

Perth Café Bridge hand commentary by Liz McGowan

1	♠ K98	
	♥ J4	
	♦ K87542	
N / -	♣ T6	
♠ AQ764	♠ T	
♥ A	♥ Q98762	
♦ QT63	♦ J9	
♣ J75	♣ KQ84	
NSEW	♠ J532	7
NT 7 6	♥ KT53	13
♠ 6 6	♦ A	8
♥ 5 8	♣ A932	12
♦ 6 6		
♣ 5 8		

They say “It’s a bidder’s game” but there are exceptions to every bridge rule, and this is one. It is hard to imagine how anyone could stop in a makeable contract.

If you manage to escape for a few down undoubled you should score well enough, and if you can persuade opponents to declare you will score even better.

2	♠ KJ632	
	♥ QT3	
	♦ —	
E / NS	♣ AT983	
♠ QT54	♠ 87	
♥ AK762	♥ 854	
♦ 3	♦ AJT98	
♣ KQ6	♣ 542	
NSEW	♠ A9	10
NT 7 5-6	♥ J9	14
♠ 8 4-5	♦ KQ76542	5
♥ 6 6	♣ J7	11
♦ 7 6		
♣ 9 4		

Another horror. If West and North were partners they could make slam, as it is you need to adopt a conservative style. When you suspect a misfit – stop bidding!

To quote S J Simon: “You may not be in the best possible contract, but you are in the best contract possible.”

3	♠ J9	
	♥ QJ84	
	♦ J7543	
S / EW	♣ K3	
♠ QT54	♠ K8	
♥ A52	♥ KT763	
♦ A	♦ KQ2	
♣ 98765	♣ QT2	
NSEW	♠ A7632	8
NT 5 8	♥ 9	10
♠ 6 7	♦ T986	13
♥ 6 7	♣ AJ4	9
♦ 8 4		
♣ 4 9		

Slightly better, but not much. If East opens a weak 1NT and West passes that contract might make (no guarantees).

Strong no-trumpers will do well to stop in 2♥, where the last thing you want to try to do is to draw trump.

4		♠ J92																								
W / All		♥ K64																								
		♦ 742																								
		♣ AJ97																								
♠ AK		♠ Q7654																								
♥ AJ975		♥ Q3																								
♦ QT95		♦ J83																								
♣ 32		♣ K64																								
<table><tr><th colspan="4">NSEW</th></tr><tr><td>NT</td><td>5</td><td>7</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>♠</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>♥</td><td>4</td><td>9</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>♦</td><td>4</td><td>9</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>♣</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td></td></tr></table>		NSEW				NT	5	7		♠	4	8		♥	4	9		♦	4	9		♣	6	7		♠ T83
NSEW																										
NT	5	7																								
♠	4	8																								
♥	4	9																								
♦	4	9																								
♣	6	7																								
		♥ T82																								
		♦ AK6																								
		♣ QT85																								
		9 H 14 C P 9																								

The auction might go 1♥ - 1♠ - 2♦ - 2♥ - Pass. For once the cards lie well and suits break kindly and West will wrap up 9 tricks with ease. Other contracts fare less well.

This is not the right hand to open 1NT, and a 1NT rebid fares very badly on a club lead.

5		♠ 762																								
N / NS		♥ AQ6																								
		♦ KJ43																								
		♣ 972																								
♠ 3		♠ AKQJT5																								
♥ KT432		♥ 8																								
♦ T2		♦ Q85																								
♣ AQJ63		♣ K54																								
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NSEW																										
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10																										
10	H																									
	C																									
	P																									
	5																									

The first game contract of the set, but East must insist on spades. Dummy's lowly ♠3 means the defenders cannot cash more than two diamonds. 5♣ has three top losers, and 3NT will fail on a diamond lead. The Double Dummy Solver suggests -3 in 3NT, but that requires South to lead hearts through twice, starting with the 9 or Jack to pin the singleton 8. Not an easy defence, particularly if West is declarer.

