

TRIAL SIMULTANEOUS PAIRS

6th December 2011

Welcome to the test event for the English Bridge Union's new Simultaneous Pairs system.

As I'm sure you're aware, the English Bridge Union will be taking over the running of its own Sim Pairs events with effect from April 2012. It will also be running the 'British Sim Pairs' on behalf of all the Home Unions. The purpose of today's event was to test out procedures and software so that we are ready for next April. It is almost a certainty that some things will go wrong on the first occasion. We welcome constructive feedback, but please be patient with us!

We decided to do something a little different for the commentary booklet: During our lunch breaks over a few weeks, a group of us actually went ahead and played the boards; so rather than telling you what we think *should* have happened, we've told you what *actually* happened. There are some good bids and leads, but we haven't hidden from you the terrible ones, or the messes that we got into! We hope you find it entertaining.

Dramatis Personae:

Barry Capal (EBU General Manager). Barry plays a lot in the U.S.A., so his favoured system is 'Standard American', which includes a Strong No Trump and 5-card majors.

Gail Nancarrow (Accounts Manager). Gail learned to play only a few years ago through the 'Bridge for All' scheme, and her system is based on 'Standard English' – four card majors and a Weak No Trump – with Weak Twos in three suits. She now plays almost exclusively on online site BridgeClubLive.

Michael Clark (IT and website). Michael is the most experienced tournament player on the team. His preferred system is MOSCITO, but nobody else was prepared to play that with him.

Ian Mitchell (Master Points and IT). Ian is well known to tournament players as a director and scorer and has also been known to hold a hand of cards from time to time.

Peter Jordan (Competitions). Peter plays at a few clubs in the Oxfordshire area and you will also catch him playing for Thame in the Berks and Bucks league. You may know him also as the friendly 'front of house' at some of our larger tournaments, as well as our overseas congresses.

We swapped around a little bit – depending on who was available each lunchtime! Always there was one pair playing Standard American, and one playing a variation on Standard English, though they switched between North-South and East-West.

♠AQ8 ♥AK98762 ♦Q ♣76 ♠KJ943 ♥- ♦A865 ♣A1082 ♠1076 ♥J ♦KJ97432 ♣J3		Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable BC GN IM MC West North East South 2♠ 3♥ All Pass 2♦ contract: 3♥ by North lead: ♠5 result: 7 tricks, N/S -200																															
HCP 15 12 7 6		Makeable contracts <table border="1"> <tr> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>5</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>5</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table> At this vulnerability, the South hand is borderline for a 3♦ opening and, with a Weak Two in diamonds available to him, Michael decided to err on the side of caution. Those who can't open 2♦ should open 3♦ instead of passing but it does carry some risk. The 2♦ opening did let Barry into the auction with a 2♠ overcall and Gail did remarkably well not to just jump straight to 4♥ which wouldn't make even without the brutal trump split. Not many East/West pairs will bid to 5♣, and even fewer will be able to bring it in!			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	2	1	-	-	S	-	2	1	-	-	E	5	-	-	2	2	W	5	-	-	3	2
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																												
N	-	2	1	-	-																												
S	-	2	1	-	-																												
E	5	-	-	2	2																												
W	5	-	-	3	2																												
♠QJ976 ♥AK742 ♦J10 ♣2 ♠A8543 ♥J63 ♦982 ♣64 ♠K102 ♥Q108 ♦A6 ♣AKQ73		Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable BC GN IM MC West North East South Pass 1♠ 2NT Dbl contract: 6♠ by North 3♦ 3♥ Pass 4NT lead: ♦K Pass 5♦ Pass 6♠ result: 12 tricks, N/S +1210 Pass Pass Dbl All Pass																															
HCP 11 5 6 18		Makeable contracts <table border="1"> <tr> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table> 6♠ is slightly the better contract as it can cope with some worse breaks. Even the 5-0 trump break isn't enough to scupper it, so long as declarer plays carefully. The key is not to play a second round of trumps when you get the bad news. Instead, rely on West holding three hearts and play on cross-ruff lines. This way you can score three hearts, two clubs, one diamond and six trumps. If West ruffs high and plays another trump you can draw trumps and cash more hearts, and if he ruffs high and plays a diamond you just continue along your cross-ruff path. At our table, Gail did draw a second round of trumps, but managed to recover when Barry over-ruffed the fourth round of hearts instead of discarding, thus allowing Gail to retain trump control.			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	3	-	6	6	3	S	3	-	5	6	3	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																												
N	3	-	6	6	3																												
S	3	-	5	6	3																												
E	-	-	-	-	-																												
W	-	-	-	-	-																												

