary concede a trump trick. If instead North covers 9♦ with the queen, win the king and play a diamond to the ace! This way you will be protected against four trumps with South. (If South chooses to ruff the second diamond, you must unblock the ace from your hand.)

The Irish stopped in 3♦, +130 for EW.

You played a diamond to the ace: +400 = +7 IMP.

If not: -5 IMP.

BOARD 82

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

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥J.

The main point – Combine all your chances.

Order of play:

1-2. Win the heart lead with dummy's king and play a diamond to the ace. If either opponent plays an honour then 9 tricks are certain by setting up a second diamond trick. If both opponents play small, then aim to take two spade finesses.

The Irish declarer played a diamond to the ace and you?

Yes: no swing.

No: -10 IMP.

BOARD 83

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

Contract 3NT. South opened a weak 2♥. Lead ♦7. South plays the king.

The main points – Make a plan as in chess, looking a few moves ahead.

Duck the king of diamonds on the first trick.

North, instead of playing a heart decided to lead a diamond. And on top of everything, he played ♦7 from ♦ Q 10 9 7 (5). Note, that he had an attractive choice of leading a heart from the doubleton. This indicates that the leader has five diamonds. Winning the king of diamonds would allow North to establish the diamond suit, holding two entries (e.g. the ace and queen of clubs).

Closed room – Contract 2♠, +110 for EW.

You ducked the king of diamonds: +600 = +10 IMP.

If not: -5 IMP.

BOARD 84

	♦		♠ 9 7 4									
			♥ 9 8 6 2									
			♦ Q J 10 3									
			♣ 9 8									
♠ K J ♥ 7 5 ♦ 4 2 ♣ A K Q J 10 7 5	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">N</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">W</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">S</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A Q 3 2 ♥ K Q J 10 ♦ A 8 7 ♣ 3 2	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
			♠ 10 8 6 5									
			♥ A 4 3									
			♦ K 9 6 5									
			♣ 6 4									

Contract 6NT. Lead ♦Q.

The main point – Do not give up when life is difficult.

You think: it's a poor contract, why are we not in 6♣? Also, the opponents made a annoying lead. Poor me, it's always like that. What a bad luck! If only ♣9 were in the dummy.

Stop feeling sorry for yourself! Reel off all your trumps leaving four spades and the king of hearts in the dummy. If either defender holds four spades and the ace of hearts, he will have to hold the same. So you know the solution by now – play the king and jack of spades and endplay South with a heart to the ace. The play is known as a stepping-stone squeeze.

The Irish pair stopped in an excellent contract 6♣: +1370 for EW.
You found the difficult winning line: +2 IMP.
If not: -16 IMP.

BOARD 85

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

Contract 4♥. Lead ♣Q.

The main point – If you know that required technique, it will take you 10 seconds to make it.

Win the club lead with the ace, draw trumps and ruff a club. You then play the ace and the jack of diamonds. The contract is 100% after this line of play.

You didn't expect the Irish declarer to go down, did you? Ten tricks: No swing.

If you did not know this technique: -10 IMP.

BOARD 86

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

Contract 3NT. Lead 5♥.

The main point – Do not put yourself under unnecessary pressure.

Win the first trick with the ace of hearts and finesse the jack of diamonds. Even if you lose a trick to the queen, nothing bad can happen. If instead you play the jack of hearts on the first, South might win and put your contract at risk with a spade switch.

Closed room – contract 3NT, +630 for **EW**.

If you played the ace of hearts on the first trick: No swing.

If not: -12 IMP.

BOARD 87

♦	♠ 8 ♥ 10 9 7 3 ♦ 10 9 8 7 ♣ 9 8 7 4	♠ K 10 6 4 2 ♥ K 5 ♦ A J 5 3 ♣ K 10									
♠ A Q 7 ♥ A Q J 8 ♦ Q 6 4 2 ♣ A Q	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J 9 5 3 ♥ 6 4 2 ♦ K ♣ J 6 5 3 2										

Contract 6NT. Lead ♥10.

The main point – Combine all your chances.

Order of play:

1-2. Win the first trick with the king of hearts and play the ace of diamonds.

3-4. Cross to your hand with the heart and play a diamond to the jack.

Why do you need all these diamond manoeuvres? The main assumption to be made that South has four spades with the jack. If South also holds also four diamonds with the king he will be squeezed in spades and diamonds. If four diamonds are with North then he cannot afford to rise with the king (or you would have three diamond tricks). The jack of diamonds will win the trick and you can then safely concede a spade trick to South.

Closed room – Contract 6♦, one off +100 for NS. Poor play.

You made 6 NT: +17 IMP.

You lost: no swing.

BOARD 88

♦	♠ A 10 8 7 6 5 ♥ Q J 8 ♦ 10 7 5 ♣ 6										
♠ Q 3 2 ♥ 10 3 2 ♦ K 4 2 ♣ K 9 5 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 4 ♥ A K 5 ♦ A Q J 3 ♣ Q J 4 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K 9 ♥ 9 7 6 4 ♦ 9 8 6 ♣ A 10 8 7										

Contract 3NT. North opened a weak 2♠. He leads ♠7 and South plays ♠9.

The main point – do not give up.

Duck ♠9 – this is the only chance. Why did South play the nine from ♠ K 9? He tried to preserve communications with his partner. According to the Rule of Eleven, South knew that declarer had only one card higher than the seven.

Closed room – Contract 3NT by E, Lead ♠K, +430 for EW.

You ducked the nine of spades : +400 = -1 IMP.

If not: -11 IMP.

BOARD 89

	♦		♠ Q 5 3 ♥ 10 9 6 3 ♦ K 10 8 5 ♣ 4 2								
♠ J 8 4 ♥ K 8 7 4 2 ♦ J ♣ 8 6 5 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 10 6 ♥ A Q J ♦ A 4 2 ♣ K Q J 10
	N										
W		E									
	S										
			♠ K 9 7 2 ♥ 5 ♦ Q 9 7 6 3 ♣ A 9 7								

Contract 4♥. Lead ♥3. South throws ♦6 on the second heart trick.

The main point – Sometimes a brilliant idea is the only solution!

Order of play:

3. Draw the third trump.
4. Play a small diamond to the jack!

In this way you can reach your hand, to draw the last trump, without releasing your control of the diamond suit. The defenders cannot play spades, without giving you a second trick there. If the spade ace is left intact, you will be able to throw a spade loser on the ace of diamonds.

Closed room – Contract 2♥: +140 for EW.

You played a low diamond to the jack: +620 = +10 IMP.

If not: -6 IMP.

BOARD 90

♥	♠ Q J 9 4										
	♥ K 10 9 2										
	♦ 9 3										
	♣ Q 9 6										
♠ K 7 5	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">W</td><td></td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 3 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 8 7 6 5		♥ Q J									
♦ A K 5		♦ Q J 6 4									
♣ A K 3		♣ 10 8 5 4									
	♠ 10 8 6										
	♥ A 4 3										
	♦ 10 8 7 2										
	♣ J 7 2										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠Q.

The main point – Consider camouflage in the play, even when it is against the odds.

Order of play:

1-2. You win the king of spades and play a club to the eight in dummy.

South will not be able to count a fast nine tricks for you after this club manoeuvre and will continue spades. When clubs prove to be 3-3, you will have nine tricks. North had an easier task but he did not know the distribution of a club suit and it was difficult to play second hand high (rising with the queen). If you take the best percentage chance in clubs, cashing the ace-king and leading towards the 10, you would give yourself the extra chance that South held a doubleton honour. However, it would then be more likely that the defenders would switch to hearts.

After opening 1NT by an Irish (**W**) – your team mates were active in bidding and eventually finished in 2♥ doubled down three.

Result +800 for **EW**.

You camouflaged your play: +600 = -5 IMP

If not: -14 IMP.

Your maximum gain from this match is: +40 IMP = 23-7 VP.

Your next opponent for the tenth round will be a difficult Russian team.

ROUND 10 – MATCH AGAINST RUSSIA

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 91	♠ 8 5 3		♠ A 9 4						
♣	♥ A K Q J 2	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ 7 6 5
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ K 8 4 2		♦ A 7 5						
	♣ A	♣ 7 4 3 2							

Contract 4♥. Lead ♦Q.

Board 92	♠ K 8 5		♠ A 9 7						
♥	♥ K	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ A Q J
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ K J 10 6 5 3		♦ Q 9 8						
	♣ A Q 7	♣ J 4 3 2							

Contract 6♦. Lead ♥7.

Board 93	♠ A K Q 10		♠ 6 5 3 2						
♥	♥ –	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ J 10 9
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ A K Q 9		♦ J 4 2						
	♣ J 10 9 4 2	♣ Q 8 6							

Contract 4♠. Lead ♥K.

Board 94	♠ K 8 7 5 3		♠ A 6						
♦	♥ Q 8 7	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ 4
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ A K Q		♦ 7 6 5 3						
	♣ 9 4	♣ A K Q 8 5 3							

Contract 4♠. Lead ♦J.

Board 95	♠ K 7 5 3		♠ A 6						
♥	♥ A K 8 6 4	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ J 7 5 2
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ J		♦ A 8 7 5						
	♣ 8 4 2	♣ Q 6 3							

Contract 4♥. Lead ♦K.

Board 96	♠ A K 6		♠ Q 10						
♥	♥ A K 9 7 4	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>	W	N	E		S		♥ 8 6 5 3
W	N	E							
	S								
	♦ 6 5		♦ A J 7						
	♣ A 3 2		♣ Q 7 6 4						

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠7.

Board 97	♠ A J 6		♠ K 10 5						
♣	♥ J	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>	W	N	E		S		♥ A 10 3
W	N	E							
	S								
	♦ A Q		♦ 8 7 5 4 3						
	♣ A K J 10 9 4 2		♣ 8 7						

Contract 5♣. Lead ♥K.

Board 98	♠ Q 5 2		♠ A 9 4						
♦	♥ K Q 9 2	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>	W	N	E		S		♥ J 10 7
W	N	E							
	S								
	♦ A K 10		♦ Q J 6						
	♣ K Q 2		♣ J 5 4 3						

Contract 3NT. North opened 1♠. Lead ♠7. South follows with the ♠J.

Board 99	♠ A K 10 9 7		♠ Q 8 3 2						
♦	♥ A 9 7 5	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>	W	N	E		S		♥ 3 2
W	N	E							
	S								
	♦ 5		♦ A K 9 4 2						
	♣ 6 5 3		♣ A 10						

Contract 6♣. Lead ♣Q.

Board 100	♠ A Q		♠ J 10						
♥	♥ A K Q	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>	W	N	E		S		♥ 10 9 8 7
W	N	E							
	S								
	♦ A 10 9 8 6		♦ 5 4 2						
	♣ A 8 5		♣ Q J 9 7						

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠6.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with Russia

BOARD 91

♣	♠ K 6 2 ♥ 10 8 4 ♦ Q J 10 9 ♣ Q 10 5	♠ A 9 4 ♥ 7 6 5 ♦ A 7 5 ♣ 7 4 3 2			
♠ 8 5 3 ♥ A K Q J 2 ♦ K 8 4 2 ♣ A	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 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	♠ Q J 10 7 ♥ 9 3 ♦ 6 3 ♣ K J 9 8 6
N					
W E					
S					

Contract 4♥. Lead ♦Q.

The main point – Draw precisely two rounds of trumps.

The plan is based on ruffing a diamond in the dummy. For communication reasons, you should duck the queen of diamonds in both hands. You will then draw two rounds of trumps and play to ruff the fourth diamond if necessary. Everything relies on how the diamonds and hearts behave:

- a) The diamonds break 5-1 – surprisingly it is good news. If South with three trumps is tempted to ruff a diamond at trick 2, you are going to make the contract. You will pitch a spade on a diamond. You will also make the contract if three hearts are with five diamonds.
- b) Diamonds break 4-2. Four diamonds are with three hearts.
- c) Diamonds break 3-3. No problem.

Closed room – Contract 4♥. Result: +420 for EW.

You ducked the queen of diamonds: no swing.

If not: -10 IMP.

BOARD 92

♥	♠ J 6 3										
	♥ 8 7 5 3 2										
	♦ A 2										
	♣ K 10 6										
♠ K 8 5	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 9 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K		♥ A Q J									
♦ K J 10 6 5 3		♦ Q 9 8									
♣ A Q 7		♣ J 4 3 2									
	♠ Q 10 4 2										
	♥ 10 9 6 4										
	♦ 7 4										
	♣ 9 8 5										

Contract 6♦. Lead ♥7.

The main point – Play with the odds.

Attempting to establish a club trick is better than taking the club finesse.

Order of play:

1-3. Play three rounds of hearts, discarding two clubs.

4-5. A club to the ace and a diamond to the eight.

Use two trump entries to ruff the clubs.

The analysis of the opening lead seems to encourage for this line of play. Holding small cards in both hearts and clubs, North might have chosen to lead a club. This reduces the chances of the king of clubs being onside.

The Russians bid and made the diamond slam.

You established the club suit: no swing.

You finessed the king of clubs: -10 IMP.

BOARD 93

♥	♠ J 9 7										
	♥ K Q 8 7 3										
	♦ 10 5										
	♣ A 7 3										
♠ A K Q 10	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 6 5 3 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ –		♥ J 10 9									
♦ A K Q 9		♦ J 4 2									
♣ J 10 9 4 2		♣ Q 8 6									
	♠ 8 4										
	♥ A 6 5 4 2										
	♦ 8 7 6 3										
	♣ K 5										

Contract 4♠. Lead ♥K.

The main point – Keep control of the hand.

Order of play:

1-3. Ruff a heart and play the ace and king of spades.

4-7. Play four rounds of diamonds, discarding a heart. It does not matter which trick the opponent ruffs with his last trump. The timing for establishing a club trick will be with you.

Closed room – Contract 4♠, +620 for **EW**.

You followed the above line: no swing.

You played it in a different way: -12 IMP.

BOARD 94

♦	♠ Q 4 ♥ K 10 6 3 ♦ J 10 9 2 ♣ 10 6 2	♠ A 6 ♥ 4 ♦ 7 6 5 3 ♣ A K Q 8 5 3									
♠ K 8 7 5 3 ♥ Q 8 7 ♦ A K Q ♣ 9 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J 10 9 2 ♥ A J 9 5 2 ♦ 8 4 ♣ J 7										

Contract 4♠. Lead ♦J.