6		♠ A54																																		
E / EW		♥ QJ985																																		
		♦ 63																																		
		♣ JT7																																		
♠ KT3		♠ J962																																		
♥ 2		♥ AK643																																		
♦ AQJT987		♦ 42																																		
♣ K6		♣ 54																																		
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	11																																			
		♠ Q87																																		
		♥ T7																																		
		♦ K5																																		
		♣ AQ9832																																		

The Double Dummy Solver is having a laugh when he says there are 9 tricks in 3NT. On a black suit lead there are 10! Rise ♣K on the lead, cash 2 hearts and finesse diamonds, playing South for ♦Kx. To hold you to 9 tricks the opening lead has to be a heart. Of course, if the finesse fails, or South has ♦Kxx, you make just three tricks. I doubt anyone is going to reach either 3NT or the alternative fortunate 4♠ game. A quiet part score in diamonds is less scary.

7	♠ KQ76	
	♥ T952	
	♦ 965	
	♣ Q6	
S / All		
♠ AT95	♠ J8432	
♥ J74	♥ AQ3	
♦ K72	♦ AT	
♣ JT8	♣ A52	
NSEW	♠ —	7
NT 5 7	♥ K86	9 H 15
♠ 4 8	♦ QJ843	C 9
♥ 6 7	♣ K9743	P 9
♦ 7 6		
♣ 6 7		

Back to the grind. On a good day EW could make 10 tricks in spades, but this is not a good day and they will struggle to go plus. It will not be easy to stop low if East opens a strong no-trump. West should downgrade his 4333 distribution but will probably invite game with a 9 count. East should turn down the invitation at pairs, but even 3♠ is too high.

8	♠ J9762	
	♥ A32	
	♦ A62	
	♣ JT	
W / -		
♠ Q	♠ K83	
♥ KQT9	♥ 87654	
♦ KJT3	♦ 9	
♣ 9876	♣ Q432	
NSEW	♠ AT54	10
NT 9 4	♥ J	11 H 5
♠ 11 2	♦ Q8754	C 14
♥ 6 7	♣ AK5	P 14
♦ 9 4		
♣ 6 7		

NS have game here, I expect most will reach 4♠ even if West opens. (Not a great idea with a sub-minimum 4441 distribution.)

There are 2 ways to tackle this spade combination: lay down the Ace to cater for a 2-2 break or a singleton honour in either opposing hand; or take two finesses. Taking one finesse before cashing the Ace is a Bad Idea. Here, since you need to ruff two hearts in dummy, you may as well cash the Ace.

9	♠ A	
	♥ A5	
	♦ KQJ64	
	♣ AKQ52	
N / EW		
♠ Q97	♠ JT82	
♥ QJ32	♥ T98	
♦ T985	♦ 732	
♣ J4	♣ 976	
NSEW	♠ K6543	23
NT 13 0	♥ K764	6 H 1
♠ 11 2	♦ A	C 10
♥ 11 2	♣ T83	P 10
♦ 13 0		
♣ 13 0		

Opening 2♣ with a minor 2-suiter is not always successful: the auction gets very high very fast.

It is safe enough to open 1♦, because when you are short in the Majors someone will inevitably bid one. But here North has a 2-loser hand, so most will start with 2♣. South has great controls, so should insist on slam. I hope you reach 7NT, or 7♣, but 7♦ will do this time.

10 ♠ Q763
♥ K7
E / All ♦ QJ9872
♣ 2

♠ K52 ♠ AJ8
♥ J43 ♥ T952
♦ K3 ♦ 65
♣ AQT73 ♣ K984

N		S		E		W	
NT		4	9	4	9	4	9
♠	5	6	♠	5	6	♠	5
♥	5	7	♥	5	7	♥	5
♦	8	4	♦	8	4	♦	8
♣	4	9	♣	4	9	♣	4

♠ T94 8
♥ AQ86 13 H
♦ AT4 C
♣ J65 P
11

East may open a weak 1NT and play there. The diamond lead gives an eighth trick; will declarer risk the spade finesse for nine?

North would like to overcall 2♦, but for many this has an artificial meaning over 1NT. 3♦ looks a bit bold at this vulnerability but might win the match points – provided South passes, of course.

