

CLUB STRATIFIED SIM PAIRS



11th March 2013

Monday



Welcome to the third Club Stratified Sim Pairs.

Our commentator today is Brian Senior, bridge author, newspaper columnist and player.

You may wonder how the stratification works and which strat you are in. There are four categories of strats. The main strat 'A' is open to everyone but if either member of the pair is a Tournament Master or above you will be in the 'A' strat and can only get master points from the overall ranking. If both of you are below the rank of Tournament Master you will be 'B' strat; both below Master means you will be in 'C' strat and both below District Master will make you 'D' strat.

Blue points and local points will be awarded to the top third of the overall ranking list. In addition the top third of each strat will get blue points and local points.

If you are entitled to overall points and points for your strat, you will only get the higher of the awards – you won't get two lots of points.

Master points cannot be allocated until after the event is finalised, usually about three weeks. Please keep your scorecard for that period. If we find any unusual scores we may need to contact the club scorer and also the players. Full results can be found at www.ebu.co.uk/sims/

<p>♠ J1084 ♥ 753 ♦ 1085 ♣ 543</p> <p>♠ K63 ♠ A97 ♥ K962 ♥ AQ ♦ 64 ♦ AQJ32 ♣ AKQ2 ♣ J96</p> <p>♠ Q52 ♥ J1084 ♦ K97 ♣ 1087</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>15</td><td>6</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>6</td><td>6</td><td>5</td><td>4</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>6</td><td>6</td><td>5</td><td>4</td><td>6</td></tr></table>	HCP		1	18	15	6	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	6	6	5	4	6	W	6	6	5	4	6	<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <p>The set starts with a bang with an excellent slam for E/W. It should be pretty straightforward to get there: 1 ♦ – 1 ♥ – 2NT – 6NT, is simple and to the point.</p> <p>With nine tricks in the other suits, slam is cold whenever the diamond king is onside or diamonds split three-three. there are also some extra chances – the ♥ J-10 could fall in three rounds or there may be a squeeze, though an opening spade lead and spade return after a losing diamond finesse would mess up the communications for that. Not to worry – on this occasion the diamond is offside but the even break means declarer has no problem in coming to twelve tricks.</p> <p>The auction looks to be a simple one and there is no reason why the overwhelming majority of the field should not get to slam.</p>
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<p>♠ KQJ ♥ K9 ♦ AQJ95 ♣ A102</p> <p>♠ A98764 ♠ 105 ♥ J ♥ Q7432 ♦ 2 ♦ 763 ♣ KJ954 ♣ 763</p> <p>♠ 32 ♥ A10865 ♦ K1084 ♣ Q8</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>20</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>9</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>1</td><td>6</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>5</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>	HCP		20	2	9	9	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	1	5	4	-	5	S	1	6	5	-	5	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <p>Left to themselves, N/S are likely to get to 3NT after a 2NT opening from North and transfer response from South. However, they will not be left to themselves. The question is not, will West open in third seat, but what will West open in third seat?</p> <p>Pre-emption is very much a matter of personal or partnership style, but I would think that my 6-5 shape made my hand far too good for a weak 2 ♠ opening, while the empty main suit would put me off opening at the four level. Which leaves a 3 ♠ opening. That will not inconvenience North all that much – with a balanced 20 HCP and double spade stopper he has a routine 3NT overcall and, while South might worry that 4 ♥ could be a better spot, he will pass as he cannot afford to risk a five-two fit.</p> <p>Eleven tricks is the normal outcome in 3NT. Declarer should get the hearts right for three winners without loss, using restricted choice when the jack falls, combined with the knowledge that West has length elsewhere so rates to be short in hearts. It probably won't matter. Only if West ducks the opening lead, declarer gets hearts wrong, and East switches to a club on winning the third heart, might declarer be held to ten tricks.</p>
