♠1097
♥-
♦J108652
♣AK65

♠KQ84 ♥AJ105 ♦AK ♣984

♠J2 ♥K97 ♦Q943 ♣QJ73

♠A653
♥Q86432
♦7
♣102

HCP	
8	
17	9
6	

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

Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

or

		Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

South will probably get away with it if he opens with an off-centre weak 2♥ or multi 2♦ as West has a hand that is likely to bid 2NT. 3NT will be the final contract for most, though no doubt a few will find themselves languishing in 4♥ and having to cope with a 6-0 trump break. Given the lie of the cards, particularly in the spade suit, 3NT should always make ten tricks; however I expect that some declarers will only make nine as entries have to be handled carefully.

♠10
♥7
♦106542
♣KQ9532

♠AKQ432 ♥98 ♦J7 ♣J76

♠98765 ♥AQJ1063 ♦8 ♣A

♠J
♥K542
♦AKQ93
♣1084

HCP	
5	
11	11
13	

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

Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1♦
2♠	3♦	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

West may well overcall 2♠ whether it is supposed to be weak or intermediate, though I have great sympathy with a more aggressive 3♠ overcall. North may only have five points but 5-card support and a 6-5-1-1 distribution should ensure that he bids 3♦, and then even thinks about pushing on to 5♦ over 4♠ despite the adverse vulnerability. If West's 2♠ is intermediate, East could easily get carried away and even push on to the slam which after all is just dependent on the heart finesse.

It is impossible to make anything other than eleven tricks in spades (or hearts) but any North-South who end up in diamonds (I doubt that there will be many) will make ten tricks unless East gets a club ruff

♠J10863
♥A8
♦4
♣A9752

♠A95 ♥QJ753 ♦109 ♣J104

♠72 ♥1092 ♦AJ65 ♣KQ83

♠KQ4
♥K64
♦KQ8732
♣6

HCP	
9	
8	10
13	

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

Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

If West overcalls 1♥ , North can bid 1♠ to show a 5-card suit as a Sputnik double would show a 4-card spade suit. Now it is easy for South to raise his partner's suit. If North's 1♠ only shows four cards, over East's 2♥ South should be able to distinguish between a three and four card raise in spades in that many players use double in this situation to show 3-card support. Those who haven't got this weapon available will just have to settle with bidding 2♠. Come what may, with all that distribution and two aces, North should have the courage to drive on to game. 4♠ should make but continued trump leads by the defence make it very uncomfortable for declarer. However the defence have problems of their own: in particular, when North leads a diamond towards the dummy best defence is for East to duck, which is not an easy play to find.

AUTUMN BRITISH SIM PAIRS

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Monday

Today's writer is Mike Swanson. Mike worked for several years in Liverpool in the Civil Service, firstly in National Savings and then in the JobCentre, where he ran the Hotel & Catering section. His last "real" job was managing what was then the biggest government scheme in the country for young unemployed people.

In 1983 he was approached to set up a private bridge club in Birkenhead on the Wirral. The club was a tremendous success numerically but only modestly so financially. However it led to other things, including his rise to the top of the Tournament Directing ladder in record time and offers to run bridge holidays. Mike was responsible for setting up the national scheme of Tournament Director Training courses and qualifications.
He is also a regular columnist in English Bridge magazine with his "John & Julie" articles.

♠AK54
♥AJ764
♦J
♣Q98

♠J1076 ♠9
♥KQ ♥9832
♦KQ5 ♦108763
♣7643 ♣1052

♠Q832
♥105
♦A942
♣AKJ

HCP	
15	
11	0
14	

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

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♦
Pass	5/6♠		

North is just a little too good merely to raise partner's 1♠ response to the 2-level, though any Norths who do adopt a conservative approach will be rewarded by missing the impossible slam.