The main point – Keep control of the hand.

Order of play:

2-4. Play three rounds of clubs, discarding a heart.

You lose only when two clubs are with two spades (diamonds have to behave not worse than 4-2). Why do we have to display such artistry, playing this contract? The answer is – because our bidding is poor. Making a club slam would be easier.

The Russian pair bid and made a club slam: +920 to **EW**.

You played well in 4♠ : -11 IMP.

You lost the contract: -14 IMP.

BOARD 95

♥	♠ 10 8 4										
	♥ 9										
	♦ K Q 10 4 2										
	♣ K 10 7 5										
♠ K 7 5 3	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 6
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K 8 6 4		♥ J 7 5 2									
♦ J		♦ A 8 7 5									
♣ 8 4 2		♣ Q 6 3									
	♠ Q J 9 2										
	♥ Q 10 3										
	♦ 9 6 3										
	♣ A J 9										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♦K.

The main point – Plan you play before you start.
They say: ‘The hand is faster than the head!’

The question is: can you make the game if a defender holds three trumps to the queen?

Yes – when the distribution of diamonds and spades is with you.

Order of play:

2. Ruff a diamond.

3-4. Cash the ace and king of hearts.

a) North holds three trumps to the queen.

You have to find North with four diamonds and three spades as well. Note that depending where the three hearts are ye have to plan the Order of play differently. First you ruff diamonds.

5-6. Cross to the ace of spades and ruff a diamond.

7-9. Ruff a spade, ruff the last diamond.

10. You play your last spade, promoting dummy’s jack of trumps.

b) South holds three trumps to the queen.

You have to find South with four spades and three diamonds. Ruff the spades first.

- 5-7. A spade to the ace, a spade to the king and a spade ruffed.
8-9. The last diamond ruffed and a spade ruffed.
10. You play dummy's last diamond, promoting your eight of trumps.

Open room – Contract 4♥, +420 for EW.

You played accurately: no swing.

If not: -10 IMP.

BOARD 96

♥	♠ 9 7 4 2										
	♥ Q J 10										
	♦ K 9 4 3										
	♣ J 5										
♠ A K 6	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 10
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K 9 7 4		♥ 8 6 5 3									
♦ 6 5		♦ A J 7									
♣ A 3 2		♣ Q 7 6 4									
	♠ J 8 5 3										
	♥ 2										
	♦ Q 10 8 2										
	♣ K 10 9 6										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠7.

The main point – Plan your play to match the layouts you discover or already know.

Win the spade lead with the queen and cash the ace and king of hearts.

a) three hearts with North.

At trick 4 play a diamond to the jack. South takes the trick and plays a spade back. Now it is time to play a club to the queen. After any return, cash the ace of diamonds, eliminate diamonds and spades and throw North in with a heart. You combined the chance of the king-queen of diamonds onside, the king of clubs onside and finally a doubleton club with three hearts.

b) three hearts with South – the contract is cold if South does not ruff a third spade.

Play two spades discarding a diamond from the dummy and play the ace of diamonds and a diamond. North should win the trick and play a club. Win with the ace of clubs and throw South in with the trump.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, +620 for EW.

You played effectively: no swing.

You missed the best play: -12 IMP.

BOARD 97

		♠ 9 8 4 3										
	♣	♥ K Q 7 2										
		♦ K 9 6 2										
		♣ 5										
♠ A J 6		<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">N</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">W</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">S</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 10 5
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ J			♥ A 10 3									
♦ A Q			♦ 8 7 5 4 3									
♣ A K J 10 9 4 2			♣ 8 7									
		♠ Q 7 2										
		♥ 9 8 6 5 4										
		♦ J 10										
		♣ Q 6 3										

Contract 5♣. Lead ♥K.

The main point – Let the opponents do the job for you.

Duck the king of hearts. Whatever North plays next, your problems are solved! An important thing is not to bungle 5♣ if you do not bid the slam. Ducking the king of hearts is the correct play.

The Russians made a 3NT +430 for **EW**.

You followed the above line: -1 IMP.

You played it in a different way: -10 IMP.

BOARD 98

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

Contract 3NT. North opened 1♠. Lead ♠7, South follows with the ♠J.

The main point – hundreds of games were lost in the first trick.

Duck the jack of spades. North has two aces to reach the established spade suit. Your only chance is that spades break 6-1.

Open room – your team mates played 2♠ doubled, three off.

Result: +800 for **EW**.

You ducked the jack of spades: +630 = -5 IMP

You did not: -14 IMP.

BOARD 99

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

Contract 6♣. Lead ♣Q.

The main point – Never give up. Try to find the winning line.

Order of play:

1-4. Win the ace of clubs and play ace, king, and a small diamond ruffing with ♠10. If Q-J-10 fell in the diamond suit ... well, miracles happen occasionally. There is still a chance of a doubleton jack of spades with North:

5-7. Play ♠7, finessing with ♠8, ruff a diamond with the ace and cross to the dummy with the queen. You can then discard your remaining club loser on the good diamond and ruff two losing hearts.

(If North rises with the jack of spades on the first round, congratulate him for breaking your communication.)

Closed room – Contract 4♣, +650 for EW.

You played a spade to the eight: +13 IMP.

You followed a different line: -13 IMP.

BOARD 100

♥	♠ K 9 7 6 2										
	♥ 5 2										
	♦ K Q 7										
	♣ 10 6 3										
♠ A Q	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 10
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K Q		♥ 10 9 8 7									
♦ A 10 9 8 6		♦ 5 4 2									
♣ A 8 5		♣ Q J 9 7									
	♠ 8 5 4 3										
	♥ J 6 4 3										
	♦ J 3										
	♣ K 4 2										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠6.

The main point – You have to know it already. It is not easy to devise it at the table.

Order of play:

2-4. Play hearts three times if the jack falls you have 9 tricks.

5. If hearts are no good, play a club to ♣7 in the dummy!

At first, it seems that we are looking for the king of clubs singleton or doubleton. There is another fat chance for ♣10 with North and the king with South. South has to duck the seven of clubs. Now finesse the king. You are not losing the chance of a singleton or doubleton king.

Closed room – Contract 3NT, +600 for **EW**.

You played beautifully: +600, no swing.

You failed: -12 IMP.

It happens sometimes that you cannot win a match. Your perfect play only reduced your defeat. You lost the match by 4 IMP = 14-16 VP.

After a difficult match your next opponents will be less tough – Liechtenstein.

ROUND 11 – MATCH WITH LIECHTENSTEIN

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 101	♠ J 10 9 4 3			♠ K 2
	♥ A 10			♥ K 6 5 2
♣	♦ A Q 8 4	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> W^N S^E </div>		♦ J 7 3
	♣ 4 3			♣ A K Q 2

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥3.

Board 102	♠ Q 9 8			♠ A 4 3
	♥ A K 5			♥ 4 3 2
♦	♦ K 7 6 5 2	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> W^N S^E </div>		♦ Q 9 4
	♣ A 7			♣ K Q 4 3

Contract 3NT. North opened 1♥. Lead ♥Q.

Board 103	♠ A J 4			♠ 8 7 2
	♥ A K Q 7 4 2			♥ J 10 9
♣	♦ Q J	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> W^N S^E </div>		♦ A 6
	♣ A Q			♣ 10 8 7 5 3

Contract 4♥. Lead 3♠. South plays the king.

Board 104	♠ J 8 4			♠ K
	♥ K 10 9 8 7 4 3			♥ Q 5
♥	♦ 6	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> W^N S^E </div>		♦ A 10 9 8 4
	♣ 9 6			♣ A K 5 4 3

Contract 4♥. South opened a weak 2♠. North doubled 4♥. Lead ♣Q.

Board 105	♠ A K Q J 10 4			♠ 5 3 2
	♥ 9 7 3			♥ A 10 8
♥	♦ A	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> W^N S^E </div>		♦ K Q 10 9
	♣ A 10 5			♣ 6 4 3

Contract 4♠. North opened a weak 2♥. Lead ♥K.

Board 106	♠ A K Q		♠ J 9 8						
♦	♥ A 6 5	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ K 10 4
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ Q 7 5 2	♦ A 8 6 3							
	♣ A 10 9		♣ 6 4 2						

Contract 3NT. Lead – three rounds of clubs, South throwing ♠4 on third round.

Board 107	♠ A K 6		♠ 8 7 4 3						
♣	♥ A 10 9 8 4	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ Q J
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ K Q 5	♦ A J 6 2							
	♣ 9 8		♣ Q 4 3						

Contract 4♥. Lead 2♣. Opponents play three rounds of clubs.

Board 108	♠ A 6 5		♠ K 10 3 2						
♦	♥ A Q J 4	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ K 10 9 7
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ K 8 7 2	♦ A 6 3							
	♣ 10 4		♣ 9 7						

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠7.

Board 109	♠ A 9 8 7		♠ K 6 3 2						
♣	♥ K 10	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ J 7
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ K 4 3	♦ A 8 7							
	♣ A J 4 2		♣ Q 10 9 5						

Contract 4♠. North overcalled in hearts. Lead ♦Q.

Board 110	♠ A K 5 4 2		♠ 9 7 3						
♥	♥ 2	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ 6 5 3
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ 4 2	♦ A K Q 5							
	♣ A 9 7 5 3		♣ J 6 4						

Contract 4♠. North opened 1♥. Lead ♥A, ♥K.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with Liechtenstein

BOARD 101

♣	♠ 8 7 6 ♥ J 9 8 3 ♦ K 10 9 2 ♣ J 9	♠ K 2 ♥ K 6 5 2 ♦ J 7 3 ♣ A K Q 2						
♠ J 10 9 4 3 ♥ A 10 ♦ A Q 8 4 ♣ 4 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">N</td> <td></td> <td style="padding: 5px;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	N		E	W	S		
N		E						
W	S							
	♠ A Q 5 ♥ Q 6 4 ♦ 6 5 ♣ 10 8 7 6 5							

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥3.

The main point – Maintain your communications.

Order of tricks:

1. Win with the king of hearts.
2. Play the king of spades.

If instead you run the heart lead to your hand and play a spade to the king, the opponent may duck.

Liechtenstein bid 4♣, +420 for EW.

You preserved communications: -1 IMP.

If not: -10 IMP.

BOARD 102

♦	♠ K J 2 ♥ Q J 10 8 7 ♦ A J 8 ♣ J 10										
♠ Q 9 8 ♥ A K 5 ♦ K 7 6 5 2 ♣ A 7	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 4 3 ♥ 4 3 2 ♦ Q 9 4 ♣ K Q 4 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 10 7 6 5 ♥ 9 6 ♦ 10 3 ♣ 9 8 6 5 2										

Contract 3NT. North opened 1♥. Lead ♥Q.

The main point – Develop the side suit safely.

Order of play:

1. Duck the queen of hearts.
- 2-3. Win the next heart and play a diamond to 9 in the dummy.
- 4-5. Follow with ♠8 on South's spade switch and win with dummy's ace. Play the queen of diamonds.

Closed room – Contract 3NT, +400 for **EW**.

You remembered the safety play in diamonds: no swing.

If not: -10 IMP.

BOARD 103

♣	♠ Q 10 6 3										
	♥ 6 5										
	♦ 10 9 2										
	♣ K J 9 2										
♠ A J 4	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 8 7 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K Q 7 4 2		♥ J 10 9									
♦ Q J		♦ A 6									
♣ A Q		♣ 10 8 7 5 3									
	♠ K 9 5										
	♥ 8 3										
	♦ K 8 7 5 4 3										
	♣ 6 4										

Contract 4♥. Lead 3♠. South plays the king.

The main point – The saying ‘*finesse is the essence of playing bridge*’ is not always right.

Order of play:

1. Win the trick with the ace of spades.
- 2-3. Play the ace and queen of clubs. I am not going to tell you anything else.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, +620 for **EW**.

You played carefully: no swing.

If not: -12 IMP.

BOARD 105

♥	♠ 7	♥ K Q J 6 5 4	♠ 5 3 2					
♠ A K Q J 10 4	♦ 6 5 3	♣ J 8 7	♥ A 10 8					
♥ 9 7 3	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">N</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♦ K Q 10 9
W	N	E						
S								
♦ A	♠ 9 8 6	♣ 6 4 3						
♣ A 10 5	♥ 2	♦ J 8 7 4 2						
	♣ K Q 9 2							

Contract 4♠. North opened weak 2♥. Lead ♥K.

The main point – You have to be smart.

It seems that you will need trumps to be 2-2. Let's see how good South is!

Order of play:

1. Duck the king of hearts.
2. North continues with the queen of hearts. Cover with the ace and South ruffs, which is exactly what you need. You now have an entry on the third round of trumps to two diamond tricks.

Closed room – Contract 3NT, +400 for EW.

You conceded a heart: +1 IMP.

If not: -11 IMP.

BOARD 106

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

Contract 3NT. Lead – three rounds of clubs, South throwing ♠4 on the third round.

The main point – Protect yourself against the opponents’ good defence.

You have to find diamonds 3-2 and the king with South.

Is this the end of analysis? If we play straightforwardly a diamond to the ace, South may unblock discarding the second king. Maybe you should have won the second round of clubs. Stay cool, South is not a mind reader. South could have discarded the king on the third round of clubs. Play a heart to the king and a diamond to the queen. The opponents may still create a problem. South may duck a small diamond. On the net round of diamonds, North plays the jack. Where is ♦10?

Closed room – Contract 3NT, +600 for Liechtenstein.

A diamond to the queen: no swing.

Ace of diamonds: -12 IMP.

BOARD 107

♣	♠ J 10 2										
	♥ K 7										
	♦ 8 7 4 3										
	♣ K 10 6 2										
♠ A K 6	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 8 7 4 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A 10 9 8 4		♥ Q J									
♦ K Q 5		♦ A J 6 2									
♣ 9 8		♣ Q 4 3									
	♠ Q 9 5										
	♥ 6 5 3 2										
	♦ 10 9										
	♣ A J 7 5										

Contract 4♥. Lead 2♣. The opponents play clubs three times.

The main point – Keep control of the hand.