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<p>♠ Q64 ♥ 87 ♦ J2 ♣ KJ10542</p> <p>♠ K1052 ♠ AJ983 ♥ AK654 ♥ 103 ♦ 6 ♦ Q9843 ♣ Q73 ♣ 6</p> <p>♠ 7 ♥ QJ92 ♦ AK1075 ♣ A98</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>7</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>14</td><td></td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		7		12	7	14		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	3	1	-	-	-		S	3	1	-	-	-		E	-	-	2	3	-		W	-	-	1	3	-		<p>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <p>We have all been in worse spade games than this one but accurate defence should hold E/W to nine tricks in a spade contract.</p> <p>When South opens 1♦, the modern expert approach is to overcall 1♥ with the West hand, as a double will tend to lose the fifth heart. Of course, on this occasion, a take-out double works better as the spade fit is found immediately. Where West overcalls, North may double to show some points, unless that promises four spades for his partnership, when he will have to pass. East might scrape up a 1♠ bid either way, and West raise – I would raise to 3♠ but then as East decline the invitation. the West hand may contain only 12 HCP, but I would have overcalled with four low spades and would now still raise to 2♠ so I have a whole spare king, hence the jump raise.</p> <p>If both North and East pass, South will pass out 1♥ and West can be held to seven tricks on a diamond lead. If North doubles and East passes, South will rebid 2♦ and West may double for take-out, duly finding the spade fit. If North passes over 1♥ and East bids 1♠, South will pass.</p>
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<p>♠ J52 ♥ AKQ6 ♦ AQ73 ♣ 95</p> <p>♠ 874 ♠ A103 ♥ 84 ♥ 10973 ♦ 94 ♦ J10865 ♣ KJ6432 ♣ Q</p> <p>♠ KQ96 ♥ J52 ♦ K2 ♣ A1087</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>16</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>13</td><td></td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</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><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		16		4	7	13		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	3	4	5	5	5		S	3	4	5	5	5		E	-	-	-	-	-		W	-	-	-	-	-		<p>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <p>This may be the flattest board of the night, with almost everyone playing 3NT on the N/S cards and making eleven tricks.</p> <p>the vulnerability should dissuade West from opening or overcalling 3♣, so N/S will have a free run to their chosen contract and, with a flat 16 facing a flat 13 and no 8-card fit, that contract will surely be 3NT.</p> <p>The only possible variation would come if North opened 1♦/♥ and, scared of the weak doubleton, raised the 1♠ response to 2♠. Now a lazy South might just jump to 4♠ rather than check for 3NT along the way. That combination of bids will earn a deserved near bottom. To raise to 2♠ with 16 HCP is misleading to partner.</p> <p>I am very much of the view that balanced hands should either open or rebid in no trump unless an eight-card major-suit fit has already been found. Auctions are so much easier when one partner limits both his shape and strength at his first or second turn.</p>
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<p>♠ 53 ♥ 832 ♦ J1052 ♣ AKJ4</p> <p>♠ 982 ♠ AK4 ♥ K ♥ AJ105 ♦ KQ9873 ♦ A4 ♣ Q96 ♣ 10752</p> <p>♠ QJ1076 ♥ Q9764 ♦ 6 ♣ 83</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>9</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td></td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		9		10	16	5		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	1	-	-		S	-	-	1	-	-		E	3	3	-	1	2		W	3	3	-	1	2		<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <p>This is a tricky one. With a combined 26 HCP, it seems normal for E/W to get to 3NT. Getting there and making nine tricks are two different things, however. A heart lead takes the entry out of the West hand so that there are only three diamond tricks to be had. After this start, the defence may need to be a little careful, but they are in control and the contract should be defeated. But South will normally lead a spade. East wins and clears the diamonds, wins the spade return and crosses to the king of hearts to cash the diamonds. Declarer can succeed double dummy. If North comes down to four clubs, so does East, throwing the heart ace, while if North keeps three clubs and a heart, again, East does likewise.</p> <p>Declarer will do very well to get this ending right – unless South made some kind of two-suited overcall to tip him off about the distribution. For the record, I would not dream of bidding 2♣ (Michaels) over a 1♣ opening, vulnerable and with only 5 HCP, and neither would I come in over a strong no trump at this vulnerability.</p> <p>Those who succeed in making 3NT should score very well, while those who go down will have plenty of company.</p>
