

Perth Café Bridge hand commentary by Liz McGowan

1	♠ 52	
	♥ J92	
	♦ AT97	
N / -	♣ 8732	
♠ QJ	♠ A983	
♥ A87	♥ QT654	
♦ QJ86	♦ 432	
♣ AKQ4	♣ 9	
NSEW	♠ KT764	5
NT 4 9	♥ K3	19 H 6
♠ 6 7	♦ K5	C 10
♥ 3 9	♣ JT65	P
♦ 5 8		
♣ 5 8		

Some may open a light 1♠ in third seat but that should not deter EW.

The key to this hand is to avoid the 5=3 heart fit and play in 3NT when there are four almost certain losers.

Not so easy these days with so many conventions aimed at finding the 5=3 major fit.

2	♠ AJT92	
	♥ T762	
	♦ 3	
E / NS	♣ 952	
♠ 854	♠ KQ76	
♥ A954	♥ —	
♦ J92	♦ AQ764	
♣ AJT	♣ KQ83	
NSEW	♠ 3	5
NT 4 8	♥ KQJ83	10 H 16
♠ 5 8	♦ KT85	C 9
♥ 7 5	♣ 764	P
♦ 3 10		
♣ 2 10		

An unlucky board for EW. They seem to have the values for game, and most will get too high.

Easy to avoid 3NT if South overcalls in hearts, but 5♦ looks a pretty good spot till South gets a spade ruff.

3	♠ KT54	
	♥ T6	
	♦ AKJ98	
S / EW	♣ 73	
♠ QJ963	♠ A72	
♥ K	♥ J98742	
♦ T32	♦ Q7	
♣ A854	♣ KQ	
NSEW	♠ 8	11
NT 7 5	♥ AQ53	10 H 12
♠ 5 8	♦ 654	C 7
♥ 5 7	♣ JT962	P
♦ 8 4		
♣ 7 6		

They say that bridge is a Bidders' Game, but that is not always the case.

Here it looks better to defend than to try to make a contract. Still, defence is quite difficult, so a few declarers who stop low may manage a plus score.

4
W / All

♠ AK76
♥ K9865
♦ AQ97
♣ —

♠ 943
♥ 74
♦ K6
♣ AQ9873

♠ JT52
♥ J2
♦ 852
♣ K654

N		S		E		W	
NT	7	1					
♠	9	1					
♥	13	0					
♦	13	0					
♣	7	6					

♠ Q8
♥ AQT3
♦ JT43
♣ JT2

16
H
C
P
5
10

An excellent slam.

If West passes, a simple practical auction might be 1♥ - 3♥ - 6♥.

But West may open; some may even choose a 'modern' 3♣ pre-empt. Which might make slam more difficult to bid, though North should take a rosy view of this hand.

If you overreach to the Grand Slam it is your lucky day.

5
N / NS

♠ Q43
♥ QT972
♦ 987
♣ AQ

♠ JT82
♥ K5
♦ Q3
♣ T9753

♠ A75
♥ J86
♦ T54
♣ KJ84

N		S		E		W	
NT	10	8	3				
♠	7	5					
♥	11	10	2				
♦	11	10	2				
♣	6	7					

♠ K96
♥ A43
♦ AKJ62
♣ 62

10
H
C
P
9
15

Bidding this hand to 4♥ should be easy enough. Making 10 tricks might prove more difficult, especially for strong no-trumpers when South declares after a transfer.

A club lead means there are 3 sure losers, and I can see no reason to drop the doubleton ♦Q offside. Deep Finesse does, but he peeks.

6
E / EW

♠ K72
♥ K76
♦ K8632
♣ J2

♠ A43
♥ T84
♦ T
♣ AK8543

♠ T96
♥ QJ952
♦ QJ5
♣ T6

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

♠ QJ85
♥ A3
♦ A974
♣ Q97

10
H
C
P
6
13

Important to stay low here. A weak no-trump should be passed out, and on a club lead you have to play on spades to make 7 tricks.