♠K9865
♥J8
♦QJ3
♣854

♠J10 ♠742
♥AK109 ♥Q654
♦A95 ♦87642
♣7632 ♣Q

♠AQ3
♥732
♦K10
♣AKJ109

HCP	
7	4
12	17

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4	-	-	4	2
S	4	-	-	4	2
E	-	1	1	-	-
W	-	1	1	-	-

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

GN	BC	PJ	MC
West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
2♥	2♠	1NT	contract: 2♠ by South

lead: ♥A
result: 10 tricks, N/S +170

4♠ isn't a wonderful contract as it needs there to be no spade or club losers, but you shouldn't be unhappy to be there, particularly when it makes. Michael erred at our table when he opened a 15-17 1NT – this hand with its excellent clubs is clearly better than that and should be upgraded. A start of 1♣ – 1♠ – 2NT would have swiftly got them to the top spot and I'm sure this is an auction that will be repeated in all corners of the land.

Declarers should be careful not to go off-track in the trump suit when West plays an honour on the first round. Crossing to table and running the ♠9 is only recommended if you're very sure that they would never play an honour from ♠J10x.

♠104
♥A942
♦Q865
♣K95

♠753 ♠AKJ986
♥K5 ♥-
♦AK1094 ♦7
♣AQ2 ♣1087643

♠Q2
♥QJ108763
♦J32
♣J

HCP	
9	8
16	7

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	2	-	-
S	-	-	2	-	-
E	6	2	-	6	-
W	6	2	-	6	4

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

GN	BC	PJ	MC
West	North	East	South
4♠	All Pass	3♠	Pass

contract: 4♠ by East
lead: ♥Q
result: 11 tricks, N/S -450

What did East open at your table? It would not surprise me if we see 1♠, 2♠, 3♠ and 4♠ all opened by at least one person in every club! Passing and hoping to show both suits later is also an option. Those who start low have an outside chance of reaching the slam, although they also give North/South an opportunity to make a nuisance of themselves by bidding lots of hearts.

At our table Peter opted for a preemptive 3♠ which Gail swiftly raised to game. After the heart lead was ruffed in hand, Peter crossed in diamonds and tried a first round trump finesse to the Queen. Michael won and switched to a club which went to the King. Barry now had to guess which singleton Michael had and, not picturing declarer with a six-card side suit, understandably guessed wrong. The usual play in trumps is to cash the Ace and King and this would lead to an easy twelve tricks.

♠KQ
♥107
♦A10985
♣Q1087

♠A ♠J98653
♥KQJ8652 ♥A43
♦74 ♦KQ
♣642 ♣K5

♠10742
♥9
♦J632
♣AJ93

HCP	
11	13
10	6

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	3	-	-	-
S	3	3	-	-	-
E	-	-	4	2	2
W	-	-	4	2	2

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

GN	BC	PJ	MC
West	North	East	South
3♥	All Pass	Pass	Pass

contract: 3♥ by West
lead: ♣Q
result: 10 tricks, N/S -170

A normal, albeit very maximum, 3♥ opening from Gail gave Peter a problem as East. After some thought he eventually opted for a pass but you could see it was through gritted teeth. As it happens ten tricks will always be made, even with the ♣A sitting poorly. Should Peter raise? Losing Trick Count adherents will say yes, but it's close and you can see situations where the raise will work out badly. Not today, though.

Many will open 1♥ as West and will get to game very easily, often via 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♥ – 4♥.

♠J8742
♥J
♦K7643
♣54

♠AQ3 ♠105
♥10943 ♥KQ7652
♦QJ2 ♦A8
♣A76 ♣QJ3

♠K96
♥A8
♦1095
♣K10982

HCP	
5	12
13	10

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	1	1	5	1	5
W	1	1	5	1	5

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

BC	GN	IM	MC
West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

contract: 4♥ by East
lead: ♣10
result: 11 tricks, N/S -450

Ian and Barry were playing a strong NT, so Barry started with a "could be three" 1♦ opening. Those who open 1NT will probably play in 4♥ from the West hand, but it makes no difference to the fate of the contract. Ian probably thought it was his birthday when every finesse worked and made the overtrick. Actually, North/South do have to be careful at the end to not to concede a 12th trick so hopefully they're counting the hand out carefully.