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<p>♠ 1062 ♥ A7 ♦ KQ10 ♣ AKQ98</p> <p>♠ A874 ♠ KJ53 ♥ KJ8 ♥ Q653 ♦ 96 ♦ A74 ♣ 10743 ♣ 62</p> <p>♠ Q9 ♥ 10942 ♦ J8532 ♣ J5</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>18</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>4</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		18	10	8	4	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	2	3	-	-	-		S	2	3	-	-	-		E	-	-	1	2	-		W	-	-	1	2	-		<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <p>N/S can make 2♣ but a trick extra if they can get to diamonds.</p> <p>The problem is that if South scrapes up a response North will jump to 2NT, and a lead of either major should see that defeated by a couple of tricks.</p> <p>After North opens 1♣ in fourth seat, East may double, showing his maximum pass and support for the other three suits. Trusting partner to hold both majors for this action, West can jump to 2♠, which can be made.</p> <p>That puts North in an awkward position. His opponents are both passed hands so he knows the hand may belong to his side, but with no spade stopper he cannot bid 2NT, and with only one suit will be scared to double. Perhaps he will rebid 3♣ and play there. If the defence prevents a spade ruff in the dummy, and ducks two rounds of diamonds to cut declarer off from the long tricks in that suit, 3♣ can be beaten by a trick.</p> <p>There is nothing particularly difficult in this defence, but that doesn't mean that everyone will manage it.</p>
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<p>♠ 876 ♥ A105 ♦ QJ94 ♣ AQ10</p> <p>♠ Q32 ♠ A1094 ♥ 76 ♥ K83 ♦ A10653 ♦ 82 ♣ 752 ♣ KJ84</p> <p>♠ KJ5 ♥ QJ942 ♦ K7 ♣ 963</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>13</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>10</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		13	11	6	10	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	2	-	1		S	-	-	1	-	-		E	1	1	-	1	-		W	1	1	-	1	-		<p>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <p>North will often open 1NT after two passes and South will transfer to 2♥, ending the auction. East will probably lead a diamond rather than make a dangerous lead in a black suit.</p> <p>If North opens 1♣, South will respond 1♥ then probably pass the 1NT rebid. East will lead a spade and get the defence off to a good start – can West find the club switch when in with the queen of spades?</p> <p>If North opens 1♦, some Easts will scrape up a double, though I would go quietly facing a passed partner, vulnerable, and with four cards in only one of the majors. Whatever East's decision, South will bid 1♥ and North rebid 1NT. Now East has a choice of black-suit leads, with spades working out better than clubs.</p> <p>It is a little unclear what will be a good score on this one. In both heart and no trump contracts there could be anything from seven to nine tricks made but the most popular number being eight. My guess is that +120 will score well and +110 around average, but the play and defence in either contract can go in so many different ways that it is hard to be sure.</p>
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<p>♠ KQJ ♥ K7 ♦ K108765 ♣ 32</p> <p>♠ 832 ♠ 1076 ♥ QJ983 ♥ 102 ♦ 4 ♦ AQ3 ♣ AKQJ ♣ 109864</p> <p>♠ A954 ♥ A654 ♦ J92 ♣ 75</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>13</td><td>9</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		12	6	13	9	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	3	-	1	-		S	-	3	-	1	-		E	2	-	2	-	1		W	2	-	2	-	1		<p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <p>West will open 1♥ and North overcall 2♦. East does not really have the strength or shape to get involved so will pass and South has a raise to 3♦, perhaps via a 2♥ unassuming cuebid. Though he has the right shortage to wish to compete, West is not all that strong and, facing a partner who could not act over 2♦, will usually go quietly. North has a close to minimum overcall so will pass a 3♦ raise or sign off in 3♦ over the 2♥ cuebid – to bid 2NT now, merely because North has a heart stopper, would be an error. Anything other than a 3♦ sign-off should show extra values, otherwise partner does not know what to do. If North signs off in 3♦ and South has a strong hand, he can always continue with a second heart cuebid to check for a stopper.</p> <p>The defence has three chances to get to their club tricks so there should be an almost universal nine tricks in a diamond contract.</p>
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E	2	-	2	-	1																																												
W	2	-	2	-	1																																												