Order of play:

3. Ruff with ♥10.
4. Play a heart to the jack. If the trick stands:
5. Finesse the king of hearts.

The contract will be made if the king of hearts is with South or if hearts are 3-3.

The king of hearts doubleton with North is an additional chance (provided North plays high).

Closed room – Contract 3NT, one off, +100 for NS.

A heart to the jack: +620 = +12 IMP.

If different: no swing.

BOARD 108

♦	♠ Q 9 8 7 ♥ 6 5 ♦ J 9 5 ♣ A Q 8 6	♦									
♠ A 6 5 ♥ A Q J 4 ♦ K 8 7 2 ♣ 10 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 10 3 2 ♥ K 10 9 7 ♦ A 6 3 ♣ 9 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J 4 ♥ 8 3 2 ♦ Q 10 4 ♣ K J 5 3 2										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠7.

The main point – Shrewdness is one of the elements that needs to be trained.

Duck the seven of spades in both hands! South plays the four of spades on the first trick and North continues spades. Now you have a discard for a losing club.

Closed room – Contract 4♥ +420 for EW.

How did it happen? Your team mates did not want to discuss it.

You made the contract. North did not find the club switch: no swing.

You did not duck the first trick: -10 IMP.

BOARD 109

♣	♠ Q J 4 ♥ A Q 9 6 4 ♦ Q J 9 2 ♣ 3	♠ K 6 3 2 ♥ J 7 ♦ A 8 7 ♣ Q 10 9 5									
♠ A 9 8 7 ♥ K 10 ♦ K 4 3 ♣ A J 4 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 5 ♥ 8 5 3 2 ♦ 10 6 5 ♣ K 8 7 6
	N										
W		E									
	S										

Contract 4♣. North overcalled in hearts. Lead ♦Q.

The main point – Keep the dangerous opponent off lead.

Order of play:

1. Duck the queen of diamonds.
- 2-8. Win the next diamond with the king, play ace and king of spades, ace of diamonds and four rounds of clubs, finessing.
9. Throw North with a spade.

There is certain subtlety in this problem. If we find out that diamonds are 5-2 (for instance, South plays the jack of diamonds in the first trick) – North holding a doubleton, then we do not draw the third diamond but finesse clubs to the end.

Closed room – Contract 2♠, +140 for EW.

You ducked queen of diamonds: +620 = +10 IMP.

If not: -6 IMP.

BOARD 110

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

Contract 4♠. North opened 1♥. Lead ♥A, ♥K.

The main point – Do not give up. Try to find the winning line.

Ruff the heart and play the ace of clubs. It will be difficult to unblock an honour at this stage. Cash the ace and king of trumps, cross the dummy with a diamond and ruff a heart.

Cash the remaining two diamond tricks and this is the position you will have:

	♠ –	
	♥ J 9 8	
	♦ –	
	♣ K	
♠ 5	N	♠ 9
♥ –	W E	♥ –
♦ –	S	♦ 5
♣ 9 7 5		♣ J 6
		♠ Q
		♥ –
		♦ 10
		♣ Q 10

Concede a club trick. North plays a heart, pitch a club from the dummy – South is hopeless.

Closed room – Contract $4\spadesuit$ down one, +100 for NS.

You cashed the ace of clubs: $+620 = +12$ IMP.

If not: no swing.

The pool of points to win is 45 IMP = $24-6$ VP

Your next match is against Scotland.

ROUND 12 – MATCH AGAINST SCOTLAND

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 111	♠ K 6 5 3	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 8 7
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♣	♥ A K Q	♥ J 10 9 6 5										
	♦ A 8 4 2	♦ 9 7										
	♣ A Q	♣ 9 8 2										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♥7.

Board 112	♠ A K 4	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 7 6 5
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♦	♥ Q 5	♥ A 3 2										
	♦ A Q 7	♦ K 8 6 4										
	♣ Q 7 5 4 2	♣ K 9 3										

Contract 3NT. North opened 1♠. Lead ♠Q.

Board 113	♠ A J 6	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 7 5
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♣	♥ A K 9 4 2	♥ Q 10										
	♦ Q 6 5	♦ A K J 3 2										
	♣ 10 8	♣ J 4 2										

Contract 4♥. North plays clubs three times. South produces the ace on the third trick.

Board 114	♠ A K 6	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 7 2
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♦	♥ A K	♥ 4 3										
	♦ 9 6 3 2	♦ A 7 5 4										
	♣ A J 3 2	♣ K 9 5 4										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥J.

Board 115	♠ J 10 9 8 4 2	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K Q 6
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♣	♥ J 6 3 2	♥ A Q 4										
	♦ A Q	♦ 10 9										
	♣ 10	♣ A 8 7 5										

Contract 6♣. Lead ♣K.

Board 116	♠ K Q J 9 8 3		♠ A 10 6 4
♣	♥ A Q	N W S E S	♥ 7 4
	♦ A Q J		♦ 8 4 2
	♣ 3 2		♣ K J 8 4

Contract 4♠. Lead ♣10 (from 10-9-x, Q-10-9 or 10-x).

Board 117	♠ 2		♠ 8 5 4 3
♣	♥ K J 10 9 5	N W S E S	♥ A Q
	♦ K Q J		♦ A 9 7
	♣ J 4 3 2		♣ A Q 8 6

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠A, ♠K. North overcalled in spades.

Board 118	♠ J 10		♠ A K 5 4 3 2
♣	♥ A K 7 5	N W S E S	♥ 8 7
	♦ A Q 6 5		♦ 9 2
	♣ Q 5 4		♣ 9 7 3

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥Q.

Board 119	♠ A 4		♠ 6 5
♣	♥ K Q 10 9 3	N W S E S	♥ A J 8 7
	♦ A K 2		♦ J 6 5 3
	♣ K 10 5		♣ Q 9 4

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠Q.

Board 120	♠ –		♠ K Q 5
♣	♥ K 7	N W S E S	♥ Q J 4 2
	♦ K 10 4 3 2		♦ A J 6
	♣ K Q J 9 7 6		♣ A 10 8

Contract 6♣. South overcalled in spades. Lead ♠7.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with Scotland

BOARD 111

♣	♠ QJ92 ♥ 732 ♦ Q105 ♣ KJ6	♠ A87 ♥ J10965 ♦ 97 ♣ 982									
♠ K653 ♥ AKQ ♦ A842 ♣ AQ	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">S</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 104 ♥ 84 ♦ KJ63 ♣ 107543										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♥7.

The main point – Do not be distracted by a possible finesse.

You are sure to make the contract if you play the ace and queen of clubs. You have nine top tricks and a club ruff in the West hand will bring the total to ten.

The Scots made the contract of 3NT without any problems: +400 for EW.

You played the ace and queen of clubs: +420 = +1 IMP.

You tried to take a club finesse: -10 IMP.

BOARD 112

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

Contract 3NT. North opened 1♠. Lead ♠Q.

The main point – Use safety play, but prudently not as a routine play.

You have already encountered a similar problem (102). Then you played a small club to the nine in the dummy. This the beauty of bridge – everything depends on the circumstances. In this case such a move would be quite wrong because it would allow South to make a damaging lead though your queen of hearts.

Order of play:

- 1-2. Duck the spade and win the spade continuation.
- 3-4. Play the queen of clubs. North wins the queen with the ace and continues with spades.
5. Now it is time to play a small club to the nine.

The Scots made 3NT: +400 for EW.

Queen of clubs: no swing.

You played it differently: -10 IMP.

BOARD 113

♣	♠ K 9										
	♥ J 8 6 3										
	♦ 10 9										
	♣ K Q 9 6 5										
♠ A J 6	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 7 5
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K 9 4 2		♥ Q 10									
♦ Q 6 5		♦ A K J 3 2									
♣ 10 8		♣ J 4 2									
	♠ 10 8 4 3 2										
	♥ 7 5										
	♦ 8 7 4										
	♣ A 7 3										

Contract 4♥. North plays clubs three times. South produces the ace on the third trick.

The main point – Protect your trumps from a force and preserve communications.

Order of play:

3-4. Ruff the third round of clubs and play a heart to the ten. Even if the finesse loses, the queen of hearts in dummy will prevent a further force in clubs.

Closed room – Contract 3NT, one down: +100 for **NS**.

A heart to the ten: +650 for **EW** = +13 IMP.

Otherwise: no swing.

BOARD 115

♣	♠ 3		♠ A K Q 6								
	♥ 10 9 7 5		♥ A Q 4								
	♦ K 8 6 4		♦ 10 9								
	♣ K Q J 2		♣ A 8 7 5								
♠ J 10 9 8 4 2	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ J 6 3 2											
♦ A Q											
♣ 10	♠ 7 5										
	♥ K 8										
	♦ J 7 5 3 2										
	♣ 9 6 4 3										

Contract 6♣. Lead ♣K.

The main point – Do not allow the defenders to put you to an early guess.

Order of play:

1-6. Eliminate clubs and draw trumps.

7-8. Play the ace of hearts and a low heart to the jack.

You will make it with a doubleton heart king on either side, when hearts break 3-3 or finally you can always try the diamond finesse. If instead you finesse the king of hearts, South will win with the king and play a diamond. You will have to guess whether to finesse in diamonds before you know if hearts are 3-3.

Closed room – Contract 6♠: +980 for **EW**.

You played ace and a small heart: no swing.

You played it differently: -14 IMP.

BOARD 116

♣	♠ 7 2 ♥ K 10 9 2 ♦ K 9 5 3 ♣ 10 9 6										
♠ K Q J 9 8 3 ♥ A Q ♦ A Q J ♣ 3 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 10 6 4 ♥ 7 4 ♦ 8 4 2 ♣ K J 8 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 5 ♥ J 8 6 5 3 ♦ 10 7 6 ♣ A Q 7 5										

Contract 4♠. Lead ♣10 (10-9-x, Q-10-9 or 10-x).

The main point – Make the dangerous opponent pay a high price for gaining the lead.

Duck ♣10. You will then have a chance to establish a club trick before South can play through your heart holding. If South overtakes with the queen you can set up two club winners for two discards.

Closed room – Contract 4♠, lead ♥10, +620 for Scotland.

You ducked ♣10: no swing.

If not: -12 IMP.

BOARD 117

♣	♠ A K Q 10 6										
	♥ 8 7 6 2										
	♦ 4 3										
	♣ 10 7										
♠ 2	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 8 5 4 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K J 10 9 5		♥ A Q									
♦ K Q J		♦ A 9 7									
♣ J 4 3 2		♣ A Q 8 6									
	♠ J 9 7										
	♥ 4 3										
	♦ 10 8 6 5 2										
	♣ K 9 5										

Contract 4♥. North overcalled in spades. Lead ♠A, ♠K.

The main point – Exhaust one defender of the cards that could force you.

Order of play:

2. Pitch a club.
3. Ruff the third round of spades.
- 4-7. Draw trumps in four rounds.
8. Finesse the king of clubs. South then has no spade to play.

Closed room – Contract 5♣, +400 for EW.

You discarded a club on the second spade: +420 = +1 IMP.

You ruffed: -10 IMP.

BOARD 118

♣	♠ Q 8 6 ♥ Q J 10 9 ♦ K 10 7 3 ♣ K 10										
♠ J 10 ♥ A K 7 5 ♦ A Q 6 5 ♣ Q 5 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K 5 4 3 2 ♥ 8 7 ♦ 9 2 ♣ 9 7 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 9 7 ♥ 4 3 2 ♦ J 8 4 ♣ A J 8 6 2										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥Q.

The main point – Play without unnecessary hesitation and do not make it easy for the defender to find a damaging move.

Order of play:

1-2. Win the heart lead and play ♠10. The ten and not the jack!
Maybe North will fall asleep and will not cover with the queen. He may also worry that his partner has a singleton jack.

The Scots stopped in 2♣, +140 for EW.

You played ♠10 (you knew this little trick): +420 = +7 IMP.

If not: -5 IMP.

BOARD 119

♣	♠ Q J 10 8 3 ♥ 6 5 2 ♦ 9 7 ♣ J 8 7										
♠ A 4 ♥ K Q 10 9 3 ♦ A K 2 ♣ K 10 5	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 6 5 ♥ A J 8 7 ♦ J 6 5 3 ♣ Q 9 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K 9 7 2 ♥ 4 ♦ Q 10 8 4 ♣ A 6 3 2										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠Q.

The main point – Let the opponents do your work for you.

Order of play:

1. Win the ace of spades.
- 2-4. Draw trumps in three rounds.
- 5-6. Play the ace and king of diamonds.
7. Exit in spades.

The Scottish team made 4♥ after an accurate line of play.
 You played effectively: no swing.
 You played three rounds of diamonds yourself: -12 IMP.

BOARD 120

		♠ 8 7 6 3	
	♣	♥ 10 8 6 5	
		♦ Q 8 5	
		♣ 4 3	
♠ –		N W E S	♠ K Q 5
♥ K 7			♥ Q J 4 2
♦ K 10 4 3 2			♦ A J 6
♣ K Q J 9 7 6			♣ A 10 8
		♠ A J 10 9 4 2	
		♥ A 9 3	
		♦ 9 7	
		♣ 5 2	

Contract 6♣. South bid spades. Lead ♠7.

The main point – You know the manoeuvre in spades, it is a bit complicated.

Order of play:

1. Duck a spade ruffing in the hand.
- 2-3. Cross to dummy with a club and play a heart.

Now South faces a dilemma:

- a) if he ducks, you will establish a spade and discard your last heart.
- b) if instead he rises with the heart ace, you will have three discards for your diamonds (including one that you establish in spades).

You ask why you need to duck the first spade? It is protect yourself from the opponent's good play. If you play an honour, South may hold up his ace and the whole scheme will be ruined.

Closed room – Contract 3NT: +660 for **EW**.

You ducked the first spade: +12 IMP.

It did not occur to you: -13 IMP.

A pool of points to win with Scotland: +44 IMP = 24-6 VP.

In round 13 you will face a difficult team from England.

ROUND 13 – MATCH AGAINST ENGLAND

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 121	♠ A J 10 8	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 6 4
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♥	♥ K J	♥ A 10 8 6 3										
	♦ A 9 8 4 2	♦ K 7 5 3										
	♣ K Q	♣ A J										

Contract 6♦. Lead ♠2. South plays ♠Q.