Once North has raised to 3♠, South surely will think that 6♠ must be a strong possibility and it is now a question of how he investigates it. If he simply leaps to 4NT, Roman Key-Card Blackwood will show that North has two aces and the ♠K and then 6♠ will be the inevitable resting place. Cue bidding, as suggested above, also reveals that all the aces are held; unfortunately that is not enough!

♠K9
♥KQJ108643
♦9
♣A7

♠A63 ♠Q108754
♥A ♥92
♦AK ♦Q1085
♣QJ96543 ♣8

♠J2
♥75
♦J76432
♣K102

HCP	
13	
18	4
5	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	3	-	-
S	-	-	3	-	-
E	4	1	-	5	-
W	4	1	-	5	-

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		Pass	Pass
1♣	4♥	Pass	Pass
Double			

West has one of those in-between hands at Acol, too good for 1♣ but much too poor for 2♣. Even playing Benjaminised Acol, where it is possible to show an eight playing trick hand with clubs by opening 2♣ and rebidding 3♣, I would be inclined to open 1♣ given the poor quality of the club suit. Come what may, North will surely leap to 4♥ and then what can West do but double when 4♥ is passed round to him? Now the only question is whether East will stand the double (and beat the contract by leading a club) or taking the winning decision of trying 4♠ (if I had been East I would certainly have just passed).
Any West inclined to plough on to 5♣ instead of doubling 4♥ will meet with disaster as any minus score for North-South will reap very few match-points.

♠94
♥9743
♦Q963
♣1065

♠832 ♠KQJ1065
♥K85 ♥QJ6
♦K7 ♦AJ
♣A9874 ♣K2

♠A7
♥A102
♦108542
♣QJ3

HCP	
2	
10	17
11	

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

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			Pass
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

West is certainly worth a slam try after East's jump rebid in spades. 4♣ in the auction above is a cue bid, as is 4♦, but then the auction should grind to a halt as East has no reason to make another try. Even if East or West chooses to ask for aces, they will discover that two aces are missing and the slam will be avoided.

Anyone in 3NT will get an undeserved top if they make eleven tricks but they should be held to nine tricks on continued diamond leads; indeed even a club lead and continuation will get three tricks for the defence.

♠K72
♥AKJ10
♦Q92
♣A109

♠Q9 ♠A10853
♥8 ♥97652
♦KJ765 ♦-
♣KJ874 ♣Q52

♠J64
♥Q43
♦A10843
♣63

HCP	
17	
10	6
7	

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

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
2NT	Double	3♣	Pass
Pass	?		

or

Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass/2♦	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

The only certain thing about this hand is that players are likely to get too high. It is possible that West will open the bidding, particularly if East-West are playing a 2NT opening to show a minor 2-suiter. If West passes then North's 1♥ opening gives South the choice of responding 2♥ or 1NT. I prefer 2♥ over which West surely will bid an unusual 2NT; now North should double to show a good hand but what will he do when 3♣ is passed round to him? If he defends 3♣, doubled or not, it should reap a precious plus score but more likely is failure in 3♥.

♠107
♥J4
♦AJ983
♣AQ53

♠J832 ♠AQ965
♥AK86 ♥Q52
♦Q ♦K4
♣K1042 ♣987

♠K4
♥10973
♦107652
♣J6

HCP	
12	
13	11
4	

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

Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1♦	1♠	2♦
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
Pass/4♠			

Despite only having four points, South will surely raise partner's diamonds over East's 1♠ overcall. Now West could try a competitive double (to show at least a genuine raise to 2♠) or an unassuming cue bid of 3♦ (to show at least a genuine raise to 3♠), or even an over optimistic raise to 4♠. Even if East does show that his overcall is minimum, it is extremely tempting for West to go to game.

Any spade contract will make nine tricks at most tables but an inspired defence can hold it to eight tricks: if South leads a club he can get a club ruff and then lead a diamond to North's Ace; now a fourth round of clubs ensures that South can make a second trump trick with his king.