♠842

♥J854

♦102

♣Q853

♠AK103

♥10762

♦K96

♣KJ

♠QJ765

♥AK

♦Q4

♣A1062

♠9

♥Q93

♦AJ8753

♣974

HCP	
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Makeable contracts						
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N	-	-	-	-	-	
S	-	-	-	-	-	
E	5	2	4	6	5	
W	5	2	4	6	5	

♠J42

♥AQ

♦1072

♣K9873

♠10765

♥942

♦A8

♣AJ64

♠K93

♥85

♦KJ653

♣1052

♠AQ8

♥KJ10763

♦Q94

♣Q

HCP	
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9	7
14	

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

♠86

♥J83

♦875

♣KQ973

♠J97542

♥K942

♦K94

♣-

♠KQ

♥A75

♦Q

♣AJ106542

♠A103

♥Q106

♦AJ10632

♣8

HCP	
6	
7	16
11	

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

E/W have a cold slam in spades. If South passes over the 1♠ opening, West can respond 2NT, whatever version of Jacoby game-forcing raise the partnership employs. It would be nice for East to be able to rebid 3♣, natural and showing extra values, but not everyone can do that. If a new suit would show shortage, East may have to rebid 3NT, strong and balanced. As long as West co-operates with a cuebid, East’s extra values should see him drive to slam.

But South may not go quietly. Facing a passed partner and seeing that his opponents have a probable spade fit, he may trade on the favourable vulnerability and make a weak jump overcall of 3♦. Now West should not bid a lazy 4♠, which could see the slam missed as he would also make that bid on quite a bit less than this. Instead, he should cuebid 4♦. For me, this merely shows a hand that is too good for a jump to 4♠, and does not promise a diamond control.

Whether or not you have this agreement, 4♦ is the correct action on this deal as West does have a control in the opponents’ suit.

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

3NT is a fortunate make on the N/S cards but most will stop off in a peaceful heart partscore. Playing weak NT Acol, North is just worth a 2♣ response to South’s 1♥ opening – the rule is, imagine that opener has 15-16 balanced and, if you would rather play 3NT than 1NT, make a two-over-one response as he will pass if you respond 1NT. Whether North responds 1NT or 2♣, South rebids 2♥ and usually plays there.

West will probably lead a spade to the nine and queen and declarer has to play a club before drawing trumps so that he has an entry to the club winner. West wins and must avoid a second spade play, which costs a trick.

If he switches to ace and another diamond, he gets a ruff and the spade loser goes away on the ♣K for +140.

If West defends passively, leading a trump, the defence comes to three diamond tricks for the same result as declarer does not have dummy entries to set up a diamond winner after drawing trumps.

But if West leads a second spade, declarer has three spade winners and throws a diamond on the club king to score +170.

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

When South opens 1♦, most Wests will overcall 1♠ and East, with 16 HCP, is unlikely to let him get out below game. If North passes (he might consider a raise to 2♦ if 1♦ promised at least four cards) East bids a simple 2♣ and West does best to rebid 2♠. East may just raise that to game or may try his own suit once more.

If East bids 3♣, West may bid 3♥, as he does not want to put down a trump void in the dummy, and now surely East will bid the spade game.

There are ten tricks in a spade contract, with a diamond going away on the ace of clubs. 4♠ is not a good contract, requiring that both majors play for one loser, but it is the sort of contract that we all get to just on momentum.

I suspect that those who stop short of game will score quite poorly, which is unlucky for them – they have won the auction but lost the board.

♠KQ987

♥J109752

♦9

♣6

♠A653

♥K

♦1062

♣Q9753

♠J2

♥Q4

♦AKQ874

♣KJ2

♠104

♥A863

♦J53

♣A1084

HCP

6

9

16

9

Makeable contracts

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

After a pass from West, North will also pass, planning to come in with a two-suited overcall at his next turn. However, when West responds 1♠, that idea has to be dropped.

I could not bear to pass with the North hand – despite the weak main suit the 6-5 distribution offers so much potential, so I would overcall 2♥. East has an easy 3♦ bid and South a raise to 3♥ and now West may compete with 4♦.

Now North has a big decision to make. If he passes, E/W are where they belong, making exactly for +130. But, now that he has found a fit, North has quite a decent hand, with the ♠A rating to be onside more often than not. If he plucks up his courage and bids 4♥, he will be richly rewarded as that contract succeeds, losing a spade, a heart and a diamond.

Plus 620 will score very well, of course, but don't be surprised if some Easts double and concede –790. With all those high cards, few Easts will appreciate the need to sacrifice in 5♦.