Board 122	♠ A Q 6 2	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 7 5 4
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♥	♥ –	♥ J 10 9 3										
	♦ A Q J 6 5 2	♦ K 4										
	♣ K Q 7	♣ A J 4 3										

Contract 6♦. South opened 3♥. Lead ♥Q.

Board 123	♠ Q J 8 4	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 9
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♥	♥ K Q J 8 7 3	♥ 10 9 2										
	♦ K	♦ A 9 7 5										
	♣ 3 2	♣ A J 7 6 5										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♥A and another heart. Trumps break 2-2.

Board 124	♠ A K J 7 5 4	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 10 9
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♠	♥ A J 9	♥ K 5 4										
	♦ A 6	♦ Q 2										
	♣ 4 2	♣ A K Q 6 5										

Contract 7♠. Lead ♠J.

Board 125	♠ 7 5	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 3
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♥	♥ A 10 9 8 4	♥ K 7 3										
	♦ Q 10 9	♦ A 4 3 2										
	♣ A J 5	♣ K Q 10 6										

Contract 4♥. North bid spades. Lead ♠K, ♠Q and ♠9.

Board 126	♠ K Q 8 6 4 2		♠ A 3						
♣	♥ A 3	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ Q J 7 6 4 2
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ K J 3	♦ A Q 4							
	♣ A Q		♣ J 2						

Contract 6NT. Lead ♦10.

Board 127	♠ –		♠ K 10 9 7 6						
♦	♥ Q 9 8 7 5 4 2	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ A K 3
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ A K J 8	♦ 4 3							
	♣ 7 5		♣ A K 8						

Contract 6♥. Lead ♣J. North discarded ♠5 on the first heart.

Board 128	♠ A K Q		♠ 7 6 4 2						
♥	♥ Q J 10 9 4	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ A K 8 6 5
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ J 7 3	♦ A 5 2							
	♣ 10 8		♣ A						

Contract 6♥. You opened 1♥ doubled by North. Lead ♣K.

Board 129	♠ A Q J 10 8 6 4		♠ K 3						
♥	♥ A	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ J 9 4
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ 5	♦ A 8 7 4 2							
	♣ A K 5 2		♣ Q 4 3						

Contract 7♠. Lead ♠9.

Board 130	♠ A Q		♠ 3						
♥	♥ K 4 2	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ A 10 9 8 5
W	N		E						
S									
	♦ A K J	♦ 6 5 3							
	♣ K 7 6 4 2		♣ A 10 9 3						

Contract 6♣. Lead ♠J.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with England

BOARD 121

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

Contract 6♦. Lead ♠2. South plays ♠Q.

The main point – Plan your play even when you think that the effort will be wasted.

Everything will be easy if trumps break 2-2, so plan the play based on the assumption that trumps are 3-1. After the spade lead you have to find four hearts with three diamonds - only then you will be able to discard three spades. If North holds three diamonds, hearts have to break 4-2 with the queen of hearts doubleton with South. For this reason finish drawing trumps in the dummy and finesse a heart. If three diamonds are with South - then hearts have to break 4-2 with precisely Q-9 with North. There will be no problems with communication.

The above analysis shows that you have to play the ace of diamonds on the second trick and then a diamond to the king.

Closed room – Contract 3NT: +460 for **EW**.

You played precisely: +10 IMP.

Otherwise: -11 IMP.

BOARD 122

♥	♠ K 10 9 3	
	♥ Q 4	
	♦ 9 3	
	♣ 10 8 6 5 2	
♠ A Q 6 2	N W E S	♠ 7 5 4
♥ –		♥ J 10 9 3
♦ A Q J 6 5 2		♦ K 4
♣ K Q 7		♣ A J 4 3
	♠ J 8	
	♥ A K 8 7 6 5 2	
	♦ 10 8 7	
	♣ 9	

Contract 6♦. South opened 3♥. Lead ♥Q.

The main point – A rather complicated endplay.

Order of play:

1. Ruff the heart lead.
- 2-4. Play the ace of diamonds and a small diamond to the king, both opponents following suit). Lead the ♥10 and ruff South's king.
- 5-8. Draw the last trump, discarding a spade from dummy. Play the king of clubs, a club to the jack (does South follow the suit?) and establish a heart trick with a ruffing finesse. If South did not follow the suit in the second round of clubs, then:
- 9-10. Overtake the queen of clubs with the ace and cash a heart, throwing a spade. Then throw North in with a club, throwing another spade.

If South does not follow to the second club, the subsequent play depends on the number of trumps he reveals. If South has 3 diamonds then his distribution is as follows 2-7-3-1.

Here is the final position:

♠ A Q 6 2	♠ ? ?				
♥ —	♥ —				
♦ —	♦ —				
♣ Q	♣ 10 8 6				
	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; 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	
N					
W E					
S					
	♠ ? ?	♠ 7 5			
	♥ 8 7 6	♥ 9			
	♦ —	♦ —			
	♣ —	♣ A 4			

North has to keep three clubs (if he discards one club then go back to the endplay line). He will therefore have to discard two spades. You concede a spade and your hand is good. If South hand was 3-7- 2-1, then in the same ending play the queen of clubs and ace and another spade hoping for the king with North or that he will forget to unblock the jack.

Englishmen stopped in 3NT, +630 for **EW**.
 You played as above: +12 IMP.
 You failed to see the winning line: -12 IMP.

BOARD 123

♥	♠ A 10 5 2							
	♥ A 4							
	♦ Q 10 6 4 2							
	♣ Q 8							
♠ Q J 8 4	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%; height: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">S</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♠ 9
W	N	E						
	S							
♥ K Q J 8 7 3		♥ 10 9 2						
♦ K		♦ A 9 7 5						
♣ 3 2		♣ A J 7 6 5						
	♠ K 7 6 3							
	♥ 6 5							
	♦ J 8 3							
	♣ K 10 9 4							

Contract 4♥. Lead ♥A and another heart. Trumps break 2-2.

The main point – Analyse the opponents' actions.

The rare lead of the ace of trumps indicates a difficult choice of opening lead. It precludes North holding the ace and king of spades or the king and queen of clubs. There is still another chance left, to play for a 3-3 club break. Concede a club on the third trick (without cashing the king of diamonds). Why? The opponents may force you with a spade in the dummy and the ace of diamonds will be needed as an entry to established two club tricks.

Is this the end of analysis? Are you happy with 36% for a 3-3 club break, plus a doubleton king-queen of clubs – all in all, less than 40%? If so, you have not appreciated the power of the spade suit. There is another line to follow:

Order of play:

3-4. Cash the king of diamonds and enter the dummy with the ace of clubs.

5-6. Pitch a club on the ace of diamonds and play ♠ 9 ducking in your hand.

If North takes the trick with ♠ 10, play for a double ruffing finesse in spades.

Closed room – your team mates sacrificed in spades against a heart game.

Result: down three +800 for **EW**.

You played trying to establish spade tricks: +620 = -5 IMP.

You tried clubs: -14 IMP.

BOARD 124

♠	♠ 8										
	♥ Q 7 6										
	♦ K 9 8 4										
	♣ J 10 8 7 3										
♠ A K J 7 5 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 10 9
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A J 9		♥ K 5 4									
♦ A 6		♦ Q 2									
♣ 4 2		♣ A K Q 6 5									
	♠ 6 3 2										
	♥ 10 8 3 2										
	♦ J 10 7 5 3										
	♣ 9										

Contract 7♠. Lead ♣J.

The main point – The opponents' discards may put you on a right track.

Draw trumps in three rounds and see how the clubs behave – unfortunately 5-1. Cross to your hand with a club ruff and play your penultimate trump, discarding a heart from the dummy.

a) North's sensible discards in this case (when he is 1-3-4-5) will be two diamonds and a heart. This suggests that North is trying to protect his king of diamonds. Therefore, we cash the ace of diamonds and the last spade catches North in a triple squeeze. The defender can keep only one heart, which guarantees taking three heart tricks.

b) If instead North discards three diamonds, this will strongly suggest 1-2-5-5 distribution. You will reach this final position:

♠ J	♠ —	♠ —									
♥ A J 9	♥ ???	♥ K 5									
♦ A 6	♦ ???	♦ Q 2									
♣ —	♣ 10 8	♣ Q 6									
	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ —										
	♥ ????										
	♦ ????										
	♣ —										

North has to discard a diamond on the last spade and you also discard a diamond, as does South. Why a diamond and not a club? If North has 1-1-6-5 shape, then he will be squeezed in diamonds and clubs on the second heart trick. The ace of hearts, a heart to the king and the queen of clubs perform the diamond-heart squeeze on South.

Closed room, contract 6♠, +1010 for the English.

You have made it: +1510 = +11 IMP.

You went down: -14 IMP.

BOARD 125

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

Contract 4♥. North bid spades. Lead ♠K, ♠Q and a switch to ♣9.

The main point – Keep looking for a chance until the end.

You have to find North with 5-2-4-2 or 6-2-3-2 shape, with a doubleton heart honour and the king of diamonds.

Order of play:

3-6. Win with the club ace and play a small club to the king (preserving communication in this suit). Continue with the king of hearts and a heart to the 10. Why not playing a club for the third round? Because with a 3-3 club break you cannot make it. North would give you a ruff-and-discard and, after ruffing in dummy and pitching a diamond from your hand, there would be no communication with your hand to draw the last trump.

The English beat the contract 4♠ doubled down three: +500 for EW.
You found this complicated line of play: +620 = +3 IMP.

If not: -12 IMP.

BOARD 126

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

Contract 6NT. Lead ♦10.

The main point – Combine all your chances.

Win with the jack of diamonds in your hand and play the king and ace of spades.

a) If you found North with four spades: finesse a heart, play a heart to the ace. if hearts break 3-2 there is no problem; if they are 4-1, concede a trump trick and play for the club finesse.

b) If you found four spades with South: play the ace of heart and a heart – if North holds four hearts he cannot rise with the king. Cross to your hand with the king of diamonds, concede a spade and a successful club finesse will complete your day's work.

Closed room, Contract 6♠ +1430 for **EW**.

You played 6NT accurately: no swing.

You went down: -17 IMP.

BOARD 127

♦	♠ A Q 5 3 ♥ – ♦ Q 10 6 5 2 ♣ J 10 9 4										
♠ – ♥ Q 9 8 7 5 4 2 ♦ A K J 8 ♣ 7 5	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 10 9 7 6 ♥ A K 3 ♦ 4 3 ♣ A K 8
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J 8 4 2 ♥ J 10 6 ♦ 9 7 ♣ Q 6 3 2										

Contract 6♥. Lead ♣J. North discarded ♠5 on the first heart.

The main point – Make a safety play and play accurately.

Order of play:

1-2. Win the king of clubs and play the ace of hearts – North discards ♠5.

3-4. Play a diamond to the king and a club to the ace.

5-6. A diamond to the ace and a diamond ruff with the king of hearts.

7-8. Ruff a spade and ruff a diamond.

The English made 6♥.

You have also made it: no swing.

You went down: -14 IMP.

BOARD 128

♥	♠ J 10 9 5										
	♥ 3										
	♦ K Q 8 4										
	♣ K Q 9 5										
♠ A K Q	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 7 6 4 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q J 10 9 4		♥ A K 8 6 5									
♦ J 7 3		♦ A 5 2									
♣ 10 8		♣ A									
	♠ 8 3										
	♥ 7 2										
	♦ 10 9 6										
	♣ J 7 6 4 3 2										

Contract 6♥. Lead ♣K. You opened 1♥ and North doubled.

The main point – Do not give up; draw conclusions from the bidding.

Order of play:

North made a light take-out double, which clearly indicates four spades. A count discard from South should confirm it. Draw trumps, ruff a club and cash your remaining spade winners. When you run your trumps, North will have to keep his last spade and the bare king-queen of diamonds, throwing his remaining clubs. You can then duck a diamond to establish the jack of diamonds. This is a typical squeeze without the count. You concede a trick after the squeeze has taken place.

The English made 6♥ after ♦K opening lead (ducked). A spade-diamond squeeze was then easy to set up.

You managed to execute the necessary squeeze – no swing.

If not: -14 IMP.

BOARD 129

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

Contract 7♠. Lead ♠9.

The main point – Work hard, even if you are not sure whether it will produce any profits.

Order of play:

1-3. Win a spade in your hand, play the ace of diamonds and ruff a diamond.

4-5. Cross to the dummy with the king of spades and ruff a diamond. This isolates the diamond guard with North.

6-8. Draw the remaining three trumps and the squeeze is set up without you being aware of it. Discard a heart, a club and a diamond from the dummy.

You win in the following cases:

- a) clubs break 3-3;
- b) four clubs are with the king and queen of hearts;
- c) four clubs are with four diamonds.

The English feel at home with the slam zone, contract 7♠: +2210 for EW.

You ruffed diamonds to set up the squeeze: no swing.

You misplayed the hand: -20 IMP.

BOARD 130

	♥		♠ J 10 9 7 4									
			♥ Q J 7 3									
			♦ 10 8 7									
			♣ 8									
♠ A Q		<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">W</td><td></td><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 3
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ K 4 2			♥ A 10 9 8 5									
♦ A K J			♦ 6 5 3									
♣ K 7 6 4 2			♣ A 10 9 3									
			♠ K 8 6 5 2									
			♥ 6									
			♦ Q 9 4 2									
			♣ Q J 5									

Contract 6♣. Lead ♠J.

The main point – Combine all your chances.

Order of play:

2-3. Play the king of clubs and a club to the ace. The clubs break 3-1.

a) North has three clubs:

4-5. Play a heart to the king and a heart to the ace. Check whether queen and jack of hearts fall.

6-9. Finesse the jack of diamonds, cash your spade and diamond winners.

10. Throw North in with a club, hoping he will have to give a ruff-and-discard..

b) South has three clubs:

You have a problem with checking whether queen and jack of hearts are bare. Hearts may break 4-1.

4-6. Finesse the diamond, play ace of spades and king of diamonds (South may play the queen).

7-8. Now cash the ace of hearts and a heart to the king, South cannot ruff.

9-10. Time for the ace of diamonds and a club. Yes!

Closed room – Contract 4♥, +450 for **EW**.