11 ♠ T9764
♥ KQ3
S / - ♦ 92
♣ 952

♠ J2 ♠ Q83
♥ A765 ♥ T942
♦ K74 ♦ AT63
♣ T863 ♣ 74

N		S		E		W	
NT		9	4	9	4	9	4
♠	9	4	♠	9	4	♠	9
♥	6-7	6	♥	6-7	6	♥	6-7
♦	7	5	♦	7	5	♦	7
♣	9	3	♣	9	3	♣	9

♠ AK5 5
♥ J8 8 H
♦ QJ85 C
♣ AKQJ P
21

Much bidding theory is devoted to finding the 5-3 Major suit fit. This is a classic example of a deal where you are better off in 3NT, which requires one less trick.

4♠ has no play, but 3NT is not exactly a gimme. You must use your heart entry to dummy to run the ♦9, then cash all your black suit winners and endplay someone.

12 ♠ 3
♥ K872
W / NS ♦ QJ62
♣ AT85

♠ KT72 ♠ QJ98
♥ QJ65 ♥ AT93
♦ K9 ♦ A5
♣ 932 ♣ Q76

N		S		E		W	
NT		4	9-8	4	9-8	4	9-8
♠	4	8	♠	4	8	♠	4
♥	4	6	♥	4	6	♥	4
♦	10	3	♦	10	3	♦	10
♣	8	5	♣	8	5	♣	8

♠ A654 10
♥ 4 9 H
♦ T8743 C
♣ KJ4 P
8

A good deal for weak no-trumpers. East opens 1NT and should play there. If West declares, the defence can cash four clubs and the ♠A, but South cannot productively lead clubs and cannot put North on lead in time for a club lead through East.

Inveterate Stayman bidders and strong no-trumpers may find themselves in 2♥, which plays rather badly if the defence make three clubs, the ♠A, two ruffs and the King of trump.

13 ♠ J96
 N / All ♥ Q74
 ♦ A863
 ♣ T93

♠ K873 ♠ QT52
 ♥ K62 ♥ A95
 ♦ KT4 ♦ J95
 ♣ 874 ♣ K52

	N	S	E	W
NT	6	5		
♠	6	7		
♥	8	5		
♦	8	5		
♣	8	5		

♠ A4
 ♥ JT83
 ♦ Q72
 ♣ AQJ6

7
 H
 C
 P
 14

Quite unusual for three of the four hands to be distributed 4-3-3-3. Here it means that South cannot quite make 1NT without help from the defence but can make 8 tricks in any of the 4=3 fits. A curiosity without much practical use – most will play in 1NT making six tricks.

14 ♠ J64
 E / - ♥ KT6
 ♦ T72
 ♣ 7632

♠ T2 ♠ A873
 ♥ Q4 ♥ AJ872
 ♦ AJ864 ♦ 9
 ♣ K984 ♣ AQ5

	N	S	E	W
NT	3	9		
♠	4	9		
♥	3	10		
♦	3	10		
♣	2	10		

♠ KQ95
 ♥ 953
 ♦ KQ53
 ♣ JT

4
 H
 C
 P
 11

The cards lie well for East-West, so they can make game in hearts or no-trump. If the auction starts 1♥ - 2♦ - East does best to rebid 2NT in spite of the singleton in partner's suit. 2♠ will lead partner to believe that the suits are stronger. No real problem here where West will bid no-trump instead and so become declarer.

15 ♠ QJ
 S / NS ♥ AT8753
 ♦ 8642
 ♣ K

♠ T9863 ♠ AK54
 ♥ KQ642 ♥ J
 ♦ K9 ♦ QJT5
 ♣ 4 ♣ 9762

	N	S	E	W
NT	8	4		
♠	3	8		
♥	6	7		
♦	7	6		
♣	9	4		

♠ 72
 ♥ 9
 ♦ A73
 ♣ AQJT853

10
 H
 C
 P
 11

How many Wests will overcall South's opening 1♣? It is always tempting to get the Majors in the to the auction, but you need partner to be aware that your hand may be rather limited.

At this vulnerability 2 down in 4♠ may prove a match point success: -100 outscores -130 and neither North nor South has an obvious double.