♠8
♥K863
♦AK104
♣J743

♠AK1063 ♠J9
♥1074 ♥QJ5
♦J62 ♦Q5
♣K8 ♣AQ10965

♠Q7542
♥A92
♦9873
♣2

HCP	
11	
11	12
6	

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

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♠	Double	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT	All Pass

or

Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Double	2♣	All Pass

If West opens 1♠ (I would), North has the perfect hand for a take-out double even if he does only have eleven points. East has a difficult choice to make over partner's 2♠ rebid: 3♣ should be regarded as constructive so it is a possibility, as is 2NT despite the rather thin holding in the red suits. If West passes as dealer then so will North, leaving East free to start with 1♣. Now North can double to show the red suits when West bids 1♠ and 2♣ will probably end the auction. Anyone in No Trumps should make at least eight tricks even if they fail to take the club finesse (they should take it if North has doubled a 1♠ opener) as the spade finesse will come to their rescue *unless* South covers the ♠J with his ♠Q on the first round, which seems unlikely even if it is the right thing to do on the lie of the cards.

♠107
♥1063
♦J1093
♣AQ85

♠98632 ♠KQ54
♥KQJ98 ♥A542
♦Q6 ♦752
♣4 ♣106

♠AJ
♥7
♦AK84
♣KJ9732

HCP	
7	
8	9
16	

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

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	Pass	Pass	1♣
1♥	2♣	2/3♥	5♣

or

	Pass	Pass	1♣
2♣	3♣	4♣	5♣

I rather hope that the second auction actually occurs! Any West playing Michael's Cue Bids will be tempted to bid 2♣ to show 5-5 in the majors even though his spades could be a little stronger. Now it seems reasonable for North to raise to 3♣ and East to show a fit for both majors by bidding 4♣, followed by South going to the 5-level. If West doesn't use a cue bid, surely he will bid 1♥ given the quality of the suit.

5♣ is destined to fail unless declarer plays against the odds and drops the ♦Q rather than taking the finesse.

♠6
♥QJ762
♦A84
♣A763

♠J7 ♠K10842
♥98 ♥AK4
♦KJ1032 ♦Q76
♣Q952 ♣K10

♠AQ953
♥1053
♦95
♣J84

HCP	
11	
7	15
7	

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

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

or

		1♠	Pass
1NT	2♥	?	

It is very tempting for North to bid over West's 1NT response to 1♠, but what should he bid? 2♥ is somewhat brave but the alternative of double, to show a take-out double of 1♠, will cause South real problems. Undoubtedly the best thing for North to do is pass and lead a heart. If North does bid 2♥ it is difficult for East to do the right thing and pass, but if he does bid what should he do? 2♠ will be a popular choice but I can see some overstating the hand by bidding 2NT and others doubling (and I'll wager that in many cases partner will not be sure whether it is for penalties or take-out!). Come what may this is a hand on which any plus score should be quite good as most contracts are destined to fail – 2♥ can make double dummy but seven tricks are much more likely.

♠KQ954
♥42
♦J
♣KJ843

♠107 ♠8
♥J1063 ♥Q95
♦AK92 ♦Q108643
♣A95 ♣1076

♠AJ632
♥AK87
♦75
♣Q2

HCP	
10	
12	4
14	

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

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1♠
Double	4♣ / 4♦	Pass	4♥
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

West has the thinnest of take-out doubles of 1♠ over which North has to decide how far to jump. He is certainly worth 4♠ but his distribution is such that, opposite a maximum opener, 6♠ might well be a possibility. I was brought up on splinter bids so I would be inclined to bid 4♦ to show a diamond shortage and a raise to 4♠; however fit-showing jumps are now quite popular and, using these, North would bid 4♣ to show his suit rather than his shortage. Whichever method is used, North will either cue bid his ♥A or just sign off in 4♠.
This should be a very flat board as it is hard to imagine anything other than 4♠ making an overtrick. Any East deciding to sacrifice in 5♦ will regret it as an 800 penalty awaits.