Strong no-trumpers might find the diamond fit, but had better not get over-excited when 9 tricks are the limit.

7	♠ AT5
S / All	♥ 62
	♦ QJT8654
	♣ 7
♠ 962	♠ KQ7
♥ A8753	♥ QT9
♦ 92	♦ 3
♣ A53	♣ KJT986
NS EW	♠ J843
NT 6·8 4	♥ KJ4
♠ 6 6·5	♦ AK7
♥ 3 10·9	♣ Q42
♦ 9 4	
♣ 3 10·9	

Another weak no-trump. This time North needs a method to reach 3♦, which plays rather nicely.

EW may find a route into the auction, but need to stop quite low, or take some very good views to achieve a plus score. Worth trying to push NS up a bit, though.

8	♠ Q62
W / -	♥ 8653
	♦ 87
	♣ J872
♠ AT743	♠ 95
♥ 9	♥ QJ74
♦ QT93	♦ J64
♣ T96	♣ AQ43
NSEW	♠ KJ8
NT 8 5	♥ AKT2
♠ 7 6	♦ AK52
♥ 9 3	♣ K5
♦ 7 6·5	
♣ 7 6·5	

Most Souths will be allowed to open 2NT in 4th seat.

North will do well to pass that – the loose minor honours are not worth very much. And South will do well to make 8 tricks when the cards lie as they do.

9	♠ QJ
N / EW	♥ AQJ985
	♦ A953
	♣ T
♠ 7543	♠ K98
♥ T62	♥ K43
♦ K8	♦ Q7
♣ AQJ3	♣ K9765
NSEW	♠ AT62
NT 6 6	♥ 7
♠ 7 6	♦ JT642
♥ 10 3	♣ 842
♦ 11 1	
♣ 5 6	

For once the cards lie rather well for NS. Kind breaks in the red suits and a successful spade finesse mean you can make 4♥.

But I would not worry about missing a game like this, especially at pairs where what matters is a plus score.

10 ♠ K7
 E / All ♥ KJT85
 ♦ 842
 ♣ QJ9

♠ T854 ♠ AJ96
 ♥ A4 ♥ Q76
 ♦ — ♦ K975
 ♣ AK87642 ♣ T5

N		S		E		W	
NT	5	7					
♠	2	10					
♥	8	5					
♦	8	5					
♣	3	10					

♠ Q32 10
 ♥ 932 H
 ♦ AQJT63¹¹ C 10
 ♣ 3 P 9

A distributional hand where EW can make 4♠, but only by reading the distribution.

If South leads the singleton club you should win and cross to the ♠A to lead your second club. South should not ruff ahead of dummy, so you win and ruff a club to establish the clubs. Again South should not overruff, but you can just play a spade, win the return in dummy and run clubs.

There is more than one way to draw trump!

11 ♠ AQ76
 S / - ♥ AKJ
 ♦ T52
 ♣ Q83

♠ JT52 ♠ 43
 ♥ 9432 ♥ 86
 ♦ AQ9 ♦ J743
 ♣ 94 ♣ KT762

N		S		E		W	
NT	10	3					
♠	10	3					
♥	10	3					
♦	8	5					
♣	8	5					

♠ K98 16
 ♥ QT75 H
 ♦ K86 C 7
 ♣ AJ5 P 13

A much kinder hand for North-South. You should reach 3NT quite easily.

There are 8 Sure tricks, and a 9th can safely be established by taking the club finesse.

As they lie you can make 10 by endplaying West with the fourth spade for a stylish top score.

12 ♠ A9
 W / NS ♥ AK32
 ♦ 76
 ♣ J9852

♠ T62 ♠ KQ74
 ♥ J95 ♥ Q4
 ♦ J53 ♦ AQT98
 ♣ AK43 ♣ 76

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

♠ J853 12
 ♥ T876 H
 ♦ K42 C 9
 ♣ QT P 13
 6

Not a good time for North to open a weak no-trump. A diamond lead means an almost inevitable two down, for the kiss-of-death pairs score of -200.