You played the slam accurately: +11 IMP.

Not really: -11 IMP.

The pool of points to win after faultless play is +42 IMP = 24-6 VP.

Your opponents in round fourteen will be Latvia.

ROUND 14 – MATCH AGAINST LATVIA

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 131	♠ 5 3		♠ A 7 4 2
♦	♥ A K J 10 6 2	W N S E	♥ Q 9 8 5
	♦ A Q 2		♦ 7 5 3
	♣ A J		♣ 3 2

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠K.

Board 132	♠ A Q 4		♠ K 8 7
♦	♥ Q 7 4	W N S E	♥ A
	♦ A 7 6 5 2		♦ 10 9 4
	♣ J 5		♣ A K 7 6 4 3

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥3.

Board 133	♠ A Q J 10 7 6		♠ K 9 8 2
♥	♥ 7 5	W N S E	♥ 10 8
	♦ J 7 5		♦ A Q 4 2
	♣ K 8		♣ Q 7 4

Contract 4♠. North opened 1♦. Lead ♥K, ♥Q and a switch to ♠3.

Board 134	♠ A 7 6 5 3		♠ K 4 2
♦	♥ 9	W N S E	♥ A K Q 7 6 3
	♦ A Q 4 2		♦ 8 7
	♣ 7 6 5		♣ J

Contract 4♠. Lead ♠J.

Board 135	♠ A K Q 10 9		♠ 4 3
♦	♥ Q	W N S E	♥ J 4
	♦ K Q J 3		♦ A 10 7 5 2
	♣ A 9 8		♣ J 6 5 4

Contract 4♠. Lead ♥A, ♥K.

Board 136	♠ K Q J 9 7 4		♠ A 3 2						
♠	♥ A K	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td>S</td><td> </td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ Q J 10 7 4 2
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ 3	♦ Q 2							
	♣ A K 10 5		♣ 7 6						

Contract 6♣. South opened 2NT: 5♣/5♦ and 7-11 HCP. Lead ♣2.

Board 137	♠ 10 9 8 6 4 3		♠ A K Q 2						
♦	♥ 4 3	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td>S</td><td> </td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ A K J
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ A 6 5	♦ K 8 4 2							
	♣ Q J		♣ A 4						

Contract 6♣. Lead ♥9.

Board 138	♠ A		♠ J 6 5 3						
♠	♥ A	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td>S</td><td> </td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ Q 8 7
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ 6 5 4	♦ A K 8 7 2							
	♣ A Q J 10 9 7 4 2		♣ 3						

Contract 6♣. South opened 1♦. Lead ♠8.

Board 139	♠ Q 6 5		♠ K 8 3 2						
♦	♥ 10 8 4	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td>S</td><td> </td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ 3
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ A J 4 3	♦ K Q 8 7							
	♣ 6 5 2		♣ A K Q J						

Contract 4♦. Lead ♥K and another heart.

Board 140	♠ A 7 6		♠ J 9						
♣	♥ A Q J 10	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td>S</td><td> </td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ K 4 3
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ K Q 8 6	♦ A 5 4 3 2							
	♣ Q 8		♣ 6 4 3						

Contract 4♥. Lead ♣A, ♣K, ♣10.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with Latvia

BOARD 131

♦	♠ K Q 10 ♥ 7 4 ♦ K 9 ♣ Q 10 8 6 5 4	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 7 4 2 ♥ Q 9 8 5 ♦ 7 5 3 ♣ 3 2
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ 5 3 ♥ A K J 10 6 2 ♦ A Q 2 ♣ A J			♠ J 9 8 6 ♥ 3 ♦ J 10 8 6 4 ♣ K 9 7									

Contract 4♥. Lead ♠K.

The main point – Try the endplay before you finesse.

Order of play:

1. Duck the first spade.
- 2-3. Win the second spade trick with the ace and play a club to the jack.
- 4-7. Ruff the next spade, cash your ace of clubs and play trumps in two rounds (they break 2-1), ending in the dummy.
8. Play fourth spade:
 - a) if South does not follow the suit, discard a diamond and North will be end-played;
 - b) if South plays the last spade, ruff and continue as follows:
9. Play the ace of diamonds.
10. Cross to dummy with a heart.
11. Play a diamond to the queen.

What do you gain by this strange manoeuvre? You benefit from the extra, admittedly small chance that the king of diamonds will be doubleton offside.

The Latvians were in the excellent 3NT contract, +400 for **EW**.

You played the hand correctly: +1 IMP.

You overlooked cashing the ace of diamonds: -10 IMP.

BOARD 132

♦	♠ 9 6 3 ♥ K 10 5 3 2 ♦ K J 8 ♣ Q 8	♠ K 8 7 ♥ A ♦ 10 9 4 ♣ A K 7 6 4 3									
♠ A Q 4 ♥ Q 7 4 ♦ A 7 6 5 2 ♣ J 5	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J 10 5 2 ♥ J 9 8 6 ♦ Q 3 ♣ 10 9 2										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥3.

The main point – Protect your honours from the dangerous opponent.

Order of play:

2-3. Cross to your hand with a spade and play the jack of clubs. If North plays low, play the ace.

4-5. Cross to your hand again with a spade and play another club. Duck the queen played by North. This manoeuvre protects you from a clever duck of the queen by North. If the queen does not appear, win with the king and concede a club. You will still make the contract if North holds three clubs, or South has the king of hearts.

Easy play usually ends with no swing.

You went down: -12 IMP.

BOARD 133

♥	♠ 3		♥ K Q J 2								
			♦ K 10 9 6								
			♣ A 10 6 2								
♠ A Q J 10 7 6	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 9 8 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 7 5			♥ 10 8								
♦ J 7 5			♦ A Q 4 2								
♣ K 8			♣ Q 7 4								
			♠ 5 4								
			♥ A 9 6 4 3								
			♦ 8 3								
			♣ J 9 5 3								

Contract 4♠. North opened 1♦. Lead ♥K, ♥Q and a switch to ♠3.

The main point – Aim for a throw in. Watch the South count signals carefully. Then you will not have to rely on a guess as to which cards North holds in a three-card ending.

Order of play:

4) Finesse the queen of diamonds.

5-6. Return to you hand with a trump and play the eight of clubs, underleading your king. The queen wins the trick. Next draw four trump tricks until you have these three cards left:

♦ J 7 ♣ K. Meanwhile, North has to keep ♦ K 10, ♣ A or ♦ K, ♣ A 2. An experienced player sitting North will try to misguide you. Earlier his partner will inform him about the number of hearts and clubs. You must make a mental note about this information and use it to read the ending.

Closed room – Contract 4♠, +420 for EW.

You have made it: no swing.

If not: -10 IMP.

BOARD 134

♦		♠ J 9 ♥ J 10 4 2 ♦ K 10 6 5 ♣ A 9 2		♠ K 4 2 ♥ A K Q 7 6 3 ♦ 8 7 ♣ Q J									
♠ A 7 6 5 3 ♥ 9 ♦ A Q 4 2 ♣ 7 6 5		<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S			♠ Q 10 8 ♥ 8 5 ♦ J 9 3 ♣ K 10 8 4 3
	N												
W		E											
	S												

Contract 4♠. Lead ♠J.

The main point – Preserve your communications.

The three of spades is a key card, which will provide an entry to the dummy.

Order of play:

1. Win with the ace in your hand, being careful to follow with the ♠2 from dummy and not the ♠4.
- 2-3. Play the ace of hearts and ruff a heart.
4. Cross the dummy with a spade (preserving ♠3!) and run your heart tricks. Even if South ruffs the third heart and plays a diamond the four of spades will solve your problems. Trumps have to break 3-2 and hearts not worse than 4-2.

Closed room – Contract 4♠, +420 for EW.

You preserved ♠3: no swing.

If not: -10 IMP.

BOARD 135

♦	♠ J 7 5 2 ♥ A K 9 5 ♦ 9 6 4 ♣ 7 3	♠ 4 3 ♥ J 4 ♦ A 10 7 5 2 ♣ J 6 5 4									
♠ A K Q 10 9 ♥ Q ♦ K Q J 3 ♣ A 9 8	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 8 6 ♥ 10 8 7 6 3 2 ♦ 8 ♣ K Q 10 2										

Contract 4♠. Lead ♥A, ♥K.

The main point – Lose a trump trick when it is safe to do so.

Discarding a losing club on the second trick is a typical misplay that must be avoided. You can the defenders to switch to clubs and the contract will be doomed when a defender holds J-x-x-x in the trumps suit, which is a 32% chance. There is a better line of play, although it is not easy to spot it.

Order of play:

2-3. Ruff the second heart and play ♠10! Dummy's remaining trump protects you against a further round of hearts. The alternative play of crossing to the dummy with a diamond exposes you to a diamond ruff.

Closed room – Contract 5♦, +600 for EW.

You played ♠10: +1 IMP.

You played it differently: -12 IMP.

BOARD 136

	♠ 10 8 6 5										
	♥ 9 5 3										
	♦ K 10 8 6 4										
	♣ 2										
♠ K Q J 9 7 4	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 3 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K		♥ Q J 10 7 4 2									
♦ 3		♦ Q 2									
♣ A K 10 5		♣ 7 6									
	♠ –										
	♥ 8 6										
	♦ A J 9 7 5										
	♣ Q J 9 8 4 3										

Contract 6♣. S opened 2NT: 5♣/5♦ and 7-11 HCP. Lead 2♣.

The main point – Do not give up when the distribution of suits is unfavourable.

Even great bridge players spot a solution when one of the opponents starts fidgeting in his seat.

Order of play:

1-2. win the ace of clubs and play the king of spades. South discards a club.

3-5. Not very happy, you cash two hearts and cross to the dummy with the ace of spades. The shape of South hand is obvious: 0-2-5-6.

6-7. Discard a club and return to your hand with a spade.

8-10. Cash your trump tricks and has a problem in this position.

♠ 7	♠ –									
♥ –	♥ –									
♦ 3	♦ K 10 8 6									
♣ A 10	♣ –									
	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
	♠ –									
	♥ 7									
	♦ Q 2									
	♣ 7									
	♠ –									
	♥ –									
	♦ A J									
	♣ Q 9									

Discard a heart from dummy on the last trump and South is helpless. If he throws the ace of diamonds, you continue with the two of diamonds.

The Latvians stopped in 5♠: +650 for **EW**.

You managed to execute this extraordinary endplay: +13 IMP.

You did not found this line: -13 IMP.

BOARD 137

♦	♠ 7 ♥ 9 8 ♦ Q 10 9 3 ♣ 9 8 7 6 3 2	♠ A K Q 2 ♥ A K J ♦ K 8 4 2 ♣ A 4			
♠ 10 9 8 6 4 3 ♥ 4 3 ♦ A 6 5 ♣ Q J	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 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	♠ J 5 ♥ Q 10 7 6 5 2 ♦ J 7 ♣ K 10 5
N					
W E					
S					

Contract 6♣. Lead ♥9.

The main point – combine all chances and take into consideration the opening lead.

The correct play uses all the chances, one by one:

- a) finesse in hearts,
- b) check the distribution of diamonds,
- c) finesse in clubs.

It is unlikely that North has underled the queen of hearts, particularly as he led the ♥9, which would be misleading for partner. We can swap the chance of the heart finesse for an additional chance in diamonds.

Order of play:

- 1-3. Win the heart with the ace and draw the trumps.
- 4-6. Cash the ace and king of diamonds and the king of hearts.
7. Play the jack of hearts and discard a diamond from the hand. If South takes the trick with the queen then he must have at least four diamonds to force us to rely on the club finesse.

Closed room - Contract 4♠, +450 for EW.

You played the slam correctly: +11 IMP.

If not: -11 IMP.

Unblocking

Dear Editor! I was playing with my fiancé and the opponents bid a heart slam. My partner cashed the ace of spades and switched to a trump. Declarer played the ace from dummy and I held K-2 doubleton. The day before I had read in a *Bridge* monthly about unblocking. I thought it will be good to unblock. I followed with the king and the slam was made. My fiancé tapped his forehead and left. It has been two weeks now since he left. Tell me, did I really play badly?

BOARD 138

♠	♠ 9 8 7 4			
♠	♥ 10 9 6 4 3 2			
♠	♦ –			
♠	♣ K 8 6			
♠ A	♠ J 6 5 3			
♥ A	♥ Q 8 7			
♦ 6 5 4	♦ A K 8 7 2			
♣ A Q J 10 9 7 4 2	♣ 3			
	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 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
N				
W E				
S				
	♠ K Q 10 2			
	♥ K J 5			
	♦ Q J 10 9 3			
	♣ 5			

Contract 6♣. S opened 1♦. Lead ♠8.

The main point – When you know how the cards lie, amazing plays become possible.

There is no point in crossing to dummy to finesse a club. North did not lead a diamond, which clearly indicates a void diamond.

Order of play:

2-4. Play the ace and queen of clubs. To your surprise, North wins the trick and plays ♥10. This gives you some hope. Intuitively you feel that South holds all the remaining honours and he will be in trouble.

5-8. Run four more rounds of trumps. This is the final ending:

♠ –	♠ J			
♥ –	♥ Q			
♦ 6 5 4	♦ A K 8			
♣ 4 2	♣ –			
	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 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
N				
W E				
S				
	♠ K			
	♥ K			
	♦ Q J 10			
	♣ –			

9. You play the penultimate trump, discarding a diamond from the dummy. South has no answer to that. What can he discard from his collection of honours?

Closed room – Contract 3NT, +660 for **EW**.

You made it: +12 IMP.

You went down: -13 IMP.

BOARD 139

♦	♠ A J 9 4 ♥ K Q J 7 5 ♦ 5 ♣ 9 7 4	♠ K 8 3 2 ♥ 3 ♦ K Q 8 7 ♣ A K Q J									
♠ Q 6 5 ♥ 10 8 4 ♦ A J 4 3 ♣ 6 5 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 10 7 ♥ A 9 6 2 ♦ 10 9 6 2 ♣ 10 8 6										

Contract 4♦. Lead ♥K and a heart.

The main point – Remember your communications.

Order of play:

2. Ruff the second round of hearts.
- 3-4. Play the king and queen of diamonds – trumps break 4-1.
5. Play the king of spades!!!