16 ♠ KT73
♥ 7
W / EW ♦ K853
♣ KQ73

♠ 84 ♠ QJ9
♥ KT5 ♥ A98632
♦ 762 ♦ JT9
♣ JT982 ♣ 6

N S E W			
NT	10	3	
♠	11	2	
♥	7	6	
♦	11	2	
♣	10	3	

♠ A652 11
♥ QJ4
♦ AQ4 4
♣ A54 17

H
C
P

The 4-4 major suit fit outscores 3NT when you can make two ruffs. The only danger is getting too high, perhaps if North opens this 4-4-4-1.

The Losing Trick Count flatters a 3-suiter by not counting the fourth card in a suit as a loser when it so often is.

17 ♠ J82
N / - ♥ K92
♦ A9
♣ KJ632

♠ A7 ♠ KT653
♥ AQJ7 ♥ T6
♦ JT5 ♦ KQ863
♣ T974 ♣ 8

N S E W			
NT	6	6	
♠	4	8	
♥	6	6-7	
♦	3	10	
♣	7	5	

♠ Q94 12
♥ 8543
♦ 742 12
♣ AQ5 8

H
C
P

“5-5? Come alive!”

East should certainly overcall with this hand, but it may be difficult to find the best fit in diamonds.

Over a weak 1NT East overcalls 2♠ and probably plays there, If North opens 1♣ and South raises West has a difficult problem, but can fall back on the ‘flexible’ double.

18 ♠ AJ9642
E / NS ♥ T7
♦ J6
♣ KQ3

♠ QT75 ♠ 3
♥ KQ5 ♥ AJ963
♦ 4 ♦ AT973
♣ J9652 ♣ T4

N S E W			
NT	7	6	
♠	9	4	
♥	5	7	
♦	7	6	
♣	7	6	

♠ K8 11
♥ 842
♦ KQ852 8
♣ A87 12

H
C
P

East may be tempted to open this 2-suiter, there is an easy rebid over any response. But North has the boss suit, and cannot be shut out of the auction. The problem may be to stop at a safe level. I fear a lot of minus scores on this deal.

19 ♠ —
S / EW ♥ AJT4
 ♦ T94
 ♣ Q98542

♠ AT985 ♠ QJ64
 ♥ 98732 ♥ 6
 ♦ 2 ♦ AKQ873
 ♣ T6 ♣ J3

	N	S	E	W
NT	2	3		
♠	2	10		
♥	7	5		
♦	2	7		
♣	10	2		

♠ K732
 ♥ KQ5
 ♦ J65
 ♣ AK7

7
 H
 C
 P
 13
 16

If South opens a strong no-trump things may get quite exciting. Perhaps North will find the 5♣ sacrifice over 4♠. Those playing 4-card Majors may open 1♠, which should stop EW finding their main fit.

East had better overcall in diamonds – if he does not direct the lead South may wrap up 11 tricks in no-trump.

20 ♠ AK64
W / All ♥ 72
 ♦ T97
 ♣ 9854

♠ 2 ♠ QJT97
 ♥ AJ86 ♥ KT43
 ♦ KQ8654 ♦ J32
 ♣ QT ♣ J

	N	S	E	W
NT	9	4		
♠	7	6		
♥	3	9		
♦	3	9		
♣	10	3		

♠ 853
 ♥ Q95
 ♦ A
 ♣ AK7632

7
 H
 C
 P
 13
 12

It's a funny old game. When hearts break 4-4 North-South make 3NT with a combined 20HCP. Provided of course South is careful to unblock the clubs in dummy.

But no-one will actually play there... East-West may bid game in either red suit, but both should fail. 5♦ is missing three Aces, and 4♥ should lose a spade ruff if South leads his singleton Ace.

21 ♠ QT2
N / NS ♥ AQ9762
 ♦ J754
 ♣ —

♠ AJ54 ♠ 76
 ♥ K5 ♥ J3
 ♦ A98 ♦ KQ2
 ♣ KJ52 ♣ T87643

	N	S	E	W
NT	7	4.5		
♠	7	6		
♥	8	4.5		
♦	7.8	5		
♣	4	9		

♠ K983
 ♥ T84
 ♦ T63
 ♣ AQ9

9
 H
 C
 P
 6
 16

North may open a weak 2♥. If that is passed round to West what is best? 2NT will not play well with the single stopper. Double works well provided you can stop in 3♣, so having lebensohl among your agreements will be useful.