There is a good case for South to try to improve things by using Stayman, intending to pass any response: partner will quite often have a 4-card major.

13 ♠ AJ86
♥ J85
♦ JT7
♣ Q62

N / All

♠ 95
♥ T97
♦ AQ94
♣ J854

♠ T7
♥ KQ64
♦ 852
♣ A973

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

♠ KQ432
♥ A32
♦ K63
♣ KT

9
H
C
P
15

If South opens a strong no-trump North should probably raise to 3NT. (There is no advantage to playing in a 4=4 spade fit when you cannot ruff anything.)

If West is inspired to lead the ♥T 3NT will not play well, but on a minor suit lead you should scramble 8 tricks.

Still, you will be outscored by those who open 1♠ and pass the 2♠ response.

14 ♠ QJ54
♥ 43
♦ J
♣ KQ8652

E / -

♠ A93
♥ A965
♦ 8732
♣ 94

♠ T6
♥ J7
♦ AKT654
♣ AT7

N		S		E		W	
NT	4	9					
♠	8	5					
♥	7	6					
♦	3	10					
♣	8	5					

♠ K872
♥ KQT82
♦ Q9
♣ J3

9
H
C
P
11

The minor suit length means that EW are cold for 3NT on a combined 20 count. Difficult to diagnose that, and most will play in some number of diamonds, making 10 tricks.

NS need to be aware of the importance of aces: having none means you should not compete too far.

15 ♠ T75
♥ K32
♦ KQ93
♣ AK7

S / NS

♠ KJ862
♥ T754
♦ J5
♣ J5

♠ A93
♥ QJ9
♦ A842
♣ T98

N		S		E		W	
NT	7	6					
♠	5	8					
♥	5	7					
♦	9	4					
♣	10	3					

♠ Q4
♥ A86
♦ T76
♣ Q6432

15
H
C
P
8

Another part score deal where NS can make just 1NT.

EW can make 8 tricks in spades but may have trouble getting into the auction.

After P - P - 1NT - P - P will West have the courage to compete with 2♣ to show the majors?

16 ♠ 9653
♥ 754
W / EW ♦ Q3
♣ 8542

♠ J8 ♠ T742
♥ J63 ♥ AKT982
♦ A854 ♦ T6
♣ AQT7 ♣ J

N		S		E		W	
NT	3	10					
♠	5	7					
♥	2	11					
♦	7	6					
♣	7	6					

♠ AKQ 2
♥ Q H
♦ KJ972 C 8
♣ K963 P 18

This hand illustrates how High Card Points are meaningless for suit play, where extra trump can take just as many tricks as aces and kings.

EW can make 11 tricks in hearts with their combined 20 count. Even if South leads trump. Declarer takes the club finesse to dispose of the losing diamond and plays on spades. North never gets on lead to play a second trump.

17 ♠ 962
N / - ♥ 62
♦ J75
♣ K9875

♠ QT7 ♠ AK83
♥ QT875 ♥ AKJ4
♦ 83 ♦ 642
♣ AQ4 ♣ T3

N		S		E		W	
NT	3	8					
♠	3	10					
♥	2	10					
♦	6	7					
♣	6	7					

♠ J54 4
♥ 93 H
♦ AKQT9 C 15
♣ J62 P 11

This should make a pleasant change for EW, an easy 4♥ contract with no problems in the play.

NS may compete in the minors, but better not climb too high: 3 down is too much at equal vulnerability.

18 ♠ KQ4
E / NS ♥ J96
♦ Q4
♣ AK984

♠ A63 ♠ T972
♥ A83 ♥ T2
♦ KJ863 ♦ AT5
♣ T6 ♣ QJ72

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

♠ J85 15
♥ KQ754 H
♦ 972 C 7
♣ 53 P 6

Looks as if NS are destined to play in 2♥ one way or another.