♠J932

♥Q109

♦KJ63

♣Q5

♠107

♥K865

♦10742

♣A87

♠84

♥AJ743

♦AQ8

♣964

♠AKQ65

♥2

♦95

♣KJ1032

HCP

9

7

11

13

Makeable contracts

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

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

If you pointed a gun at my head and told me that I had to open the East hand, I would prefer to treat it as a balanced hand and open 1NT, rather than as a single-suited hand and open 1♥. But I see no reason to upgrade this empty 11-count to opening status and would prefer to pass.

If East passes, South opens 1♠, North raises to 2♠, and maybe South makes a game try by bidding 3♣. North has a maximum, pointing to acceptance, but most of the strength is in opener's short suits, pointing in the opposite direction. The fact that game is actually neither here nor there, being on the diamond position, perhaps reflects the borderline nature of North's decision. I suspect that most Norths in this position will jump to 4♠.

If East opens 1♥, South may make a Michaels cuebid, 2♥ showing spades and a minor. the four-card support and fitting honour for whichever minor partner holds suggests a jump to 3♠ on the North cards and South will probably go on to game.

Today, nine tricks is the limit, but on another day bidding game will be the winner.

♠4

♥AQ873

♦K1064

♣Q95

♠87

♥J105

♦987532

♣K2

♠AK10962

♥92

♦-

♣J10863

♠QJ53

♥K64

♦AQJ

♣A74

HCP

11

4

8

17

Makeable contracts

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

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

This is another one of those hands where I would pre-empt a level higher because of the side-suit distribution. I would open 3♠ as East and now South will overcall 3NT and most Norths will pass. Accurate defence leads to ten tricks after a spade lead, but some will no doubt be allowed to make eleven.

Where East opens only 2♠, South overcalls 2NT and North has room to transfer then bid 3NT. Though South knows of an eight-card heart fit, he will usually choose to play the no trump game.

The fate of anyone who gets to 4♥ by South will be decided by the opening lead. If West leads his partner's suit, which looks normal enough, declarer can come to eleven tricks for a useful score.

A diamond lead, however, gives East a ruff and now ten tricks in hearts is very poor for N/S with everyone in no trumps doing better.

♠AJ4

♥K52

♦97

♣KQ1042

♠KQ1092

♥A96

♦10864

♣J

♠7

♥Q1087

♦Q32

♣A9875

♠8653

♥J43

♦AKJ5

♣63

HCP

13

10

8

9

Makeable contracts

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

♠KQJ4

♥A543

♦Q5

♣K83

♠A72

♥107

♦A10432

♣J97

♠10953

♥KQJ6

♦K9876

♣-

♠86

♥982

♦J

♣AQ106542

HCP

15

9

9

7

Makeable contracts

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

♠642

♥93

♦109652

♣J63

♠AKJ9853

♥10

♦AJ7

♣Q5

♠Q7

♥AJ872

♦Q4

♣A1042

♠10

♥KQ654

♦K83

♣K987

HCP

1

15

13

11

Makeable contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	2	4	6	6
W	3	2	4	6	5

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

Those who open 1♣ on the North cards and get a 1♠ response from South are likely to be left to play in 1NT, their normal rebid, as South has taken away West’s suit and North has taken East’s bid. As the cards lie, eight tricks can be made in 1NT; though there will no doubt be some who make only seven.

Where North opens 1NT, that will often run around to West and he will compete with either 2♠ or a two-suited bid to show spades and another. E/W can probably scramble six tricks in any of three suits and the favourable vulnerability means that two down costs only –100, which will score OK for them. However, if N/S start to double, there should be no escape.

It is also possible that East will come in over 1NT – playing one of the Asptro family of defences, for example, he can bid 2♣ to show hearts and another. When West now bids 2♥ it is unlikely that anyone will be able to make a penalty double.

As always, it is much safer to compete if your methods permit you to show two suits rather than just one.

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

The deal belongs to E/W in diamonds, where they can make ten tricks – and more if the defence fails to lead spades immediately – but they may not find it so easy to get to that suit. Say that North opens 1NT – East may compete with some two-suited bid but, if that is a simple 2♣, showing the majors, diamonds may never come under consideration. However, South will compete in clubs, where nine tricks are available – eleven if the defence fails to lead hearts quickly enough. Where North opens 1♥, East is unlikely to come in. South would like to bid his long suit but 2♣ would suggest more strength than this. Feeling that a 1NT response would not be very descriptive, South may compromise with a simple heart raise and, if he chooses that option, 2♥ rates to end the auction.