Closed room – Your team mates heroically reached four hearts.

Contract 4♥ doubled, down two, +500 for **EW**.

You played the king of spades: +130 = -9 IMP.

If not: -12 IMP.

BOARD 140

♣	♠ K 10 4 2										
	♥ 7 5										
	♦ J 10 7										
	♣ A K 10 9										
♠ A 7 6	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 9
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A Q J 10		♥ K 4 3									
♦ K Q 8 6		♦ A 5 4 3 2									
♣ Q 8		♣ 6 4 3									
	♠ Q 8 5 3										
	♥ 9 8 6 2										
	♦ 9										
	♣ J 7 5 2										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♣A, ♣K, ♣10.

The main point – Try to foresee the problem of a suit becoming blocked.

Order of play:

3. Discard a diamond on the third round of clubs.

Closed room – Contract 5♦, +400 for EW.

You discarded a diamond: +1 IMP.

You discarded a spade or ruffed: -10 IMP.

Effective play in this match would produce +30 IMP = 21-9 VP.

Austria will be your next opponents.

ROUND 15 – MATCH AGAINST AUSTRIA

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 141	♠ –		♠ K Q 10 6						
♦	♥ A Q J 10 2	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ 7 6 5
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ 8 3	♦ J 10 7 4 2							
	♣ A K J 7 5 3		♣ 2						

Contract 4♥. Lead ♣8.

Board 142	♠ A Q 4		♠ K 10						
♠	♥ 9 5 4 3	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ Q J 6
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ 6 5 2	♦ A K 4							
	♣ A K 6		♣ 9 8 4 3 2						

Contract 3NT. Lead ♦10.

Board 143	♠ Q 4 2		♠ A K J						
♥	♥ Q 10	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ A 6 5 3
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ A 8	♦ 5 3 2							
	♣ A K J 10 9 4		♣ Q 8 7						

Contract 6♣. Lead ♦4.

Board 144	♠ Q 6		♠ A K 9 8						
♣	♥ J 7 5 3 2	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ K Q 4
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ 10 4	♦ 7 6 5							
	♣ K Q 4 3		♣ A J 10						

Contract 4♥. Lead ♦K, ♦Q – South overtakes with the ace and plays ♦J.

Board 145	♠ Q J 9 6 4 2		♠ A K						
♦	♥ A 10 9	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ 7 5 3
W	N		E						
	S								
	♦ K 10 9 8	♦ A Q 5 4 3							
	♣ –		♣ 10 9 8						

Contract 6♣. S opened weak 2♥. Lead ♥2.

Board 146	♠ 3		♠ K Q 10 2
♦	♥ J 8	N W E S	♥ 4 3 2
	♦ J 5 4		♦ A Q 10 9 6
	♣ A K Q J 9 5 2		♣ 10

Contract 4♣. South bid hearts. Lead ♥K, ♥Q, ♥6.

Board 147	♠ Q 6		♠ A 4 2
♥	♥ K 7 6 4 3 2	N W E S	♥ A Q 9 8
	♦ A 10		♦ K 7 5 4 2
	♣ J 10 9		♣ 6

Contract 6♥. Lead ♠8.

Board 148	♠ A K Q 9 8 4		♠ 5 2
♣	♥ –	N W E S	♥ A J 10 8 6 5
	♦ K 10 7 5		♦ 3 2
	♣ A 4 3		♣ K 9 7

Contract 4♠. South opened 1♦. Lead ♦4, South wins ♦A and plays ♦Q.

Board 149	♠ J 5		♠ A Q 10
♦	♥ A K 9	N W E S	♥ Q 10 6 5
	♦ Q 10 9 7 5 2		♦ A J 3
	♣ A 3		♣ 9 7 5

Contract 6♦. Lead ♣4.

Board 150	♠ K 6		♠ A 5 4 3
♦	♥ A J 5 3 2	N W E S	♥ Q 7 6
	♦ 4 3		♦ 10 6
	♣ K J 7 2		♣ A Q 9 4

Contract 4♥. East opened 1♣, South doubled. Lead ♦5, South wins ♦K, plays ♦A, ♠Q.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with Austria

BOARD 141

♦	♠ J 9 7 4 2 ♥ K 9 3 ♦ A Q 9 ♣ 8 6										
♠ – ♥ A Q J 10 2 ♦ 8 3 ♣ A K J 7 5 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K Q 10 6 ♥ 7 6 5 ♦ J 10 7 4 2 ♣ 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A 8 5 3 ♥ 8 4 ♦ K 6 5 ♣ Q 10 9 4										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♣8.

The main point – As in a chess problem, you have to plan a few moves in advance.

If you play routinely, ruffing a club and finessing in trumps, the opponents may wise up and find a club ruff. Instead, play the ten of trumps at trick 2.

Your partners sacrificed in spades against four hearts. Down three: +500 for EW.

You played ♥10: +620 = +3 IMP.

You ruffed a club: -12 IMP.

BOARD 142

♠	♠ J 9 6	♠ K 10									
♠	♥ K 10 8 2	♥ Q J 6									
♠	♦ Q 10 9 8 3	♦ A K 4									
♠	♣ 7	♣ 9 8 4 3 2									
♠ A Q 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 8 7 5 3 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 9 5 4 3		♥ A 3									
♦ 6 5 2		♦ J 7									
♠ A K 6		♣ Q J 10 5									

Contract 3NT. Lead ♦10.

The main point – A small chance is better than nothing.

Order of play:

1-3. Duck the ten of diamonds, win the second diamond and play ♣9. South covers with ♣10, king from your hand and North follows with ♣7!

4-5. A heart to the jack, South wins with the ace and plays a spade, won with the king.

6. Play a club from the dummy – luckily, South covers again. After playing low by South playing 6♣ is risky. You may go down if clubs break 3-2. You have to ask yourself a question whether there is another distribution of cards when a high-class defender will rise with 10♣ and play 5♣ in the second club trick.

Those players who did not spot the chance of a singleton ♣7 with North played the ace and king of clubs, could not make the contract.

The Austrians made 3NT after a spade lead (and not the best defence). Result: +600 for EW.

You spotted the chance of a singleton ♣7: no swing.

If not: -12 IMP.

BOARD 143

♥	♠ 10 8 5										
	♥ K 9 8 2										
	♦ Q 10 7 4										
	♣ 5 3										
♠ Q 4 2	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K J
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q 10		♥ A 6 5 3									
♦ A 8		♦ 5 3 2									
♣ A K J 10 9 4		♣ Q 8 7									
	♠ 9 7 6 3										
	♥ J 7 4										
	♦ K J 9 6										
	♣ 6 2										

Contract 6♣. Lead ♦4.

The main point – Do not give up, there is a layout that will let you make the contract.

You know the distribution of diamonds from the opening lead. Play all your tricks, watching the opponents' discards carefully. If you find the king of hearts with North and the jack of hearts with South then in a three-card ending they both have to keep two hearts and a diamond. Play a diamond and make the contract! But be careful, one of the opponents may bare his heart honour. This is a big risk. You will have to watch the discards very carefully!

Closed room – Contract 3NT, +460 for **EW**.

You found the winning line: +920 = +10 IMP.

If not: -11 IMP.

BOARD 144

		♠ 10 7 5 2										
	♣	♥ 9 6										
		♦ K Q 8										
		♣ 8 6 5 2										
♠ Q 6		<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;"></td><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;"></td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K 9 8
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ J 7 5 3 2			♥ K Q 4									
♦ 10 4			♦ 7 6 5									
♣ K Q 4 3			♣ A J 10									
		♠ J 4 3										
		♥ A 10 8										
		♦ A J 9 3 2										
		♣ 9 7										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♦K, ♦Q – South overtakes with the ace and plays ♦J.

The main point – Information about the distribution of a diamond suit, which is seemingly irrelevant, may be decisive for declarer's play.

The idea of ruffing the third diamond with the jack of hearts is a bit far-fetched.

Order of play:

3. Ruff the third heart low.

There is a serious threat is trump promotion if A-x-x of hearts is with five diamonds.

- A) if North holds five diamonds then you have to leads towards the K-Q of hearts;
- B) if South holds five diamonds then cross to the dummy with a spade and play a heart to the jack.

The way South played in diamonds makes variant b) seems more likely.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, Lead 6♣, +420 for EW.

You played to the jack of hearts: no swing.

You played a heart to the king: -10 IMP.

BOARD 145

♦	♠ 10 8 5 3										
	♥ 2										
	♦ 7										
	♣ A K J 7 5 4 2										
♠ Q J 9 6 4 2	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A 10 9		♥ 7 5 3									
♦ K 10 9 8		♦ A Q 5 4 3									
♣ –		♣ 10 9 8									
	♠ 7										
	♥ K Q J 8 6 4										
	♦ J 6 2										
	♣ Q 6 3										

Contract 6♣. South opened weak 2♥. Lead ♥2.

The main point – Beware of a blocked suit!

Order of play:

1. Win the heart lead

2-3. Cross to dummy with a spade and play a club, discarding a diamond if South does not cover with an honour. If South covers in clubs, you may have to repeat this manoeuvre once or twice more.

The weak 2♥ opener should not hold three club honours because he has already disclosed three heart honours. You may ask what if South opened with five hearts and North bluffed by leading the lower card from the doubleton? It will be my pleasure to buy such a pair in the Cavendish tournament in Las Vegas.

Closed room – Contract 6♦, +1370 for EW.

You noticed that the diamond suit was blocked: +2 IMP.

If not: -16 IMP.

BOARD 146

♦	♠ J 8 6 5 ♥ K Q 6 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ 7 4 3	♠ K Q 10 2 ♥ 4 3 2 ♦ A Q 10 9 6 ♣ 10									
♠ 3 ♥ J 8 ♦ J 5 4 ♣ A K Q J 9 5 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 9 7 4 ♥ A 10 9 7 5 ♦ K 2 ♣ 8 6
	N										
W		E									
	S										

Contract 4♣. South bid hearts. Lead ♥K, ♥Q, ♥6.

The main point – play for all real chances.

Order of play:

3-4. Ruff and play a spade to the ten. If you lose to the jack there is still the chance of a diamond finesse.

Your team mates were doubled in 3♥x, down two, +300 for **EW**.

A spade to the ten: +130 = -5 IMP

If you played it differently: -8 IMP.

BOARD 147

		♠ 9 8 7 5 3									
	♥	♥ 10									
		♦ Q 8									
		♣ A Q 8 5 3									
♠ Q 6		♠ A 4 2									
♥ K 7 6 4 3 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♥ A Q 9 8
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♦ A 10			♦ K 7 5 4 2								
♣ J 10 9			♣ 6								
		♠ K J 10									
		♥ J 5									
		♦ J 9 6 3									
		♣ K 7 4 2									

Contract 6♥. Lead ♠8.

The main point – Your line of play is determined by your communication problems.

After winning with the ace you have to notice that you cannot enter the dummy three times in trumps because you need two trumps to ruff clubs.

Order of play:

1. Win the ace of spades.
- 2-4. Play the ace, king and a small diamond. You will have a dilemma here, if South follows suit:
 - 1) if you ruff with a small card you will make it if diamonds break 3-3. hearts may even be 3-0.
 - 2) if you ruff with the king you win if diamonds break 3-3 and hearts 2-1, or diamonds are 4-2 and a single heart is with the doubleton diamond. After ruffing with the king of hearts, cross to the trump ace and ruff a diamond.

The play is well in line with the odds in variant b), simply because the opponents did not bid, which implies a more even distribution of the suits than normal.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, +450 for EW.
 You played as above: +980 = +11 IMP. Otherwise: -11 IMP.

BOARD 148

		♠ J 10 7 3			
	♣	♥ Q 7 4 3			
		♦ 4			
		♣ J 8 6 2			
♠ A K Q 9 8 4	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 5 2
N					
W E					
S					
♥ –		♥ A J 10 8 6 5			
♦ K 10 7 5		♦ 3 2			
♣ A 4 3		♣ K 9 7			
		♠ 6			
		♥ K 9 2			
		♦ A Q J 9 8 6			
		♣ Q 10 5			

Contract 4♠. South opened 1♦. Lead ♦4, South wins the ace and returns ♦Q.

The main point – Your hand is faster than your head. Think before you play.

The only risk is that North holds four trumps and a singleton diamond. Duck the queen of diamonds. If South plays a third diamond, cover in your hand, not worrying if North ruffs higher than dummy's five with his long trumps.

Closed room – Contract 4♠ doubled, +790 for the Austrians.

You ducked the queen of diamonds: +620 = -5 IMP.

Your hand was faster than your head: -13 IMP.

BOARD 149

♦	♠ 9 6 3 ♥ 7 4 3 ♦ 8 6 4 ♣ Q 10 6 4	♠ A Q 10 ♥ Q 10 6 5 ♦ A J 3 ♣ 9 7 5									
♠ J 5 ♥ A K 9 ♦ Q 10 9 7 5 2 ♣ A 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K 8 7 4 2 ♥ J 8 2 ♦ K ♣ K J 8 2										

Contract 6♦. Lead ♣4.

The main point – Before taking the obvious line, check other options.

It seems that the contract depends on the successful spade finesse. However, try leading the queen of diamonds at trick 2.

- a) if North covers with the king the king – great. Draw trumps and a new option (four heart tricks) appears.
- b) if North plays low, rise with the ace for a chance of single king.
- c) if South plays low, you still can play for the king of spades finesse.

Closed room – Contract 3NT (E) after a spade opening lead +490 for the Austrians.

You made the contract: +920 = +10 IMP.

You played for a spade finesse at trick 2: -11 IMP.

BOARD 150

♦	♠ 9 7 2 ♥ 8 ♦ Q 9 8 5 2 ♣ 10 8 6 3	♠ A 5 4 3 ♥ Q 7 6 ♦ 10 6 ♣ A Q 9 4									
♠ K 6 ♥ A J 5 3 2 ♦ 4 3 ♣ K J 7 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ Q J 10 8 ♥ K 10 9 4 ♦ A K J 7 ♣ 5										

Contract 4♥. East opened 1♣ and South doubled. Lead ♦5, South wins ♦K, plays ♦A, ♠Q.

The main point – Look for even the slightest chance.