If West opens a weak no-trump North should try a penalty double and South will run to hearts.

If West opens 1♥ North will try a take-out double with a similar result.

19 ♠ AT96
 S / EW ♥ Q742
 ♦ JT5
 ♣ KT

♠ Q842 ♠ J3
 ♥ A8 ♥ T953
 ♦ A962 ♦ K74
 ♣ 932 ♣ Q764

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

♠ K75 10
 ♥ KJ6 H
 ♦ Q83 C
 ♣ AJ85 P
 10 14

They say you need 25HCP to make 3NT, but sometimes that is not enough, and sometimes, as here, 24 may do.

North may well look for a major suit fit with Stayman, then rebid 2NT over 2♦. South has a maximum and will bid on to game.

All that remains is to make it, perhaps easier for Deep Finesse.

20 ♠ T962
 W / All ♥ —
 ♦ KJT43
 ♣ AQ53

♠ AQJ85 ♠ K743
 ♥ A4 ♥ 6532
 ♦ 87 ♦ 52
 ♣ KJ92 ♣ T74

N		S		E		W	
NT	7	6					
♠	6	7					
♥	12	1					
♦	13	0					
♣	8	4					

♠ — 10
 ♥ KQJT987 H
 ♦ AQ96 C
 ♣ 86 P
 15 12

Hard to imagine the outcomes here.

Poor West has a nice hand but would be unwise to compete too far. He might push opponents into a making slam, even a Grand in diamonds.

Which he might double, then have to check the score on the back of the bidding cards.

Or NS might choose to double him instead for a 4-figure penalty.

21 ♠ AT4
 N / NS ♥ T72
 ♦ KT63
 ♣ Q73

♠ KQ532 ♠ J98
 ♥ 43 ♥ AJ86
 ♦ AQJ95 ♦ 4
 ♣ A ♣ KT842

N		S		E		W	
NT	5	8					
♠	1	11					
♥	5	8					
♦	3	9					
♣	5	8					

♠ 76 9
 ♥ KQ95 H
 ♦ 872 C
 ♣ J965 P
 16 6

EW should reach 4♠ easily enough. Making it is not quite so straightforward.

One of many types of hand where you must postpone drawing trump till you have secured enough tricks in the plain suits.

You need to ruff diamonds in the short trump hand to establish tricks there.

22 ♠ KJT
 E / EW ♥ AQ9
 ♦ AT983
 ♣ 54

♠ 742 ♠ Q83
 ♥ T8 ♥ J643
 ♦ 762 ♦ QJ4
 ♣ K8762 ♣ AT3

N		S		E		W	
NT	10	2					
♠	11	1					
♥	11	2					
♦	10	3					
♣	8	5					

♠ A965
 ♥ K752
 ♦ K5
 ♣ QJ9

14
 H
 C
 P
 10
 3
 13

A normal 3NT for NS, but not many will emulate Deep Finesse's overtrick.

He wins the second club, crosses to a top heart and runs the ♠J.

After cashing 4 spades he takes the other top heart in dummy, then runs the ♥9. Which makes 11 tricks – but of course he led a diamond, not a club, to hold himself to 10.

23 ♠ JT86
 S / All ♥ KT8
 ♦ KJT84
 ♣ 6

♠ A4 ♠ 9732
 ♥ 93 ♥ QJ74
 ♦ Q753 ♦ 2
 ♣ KQJT8 ♣ 9742

N		S		E		W	
NT	8	2					
♠	10	2					
♥	10	3					
♦	11	2					
♣	5	7					

♠ KQ5
 ♥ A652
 ♦ A96
 ♣ A53

8
 H
 C
 P
 12
 17
 3

Many NS pairs will end in 3NT and go down when West meanly leads a club.

If West overcalls clubs NS may avoid 3NT. 5♦ is the most straightforward alternative: you just need to finesse the right way.

