Board # 1

Dealer: North

Vulnerable: None

NORTH
♠ K
♡ T765
◇ Q964
♣ Q862

WEST
♠ Q6543
♡ A42
◇ KJ
♣ J75

HCP: 7 11 13 9

EAST
♠ T2
♡ Q9
◇ AT753
♣ AKT4

HCP: 6 13 16 5

SOUTH
♠ AJ987
♡ KJ83
◇ 82
♣ 93

HCP: 7 11 13 9

E-W have 24 combined points.
Suitable Level: Possible Game

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	5	5	8	8
♠	5	5	8	8
♡	7	7	6	6
◇	4	4	9	9
♣	4	4	9	9

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	3Nw	5♡	-3	150	
	3♣e	8◇	-1	50	
	2♡s	K◇	-1		50
	2◇e	9♣	=		90
	1Nw	K♠	=		90
	1♠s	K◇	-3		150

It's pretty clear that East will open 1◇ and West will respond 1♠; the question is what will North and South do? If they pass, East and West might settle in 2NT where eight tricks are not too difficult to find. If South makes a takeout double of 1◇ (admittedly a bit light and risking a club response), or North doubles 1♠ for takeout (even lighter but the distribution is right), N-S can compete in hearts and perhaps win the auction to go down less than the 120 that 2NT is worth. Getting into auctions on distributional values often works quite well!

Board # 2

Dealer: East

Vulnerable: N-S

NORTH
♠ 8763
♡ K3
◇ K63
♣ T952

WEST
♠ AK42
♡ 8754
◇ Q97
♣ A6

HCP: 6 13 16 5

EAST
♠ Q
♡ AJT9
◇ AT54
♣ KQ74

HCP: 7 18 6 9

SOUTH
♠ JT95
♡ Q62
◇ J82
♣ J83

HCP: 7 18 6 9

E-W have 29 combined points.
Suitable Level: Game

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	2	2	11	11
♠	3	3	10	10
♡	2	2	11	11
◇	2	2	11	11
♣	3	2	10	10

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	3Ne	3♣	=		400
	3Ne	9♠	=		400
	3Ne	J♠	+1		430
	3Nw	7♠	+1		430
	4♡w	8♠	+1		450
	4♡w	2♣	+1		450

East opens 1◇ and what should West respond? If West chooses 1♠, East's rebid is 2♣ (2♡ would show MORE diamonds than hearts) and West tries 2♡. But 1◇ - 1♠, 2♣ - 2♡, the fourth suit, is conventional and as you see, four pairs out of six played this in 3NT and were outscored by those in hearts. Responder should bid four card suits up the line to avoid losing fits in this way. If East instead has four spades and one heart, the auction will go 1◇ - 1♡, 1♠ and the spade fit will not be lost as the hearts were in many auctions.

Board # 3

Dealer: South

Vulnerable: E-W

NORTH
♠ J8
♡ KQJ86
◇ 532
♣ T75

WEST
♠ A9
♡ A92
◇ KT
♣ AQJ982

HCP: 7 18 6 9

EAST
♠ QT7542
♡ T5
◇ A876
♣ 6

HCP: 7 18 6 9

SOUTH
♠ K63
♡ 743
◇ QJ94
♣ K43

HCP: 7 18 6 9

E-W have 24 combined points.
Suitable Level: Possible Game

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	3	3	10	10
♠	1	1	11	11
♡	4	5	8	8
◇	4	4	9	9
♣	3	3	9	9

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	3Nw	K♡	-2	200	
	3♣w	K♡	+1		130
	3♡n	6♣	-3		150
	3Nw	K♡	=		600
	4♠e	5♡	+1		650
	4♠e	7♡	+1		650

South passes and West's plan should be to treat this hand as an in-betweener, balanced yet too strong for 1NT and not quite enough for 2NT. East responds 1♠ and West jumps to 2NT, showing the balanced hand of 18-19 points. East knows that West must have at least two spades (that's what 'balanced' means, never respond or rebid notrump with a singleton or void in partner's suit) and jumps to 4♠. This scores better than 3NT because eight card major suit fits usually play better in the suit than in notrump. (This is why Sam Stayman's convention is universally played!)