♠KJ862
♥Q1075
♦2
♣Q73

♠104 ♠A7
♥AK842 ♥J63
♦AJ87 ♦K1065
♣AK ♣9642

♠Q953
♥9
♦Q943
♣J1085

HCP	
8	
19	8
5	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	1	-
S	-	-	-	1	-
E	2	4	5	-	3
W	2	4	5	-	3

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West	*East*	or	*West*	*East*	or	*West*	*East*
1♥	2♥		1♥	1NT		2NT	3♣
4♥			3♦	4♥		3♥	4♥

There are several possible auctions, all of which should get East-West to 4♥. If West opens 1♥ I have a strong preference for raising to 2♥ on the East hand, even playing 4-card majors; however a 1NT response should still lead to the same final contract. If West is playing Benjaminised Acol he may well open 2NT (19-20); now 3NT could well be the final contract unless a 3♣ response asks about 5-card (and 4-card) majors.
4♥ should make at least ten tricks provided that declarer doesn't just cash the ♥AK in the hope that the Queen falls. A small heart to the jack is the winning line and then it is more than likely that the defence will take a diamond trick as well as a spade. Declarer can take four diamond tricks but it involves the unlikely line of leading the ♦10.

♠72
♥J84
♦K108752
♣109

♠K9 ♠J1064
♥5 ♥Q1073
♦AQJ6 ♦43
♣KQJ643 ♣A82

♠AQ853
♥AK962
♦9
♣75

HCP	
4	
16	7
13	

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

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	Pass	Pass	1♠
2♣	Pass	3♣	3♥
4♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

After South's 1♠ opening West is a little too strong just to overcall 2♣ and is also a bit too lopsided to double for take-out as partner might leap around in hearts; however 3♣ won't be an option for most Wests as it seems very few people play strong jump overcalls nowadays. All in all 2♣ seems the least of all evils, with the hope that reversing into diamonds might be possible later. East is just worth a non-constructive raise to 3♣ over which I doubt that South will be able to resist bidding 3♥, despite only having a minimum opener. West may now be tempted to leap to 5♣, especially if he thinks East has promised more than he actually holds, a shame because ten tricks is the limit of the hand; however if West realises that partner's 3♣ is not a serious try he may be able to restrain himself and settle for the part-score.

♠AQJ1074
♥K
♦AQ95
♣64

♠32 ♠9865
♥742 ♥AJ865
♦J2 ♦863
♣AK10832 ♣Q

♠K
♥Q1093
♦K1074
♣J975

HCP		
	16	
8		7
	9	

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

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		Pass	Pass
3♣	3♠	All Pass	

or

		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
2♣	2♦	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠?

I would not be able to restrain myself from opening 3♣ on the West hand. Yes I know it is vulnerable and only a 6-card suit but it is in third seat, so it is odds on that North holds a good hand. Now North's 3♠ is likely to end the auction and the game will be missed. If West passes initially, North will get the chance to show both of his suits which should prompt a raise to 3♦ from South; now North can make an extra try and South, with a maximum hand for 1NT and good holdings in both opener's suits (I consider the singleton ♠K opposite a good 6-card suit as a good holding) may well go to game.

♠J62
♥KQJ
♦QJ98
♣A105

♠Q74 ♠A98
♥10964 ♥A5
♦1064 ♦AK7
♣K62 ♣J9743

♠K1053
♥8732
♦532
♣Q8

HCP		
	14	
5		16
	5	

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

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			Pass
Pass	1NT	Double	2♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

I could have put a myriad of auctions above depending on the chosen method after 1NT has been doubled, be it natural or one of the many variations of wriggle. A number of methods involve redouble forcing partner to bid 2♣ in preparation for responder to show a 5-card suit, whilst an immediate suit bid shows the lower of two 4-card suits, hence the 2♥ bid above. Is there a best method? Quite simply no, otherwise there would be more agreement amongst leading players.
Anyone playing in 1NT* is likely to go one down, but success or two down are both possible. Any plus score for North-South will be very good whilst East-West may well need to beat +100 to fare well. Those playing natural methods who run to 2♣ on the South hand, intending to try an SOS redouble when doubled, may well play there.