Either 4=3 Major suit fit scores better... both 4♠ and 4♥ can be made but need some care.

24 ♠ 8
 W / - ♥ 95
 ♦ KQJT97
 ♣ QJ43

♠ AKJT63 ♠ 75
 ♥ AT ♥ Q87642
 ♦ 642 ♦ 3
 ♣ KT ♣ A765

N		S		E		W	
NT	4-7	6					
♠	3	9					
♥	2	10					
♦	8	4					
♣	6	6-7					

♠ Q942
 ♥ KJ3
 ♦ A85
 ♣ 982

9
 H
 C
 P
 15
 10
 6

Which major to play in?

Deep Finesse says 4♥ cannot be beaten here, whereas 4♠ will fail if the defenders play one round of trump and South withholds the ♠Q.

But some may fail in 4♥ and others make 4♠ because defence is not so easy for real people.

25 ♠ JT6543
♥ A98
N / EW ♦ 5
♣ AJ9

♠ — ♠ Q987
♥ KJT762 ♥ 53
♦ KQ932 ♦ AJ874
♣ Q3 ♣ 82

	NS	EW
NT	8	3
♠	10	2
♥	3-4	9
♦	3	10
♣	10-11	1

♠ AK2
♥ Q4
♦ T6
♣ KT7654

10
H
C
P
7
12

I suspect all four suits may make it onto the scoresheet here.

The par score appears to be 5♦X-1 for EW but there will be plus scores both ways from making and failing contracts.

Sometimes bridge is a guessing game.

26 ♠ T75
♥ 65
E / All ♦ 87
♣ AJT854

♠ 3 ♠ AK42
♥ QJ93 ♥ T2
♦ JT965 ♦ AK43
♣ Q97 ♣ K32

	N	S	E	W
NT	4	8		
♠	6	5		
♥	7	6		
♦	3	9		
♣	7	6		

♠ QJ986
♥ AK874
♦ Q2
♣ 6

5
H
C
P
17
12

Nowadays most weak no-trumpers open 1♦ with the East hand, though traditionally Acoll would prefer 1♠.

The major has more pre-emptive value, but you must be prepared for a 1NT response.

If you are happy to pass, open 1♠; if you feel too strong to pass 1NT, prefer 1♦.

27 ♠ 73
♥ A8
S / - ♦ KT932
♣ T973

♠ QJT4 ♠ 98652
♥ QT73 ♥ J4
♦ 6 ♦ QJ7
♣ KQJ8 ♣ 654

	N	S	E	W
NT	9	4		
♠	6	7		
♥	9	4		
♦	11	2		
♣	9	4		

♠ AK
♥ K9652
♦ A854
♣ A2

7
H
C
P
4
18

An unusual deal where five of a minor scores just as well as 3NT.

Many match-point specialists who bypass 3NT will bid on to slam, expecting no-trump to score better than 5♦.

Not this time!

28		♠ JT73																			
W / NS		♥ 95																			
		♦ Q65																			
		♣ AQ93																			
♠ A54		♠ K98																			
♥ 76		♥ Q432																			
♦ K3		♦ J82																			
♣ K87642		♣ JT5																			
<table><tr><th colspan="3">NSEW</th></tr><tr><td>NT</td><td>10</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>♠</td><td>10</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>♥</td><td>10</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>♦</td><td>10</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>♣</td><td>7</td><td>6</td></tr></table>		NSEW			NT	10	3	♠	10	3	♥	10	3	♦	10	3	♣	7	6	♠ Q62	
NSEW																					
NT	10	3																			
♠	10	3																			
♥	10	3																			
♦	10	3																			
♣	7	6																			
		♥ AKJT8																			
		♦ AT974																			
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H																					
C																					
P																					
14																					

This time 3NT *is* the top scoring spot, though every contract has its own communication problems.

Suggest 1H - 1S - 2D - 2H - 3D - 3NT as a possible way to get there.