Board # 4

Dealer: West

Vulnerable: Both

NORTH
♠ QT4
♡ 95
◇ 9
♣ AKQ7642

WEST
♠ KJ963
♡ AQ2
◇ A863
♣ T

EAST
♠ 87
♡ KT874
◇ KQJ75
♣ 3

SOUTH
♠ A52
♡ J63
◇ T42
♣ J985

HCP:
11
14 9
6

E-W have 23 combined points.
Suitable Level: Partscore

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	3	3	5	5
♠	3	3	9	9
♡	2	2	11	11
◇	1	1	11	11
♣	9	9	4	4

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	5◇w	A♣	-1	100	
	4♣n	8♠	-1		100
	4◇w	A♣	+1		150
	3♡e	5♣	+2		200
	3♡e	J♣	+2		200
	5◇w	K♣	=		600

West opens 1♠ and North overcalls 2♣. East has enough for a negative double, a special kind of takeout double by responder after the opening bid is overcalled. In this specific situation, the double promises four-card (or longer) support for any unbid major, unlike a normal takeout double where you can expect four but sometimes it is only three. South raises to 3♣ and West tries 3◇, but North raises to 4♣. The barrage in clubs is going to make it difficult for N-S to find their heart fit and they may need to settle for the more difficult 5◇, or double 4♣ and hope for a big score.

Board # 5

Dealer: North

Vulnerable: N-S

NORTH
♠ 93
♡ Q843
◇ 97653
♣ J7

WEST
♠ KT842
♡ KJ75
◇ T2
♣ K2

EAST
♠ QJ6
♡ AT
◇ KQJ8
♣ 9865

SOUTH
♠ A75
♡ 962
◇ A4
♣ AQT43

HCP:
3
10 13
14

E-W have 23 combined points.
Suitable Level: Partscore

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	5	5	7	7
♠	3	3	10	10
♡	4	4	7	7
◇	5	5	8	8
♣	6	6	6	6

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	3Ne	4♣	-3	150	
	4♠w	J♣	-1	50	
	4♠w	7♣	-1	50	
	2♠w	J♣	+1		140
	2♠w	J♣	+2		170
	2♣s*	4♠	-1		200

East opens 1◇, South overcalls 2♣, and this time West has the negative (takeout) double. North passes and East has no reasonable option other than 2◇. South passes and West tries 2♠, almost certainly indicating five or more (with support also for hearts from the first double). East is happy to raise to 3♠, and West's 10 points with two doubletons should be just enougn to bid game, which should be easier to make than the open players found it last week! Be sure to ruff two hearts and you'll make it.

Board # 6

Dealer: East

Vulnerable: E-W

NORTH
♠ K86
♡ AKJ32
◇ QT3
♣ 86

WEST
♠ A5
♡ 74
◇ AK742
♣ KQJ9

EAST
♠ 72
♡ QT5
◇ J865
♣ AT32

SOUTH
♠ QJT943
♡ 986
◇ 9
♣ 754

HCP:
13
17 7
3

E-W have 24 combined points.
Suitable Level: Possible Game

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	4	4	7	7
♠	8	8	5	5
♡	7	7	5	5
◇	4	4	9	9
♣	3	3	9	9

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	5◇w	A♡	-2	200	
	3♠s	K♣	-1		50
	3♡n	2◇	-2		100
	1Nw	3♡	+1		120
	3◇w	A♡	+1		130
	3◇w	A♡	+1		130

Two passes to West, who could choose 1NT and might get to play it there for a likely seven or eight tricks. A 1◇ opener will get a 1♡ overcall from North, and East can bid 1NT, treating ♡QT5 as a probable stopper with the hearts likely on East's right. South passes and West rebids 3♣ with the strong hand, and plays 3◇ when East prefers West's opened suit. Notrump is dangerous: East has a heart stopper but the Q◇ and the K♠ are entries to finish off the heart suit and declarer's chances. 3◇ is likely to make an overtrick.