2♥ will be at least two down if East can find a trump lead, but he may not want to risk losing one of his three trump winners and look elsewhere. Either a spade or a diamond lead helps declarer considerably.

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

E/W have a borderline slam. 6♠ makes on this layout because the diamond finesse wins. On another day, with the diamond offside, there would be some small extra chances of a heart/club squeeze.

When East opens 1♥, West can make a strong jump shift of 2♠ then rebid the suit at his second turn. Knowing that queen-doubleton must now be sufficient to solidify the suit, East should make one mild slam try as he has two aces and the trump queen. Whether that will be enough to get to slam is unclear but then this is one of those slams that one doesn’t really care that much whether it is reached or not – until the result of the diamond finesse is seen.

Certainly, the jump shift should make it more likely that slam is bid. After 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♣, West has to grope with 2♦, FSF, then follow up with 3♠. Yes, that shows a game-force with long spades, but it is an auction which initially focuses on reaching the best game, while the strong jump shift puts slam in the picture from the word go.

<p>♠ K76 ♥ K9632 ♦ 1052 ♣ 54</p> <p>♠ 109 ♥ AQ75 ♦ QJ3 ♣ KQ102</p> <p>♠ AJ42 ♥ - ♦ A98764 ♣ J86</p> <p>♠ Q853 ♥ J1084 ♦ K ♣ A973</p> <table><tr><th colspan="3">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>6</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>14</td><td>10</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP			6			14	10		10			Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	2	-	-		S	-	-	1	-	-		E	3	5	-	1	2		W	3	5	-	2	3		<p>Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <p>Though E/W can make either 3NT or 5♦, that relies on declarer dropping the bare king of diamonds offside and there is no reason why he should do so. In practice, those in 5♦ and many in 3NT will be down.</p> <p>This suggests that, on this occasion, the pessimists will score very well. The key decision is East's – should he open the 10-count or not? It is easy to sympathise with anyone who passes, but the shape is good and the suits in the right order to hope to show both comfortably. Of course, once East opens, West will drive to game, probably via: 1♦ – 1♥ – 1♠ – 3NT.</p> <p>Where East does not open, game may still be reached. For example, if West opens 1NT, East will use Stayman and perhaps follow through with 3♦. By a passed hand, that sums up the hand pretty nicely – a maximum pass with four spades and long diamonds – and West's maximum and diamond fit may well see him go on to 3NT.</p>
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<p>♠ J43 ♥ KJ53 ♦ J653 ♣ 93</p> <p>♠ K10 ♥ A986 ♦ Q102 ♣ QJ62</p> <p>♠ AQ85 ♥ 104 ♦ 984 ♣ A1075</p> <p>♠ 9762 ♥ Q72 ♦ AK7 ♣ K84</p> <table><tr><th colspan="3">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>6</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>10</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP			6			12	10		12			Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	-	-		S	-	-	-	-	-		E	3	1	1	2	2		W	3	1	1	1	2		<p>Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <p>Where South opens 1NT he is likely to play there and, where he opens 1♣ he may also have an uncontested auction to 1NT as, though West has opening values, he has the wrong shape for a take-out double. Of course, in practice there will be more variation than that, but 1NT by South will be a popular spot. A club lead looks normal and, on winning the king, declarer will play on hearts. If West ducks two rounds of those, the defence should be in control and the contract will be two down. Minus 100 need not be bad for N/S. If they could get there, E/W could make the same eight tricks in no trumps for +120, and can also make 3♣ for +110.</p> <p>While it would work out very badly this time, allowing West to declare 1NT, would it be ridiculous for South not to open an empty 12-count, 4-3-3-3 with no intermediates? I rate the South hand close to 2 HCP weaker than West, despite both having 12 HCP. In a balanced hand I like to upgrade the minor honours slightly and downgrade aces and kings, meaning that the sheer number of honours makes a difference to my evaluation of a hand. Here, West has seven to South's four and it follows that West has better honour combinations. Plus, 4-4-3-2 offers more playing potential than 4-3-3-3.</p>
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<p>♠ A9 ♥ J9 ♦ 98765 ♣ 8643</p> <p>♠ J532 ♥ A10872 ♦ Q10 ♣ AJ</p> <p>♠ KQ8 ♥ 63 ♦ AJ32 ♣ KQ107</p> <p>♠ 10764 ♥ KQ54 ♦ K4 ♣ 952</p> <table><tr><th colspan="3">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>5</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>15</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP			5			12	15		8			Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	-	-		S	-	-	-	-	-		E	3	2	3	4	3		W	3	2	3	4	4		<p>Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <p>With so much strength in the short suits, if we swapped the suits around so that I had four diamonds and five clubs, I would open 1NT rather than open 1♣ and perhaps have to rebid the suit. However, with the actual hand I would show due respect to the majors and open 1♥. Now the auction is likely to be quite straightforward: 1♥ – 2♣ – 2♥ – 3NT. The best lead for the defence is a heart, but nobody is going to find that on the auction above. A spade lead looks normal and that should ensure three spade winners for declarer. Again, the best switch from North on this layout is a heart, but he would have to be on hot form to find it. On any other return, declarer can give up a diamond and has eleven tricks – three spades, three diamonds, four clubs and the ace of hearts.</p> <p>Though nine tricks is the limit double dummy, in practice +600 will score very badly and even +630 may be below average.</p>