♠43
♥1086
♦KQ7
♣A8764

♠965 ♠10
♥QJ732 ♥AK54
♦A5 ♦J10864
♣Q102 ♣KJ9

♠AKQJ872
♥9
♦932
♣53

HCP		
	9	
9		12
	10	

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

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
Pass	Pass	1♦	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Only the most conservative of players will fail to bid 4♠ on the South hand. For those who only bid 3♠, and consequently missed the game, I would ask "Would you have bid 3♠ if the ♠QJ had been small cards?" My guess is that the answer is yes, in which case hopefully next time hopefully more aggression will be called for. After 1♦-3♠ West may be able to double for take-out, in which case 4♥ may be reached; now it begs the question, will South bid again? The answer is probably yes, but now East-West have the chance to go on in hearts.

Any East-West pairs that do find their heart fit will fare well, even if they are playing in 5♥, which should only go one down as the diamonds set up easily for extra tricks.

♠2
♥75
♦QJ875
♣86432

♠Q9765 ♠AJ
♥A1086 ♥K43
♦92 ♦K64
♣75 ♣AKJ109

♠K10843
♥QJ92
♦A103
♣Q

HCP		
	3	
6		19
	12	

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

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	Pass	1♣	Double
1♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass

or

	Pass	1♣	1♠
Dble/1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

At some tables East may well open 2NT (19-20) over which West has a problem: he can either use 3♣ to ask about majors and forget his fifth spade or show five spades and forget his four hearts. Playing transfers there is a solution – using a 3♠ response to show precisely five spades and four hearts. If East opens 1♣, South has to decide whether to double or bid 1♠. It is a close call but I would choose 1♠, hoping to bid 2♥ on the next round. Over 1♠ West could double to show his hearts, bid 1NT to show his spades, or even pass. Come what may the final contract should be 3NT. Lack of entries may force declarer to fell the ♣Q and, should South lead the ♥Q, an overtrick could emerge. If West is declarer and North leads the ♦Q, declarer must duck twice to succeed.

♠10962
♥K86
♦A73
♣AK10

♠AJ8 ♠K53
♥A104 ♥93
♦Q102 ♦KJ65
♣QJ96 ♣7542

♠Q74
♥QJ752
♦984
♣83

HCP		
	14	
14		7
	5	

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

I can't imagine many tables playing in anything other than 1NT; even those playing a strong NT should end up there.

Declarer has seven relatively easy tricks to take; all that is needed is to take the spade finesse and drive out the ♦A. North will surely start by leading a spade which gives nothing away apart from the working finesse. However any North who takes the really poor decision to start with a top club "to take a look" will rue his decision as now the stage is set for declarer possibly to roll home nine tricks as the clubs will now produce two extra tricks.

Some strong NT pairs may end up with East as declarer, in which case a heart lead is probable, but so long as he ducks twice declarer should still succeed.

♠7543
♥KJ4
♦1093
♣J106

♠AKQ982 ♠-
♥1098 ♥AQ7
♦7 ♦AQJ542
♣732 ♣AKQ9

♠J106
♥6532
♦K86
♣854

HCP		
	5	
9		22
	4	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	7	5	6	7	5
W	7	5	6	7	5

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			Pass
2♠ (weak)	Pass	3NT	All Pass

or

			Pass
Pass	Pass	2♣ (Acol)	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♠/4NT/6NT?			

This hand seems as if it has been especially set up for making unlikely contracts (6♥ looks like a hand that should be played by the Rueful Rabbit in Victor Mollo's Bridge in the Menagerie series). In reality, if West opens with a weak 2♠, only those who get carried away who are likely to reach a slam. If however West passes then East will start with an Acol 2♣, and now West could easily get carried away. He will start with ♠2 then ♠3, but over 3NT from partner he will now think that he has a very good 9-count opposite a minimum of 23 points, so slam seems likely – but which one?