♠KJ52
♥A10764
♦65
♣A7

♠73 ♠84
♥KQ9853 ♥J2
♦102 ♦843
♣Q42 ♣KJ10653

♠AQ1096
♥-
♦AKQJ97
♣98

HCP	
12	5
7	16

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	7	2	7	7
S	1	7	2	7	7
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

BC	GN	IM	MC
West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	5♦
Pass	5♥	Pass	5NT
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

contract: 6♠ by South
lead: ♣Q
result: 13 tricks, N/S +1460

A hand where a regular partnership will be disappointed to miss 7NT, but which proved too tough for Gail and Michael's limited agreements. They made a good fist of it but in the end subsided in 6♠. As it turns out, agriculturally blasting Roman Key Card Blackwood after the 3♠ bid would lead to a very confident 7NT bid, but this is not recommended when you hold a void.

♠Q
♥Q73
♦432
♣AQ10765

♠64 ♠AKJ83
♥AKJ1092 ♥54
♦J65 ♦1097
♣J8 ♣942

♠109752
♥86
♦AKQ8
♣K3

HCP	
10	8
10	12

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4	3	-	1	2
S	4	3	-	1	2
E	-	-	1	-	-
W	-	-	1	-	-

Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all

BC	GN	IM	MC
West	North	East	South
2♣	Dbf	Pass	1NT
2♥	3♣	All Pass	Pass

contract: 3♣ by North
lead: ♥5
result: 11 tricks, N/S +150

Michael made a slightly off-shape 1NT opening on this hand but couldn't face rebidding his spades should his partner respond 2♥ and so pretended that he had a small spade caught in with his clubs. It made little difference as Gail would have competed to the three level with her good club suit anyway.

Ian's ♥5 lead probably cost his side an overtrick when Barry couldn't find the spade switch at trick three, instead trying a heart in case his partner held ♣Q 10 or similar.

Barry's 2♣ overcall was Capalletti, showing a long suit somewhere – a popular convention in America.

♠10942
♥1095
♦AQ3
♣763

♠KQ853 ♠J6
♥A42 ♥KJ8
♦J4 ♦9875
♣QJ4 ♣K1098

♠A7
♥Q763
♦K1062
♣A52

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
6		N	-	-	-	-	
13	8	S	-	-	-	-	
		E	2	1	-	2	1
		W	2	1	-	2	1

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

BC	GN	IM	MC
West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT

All Pass contract: 1NT by South
lead: ♠5
result: 7 tricks, N/S +90

An unusually quiet board, given the preceding 24! Barry resisted overcalling the 1NT opening and Michael took the tricks available, making two spades, four diamonds and a club.

There will be plenty of people who do overcall 2♠, but at this vulnerability it's very dangerous and deserves to go for -200 or worse. The fact that this time it makes +110 is neither here nor there!

♠KQ8
♥AQ3
♦KQJ973
♣4

♠J1062 ♠43
♥984 ♥1076
♦86 ♦10542
♣A1063 ♣KQ97

♠A975
♥KJ52
♦A
♣J852

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
17		N	2	6	6	5	3
5	5	S	2	6	6	5	3
		E	-	-	-	-	-
		W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

GN	BC	PJ	MC
West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

contract: 4♥ by South
lead: ♦6
result: 13 tricks, N/S +710

A fun hand where there will be a lot of different contracts and results. Slam can be made in either red suit and, for those who like to live dangerously, there are a lot of tricks available in no-trumps if the defence don't find a club lead.

Barry and Michael stopped slightly cautiously in 4♥ after finding they had a lot of points but no eight-card fit. The major-suit game, along with the precious overtrick when the defence led a diamond, should still score quite well, though.

Those who played in 6♠ rather than 6♥ should probably count themselves a little unlucky.

♠5432
♥K9642
♦5
♣A72

♠Q9 ♠J86
♥AQ8 ♥J
♦AKQ108 ♦J432
♣KQJ ♣108543

♠AK107
♥10753
♦976
♣96

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
7		N	-	-	2	2	-
23	3	S	-	-	2	2	-
		E	2	4	-	-	2
		W	2	4	-	-	2

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

BC	GN	IM	MC
West	North	East	South
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

contract: 3NT by West
lead: ♥4
result: 11 tricks, N/S -660

Nobody's going to realistically beat 3NT here. If North's on lead she needs to lead a spade and South needs to win and switch to a heart. If declarer lets this run to the dummy, North will win and go back to spades, setting up a long trick there. If declarer instead wins the ♥A, North can win the ♣A, put partner in with a high spade and a heart through will send the contract flying.