Board # 7

Dealer: South

Vulnerable: Both

NORTH
♠ J6543
♡ QT
◇ J75
♣ AT4

WEST
♠ 87
♡ AKJ985
◇ AT32
♣ 9

HCP: 8 12 8 12

EAST
♠ QT9
♡ 32
◇ 64
♣ KQJ532

HCP: 8 6 15 11

SOUTH
♠ AK2
♡ 764
◇ KQ98
♣ 876

HCP: 12 8 12

Highcard points are split 20-20
Suitable Level: Partscore

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	6	6	7	7
♠	7	7	6	6
♡	5	5	7	7
◇	6	6	6	6
♣	4	4	9	9

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	4♡w	5◇	-2	200	
	4♡w	4♠	-2	200	
	3♡w	J◇	-1	100	
	3♠n	3♡	-1		100
	2♡w	J◇	+1		140
	3♠n	3♡	-2		200

South opens 1◇ and West overcalls 1♡. North has just enough to bid 1♠ and East gets into the action with a 2♣ call. South has a minimum but knows North has five or more spades (with four only, a negative double would be the call instead), so competes to 2♠. West bids 3♡ and that might be too high for the rest. It's probably too high for West too, as the defenders will get one trick in each suit and a second in spades unless West plays the A-K♡ and lucks out when the queen drops. With no easy entry to dummy, West may end up losing more than one diamond even if the Q♡ is neutralized.

Board # 8

Dealer: West

Vulnerable: None

NORTH
♠ A9863
♡ J975
◇ 6
♣ K83

WEST
♠ J2
♡ K832
◇ T432
♣ QT5

EAST
♠ 75
♡ 4
◇ AKQJ
♣ AJ9642

SOUTH
♠ KQT4
♡ AQT6
◇ 9875
♣ 7

E-W have 21 combined points.
Suitable Level: Partscore

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	6	3	6	6
♠	10	10	3	3
♡	8	8	4	4
◇	5	5	8	8
♣	4	3	8	8

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	4♠n	A◇	=	420	
	3♠n	A◇	+1	170	
	2♠n	A◇	+2	170	
	3♠n	A◇	+1	170	
	5◇e*	K♠	-1	100	
	4♡s	5♣	-3		150

East opens 1♣ in third seat and South makes a takeout double. West passes and North has just enough for a jump to 2♠ (over a takeout double, eight is enough to jump: it's two aces worth of points more than you might have, since the takeout double forces you to bid even with nothing). East may try a 3◇ rebid but South will bid 3♠ and North should make four even with only 19 combined points to work with! One trick in each side suit are the only losers in spades!

Board # 9

Dealer: North

Vulnerable: E-W

NORTH
♠ Q5
♡ KJ942
◇ A87
♣ KQ8

WEST
♠ K3
♡ 8653
◇ T6432
♣ T2

EAST
♠ AJT742
♡ T
◇ 9
♣ J7654

SOUTH
♠ 986
♡ AQ7
◇ KQJ5
♣ A93

N-S have 31 combined points.
Suitable Level: Possible Slam

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	7	7	1	1
♠	5	5	8	8
♡	11	11	1	1
◇	10	10	2	2
♣	7	7	6	6

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	3Ns	3◇	+3	490	
	4♡n	9◇	+2	480	
	4♡n	9◇	+2	480	
	3Nn	T♠	-2		100
	3Nn	J♠	-2		100
	4Nn	J♠	-3		150

The general rule about eight-card major suit fits playing better in the suit breaks down a bit when the declaring side has 28-31 combined points: often notrump is better in this case. But you have to have stoppers in all suits, especially those bid by the opponents! North opens 1♡, East overcalls 1♠, and how four pairs ended up in notrump without a spade stopper is beyond me. And beyond reason. There are 12 top tricks in notrump if they don't lead a spade. But they will. South heard North open 1♡ and knows there is an eight-card heart fit here. Take charge!