♠A10
♥A3
♦AJ42
♣109743

♠QJ876 ♠432
♥6 ♥10754
♦65 ♦KQ987
♣AJ865 ♣Q

♠K95
♥KQJ982
♦103
♣K2

HCP	
13	
8	7
12	

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		Pass	1♥
2♥	Double	2♠	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Given the favourable vulnerability West has the ideal hand for a Michael's Cue Bid to show 5-5 in spades and a minor (or for a Ghestem bid to show spades and clubs). My guess is that most pairs have not really discussed what to do over such a bid: one approach is to use 3♥ as pre-emptive and 2♠ (a cue bid of the opponent's suit) as a real 3♥ bid, now double can be used as a generally good hand inviting partner to double for penalties if appropriate. When East bids 2♠ South will just want to rebid his hearts and now North should go to 4♥ rather than try 3NT.
4♥ should always make ten tricks as declarer can ruff his third spade in the dummy. A club ruff doesn't even help the defence as, left to his own devices, declarer will lose two club tricks anyway.

♠J652
♥KJ1087
♦A5
♣K10

♠AQ107 ♠93
♥Q5 ♥92
♦Q8 ♦KJ763
♣98763 ♣AQ52

♠K84
♥A643
♦10942
♣J4

HCP	
12	
10	10
8	

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

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			Pass
Pass	1♥	2♦	2♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

or

			Pass
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	Pass	3♥

East's diamond suit is certainly a bit thin for an overcall but many will think it is "now or never" and take a chance with 2♦; however it will take a very brave East to bid 3♣ on the next round when 2♥ is passed round to him. If East passes initially he has the opportunity to try an unusual 2NT over 2♥ (only promising 5-4 in the minors given that he didn't do it on the first round). At many tables though North-South will have an uninterrupted auction. If the defence fails to get its spade ruff North should manage eight tricks in hearts for a good score if he is only in 2♥.

♠Q4
♥Q92
♦J654
♣A764

♠K32 ♠J1087
♥K1063 ♥J7
♦Q832 ♦9
♣J3 ♣Q109852

♠A965
♥A854
♦AK107
♣K

HCP	
9	
9	4
18	

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

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

or

Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT

The textbooks all say to open 1♥ on the South hand, though my preference would be 1♦ as the hand is well suited to a 2/3NT rebid over a 2♣ response. Whether North responds 2♥ or 1NT to 1♥, South has to press on and 2NT, even with a singleton ♣K, strikes me as the best option.
3NT is very fortunate to make in that West holds both the major suit kings <u>and</u> has club shortage. Those who press on to 4♥ will be less lucky as failure is almost inevitable.

♠K10
♥KJ643
♦J
♣AJ1075

♠8764 ♠AJ93
♥1095 ♥72
♦AQ74 ♦K86
♣Q3 ♣K862

♠Q52
♥AQ8
♦109532
♣94

HCP	
13	
8	11
8	

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1♥	Double	2♥
2♠	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

It will be a matter of style as to what South bids over East's double of 1♥. Raising hearts looks the best course of action, though 2♥ does seem a little conservative; however 3♥ just looks wrong if you are playing 4-card majors. 1NT is the alternative: this may prove the lucky choice if North overstates his hand by bidding 3♣ over West's 2♠ as now South will surely bid 4♥.
4♥ can always be made, though on continued trump leads it almost requires being able to see through the back of the cards. The key to success is setting up the club suit which requires ruffing the third round high in the dummy: on a trump lead declarer must win in dummy, lead the ♣9 and, if West covers with the ♣Q, take the ♣A and immediately play a diamond to create an entry back to hand for drawing trumps later.