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<p>♠ 642 ♥ 873 ♦ 96 ♣ QJ1054</p> <p>♠ A109 ♠ KJ8 ♥ AK4 ♥ QJ962 ♦ J872 ♦ AKQ5 ♣ 763 ♣ A</p> <p>♠ Q753 ♥ 105 ♦ 1043 ♣ K982</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>3</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td></td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>2</td><td>7</td><td>7</td><td>5</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>2</td><td>7</td><td>7</td><td>5</td><td>7</td></tr></table>	HCP		3		12	20	5		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	2	7	7	5	7	W	2	7	7	5	7	<p>Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <p>While it is true that 13 tricks can be made in either a heart or no trump contract simply by picking the spade position correctly, the grand slam to play is 7♦, where there is no guess required as the thirteenth trick can be made via a club ruff. That may be very tough to reach for those who open 1NT with the West cards. East will transfer to hearts then show the diamonds but, not imaging that this is a grand slam hand, West will now show heart support and most pairs will get locked into that suit. 6♥ plus one may well be above average.</p> <p>It may be a different matter where West’s systemic opening is 1♦. If East can discover that his partner holds the ace of spades and heart ace-king, he can bid the diamond grand. A 1♣ opening, meanwhile, is very likely to see diamonds lost forever as, even if East bids the suit at some point, West will by then be showing his heart support.</p>
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<p>♠ AQ7 ♥ K73 ♦ Q10 ♣ AQ1042</p> <p>♠ J854 ♠ 63 ♥ - ♥ AJ642 ♦ AKJ9 ♦ 8432 ♣ J8653 ♣ K7</p> <p>♠ K1092 ♥ Q10985 ♦ 765 ♣ 9</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>17</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td></td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table>	HCP		17		10	8	5		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	1	-	2	2	1	S	1	-	3	2	1	E	-	1	-	-	-	W	-	1	-	-	-	<p>Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <p>With a decent five-card suit, many Norths will upgrade and treat their hand as an 18-count, opening 1♣ and intending to rebid 2NT. Given an uncontested auction, that may happen at quite a few tables. However, even vulnerable, there will be some Easts who scrape up an overcall. If South passes, looking for a penalty, North may rebid 1NT and play there.</p> <p>Where East does not get involved, South may respond 1♥ then rebid 3♥ over the 2NT rebid. In my youth that used to be non-forcing, but these days most play otherwise and North will raise to what is a hopeless game as the cards lie.</p> <p>Wherever North upgrades, there is a big danger of N/S going minus. The most successful N/S auction sees N/S get to a peaceful 2♥. that can be achieved if North opens 1NT, 15-17 – South uses Stayman then bids 2♥, weak with five hearts and four or five spades, or if North opens 1♣ then rebids 1NT. In the latter case South can rebid 2♥, though many will just pass out 1NT, which will just make after a diamond lead.</p>
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W	-	1	-	-	-																																								
<p>♠ Q109876 ♥ K ♦ K43 ♣ A105</p> <p>♠ A54 ♠ 3 ♥ A10652 ♥ Q83 ♦ 107 ♦ J9852 ♣ 982 ♣ KJ76</p> <p>♠ KJ2 ♥ J974 ♦ AQ6 ♣ Q43</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>12</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>13</td><td></td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table>	HCP		12		8	7	13		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	4	2	S	-	-	-	4	2	E	-	-	1	-	-	W	-	-	1	-	-	<p>Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</p> <p>South will either open or rebid 1NT and it is normal to play 4♠ on the 6-3 fit. I know somebody will manage something different, but it is hard to see other than ten tricks being made and an almost flat board at +620.</p> <p>Leading doubletons in hope of getting a ruff is not a high percentage action but nothing else looks any better and the percentage goes up significantly when the opening leader has trump control – i.e. can expect to get in with a top trump honour before trumps can be drawn. Hence, I would lead the ten of diamonds, hoping to win an early round of trumps and find partner with the necessary entry for a ruff. Of course, on this layout that doesn’t work, but neither does it cost a trick, so no harm is done.</p>
HCP																																													
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Makeable contracts																																													
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S	-	-	-	4	2																																								
E	-	-	1	-	-																																								
W	-	-	1	-	-																																								