22 ♠ 97
 E / EW ♠ —
 ♠ AKQ9652
 ♣ Q842

♠ JT4 ♠ 8653
 ♥ 9854 ♥ JT62
 ♦ 83 ♦ T7
 ♣ AT95 ♣ 763

N S E W		♠ AKQ2		11	
NT	12 0	♥ AKQ73	5	H	1
♠	11 2	♦ J4		C	
♥	11 2	♣ KJ		P	
♦	12 0				23
♣	11 2				

A difficult hand for South. Most will open 2♣, hoping to get the hand over later. A few may prefer 1♥, which may work better if it does not go All Pass. Either way North should drive to slam in diamonds, which South may convert to 6NT for the extra 70 points.

23 ♠ K5
 S / All ♥ K42
 ♠ AT63
 ♣ J986

♠ T6432 ♠ QJ97
 ♥ Q9 ♥ AJ8
 ♦ 54 ♦ KQ97
 ♣ KQ53 ♣ AT

N S E W		♠ A8		11	
NT	3 9	♥ T7653	7	H	17
♠	3 10	♦ J82		C	
♥	5 7	♣ 742		P	
♦	5-4 8				5
♣	4 9				

East-West should reach 4♠ here. If East opens a strong no-trump, or overcalls 1NT over North's light opener, West transfers and East has enough to superaccept with 2NT (or whatever shows the strong four-card support). Similarly, if East opens 1♦ and West responds 1♠, East shows a strong raise and West may as well try game.

Declarer should play on diamonds to try establish a discard for the losing heart – but the heart finesse works all the time.

24 ♠ K76
 W / - ♥ A64
 ♠ A65
 ♣ AJ93

♠ J98 ♠ AT54
 ♥ J52 ♥ QT3
 ♦ K9 ♦ Q32
 ♣ KT876 ♣ Q42

N S E W		♠ Q32		16	
NT	9-8 4	♥ K987	8	H	10
♠	7 6	♦ JT874		C	
♥	9 4	♣ 5		P	
♦	9 4				6
♣	6 7				

Do not take Double Dummy Solver predictions too seriously – you should not reach 3NT on this deal.

Why does South make fewer tricks than North? Because a spade lead from West removes the ♠Q, an essential entry to the long diamonds when East holds up the ♦Q.

Playing a strong 1NT South may use Stayman, planning to pass any response – 2♦ may be a better contract but it will not score well.

25 ♠ KQ94
♥ AK6
N / EW ♦ A53
♣ J84

♠ J6 ♠ AT853
♥ T5 ♥ 743
♦ KQJT ♦ 9864
♣ AQT63 ♣ K

NT		N		S		E		W	
♠	6	6	♠	7	2	♥	QJ982	17	H
♥	5	8	♥	7	5	♦	72	13	C
♦	3	9	♦	4	8	♣	9752	3	P
♣	4	8	♣	7	3				

After a strong 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - Pass - Pass West has an easy way to compete with 2NT, unusual, to show the minors and reach a nice 3♦ partscore.

If North opens a 4-card spade suit and this is passed to West there is a different problem since 2NT here is natural. Best to pass and collect a few hundred in undertricks – but very tempting to bid 2♣.

26 ♠ AQT7
♥ 65
E / All ♦ 9742
♣ A86

♠ — ♠ J642
♥ KJ982 ♥ AQT7
♦ A5 ♦ J86
♣ KT9732 ♣ Q5

NT		N		S		E		W	
♠	6	6	♠	9	4	♥	43	10	H
♥	1	11	♥	8	5	♦	KQT3	11	C
♦	2	11	♦	2	11	♣	J4	9	P
♣	9	10	♣	10	9				

Left to their own devices East-West should reach 4♥, which plays nicely for 11 tricks. But if South has the chance to overcall 1♠ it is almost compulsory to introduce the Boss Suit, and so find the cheap vulnerable sacrifice in 4♠. Seems right for West to bid one more with his extreme distribution, and North-South should give up. Two down in 5♠X will not score well when some pairs have failed to reach game.