♠KQ
♥AQJ4
♦10654
♣J62

♠6542 ♠AJ87
♥K7 ♥1062
♦A ♦KJ932
♣AQ9854 ♣K

♠1093
♥9853
♦Q87
♣1073

HCP	
13	
13	12
2	

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

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		1♦	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Any West that chooses to respond 1♠ rather than 2♣ to partner's 1♦ opening is a very lucky soul. Should partner rebid 2♦ rather than raise spades, West would face an impossible rebid as 3♣ would certainly show a 5-card suit and the rather dreadful 3NT rebid would produce a forlorn final resting place if North finds a diamond lead (even a heart lead only produces ten tricks which will be outscored by 4♠). After the more sensible start of 1♦-2♣-2♦ West still has the unenviable rebid of 2♠ on four small (what else can he do?) which will result in 4♠ being reached. At first sight two trump losers look inevitable but when the ♠KQ are onside all is rosy for declarer; indeed if North fails to cash his ♥A in the hope that declarer will want to take the finesse, twelve tricks should emerge.

♠K643
♥K84
♦94
♣Q763

♠AJ10975 ♠2
♥A2 ♥QJ10963
♦65 ♦K3
♣AJ4 ♣10952

♠Q8
♥75
♦AQJ10872
♣K8

HCP	
8	
14	6
12	

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

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1♦
2♠	Pass	Pass	3♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The one thing I am sure of is that the auction above won't happen very often! 1♦ looks a routine opening bid though there will be some who try an over strength 3♦ or 4♦ instead. Those who play intermediate jump overcalls will bid 2♠ over South's 1♦. The question is then will East find a disciplined pass (he should) or will he try to rescue the situation by bidding 3♥? If he does West will certainly raise him to the doomed game. If East passes, South's 3♦ should come round to him and now if East bids 3♥ it should produce a plus score, either by being the final contract or by driving South on to 4♦.
Of course 4♦ could scrape home if East-West fail to get their spade ruff; whilst ♥A is the likely opening lead, dummy's major suit cards should persuade West to find the switch.

♠AQ43
♥4
♦AQ104
♣10942

♠1087 ♠KJ65
♥AJ853 ♥Q106
♦962 ♦J87
♣A3 ♣J86

♠92
♥K972
♦K53
♣KQ75

HCP	
12	
9	8
11	

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♣

or

Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT

It depends when you learned to play as to whether you open 1♣ or 1♦ on the North hand. The old style is suit below the singleton, whereas modern teaching tends to be middle of three touching suits, otherwise 1♣. I would be tempted to rebid 1NT on the South cards irrespective of partner's opening but I would be wrong on this occasion if it were 1♣, as 3♣ is a much better contract than 1NT. In 1NT after a small heart lead, declarer is best placed by now leading the ♣K; if West wins the trick he must now lead another small heart to partner's ♥10, but if instead he leads the ♥A the defence can only take three hearts and 1NT should roll home.

♠AK1032
♥-
♦A108
♣QJ1053

♠- ♠J874
♥J87653 ♥KQ94
♦K75 ♦432
♣AK64 ♣87

♠Q965
♥A102
♦QJ96
♣92

HCP	
14	
11	6
9	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	4	-	5	4
S	3	4	-	5	4
E	-	-	3	-	-
W	-	-	3	-	-

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♠

or

	1♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Playing Acol the text books all say that North should start by opening 1♠; however there will be many who decide on 1♣. After 1♣-1♠ West has to decide whether to intervene with 2♥ on what is an awful suit - I am sure that a lot of Wests will take the very risky plunge. Once partner has shown spades, North is well worth a slam try and splinter bid of 3♥ showing heart shortage seems best (2♥ would be a reverse and forcing so 3♥ should be a high enough jump to show a shortage rather than a suit), over which South will just sign off. If North opens 1♠, after a couple of cue bids (showing first round control) the bidding should die in 4♠ which should make eleven tricks provided that declarer makes the safety play of cashing a top spade in the North hand to guard against a 4-0 break either side.