Order of play:

3-4. Win the ace in the dummy and play the queen of hearts. Why? The bidding shows that South holds three or four hearts. If they break 4-1 you will make it when singleton 8, 9, or 10 is with North.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, +420 for the Austrians.

You played the queen of hearts: no swing.

If not: -10 IMP.

You could win this difficult match with +26 IMP = 20-10 VP.

In Round 16 you will face Ukraine.

ROUND 16 – MATCH AGAINST UKRAINE

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 151	♠ K J 6 5 4	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 7 3 2
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♦	♥ 10 9 3 2	♥ A 6 5										
	♦ K 2	♦ A 7 5 3										
	♣ A J	♣ K 8										

Contract 4♠. You opened 1♠, North bid 2♥. Lead ♥K.

Board 152	♠ Q 7 4	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A J 10 9
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♦	♥ A J 8	♥ 4 3 2										
	♦ A Q 10 9 7	♦ J 6 4										
	♣ A K	♣ J 4 3										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥6. South plays the queen.

Board 153	♠ A K Q 10 9 4	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 5 3
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♥	♥ 3 2	♥ A K 6 5 4										
	♦ A K 6	♦ Q 4 3										
	♣ Q 4	♣ A 8 7										

Contract 7♠. Lead ♦J.

Board 154	♠ A Q 10 7 5	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ K J 2
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♠	♥ Q 7 4 3	♥ A K 6										
	♦ J 9 7	♦ 4 3										
	♣ 7	♣ J 9 8 4 2										

Contract 4♠. Lead ♠4.

Board 155	♠ A K 4 2	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 7
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♥	♥ K J 3	♥ A 7 5										
	♦ 7 6	♦ Q J 9 5 3 2										
	♣ A K 8 6	♣ 4 2										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥4.

Board 156	♠ Q J 5 4 2		♠ A K 10 3									
♠	♥ A 7	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♥ Q 6
	N											
W			E									
	S											
	♦ 5 4 3	♦ A K 8										
	♣ K J 4	♣ A 10 3 2										

Contract 6♣. South opened weak 2♥. Lead ♥8.

Board 157	♠ A 4		♠ J 9 7									
♥	♥ A J 6 5	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♥ Q 3 2
	N											
W			E									
	S											
	♦ K 10 8	♦ A J 5										
	♣ Q J 4 2	♣ A K 10 7										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠3. South wins with the ♠10 and plays ♠K. North follows with the ♠2.

Board 158	♠ A 4 3		♠ 9 7									
♦	♥ A Q 8 7 6 5	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♥ K 10 2
	N											
W			E									
	S											
	♦ K 8 7	♦ Q 6 5										
	♣ 2	♣ A 7 6 4 3										

Contract 4♥. North opened weak 2♠. Lead ♠K.

Board 159	♠ K J 6		♠ A 4 3									
♦	♥ 10 9 8	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♥ A Q
	N											
W			E									
	S											
	♦ A 9 8 6 5 4 2	♦ J 10 7 3										
	♣ –	♣ K Q 10 9										

Contract 6♦. Lead ♣A.

Board 160	♠ Q J 4		♠ A 10 8									
♥	♥ K 6	<table border="1"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♥ A Q 7 5 3
	N											
W			E									
	S											
	♦ A Q 10 9 8 2	♦ K J										
	♣ A 6	♣ K 3 2										

Contract 7NT. Lead ♣Q.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with Ukraine

BOARD 151

♦	♠ Q ♥ K Q J 8 7 ♦ Q J 9 ♣ Q 10 9 5						
♠ K J 6 5 4 ♥ 10 9 3 2 ♦ K 2 ♣ A J	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N		W	E		S
N							
W	E						
	S						
	♠ 10 7 3 2 ♥ A 6 5 ♦ A 7 5 3 ♣ K 8 ♠ A 9 8 ♥ 2 ♦ 10 8 6 4 ♣ 7 6 4 3 2						

Contract 4♠. You opened 1♠, North bid 2♥. Lead ♥K.

The main point – An iron rule: if variant A is with the odds but does not take you home, try variant B.

Order of play:

1. Win the ace of hearts.
2. Play a spade to the king.

Why? To make this contract you have to find ace of spades with South. If he holds the queen of spades instead, he will always overruff a fourth round of hearts.

Closed room – Contract 3♠, +140 for Ukraine.

A spade to the king: +620 = +10 IMP.

A spade to the jack: -6 IMP.

BOARD 152

♦	♠ K 6 2 ♥ K 10 7 6 5 ♦ 3 ♣ 10 9 5 2										
♠ Q 7 4 ♥ A J 8 ♦ A Q 10 9 7 ♣ A K	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A J 10 9 ♥ 4 3 2 ♦ J 6 4 ♣ J 4 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 8 5 3 ♥ Q 9 ♦ K 8 5 2 ♣ Q 8 7 6										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥6. South plays the queen.

The main point – Calculate whether or not to win the first trick.

Should you win the first trick or duck? It is not that obvious. There are four variants.

- a) Both kings are offside – maybe the defenders' hearts are blocked.
- b) Both kings are onside but there is a catch.
- c) The king of diamonds is offside and the king of spades onside.
- d) The king of diamonds is onside and the king of spades offside.

In variant a) you should win the first heart. Maybe the hearts are:

N: ♥ K 9 7 6 5 – S: ♥ Q 10?

In variant b) your decision in hearts is immaterial. In variant c) it is essential to win the first trick. In variant d) winning the first heart trick may be damaging if the king of diamonds is fourth with South.

Order of play:

1. Win with the ace of hearts.
2. Overtake the queen of spades with the ace in the dummy. The spade manoeuvre will be useful if you encounter variant b) but with K-x-x-x onside in diamonds. Overtaking the queen of spades will create an additional entry to dummy, needed for the second diamond finesse.

Closed room – Contract 3NT(E), lead ♣6, +690 for Ukraine.

You overtook the queen of spades with the ace: +630 = -2 IMP.

If not: -13 IMP.

BOARD 153

♥	♠ 7 ♥ J 10 8 ♦ J 10 8 7 5 ♣ J 9 6 3	♠ 5 3 ♥ A K 6 5 4 ♦ Q 4 3 ♣ A 8 7									
♠ A K Q 10 9 4 ♥ 3 2 ♦ A K 6 ♣ Q 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J 8 6 2 ♥ Q 9 7 ♦ 9 2 ♣ K 10 5 2										

Contract 7♠. Lead ♦J.

The main point – The trump coup requires an accurate plan.

Order of play:

1. Win the diamond lead in your hand.
- 2-3. Cash the ace and king of trumps .

a) North discards a club in the second trick.

4-6. Play the ace, king and another heart, ruffing. They have to break 3-3. Done.

7-8. Cross to the queen of diamonds and discard a club to established heart.

9-10. Pitch the king of diamonds on your last heart and ruff a diamond.

11. Cross with the ace of clubs and the trump coup has been executed.

Holding 4-3-4-2 shape South may beat the contract by discarding two clubs on two hearts. With 4-3-3-3 or 4-3-2-4 South will be hopeless.

b) Spades 3-2.

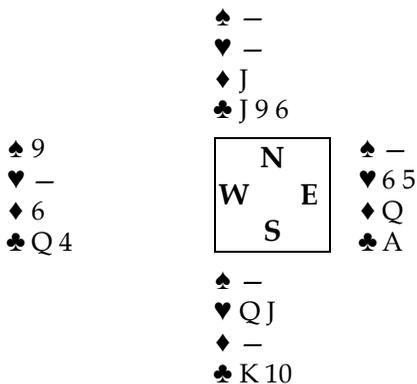
Draw the trumps and ruff a heart.

Hearts 4-2 – and the contract is home.

Hearts 5-1 against five with North, you still can make it executing heart and club squeeze with North.

Hearts 5-1 with five with South.

Here is the final position:



Now crossing to the dummy with the queen of diamonds puts criss-cross heart-club squeeze on South.

Closed room – Contract 6♠, +980 for EW.

You played as above: +11 IMP.

If not: -14 IMP.

BOARD 154

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

Contract 4♠. Lead ♠4.

The main point – When the defenders prevent one line, look for another line.

You are in a thin game contract and the opponents do not help you by leading a trump.

Order of play:

- 1-2. Win the trump lead in your hand and play a club.
- 3-4. Win the next trump in dummy and ruff a club.
- 5-6. Enter dummy with the ace of hearts and ruff a club.
- 7-9. Play the queen and king of hearts, ruff yet another club.
10. Play a good heart, pitching a diamond.

Hearts break 3-3, spades 3-2 and clubs 4-3. You were lucky, yes, but something must work when you play thin games.

Closed room – Contract 3♠ +140 for **EW**.

You played accurately: +620 = +10 IMP.

If not: -6 IMP.

BOARD 155

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

Contract 3NT. Lead ♥4.

The main point – You must adapt your play to match the opponents’ level.

Order of play:

1. Win the heart lead with the jack.
- 2) Play a diamond and...
 - a) playing against strong players – play low from the dummy. The only theoretical chance is single honour with South or AK bare.
 - b) against weaker players you must decide whether the chance of them making a mistake (winning the first diamond) is higher than this tiny theoretical chance.

Closed room – Contract 3♦, +130 for Ukraine.

You played in line with the odds: +660 = +11 IMP.

You relied on a mistake: -6 IMP.

Even after a diamond to the queen, you can still make this contract at double-dummy (ducking a spade and end-playing West to give dummy a diamond), but that is fantasy land.

BOARD 156

♠	♠ 8 7 ♥ 9 8 3 ♦ J 10 9 7 6 2 ♣ 8 6	♠ A K 10 3 ♥ Q 6 ♦ A K 8 ♣ A 10 3 2									
♠ Q J 5 4 2 ♥ A 7 ♦ 5 4 3 ♣ K J 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 9 6 ♥ K J 10 5 4 2 ♦ Q ♣ Q 9 7 5										

Contract 6♣. South opened weak 2♥. Lead ♥8.

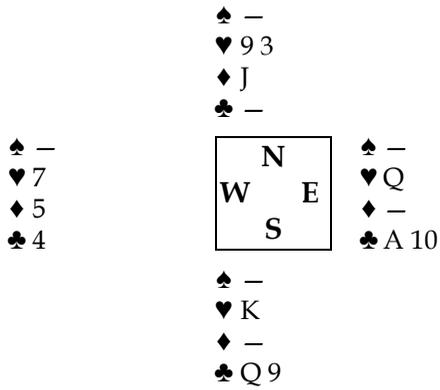
The main point – If you make a reconnaissance play you will set up a throw-in squeeze.

Order of play:

1. Win the ace of hearts keeping the queen in the dummy (it can be useful later).

2-3. Draw trumps in two rounds.

4-5. Cash the ace and king of diamonds and the shape of South hand is clear: 2-6-1-4. At first glance it seems that you can only make the contract if the queen of clubs is in North's doubleton. The odds are 2-to-1 that the queen of clubs is with South. Making this assumption, a throw-in squeeze will give you the contract. Play a club to the jack and you will come to this ending:



A heart to South's king completes your work.

The Ukrainians stopped in 4♠, +450.

You made the slam: +11 IMP.

If not: -11 IMP.

BOARD 157

♥	♠ Q 8 6 3 2										
	♥ K 9 8										
	♦ 7 6 2										
	♣ 9 8										
♠ A 4	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 9 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A J 6 5		♥ Q 3 2									
♦ K 10 8		♦ A J 5									
♣ Q J 4 2		♣ A K 10 7									
	♠ K 10 5										
	♥ 10 7 4										
	♦ Q 9 4 3										
	♣ 6 5 3										

Contract 3NT. Lead ♣3. South wins with the ♠10 and plays ♠K. North follows with the ♠2.

The main point – If you are a good player, then everything you have to do you will do well. If you are a very good player, then everything you have to do the opponents will do for you.

Order of play:

- 3-5. Play three rounds of clubs, ending in the dummy.
6. Play a spade from the dummy.

Discard two hearts and a diamond from your hand on the spades and two hearts from the dummy.

Closed room – Contract 3NT, +630 for Ukraine.

You played as above: +600 = -1 IMP.

If not: -12 IMP.

BOARD 158

♦	♠ K Q J 8 6 2										
	♥ 3										
	♦ J 9 3										
	♣ Q 10 8										
♠ A 4 3	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 9 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A Q 8 7 6 5		♥ K 10 2									
♦ K 8 7		♦ Q 6 5									
♣ 2		♣ A 7 6 4 3									
	♠ 10 5										
	♥ J 9 4										
	♦ A 10 4 2										
	♣ K J 9 5										

Contract 4♥. North opened weak 2♠. Lead ♠K.

The main point – Replace a greater risk with a smaller risk.

Discard a diamond from the dummy on the third round of spades. South can overruff in spades but is much less likely to overruff in diamonds. Concede a trick to the ace of diamonds and draw two rounds of trumps. You will only go down if you find South with three hearts to the jack and only three diamonds.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, +620 for Ukraine.
 You discarded a diamond on a spade: no swing.
 If not: -12 IMP.

BOARD 159

♦	♠ Q 10 7 ♥ J 6 3 ♦ K Q ♣ A 8 7 5 3										
♠ K J 6 ♥ 10 9 8 ♦ A 9 8 6 5 4 2 ♣ –	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 4 3 ♥ A Q ♦ J 10 7 3 ♣ K Q 10 9
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 9 8 5 2 ♥ K 7 5 4 2 ♦ – ♣ J 6 4 2										

Contract 6♦. Lead ♣A.

The main point – Play according to the distribution.

Order of play:

1. Ruff the ace of clubs.
2. Play the ace of diamonds:
 - a) North does not follow the suit.
- 3-4. Play the king of spades and a spade to the ace.
- 5-7. Pitch a spade to the king of clubs and ruff a spade.
8. Throw South on lead with a trump.
 - b) South does not follow a suit.
3. Play a heart to the ace.
- 4-6. Discard two hearts on two clubs and ruff a heart.
- 7-9. Cross to dummy with the ace of spade and ruff a club. Play a trump.

Closed room – Contract 3NT (E), +430 for Ukraine.

You made the slam: +10 IMP

You lost: -10 IMP.