Board # 10

Dealer: East

Vulnerable: Both

NORTH
♠ 965
♡ T864
◇ KQ6
♣ 652

WEST
♠ T82
♡ AQ2
◇ JT98
♣ KT4

EAST
♠ KQJ43
♡ J3
◇ A432
♣ Q9

SOUTH
♠ A7
♡ K975
◇ 75
♣ AJ873

HCP:
5
10 13
12

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	3	3	9	8
♠	3	3	10	10
♡	6	6	6	6
◇	3	3	10	10
♣	6	6	7	7

E-W have 23 combined points.
Suitable Level: Partscore

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	1Nw	4♡	+1		120
	2♠e	7◇	+1		140
	2♠e	A♣	+1		140
	3♠e	5♡	+1		170
	2♠e	5♡	+2		170
	4♠e	7◇	=		620

East-West will end up in some number of spades here, even if South meddles into their auction with overcalls. There are ten tricks available in spades, but does that mean game should be bid on only 23 combined? Not really: all of the missing high cards (K◇, Q◇, K♡, even the J♣) can be finessed against, a combination that doesn't often happen. Remeber this hand the next time every missing card is in the wrong defensive hand and you go down in game with 28 combined points. It does all even out in the long run!

Board # 11

Dealer: South

Vulnerable: None

NORTH
♠ 76
♡ QJ32
◇ AJ9
♣ JT94

WEST
♠ QT4
♡ T975
◇ T53
♣ Q53

EAST
♠ AKJ932
♡ 86
◇ 86
♣ A76

SOUTH
♠ 85
♡ AK4
◇ KQ742
♣ K82

HCP:
9
4 12
15

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	6	6	4	4
♠	5	5	8	8
♡	10	10	3	3
◇	10	10	3	3
♣	9	9	4	4

N-S have 24 combined points.
Suitable Level: Possible Game

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	4♡n	A♠	=	420	
	2Ns	5♡	+1	150	
	2Ns	5♡	+1	150	
	3◇s	4♠	+1	130	
	3◇s	4♠	+1	130	
	4♡n	A♠	-1		50

South opens 1◇, West passes, and North responds 1♡. East could bid 1♠, but opponents have shown half the deck already with an opener (minimum 13 or so) and a response (minimum 6), and there can't be much left for West. East is better off preempting to 2♠ or even 3♠, giving the opponents a more difficult task of finding their best contract. Surprisingly, it is 4♡, with four trumps, five diamonds, and a club to the king the way to ten tricks, as long as the club lead is made before trumps are pulled, so East cannot win the ace and run the rest of the spades....

Board # 12

Dealer: West

Vulnerable: N-S

NORTH
♠ AK
♡ T9742
◇ K73
♣ QT9

WEST
♠ J542
♡ A3
◇ T8
♣ AJ862

EAST
♠ 98
♡ Q86
◇ AQJ6
♣ K543

SOUTH
♠ QT763
♡ KJ5
◇ 9542
♣ 7

HCP:
12
10 12
6

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	5	5	7	7
♠	6	6	7	7
♡	7	7	6	6
◇	6	6	7	7
♣	3	3	10	10

E-W have 22 combined points.
Suitable Level: Partscore

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	3♡n	K♣	=	140	
	2♡n	9♠	-1		100
	2♡n	9♠	-1		100
	1Nw	4♡	+1		120
	2♡n	9♠	-2		200
	3♡n	3♣	-3		300

West passes, North opens 1♡, and East has no safe call so must pass even with a full 12-count. Doubling with only two cards in an unbid major asks for trouble, and overcalling two of a minor with only four does as well. So East passes and South's bid is ... revealing. Souths who think their partner is a better declarer will raise to 2♡. Souths who think they declare better will try a 1♠ response, but no dice: North rebids 1NT and South must now support hearts. Either way, 2♡ is the final spot, and most roads lead to down one at best.