♠A753
♥107
♦KQ84
♣754

♠98 ♠J
♥KJ42 ♥AQ9653
♦A1096 ♦3
♣K63 ♣QJ1082

♠KQ10642
♥8
♦J752
♣A9

HCP	
9	
11	10
10	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	3	-	3	-
S	-	3	-	3	-
E	4	-	5	-	-
W	4	-	5	-	-

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		1♥	2♠
3♥	4♠	5♣/5♥	All Pass

East is a little too good to contemplate starting with a pre-emptive bid, though I can understand the temptation to do so. A 2♠ overcall by South is possible whether it is supposed to be weak or intermediate; then it is just a question of how many hearts West bids (I would favour 4♥ but my guess is that most will settle for 3♥). Once partner has supported him, East just does not have a hand that wants to defend and so going to the 5-level is inevitable. The question is what East will do if the opponents try 5♠: doubling them is the right action but I can see some people bidding 6♥.
Any heart contract is bound to make eleven tricks (it is inconceivable that the defence will forget to lead spades – twice) whereas spades could get up to 10 tricks if the defence fails to take its diamond ruff (again highly unlikely as it is routine for East to switch to diamonds after taking the ♥A).

♠J1087652
♥K10
♦10
♣J63

♠Q4 ♠3
♥A53 ♥J8742
♦J973 ♦K8652
♣AQ85 ♣K9

♠AK9
♥Q96
♦AQ4
♣10742

HCP	
5	
13	7
15	

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

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

Even by my standards East is a bit too weak for an unusual 2NT after 1♣-1♠; however if he does try 2NT he might regret it as it might well drive his opponents on to 4♠ which will often make. East-West need to take their club tricks before declarer gains the lead; otherwise he can jettison a club after taking the diamond finesse or, on a heart lead without a club switch by discarding on the ♥Q and then maybe even taking the diamond finesse as well for eleven tricks.

A more likely resting place is 2♠ which is likely to make just nine tricks (except maybe on a heart lead) as declarer won't want to risk a losing diamond finesse for fear of being held to eight tricks.

♠A64
♥AK964
♦Q54
♣32

♠32 ♠J9
♥J732 ♥85
♦K72 ♦AJ86
♣9864 ♣AQJ105

♠KQ10875
♥Q10
♦1093
♣K7

HCP	
13	
4	13
10	

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

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
Pass	1♥	2♣	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

I don't think there is any doubt that South should continue to 4♠ after partner has bid 3♠: all his values are in the right place *and* he has an extra trump. Any defenders that actually defeat 4♠ deserve my congratulations as to find a diamond switch after the initial club lead is certainly something I don't think I would achieve at the duplicate pairs table.

In practice most Easts are just going to settle for a club return as partner's lead of the ♣8 (second highest in the style of **M**iddle-**U**p-**D**own against suit contracts) could easily be from ♣K98 with declarer false carding from ♣764. Now declarer has time set up the hearts for a discard, which is all that is needed to make eleven tricks.

♠J843
♥A9543
♦A
♣K75

♠KQ1075 ♠62
♥Q10 ♥KJ872
♦752 ♦94
♣982 ♣AJ106

♠A9
♥6
♦KQJ10863
♣Q43

HCP	
12	
7	9
12	

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

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1♥	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♦/3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

I have sympathy with any South who really does not know what to bid over North's 2♥ rebid as I am really not sure myself. The partnership auction 1♥-2♦-2♥-3♦ should be regarded as constructive but not forcing, so there is a strong case to go down that route and a diamond part-score is the most sensible option. A 3NT rebid by South will certainly work on the lie of cards but it is very risky: if West leads the ♠K declarer has to hope that East has the ♣A, otherwise 3NT will fail spectacularly.
Those who reach 5♦ could well succeed: after the ♠K lead declarer is best placed to return a spade in the hope of throwing a club on the ♠J. Now the defence has to switch to hearts in order to stop declarer having an entry back to dummy after drawing trumps.