Back in the real world, the key here is for North to be aware enough of South's carding to switch to a spade when she regains the lead. Otherwise 11 tricks are there for the taking, and what should be a very good score.

♠QJ7
♥1074
♦J53
♣K1052

♠AK9 ♠854
♥J9 ♥AKQ8
♦A874 ♦KQ1092
♣QJ64 ♣A

♠10632
♥6532
♦6
♣9873

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
7		N	-	-	-	-	
15	18	S	-	-	-	-	
		E	4	7	6	5	6
		W	4	7	6	5	6

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

GN	BC	PJ	MC
West	North	East	South
2♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass	2♥	Pass

contract: 3NT by West
lead: ♠Q
result: 12 tricks, N/S -490

There was a misunderstanding here for Gail and Peter. Peter's 2♥, as it is a higher bid than rebidding his diamonds, is a *reverse* and indicates 16 or more points. He'd have to rebid 2♦ with a weaker hand. If Gail had appreciated this she would no doubt have tried something different to her 3NT and the excellent slam would have been reached.

Full marks to those who not only bid to 7♦ but knew they were making it before seeing dummy!

♠AK954
♥964
♦J872
♣4

♠J8 ♠Q3
♥107532 ♥KJ
♦Q105 ♦A943
♣987 ♣K10652

♠10762
♥AQ8
♦K6
♣AQJ3

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
8		N	2	3	3	6	4
3	13	S	2	3	3	6	4
		E	-	-	-	-	-
		W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

BC	GN	IM	MC
West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

contract: 4♠ by North
lead: ♣5
result: 11 tricks, N/S +450

A normal auction here which strong no-trumpers should be equally comfortable with (although those playing precisely a 14-16 NT will find it a bit more difficult). You're always going to lose a diamond trick, so the play revolves entirely around which way you take the club finesse to set up a heart discard. Guess right and it's 12 tricks; guess wrong and it's back to 11. Gail fell into the latter camp, rising with the Ace at trick one and later running the ♣Q to the ♣K.

♠AQ984
♥876
♦A872
♣4

♠J52 ♠10763
♥J92 ♥Q
♦QJ ♦65
♣AQJ82 ♣K109765

♠K
♥AK10543
♦K10943
♣3

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
10		N	-	5	5	5	1
12	5	S	-	5	5	5	1
		E	1	-	-	-	-
		W	1	-	-	-	-

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

GN	BC	PJ	MC
West	North	East	South
2♣	2♠	5♣	Dbl
All Pass			

contract: 5♣X by West
lead: ♥8
result: 7 tricks, N/S +1100

Gail's 2♣ overcall won't be everyone's cup of tea but this is pairs and it does have some preemptive and lead-directing merits. It is undeniably dangerous, though. Peter's barrage to the five level is also understandable, even at the vulnerability. Unfortunately, when both partners step a little too close to the edge one of them is likely to fall off – and take the other with them.

It might have worked beautifully, of course. Michael was under considerable pressure after the 5♣ bid and strongly considered trying 5♦. This would have undoubtedly led to a doomed red-suit slam and praise for East/West. Not this time but, as a wise man once said, if you don't go for a large penalty every once in a while you're probably not being aggressive enough.

♠1094
♥Q3
♦AQ954
♣J73

♠K63 ♠AQJ8
♥2 ♥AK76
♦K ♦J1076
♣KQ1098652 ♣4

♠752
♥J109854
♦832
♣A

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
9		N	-	-	1	-	
11	15	S	-	-	1	-	
	5	E	5	1	-	4	
		W	5	1	-	4	

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

GN	BC	PJ	MC
West	North	East	South
4♣	Pass	4NT	All Pass

Pass contract: 4NT by East
lead: ♥J
result: 10 tricks, N/S -630

Gail was possibly a little excited here by all the preempting that had been going on and wanted to continue along that vein. Her 4♣ might of course force North/South into an error, but 1♣ should usually be enough. Peter converted to 4NT and made ten tricks so no harm was done this time.

Some pairs will make 12 tricks so the defenders who can find a diamond lead or diamond switch will do well. The Norths who venture an overcall of 1♦ over 1♣ will make things nice and easy for their grateful partners.