Board # 13

Dealer: North

Vulnerable: Both

NORTH
♠ AQT
♡ JT952
◇ T9
♣ JT3

WEST
♠ J932
♡ 64
◇ KQ74
♣ A94

EAST
♠ 74
♡ KQ873
◇ 652
♣ 652

SOUTH
♠ K865
♡ A
◇ AJ83
♣ KQ87

HCP:
8
10 5
17

N-S have 25 combined points.
Suitable Level: Likely Game

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	9	9	4	4
♠	10	10	3	3
♡	8	8	5	5
◇	9	9	4	4
♣	10	10	3	3

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	3Ns	2♠	+2	660	
	1Nn	5♣	+3	180	
	2Nn	7♡	+2	180	
	1♠s	K◇	+3	170	
	2Nn	2♠	=	120	
	1♠s	4♡	+1	110	

South opens 1◇ after two passes. West passes and North responds 1♡, as partners tend to do when you have a three-suited hand... East passes and South should jump to 2♠ with the extra strength: 1♠ is the rebid one would make with a minimum hand, so 17 and shape requires a jump (the jump doesn't promise extra length in spades, just considerably more highcard points than a minimum opener and at least four spades). North's eight is enough to venture 3NT, but 2NT is also an option (South should raise to 3NT). On this hand, spades scores better but it's a lucky seven-card fit: notrump is safest.

Board # 14

Dealer: East

Vulnerable: None

NORTH
♠ T93
♡ T2
◇ A9762
♣ AK3

WEST
♠ QJ5
♡ K8743
◇ Q5
♣ 952

EAST
♠ AK764
♡ AQ6
◇ -
♣ QJ864

SOUTH
♠ 82
♡ J95
◇ KJT843
♣ T7

HCP:
11
8 16
5

E-W have 24 combined points.
Suitable Level: Possible Game

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	3	3	5	5
♠	2	2	10	10
♡	2	2	10	10
◇	9	9	4	4
♣	2	2	11	11

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	5◇s	Q♠	-2		100
	4♠e	8◇	+1		450
	4♡w	A♣	+1		450
	4♠e	8◇	+1		450
	4♠e	3◇	+1		450
	4♠e	T♣	+1		450

Players used to (maybe still do) argue over which suit to open with 5-5 in spades and clubs. I open 1♠ unless the clubs are much better, so East opens 1♠ and South passes. West raises to 2♠ and North passes. East has enough to bid game knowing that there is a spade fit. 16 points and a void, opposite even the lightest of single raises, should produce a good play for 4♠. Here the best N-S can do is two clubs and a club ruff, holding 4♠ to ten tricks.

Board # 15

Dealer: South

Vulnerable: N-S

NORTH
♠ AT32
♡ J3
◇ 9765
♣ QJ7

WEST
♠ KJ
♡ 865
◇ KQJT2
♣ 954

EAST
♠ Q86
♡ AT7
◇ A83
♣ KT32

SOUTH
♠ 9754
♡ KQ942
◇ 4
♣ A86

HCP:
8
10 13
9

E-W have 23 combined points.
Suitable Level: Partscore

Available Tricks:

	N	S	E	W
NT	4	4	6	6
♠	8	8	4	4
♡	8	8	5	5
◇	4	4	8	8
♣	6	5	7	7

Players	Contract	Lead	Result	NS	EW
	3Ne	4♡	-2	100	
	3◇w	3♡	-1	50	
	1Ne	4♡	=		90
	2◇w	J♡	=		90
	3◇w	J♡	=		110
	2◇e	K♡	+1		110

Three passes to East, who opens 1♣. South overcalls 1♡ and West bids 2◇. This leaves N-S little chance of uncovering their spade fit and E-W might actually get to play 2◇, the highest makeable contract on their side. 2♡ and 2♠ are makeable for North-South, but difficult to find after East opens and West gets to the two level.