BOARD 160

♥	♠ 9 6 3										
	♥ 10 8 4 2										
	♦ 7 4										
	♣ Q J 9 7										
♠ Q J 4	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">W</td><td></td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 10 8
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K 6		♥ A Q 7 5 3									
♦ A Q 10 9 8 2		♦ K J									
♣ A 6		♣ K 3 2									
	♠ K 7 5 2										
	♥ J 9										
	♦ 6 5 3										
	♣ 10 8 5 4										

Contract 7NT. Lead ♣Q.

The main point – Combine technique with psychology.

Order of play:

1. Win the ace of clubs.
- 2-4. Check the distribution of hearts discarding a spade from your hand.
 - a) four hearts with South – finesse a spade (overtake the king of diamonds with the ace).
 - b) four hearts with North – overtake the king of diamonds with the ace and play the queen of spades. If North does not cover with the king, play the ace and execute double squeeze for hearts and clubs with North and spades and clubs with South.

Of course North did not have to cover with the king and you might down in a slam your granny would have made. Well, it happens.

Closed room – Contract 6 NT, +990 for Ukraine.

You played for a double squeeze (+ a psychological chance): +11 IMP.
 If not: -14 IMP.

You could win a huge number of points in this match +71 IMP = 25-2 VP.

True, it was not easy.

The match with Portugal on round 17 will be take you to the half-way point of the European Championship.

ROUND 17 – MATCH AGAINST PORTUGAL

West is a declarer on all boards.

Board 161	♠ A Q 10 9 6 5	<table border="1" style="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>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 2
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♣	♥ A 2	♥ K 5										
	♦ Q 10 2	♦ K J 9 3										
	♣ A Q	♣ 8 7 4 3 2										

Contract 6♠. Lead ♥10.

Board 162	♠ 4	<table border="1" style="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>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 7 5 2
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♥	♥ A 8 7 5 3	♥ K 4 2										
	♦ A J 5 2	♦ K Q 8 4										
	♣ Q 8 7	♣ K 3										

Contract 4♥. South opened 1♠. Lead ♠J and a spade. South plays the ♠9.

Board 163	♠ A 9 8 6 4	<table border="1" style="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>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 7 5 3 2
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♦	♥ A 6 5	♥ K 8										
	♦ 4 3	♦ K 8 7										
	♣ A 6 5	♣ K 7 2										

Contract 4♠. Lead ♥2.

Board 164	♠ K Q J 8 7	<table border="1" style="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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 6 5 3 2
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♥	♥ 3	♥ A 8 4										
	♦ K 8 5 4	♦ 9 2										
	♣ A Q 10	♣ 6 4 3										

Contract 4♠. Lead ♥D.

Board 165	♠ Q J 5	<table border="1" style="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>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K 10 9
	N											
W			E									
	S											
♣	♥ K Q 4	♥ A J 5 3										
	♦ A 6	♦ K 7										
	♣ A K 8 6 4	♣ 5 3 2										

Contract 7NT. Lead ♥10.

Board 166	♠ A Q 4		♠ 6						
♣	♥ Q J 10 9 8	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ A K
W	N	E							
S									
	♦ 4 3		♦ A K J 6 5 2						
	♣ Q 10 5		♣ A 9 8 2						

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠5. South rises with the king.

Board 167	♠ A K 10 8 7 2		♠ J 9						
♠	♥ A K Q 9	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ J 4 3 2
W	N	E							
S									
	♦ A		♦ 10 9 7 5 3						
	♣ 9 3		♣ K 6						

Contract 4♥. Lead ♣Q. Another club to South's ace and a diamond.

Board 168	♠ K 8 7 6 2		♠ J 9						
♠	♥ K 9 7 5	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ A 4 3 2
W	N	E							
S									
	♦ A 4		♦ K Q 5 3						
	♣ Q 3		♣ K 6 5						

Contract 4♥. North opened 1♦, 4+ diamonds. Lead ♦J.

Board 169	♠ A K Q 8 7 4		♠ 6 5 3						
♠	♥ A 9 7	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ K 6 5 4 2
W	N	E							
S									
	♦ Q 9		♦ A K 4						
	♣ Q 9		♣ A 10						

Contract 7♠. Lead ♦J.

Board 170	♠ A Q J 6		♠ K 8						
♥	♥ A Q 7	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♥ J 6 5 3 2
W	N	E							
S									
	♦ K Q 2		♦ A 6 5						
	♣ Q 6 4		♣ A K 5						

Contract 7NT. Lead ♣J.

Solutions of the play problems from the match with Portugal

BOARD 161

♣	♠ 7 4 ♥ 10 9 8 7 3 ♦ 7 5 ♣ K 10 6 5					
♠ A Q 10 9 6 5 ♥ A 2 ♦ Q 10 2 ♣ A Q	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">S</td> </tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	♠ J 2 ♥ K 5 ♦ K J 9 3 ♣ 8 7 4 3 2
N	E					
W	S					
	♠ K 8 3 ♥ Q J 6 4 ♦ A 8 6 4 ♣ J 9					

Contract 6♣. Lead ♥10.

The main point – Communications.

Order of play:

1. Win the heart lead with the ace.
2. Play ♦10 and take over with the jack.

You can then pick up the trump suit, with a finesse, while the king of hearts stays as an entry for the fourth diamond.

The Portuguese pair stopped correctly in 4♣, +680.

You played accurately: +13 IMP.

If not: -13 IMP.

BOARD 162

♥	♠ J 8 ♥ J 6 ♦ 10 7 6 3 ♣ J 9 5 4 2										
♠ 4 ♥ A 8 7 5 3 ♦ A J 5 2 ♣ Q 8 7	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 7 5 2 ♥ K 4 2 ♦ K Q 8 4 ♣ K 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A K 10 9 6 3 ♥ Q 10 9 ♦ 9 ♣ A 10 6										

Contract 4♥. South opened 1♠. Lead ♠J and a spade. South plays ♠9.

The main point – Plan the play right the way through.

Order of play:

2. Ruff the second round of spades.
- 3-5. Play the ace and king of hearts and a club to the queen (the ace must be with South, who opened the bidding).
- 6-9. Crossing to dummy in diamonds to ruff two more spades.
- 10-11. Play the remaining two diamond winners.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, +420 for Portugal.

You knew how to play it: no swing.

If not: -10 IMP.

BOARD 163

♦	♠ –										
	♥ Q 10 7 2										
	♦ Q 9 6 5 2										
	♣ J 10 4 3										
♠ A 9 8 6 4	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 7 5 3 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A 6 5		♥ K 8									
♦ 4 3		♦ K 8 7									
♣ A 6 5		♣ K 7 2									
	♠ Q J 10										
	♥ J 9 4 3										
	♦ A J 10										
	♣ Q 9 8										

Contract 4♠. Lead ♥2.

The main point – dangerous opponent.

Order of play:

1. Allow South's jack of hearts to win the first trick!

For careful play you deserve a prize. Spades break 3-0, South holding three spades.

By ducking the first trick, you can easily eliminate hearts and clubs and throw South in with a spade.

Closed room – Contract 4♠ +420 for **EW**.

You ducked a heart: +420 – no swing.

If not: -10 IMP.

BOARD 164

♥	♠ 10 9										
	♥ Q J 10 5										
	♦ A 6 3										
	♣ K J 9 2										
♠ K Q J 8 7	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 6 5 3 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 3		♥ A 8 4									
♦ K 8 5 4		♦ 9 2									
♣ A Q 10		♣ 6 4 3									
	♠ 4										
	♥ K 9 7 6 2										
	♦ Q J 10 7										
	♣ 8 7 5										

Contract 4♠. Lead ♥K.

The main point – Plan the play right at the start.

Eliminate hearts, crossing with the spade ace, and draw trumps.

Order of play:

1-2. The ace of hearts and a heart ruffed.

3-4. Cross to the dummy with the ace of spades and ruff the last heart.

Did you notice that you are in the wrong hand? Yes, but I think you know what you are doing:

5. Play a diamond to the nine.

See that the game is secure regardless of what the opponents do.

Closed room – Contract 4♠, +620 for EW.

You did it: no swing.

If not: -12 IMP.

BOARD 165

		♠ 6 4 2			
	♣	♥ 10 9			
		♦ 10 9 5 4 3 2			
		♣ Q 10			
♠ Q J 5	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ A K 10 9
N					
W E					
S					
♥ K Q 4		♥ A J 5 3			
♦ A 6		♦ K 7			
♣ A K 8 6 4		♣ 5 3 2			
		♠ 8 7 3			
		♥ 8 7 6 2			
		♦ Q J 8			
		♣ J 9 7			

Contract 7NT. Lead ♥10.

The main point – Do not look desperate. Maybe you are playing against opponents who boast that they do not use count signals.

First play eight tricks in the major suits, pitching two clubs. North will discard two diamonds on the hearts. Only an even-number count signal will make South discard a diamond and not a club on the fourth round of spades. This example shows that defenders must give count signals more often than they admit.

Closed room – Contract 6NT, +990 for Portugal.

You lost because the opponents defended accurately using their count signals. Use this information on the remaining boards.

Result: -14 IMP.

BOARD 166

		♠ J 9 8 5 2									
	♣	♥ 6 5 3									
		♦ 7									
		♣ J 7 4 3									
♠ A Q 4	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;"></td><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;"></td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 6
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q J 10 9 8		♥ A K									
♦ 4 3		♦ A K J 6 5 2									
♣ Q 10 5		♣ A 9 8 2									
		♠ K 10 7 3									
		♥ 7 4 2									
		♦ Q 10 9 8									
		♣ K 6									

Contract 3NT. Lead ♠5. South plays the king.

The main point – A grand unblocking.

Order of play:

1. Duck South's king of spades.
- 2-3. Discard two heart honours on the ace and queen of spades.

Closed room – Contract 4♥, +450 for EW.

You found this grand unblocking: +430 = -1 IMP.

You tried to score diamond tricks: -11 IMP.

BOARD 167

♠	♠ 4										
	♥ 10 8 6 5										
	♦ K J 2										
	♣ Q J 10 7 5										
♠ A K 10 8 7 2	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 9
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K Q 9		♥ J 4 3 2									
♦ A		♦ 10 9 7 5 3									
♣ 9 3		♣ K 6									
	♠ Q 6 5 3										
	♥ 7										
	♦ Q 8 6 4										
	♣ A 8 4 2										

Contract 4♥. Lead ♣Q. Another club to South’s ace and a diamond.

The main point – Adapt your play to the existing distribution.

Order of play:

- 1-3. The opponents cash two club tricks and play a diamond.
4. Play the ace of hearts.
5. Play the king of hearts:
 - a) North does not follow the suit.
- 6-9. Play the ace and king of spades, ruff a spade with the jack of hearts and finesse ♥10.
 - b) South does not follow the suit. In this case you can play safe for 4-1 spade break.
6. Play the ace of spades, unblock this suit pitching the jack.
7. Play ♠10 – concede a trick to the queen.
8. Ruff a diamond.
- 9 By playing spades through North, you pick up his trumps.

Closed room – Contract 4♠, +650 for Portugal.

You found this difficult line: +620 = -1 IMP.

If not: -13 IMP.

BOARD 168

	♠ A 10 5				
	♥ Q 10 8				
	♦ J 10 9 8				
	♣ A J 8				
♠ K 8 7 6 2	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ J 9
N					
W E					
S					
♥ K 9 7 5		♥ A 4 3 2			
♦ A 4		♦ K Q 5 3			
♣ Q 3		♣ K 6 5			
	♠ Q 4 3				
	♥ J 6				
	♦ 7 6 2				
	♣ 10 9 7 4 2				

Contract 4♥. North opened 1♦ (4+ diamonds). Lead ♦J.

The main point – Sometimes, simplest is best.

The well-known Morton Fork's Coup will not help – even if diamonds break 4-3. If you play a small club to the king and pitch a club on a diamond honour you will not make it. There is no communication. You need to plan many moves ahead. Your plan must be based on the assumption that North has three hearts and four diamonds.

Order of play:

1. Win the ace of diamonds.
2. Play the queen of clubs! North will rise with the ace and play a diamond (or a club, it is immaterial).
- 3-4. Win a diamond and ruff a diamond.
- 5-6. Play a club to the king and a club ruff.
- 7-8. The king and ace of hearts.
- 9-10. Cash a diamond honour and throw North in with a heart. Yes!

Closed room – Contract 3NT, +600 for EW.

You made it: +620 = +1 IMP.

You went down: -12 IMP.

BOARD 169

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

Contract 7♠. Lead ♦J.

The main point – A squeeze will drive the contract home, even if you are not aware that you have set up a squeeze.

A 2-2 spade break would solve the problem of 4-1 heart break. Unfortunately, spades are 3-1 with North holding three spades. What do you need to set up the squeeze? You must run your winning tricks.

Order of play:

1. Win the queen of diamonds in your hand.
 - 2-6. Play five rounds of spades, discarding a club and a heart from the dummy.
 - 7-8. Play two diamonds, discarding a heart from the hand.
 - 9-10. Now ace and king of hearts – bad luck – hearts break 4-1.
 11. Cash the ace of clubs and you can be happy – the king falls.
- Was the king singleton? No, but it was with four hearts. The squeeze set itself up.

Closed room – Contract 6♠, +980 for Portugal.

You set up a criss-cross trump squeeze: +11 IMP.

You did not find this line: -14 IMP.

BOARD 170

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

Contract 7NT. Lead ♣J.

The main point – Play with hope, even in a hopeless contract.

You must seek a solution that matches the existing distribution of cards. Play your tricks in spades, diamonds, and clubs. If North showed five spades, at least three clubs and three diamonds, then the chance for a king of hearts doubleton onside does not exist. But you can still find another shape to bring this crazy slam home – king of hearts singleton offside and this is what you have to play for.

Closed room – Contract 6NT, +1440 for Portugal.

You did it: +13 IMP.

If not: -17 IMP.

The pool of points you could win was modest: +22 IMP = 20-10 VP.

You could win 371 VP in seventeen rounds. This result would be the dream of all teams in the European Championships. The Italians, the actual gold medal winners, collected 647 VP in 34 rounds in Tenerife.

Is it possible to avoid a mistake in these 170 carefully selected boards? Certainly not. I personally do not know any bridge player who would solve all the problems within a reasonable time limit (1 minute). But some would come quite close!