♠AQJ106
♥Q8
♦KJ53
♣43

♠K942 ♠8
♥A5 ♥K10942
♦Q108742 ♦96
♣6 ♣KJ1097

♠753
♥J763
♦A
♣AQ852

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
13		N	1	1	1	4	
9	7	S	1	1	1	4	
	11	E	-	-	-	-	
		W	-	-	-	-	

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

GN	BC	PJ	MC
West	North	East	South
2♦	2♠	Pass	4♠

All Pass contract: 4♠ by North
lead: ♦9
result: 9 tricks, N/S -50

The four-card major on the side should usually deter West from preempting – you risk either missing a better fit yourself or dissuading the opponents from finding a fit in a suit which is breaking badly – but that won't stop our Gail! Barry and Michael shrugged it off, though, and quickly reached the spade game.

4♠ can make but it's complex. Barry won the diamond lead and finessed in spades, then ruffed a diamond. He then finessed in spades again and when they didn't break he lost two hearts, a diamond and a trump. Playing on hearts while there's still a trump on the table to stop the defence from setting up a diamond trick happens to work, but it's hard to find a logical reason for why that's right!

♠AK8742
♥105
♦A
♣7532

♠J95 ♠10
♥6 ♥AQ7432
♦Q108764 ♦K93
♣Q94 ♣A108

♠Q63
♥KJ98
♦J52
♣KJ6

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
11		N	1	-	-	3	
5	13	S	1	-	-	3	
	11	E	-	3	1	-	
		W	-	3	1	-	

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

GN	BC	PJ	MC
West	North	East	South
	1♠	3♥	All Pass

contract: 3♥ by East
lead: ♠3
result: 5 tricks, N/S +400

We're not sure what Peter had for breakfast on the morning we played these boards, but he was certainly feeling in an aggressive mood! His 3♥ overcall is not usually recommended, but these sorts of actions can occasionally strike gold at pairs. Michael, smelling blood, had to pass and hope that Barry could protect with a takeout double but Barry didn't feel able to do so with his minimum opener. Still, +400 ought to score well. That said, those who do somehow bid to 4♠ will probably make it, unless East leads the ♥A and gives his partner a ruff.

♠10
♥AKJ103
♦J103
♣7542

♠AQ8642 ♠J9753
♥82 ♥9654
♦AKQ76 ♦952
♣-

♠K
♥Q7
♦84
♣AKQ109863

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
9		N	4	-	3	-	
15	2	S	4	-	4	-	
	14	E	-	4	-	5	
		W	-	4	-	5	

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

BC	GN	IM	MC
West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
Dbl	1♥	Pass	3NT
Dbl	Pass	Pass	4♣
4♠	5♣	5♠	All Pass

contract: 5♠ by West
lead: ♥A
result: 11 tricks, N/S -650

An exciting auction! Barry's first decision was whether to double first or overcall 1♠. The latter certainly makes his life simpler, but doesn't exactly get across the playing strength of the hand. Those playing a two-suited overcall system that caters for this hand will get the best of both worlds. He decided to double and doubled again when Michael's speculative 3NT came back round to him. When Michael ran into 4♣ he was left with no choice but to finally bid his spade suit. Gail's sacrifice didn't deter Ian and 11 tricks were easily wrapped up.

A particularly inspired North/South will sacrifice profitably in 6♣, but it would be very hard for them to know that this is anything other than a complete gamble.

♠A62
♥A9832
♦10
♣Q832

♠QJ83 ♠10974
♥Q4 ♥J1076
♦A9752 ♦KQJ3
♣105 ♣J

♠K5
♥K5
♦864
♣AK9764

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
10		N	6	-	4	-	
9	8	S	6	-	4	-	
	13	E	-	1	-	-	
		W	-	1	-	-	

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

BC	GN	IM	MC
West	North	East	South
			1♣
1♦	1♥	1♠	2♣
2♠	3♣	3♦	Pass
3♠	4♣	All Pass	

contract: 4♣ by South
lead: ♠Q
result: 12 tricks, N/S +170

The North/South hands fit together beautifully and not a single card is wasted, something that Michael and Gail clearly didn't appreciate during the bidding. It's not always easy when the bidding gets competitive, which is precisely why the bidding gets competitive!

Ian's 1♠ bid on ten-high is unusual but perfectly safe with the excellent diamond support to fall back on. Had North/South decided to defend 3♠ (even undoubled) they would have scored quite well; +170 won't, though.