♠ A104
♥ 96
♦ AJ1097
♣ K83

♠ 62 ♠ J975
♥ KQ10874 ♥ A
♦ K432 ♦ Q86
♣ J ♣ Q6542

♠ KQ83
♥ J532
♦ 5
♣ A1097

HCP		
12		
9	9	
10		

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

Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all

West will open with a pre-empt after two passes. The mainstream action is 2♥, and that may end the auction. My style is to open 3♥, liking the extra playing potential of the 6-4 shape when the main suit is decent. That will surely end the auction and probably score quite poorly as there appear to be only six winners in a heart contract.

The cards lie so well for N/S that they can make at least eight tricks in any denomination other than hearts, with 3NT a possibility double dummy. That is perhaps not a realistic expectation, however, as declarer may need to pick up both black suits to come to nine tricks.

Where West opens 2♥, some Norths will come in, either with an overcall or a double. My own preference would be for the double, as I am not a fan of three-level overcalls on hands with which I would have opened a weak no trump – there just isn't sufficient playing potential.

Those who bid will often go minus, so passing and chalking up a boring +100 may score well.

♠ Q64
♥ 10653
♦ 983
♣ AJ9

♠ 3 ♠ 9872
♥ KJ987 ♥ 42
♦ J654 ♦ Q7
♣ 875 ♣ K10642

♠ AKJ105
♥ AQ
♦ AK102
♣ Q3

HCP		
7		
5	5	
23		

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

Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

It is possible to make eleven tricks in either spades or NTs if played by South.

In spades it is quite straightforward, as the ♥Q can be thrown on the third club and a diamond given up after drawing trumps. It takes a little more care in NTs on a club lead. If declarer finesses, East can win and push a heart through and the contract can be held to ten tricks. To make the extra trick, declarer has to read that the club is not away from the king so go up with the ace at trick one to avoid the early heart through the ace-queen. Now he can give up a diamond to West and later set up a second club winner for +660.

South has enough to open 2♣. If he rebids 2NT, North should just raise to 3NT, hoping that the same tricks are available in no trump as in a possible major-suit fit. If South rebids 2♠, game-forcing, North will probably raise to 3♠. It would be quite sensible now for South to bid 3NT to show the all-around nature of his hand and leave the choice of games to North. With no ruffing value, North might judge well to pass, despite the assumed eight-card spade fit.

♠ AK6
♥ K103
♦ A75
♣ J1087

♠ 52 ♠ 10943
♥ A962 ♥ J8754
♦ J10632 ♦ Q94
♣ A3 ♣ 4

♠ QJ87
♥ Q
♦ K8
♣ KQ9652

HCP		
15		
9	3	
13		

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

Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

5♣ is the winning spot for N/S but, at matchpoints, few will get there against silent opponents. And, after all, if West holds the ♥J, 3NT will be the better-scoring contract.

If North opens 1NT, South will use Stayman then perhaps show the clubs. Despite the club fit, most Norths will not fancy going past 3NT and, with help in the unbid suits and no aces, South has no reason to insist.

Where North opens 1♣, South will respond 1♠ then show the club fit. However, once again North is going to insist on playing 3NT and most Souths will reluctantly give in.

With the defence to 3NT looking to be very straightforward, anyone who does bid and make 5♣ should be richly rewarded.