27 ♠ T9542
♥ K8652
S / - ♦ Q43
♣ —

♠ AKQ ♠ J863
♥ Q4 ♥ A973
♦ 762 ♦ A85
♣ J9843 ♣ T5

NT		N		S		E		W	
♠	6	7	♠	6	7	♥	JT	5	H
♥	6	6	♥	7	5	♦	KJT9	12	C
♦	8	5	♦	8	5	♣	AKQ762	14	P
♣	5	9	♣	9	14				

A truly horrible misfit. If South rebids 2♣ over North's response it is best to pass before things get worse. But bridge players tend to be optimists and I fear many partnership will reach an uncomfortably high level. A good time to double.

28 ♠ —
 W / NS ♥ AKQ3
 ♦ AQ653
 ♣ KJ94

♠ AKJT2 ♠ 87
 ♥ 42 ♥ JT86
 ♦ J7 ♦ KT984
 ♣ 8652 ♣ 73

NSEW		♠	♥	♦	♣
NT	8 5	Q96543	975	2	AQT
♠	9 4	19	9	4	8
♥	10 3				
♦	8 4				
♣	10 3				

This is a very difficult deal for North-South. It seems that 4♥ is the only makeable game, but it will be hard to reach the 4-3 fit, and harder to come to 10 tricks if you do!

3NT seems the normal spot, and one down should score pretty well.

29 ♠ K53
 N / All ♥ QJ96
 ♦ 9862
 ♣ 54

♠ — ♠ A86
 ♥ AT753 ♥ 8
 ♦ KT5 ♦ AQ43
 ♣ AQJT8 ♣ K9763

NSEW		♠	♥	♦	♣
NT	2 11	QJT9742	K42	J7	2
♠	6 7	6	14	13	7
♥	3 9				
♦	1-2 11				
♣	0 13				

Hardly anyone can open a natural 1♣ these days. Every so often those who can have a huge advantage. Here East opens 1♣ and South makes a pre-emptive overcall.

What should West do? Opposite a 4-card club suit it is easy to bid 6♣. But if partner has a weak no-trump with only 3 clubs?

30 ♠ Q875
 E / - ♥ 98
 ♦ K532
 ♣ AK3

♠ J9 ♠ 642
 ♥ AJ5 ♥ T73
 ♦ AJ864 ♦ Q97
 ♣ QT4 ♣ 8765

NSEW		♠	♥	♦	♣
NT	8 4	AKT3	KQ642	T	J92
♠	11 2	12	13	2	13
♥	10 3				
♦	7 6				
♣	8-9 4				

At last, a fairly easy auction to 4♠, and an easy hand to play when everything breaks kindly. Could be a rare flat board.

31		♠ 63																									
S / NS		♥ T8632																									
		♦ AKJ2																									
		♣ AK																									
♠ A942		♠ KQJT8																									
♥ AKQ7		♥ 54																									
♦ —		♦ T764																									
♣ Q7653		♣ T4																									
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♦	8·9	4																									
♣	5	8																									
		♥ J9																									
		♦ Q9853																									
		♣ J982																									
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15	H																										
15	C	6																									
	P																										
4																											

Most East-West pairs should reach the comfortable 4♠ contract. North has a good enough hand to overcall 1♥ with this terrible suit, but East will insist on playing in spades. The challenge is to make 11 tricks.

32		♠ 87542																									
W / EW		♥ JT9875																									
		♦ A																									
		♣ K																									
♠ QT6		♠ J9																									
♥ K2		♥ Q63																									
♦ QJ962		♦ K753																									
♣ QT5		♣ J987																									
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♣	7	6																									
		♥ A4																									
		♦ T84																									
		♣ A6432																									
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8	H																										
10	C	7																									
15	P																										

Looks like a hand that will suit strong no-trumpers. If North can show both majors North South should reach yet another comfortable 4♠ contract.