♠A5
♥J1073
♦K43
♣Q1072

♠K862 ♠10743
♥A965 ♥Q82
♦8 ♦10962
♣AK86 ♣J9

♠QJ9
♥K4
♦AQJ75
♣543

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
10		N	2	3	-	-	
14	3	S	2	3	-	-	
	13	E	-	-	-	1	
		W	-	-	-	1	

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

BC	GN	IM	MC
West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

contract: 1NT by North
lead: ♣J
result: 8 tricks, N/S +120

Please cover your children's eyes – three-card overcalls are not to be recommended! In this case, Michael couldn't bear to let the opponents play in 1♥ and nor could he really justify bidding 1NT or 2♦ so he took a shot at what he thought might be his side's best fit. The danger, of course, is that Gail would raise too high in spades with her (presumed) length there but this is the fun of pairs. As it turned out, Michael was able to breathe a sigh of relief when Gail converted to 1NT and comfortably made 8 tricks.

There will be all sorts of contracts played on this board.

♠ J
♥ A7653
♦ AQJ653
♣ Q

♠ A107542 ♠ Q
♥ Q109 ♥ J842
♦ 10 ♦ K987
♣ AK2 ♣ J943

♠ K9863
♥ K
♦ 42
♣ 108765

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
14		N	-	2	-	-	
13	7	S	-	1	-	-	
		E	1	-	1	2	
		W	1	-	1	2	

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

PJ	GN	BC	MC
West	North	East	South
1♠	2♥	Pass	Pass
2♠	3♦	Dbl	3♥
All Pass			

contract: 3♥ by North
lead: ♠Q
result: 4 tricks, N/S -250

This won't be a common auction! Gail and Michael hadn't discussed any two-suited overcalls so, scared of the heart suit getting lost, Gail decided to show her suits in the opposite order. The bad news was that Michael, wary of Barry's swift double, gave preference to the 6 card fit rather than the 8 card one. The good news was that neither defender felt confident enough that they could beat this to double!

-250 won't score well, but it's the sort of board where anything could happen and we expect to see plenty of nice large numbers across the field.

♠ J5
♥ QJ8
♦ KQJ2
♣ AQJ7

♠ 3 ♠ A42
♥ K102 ♥ A97543
♦ A10975 ♦ 6
♣ K1094 ♣ 532

♠ KQ109876
♥ 6
♦ 843
♣ 86

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
17		N	-	-	-	2	
10	8	S	-	-	-	2	
		E	1	-	3	-	
		W	1	1	4	-	

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

GN	BC	PJ	MC
West	North	East	South
Pass	Dbl	2♥	Pass
All Pass		4♠	4♠

contract: 4♠ by South
lead: ♥2
result: 9 tricks, N/S -100

How strong does your partnership play a 2NT overcall after a Weak Two is opened and there are two passes? Barry thought he was too strong for this and so started with a Double. He must have been a little worried when Michael jumped all the way to 4♠! The defence did well. Gail led a heart and Peter switched to a diamond. Making no mistake, Gail gave her partner the ruff he desired and so the contract went one off.

A super-human defence would actually take the contract two off, but there will be more people who make 4♠ than suffer this fate.

♠ K1084
♥ 1073
♦ 1085
♣ 972

♠ A53 ♠ 762
♥ K52 ♥ Q6
♦ J763 ♦ K942
♣ KQ5 ♣ J1064

♠ QJ9
♥ AJ984
♦ AQ
♣ A83

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
3		N	-	-	3	3	
13	6	S	-	-	3	3	
		E	-	1	-	-	
		W	-	1	-	-	

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

PJ	GN	BC	MC
West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1NT	Dbl
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

contract: 2♠ by North
lead: ♥Q
result: 9 tricks, N/S +140

Michael's double of a 1NT response is usually played as takeout, although on this occasion he rather hoped it would be treated as penalty! Gail dutifully removed to her "long" suit and made no mistake in the play to take her 9 tricks.

This might not score so well, though, as West will often open a weak no trump which South will double in the protective seat. North should probably leave this in (running away seems a lot more dangerous) and East/West are going to score badly, even if they can escape to 2♦.

♠ -
♥ K109653
♦ 54
♣ A9765

♠ AQ642 ♠ KJ1098
♥ J87 ♥ AQ
♦ A7 ♦ QJ109
♣ KJ8 ♣ Q10

♠ 753
♥ 42
♦ K8632
♣ 432

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
7		N	-	-	-	-	
15	15	S	-	-	-	-	
		E	1	3	1	6	
		W	1	4	1	6	

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

IM	GN	BC	MC
West	North	East	South
1NT	2♥	3NT	Pass
			All Pass

contract: 3NT by West
lead: ♥10
result: 11 tricks, N/S -460

Barry faced an interesting decision here, after Ian opened a 15-17 1NT and Gail overcalled 2♥. If North can be trusted then presumably slam is unlikely, especially with so few Aces and Kings, so he decided to ignore his spades and took a shot at the highest scoring match point contract. He hoped that even if there was a spade fit it would score the same number of tricks. This time he was unlucky and Ian could only make 11 tricks in No Trumps, with an easy 12 available in spades.

♠ KQ84
♥ J7
♦ Q2
♣ J9543

♠ 72 ♠ J10965
♥ 106432 ♥ KQ85
♦ 1064 ♦ A
♣ 1086 ♣ AQ7

♠ A3
♥ A9
♦ KJ98753
♣ K2

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
9		N	2	4	-	-	
0	16	S	2	4	-	-	
		E	-	-	3	-	
		W	-	-	2	-	

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

BC	GN	IM	MC
West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	1♠	2♦
All Pass		Pass	3NT

contract: 3NT by North
lead: ♠J
result: 10 tricks, N/S +630

Gail's 2NT is a good bid and actually quite brave given the general standard of Michael's overcalls!

A heart lead would have seen the end of this 3NT contract, but it's hard to fault Ian for leading his more solid suit. On another day leading the ♥K could have been costly. And how often have you been put off the killing lead of your own bid suit – or your partner's – just because declarer implied that she had a good stop?

Gail set up her 10 obvious tricks and quickly racked up what should be a common +630.

♠ A87
♥ 4
♦ KJ10652
♣ 1063

♠ K532 ♠ QJ94
♥ 87532 ♥ KQ109
♦ Q ♦ A87
♣ 875 ♣ 42

♠ 106
♥ AJ6
♦ 943
♣ AKQJ9

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
8		N	4	5	-	-	
5	12	S	4	5	-	-	
		E	-	-	2	1	
		W	-	-	2	1	

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

IM	GN	BC	MC
West	North	East	South
Pass	2♦	Dbl	3♦
3♥	4♦	4♥	5♦
All Pass			

contract: 5♦ by North
lead: ♥K
result: 12 tricks, N/S +620

Gail's Weak Two opening at our table led to a competitive auction where nobody could tell who could make what. After Barry's takeout double, Michael just raised quietly to 3♦, happy that if things stopped there it would probably be ok, and if things didn't he would be in a better position to know what to do. Gail's 4♦ after Ian's 3♥ is bidding her hand twice – a preemptor should usually have a very good reason to raise herself later in the auction – but it did make it easy for Michael to bid the vulnerable diamond game rather than try his luck against 4♥.

Those who land in 3NT will usually make eleven tricks, unless the defence get off to an unlikely spade lead.

♠ 3
♥ K3
♦ KQ1064
♣ Q9843

♠ 5
♥ Q986
♦ 872
♣ AKJ62

♠ AKQJ6
♥ J1042
♦ A53
♣ 7

♠ 1098742
♥ A75
♦ J9
♣ 105

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
10		N	-	-	-	-	
10	15	S	-	-	-	-	
	5	E	1	-	4	1	
		W	1	-	4	1	

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

IM	GN	BC	MC
West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	2♦	2♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

contract: 4♥ by East
lead: ♦J
result: 9 tricks, N/S +100

To make 4♥ here you have to win the diamond lead and then pitch a losing diamond on the ♣K. But who would guess to do that? Barry tried the more promising spade suit for his discards, so the defence made three trump tricks and one diamond.

It's often right, when the opposition bid two suits and settle in a third, to lead a trump in order to cut down on a cross-ruff but that would be wrong here. Not only is partner marked with shortness in spades (and so can over-ruff dummy), but declarer is known to have such good spades that he won't want to do much ruffing anyway. And besides, when partner goes out of her way to ask you to lead a diamond it would be very rude not to!

♠ 1065
♥ AK1076
♦ A96
♣ 42

♠ K8
♥ J85
♦ 87
♣ QJ10986

♠ AQ974
♥ 42
♦ K542
♣ 75

♠ J32
♥ Q93
♦ QJ103
♣ AK3

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
11		N	-	2	3	1	
7	9	S	-	2	3	1	
	13	E	1	-	-	-	
		W	1	-	-	-	

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

PJ	GN	BC	MC
West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT
2♣	3♥	All Pass	

contract: 3♥ by North
lead: ♣7
result: 9 tricks, N/S +140

Not a good hand for light openers. A 1NT or 1♥ opening from Gail would have sailed the partnership into the game which is never going to make. Instead, Michael was able to open a 12-14 1NT in fourth seat and, brushing aside Peter's petulance, Gail settled for a simple invitation. Michael could see no reason to go further and Gail easily wrapped up 9 tricks for what should be a fairly good score.

The heart game is on a straight finesse, so don't feel too bad if you finished too high. Next week it'll make.

♠ J84
♥ -
♦ Q87432
♣ 10876

♠ 10962
♥ K10
♦ AKJ9
♣ K94

♠ K73
♥ Q7532
♦ 105
♣ QJ3

♠ AQ5
♥ AJ9864
♦ 6
♣ A52

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
3		N	2	1	1	-	
14	8	S	2	1	1	-	
	15	E	-	-	-	1	
		W	-	-	-	1	

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

IM	GN	BC	MC
West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
Dbl	Pass	1NT	2♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl	All Pass

contract: 2♥X by South
lead: ♠9
result: 7 tricks, N/S -100

A very sharp match point double from Barry here led to the good score of +100, far better than all those measly +90s that will be scored his way. Michael's 2♥ is not without danger, but the suit is good and the hand is strong and he wasn't too confident about defeating 1NT so he tried to improve matters. He didn't reckon on Barry "the Assassin" Capal, though!

♠ KQ5
♥ K1052
♦ QJ73
♣ 64

♠ A974
♥ QJ96
♦ A5
♣ A103

♠ J82
♥ A873
♦ -
♣ KJ9852

♠ 1063
♥ 4
♦ K1098642
♣ Q7

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
11		N	-	2	-	-	
15	9	S	-	2	-	-	
	5	E	5	-	5	4	
		W	5	-	5	4	

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

PJ	GN	BC	MC
West	North	East	South
	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

contract: 3NT by West
lead: ♥2
result: 10 tricks, N/S -430

After long discussion on board 8 about the perils of preempting with a four-card major on the side, Barry decided to ignore his own advice and open 3♣ here anyway. He seemed to have got away with it, though, as 3NT can make the same number of tricks as 4♥, but Peter tried the club finesse instead of playing them from the top and made only 10 tricks (five clubs, three hearts and two aces).

It may look like there are only 10 tricks available on a diamond lead, but North comes under a lot of pressure and can't hold on to everything. After winning the second diamond and running six clubs, North has to come down to five cards. She must keep ♠KQ and ♥K105, so can't have any diamonds left to run and a declarer who reads the position can set up a spade or heart trick at their leisure.

♠ -
♥ QJ1094
♦ Q1064
♣ AJ102

♠ K432
♥ A32
♦ AKJ95
♣ 8

♠ J965
♥ K65
♦ 2
♣ K9743

♠ AQ1087
♥ 87
♦ 873
♣ Q65

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
10		N	-	-	-	-	
15	7	S	-	-	-	1	
	8	E	1	1	1	3	
		W	1	1	2	3	

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

IM	GN	BC	MC
West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♦	1♥	Dbl	1♠
Dbl	1NT	2♣	Pass
2♦	All Pass		

contract: 2♦ by West
lead: ♥Q
result: 6 tricks, N/S +100

At the time, Michael regretted bidding 1♠ and keeping Ian and Barry out of their 4-4 spade fit. When dummy went down, though, he was quite happy that they instead found an even worse spot!

A lot of pairs will end up in 2♠, especially if East bids 1♠ after the overcall rather than double, and will actually do pretty well in that contract. South won't be able to get in to play trumps too many times and declarer will be able to make a lot of low trumps on a cross-ruff.

♠ 1054
♥ KQ4
♦ J102
♣ Q953

♠ J763
♥ J10873
♦ 8
♣ KJ6

♠ AK98
♥ 962
♦ K7
♣ A1042

♠ Q2
♥ A5
♦ AQ96543
♣ 87

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
8		N	-	3	-	-	
6	14	S	-	3	-	-	
	12	E	1	-	3	3	
		W	1	-	3	3	

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

PJ	GN	BC	MC
West	North	East	South
		1♣	1♦
1♥	1NT	Pass	Pass
Dbl	2♦	2♥	3♦
All Pass			

contract: 3♦ by South
lead: ♥J
result: 10 tricks, N/S +130

Michael's judgement to pass 1NT instead of rebidding his diamonds could have worked quite badly but the defence have to be spot on to defeat that contract so he might have got away with it. We'll never know, as Peter and Barry competed and Michael landed in 3♦. After the heart lead, the best way to make 9 tricks is to cash a top diamond before playing hearts. This will make even if East has a doubleton heart and West has ♦Kx but Michael felt that this was unlikely to be necessary given the bidding and took the trump finesse to make 10 tricks.