British Summer Sim Pairs

29th July 2013

Monday

Welcome to the British Summer Sim Pairs.
Our thanks to our commentator today who is Julian Pottage.

Blue points are now awarded for Sim Pairs. These go down to the top third of the field. 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 a contact the club scorer and also the players. When checking the frequencies we do find quite a few suspicious scores. Common errors are for scores to be recorded on the wrong side, and for 'passed out' to be recorded when the board should have been recorded as 'not played' or 'average'. 'Passed out' is a genuine bridge result and rests between the plus scores and minus scores. So if there are no plus scores it gets all the match points for the NS pair. If there are equal numbers of plus and minus scores it gets 50% of the available matchpoints etc. When the board has genuinely not been played, for whatever reasons, then 'averages' (50%) should be given to both pairs – or perhaps 'average minus' or 'average plus'. 'Not played' should almost never be used.
Please do always check that the score has been entered correctly on the traveller or Bridgemate before leaving the table. *After all, it may be you who is being given a bottom instead of a top!*
Of course if it's the scorer who has to type in the travellers late at night human error can creep in and it is very easy to enter the odd score as plus rather than minus so this needs careful checking before uploading the results.

Full results can be found at www.ebu.co.uk/sims/

♠ A 6 2
♥ Q 10 9 3 2
♦ J
♣ 8 7 4 3

♠ K J
♥ J 4
♦ Q 10 7 5 4 3
♣ J 10 6

♠ 10 3
♥ A 8 6 5
♦ 9 2
♣ A Q 9 5 2

♠ Q 9 8 7 5 4
♥ K 7
♦ A K 8 6
♣ K

HCP	
7	
8	10
15	

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

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

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

[1] Since the bare king may not be pulling full weight, South is only worth a game try.

With just 22 HCP between the two hands, three of which are a singleton king, not everyone will reach game. The majority ought to because South should make at least a game try, after which North will like the look of the singleton diamond and possible source of tricks in hearts.

The favourable trump position means that most should make 10 tricks. You can either ruff two diamonds in dummy or set up the hearts.

East-West do not have a good enough fit anywhere to contemplate a sacrifice at equal vulnerability. They should get a bottom if they play doubled at the five level.

♠ 5 3 2
♥ 6 5 4 3 2
♦ 6
♣ J 7 6 3

♠ A Q 9 7
♥ A K J 10
♦ 9 4 2
♣ 9 5

♠ K 4
♥ 9
♦ A Q 10 8 5
♣ K Q 8 4 2

♠ J 10 8 6
♥ Q 8 7
♦ K J 7 3
♣ A 10

HCP	
1	
14	14
11	

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

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

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

Many tables will see the natural auction illustrated. East opens the higher of two five-card suits while West responds in the lower of two four-card suits.

Given South's failure to overcall 1♠, North knows that a spade lead will not strike gold. Then again, nothing else appeals strongly. As the cards lie, a diamond lead may work best, setting up a diamond trick in South's hand.

In the absence of a diamond lead, declarer can (if playing in inspired fashion), give up two clubs and come to 11 tricks via three spades, four hearts, a diamond and three clubs. The more natural line of playing on diamonds, finessing if possible, means the loss of two diamonds and a club for only ten tricks. Indeed, the entry position means that declarer may have to attack diamonds once from dummy.

♠ K 7 5
♥ 6 5
♦ A K J 8 5 3
♣ K 3

♠ 9
♥ Q J 10 7 3 2
♦ 10 6 4
♣ 9 7 6

♠ Q J 6 3
♥ 9 4
♦ 9 7 2
♣ Q J 5 4

♠ A 10 8 4 2
♥ A K 8
♦ Q
♣ A 10 8 2

HCP		
	14	
3		6
	17	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	6	7	3	6	7
S	6	7	3	6	7
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣ [1]
Pass	4♦ [1]	Pass	4♥ [1]
Pass	4NT [2]	Pass	5♣ [3]
Pass	5♦ [4]	Pass	5♠ [5]
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

[1] Control cue bids; these bids show first- or second-round control, here an ace.
[2] Roman Keycard Blackwood; South's high reverse has shown a strong hand.
[3] Shows 0 or 3 key cards (obviously 3 in this instance).
[4] Do you have the queen of spades?
[5] Sorry, no I do not have it.

Reaching 7NT is very tough, the key being South's ♦Q. To make 6♠ you must take the slight risk of a 7-1 heart break and finesse on the second round of trumps.

♠ 7 4
♥ 9 7 5 3
♦ A K 8 2
♣ A J 6

♠ Q 10 3 2
♥ K 10 8 4
♦ 10 3
♣ 10 9 4

♠ A J 8 6 5
♥ A J
♦ Q 6
♣ K Q 7 2

♠ K 9
♥ Q 6 2
♦ J 9 7 5 4
♣ 8 5 3

HCP		
	12	
5		17
	6	

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

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

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

Many play a conventional escape from 1NT doubled, whereby you redouble to show an unspecified single-suited hand. It is normally important then for the doubling side to know which doubles are for takeout and which are for penalties. This time, any East-West pair that has misunderstanding about a double of 2♦ might collect 200 and a top.

North-South do better to stand their ground and play in 1NT doubled, making one trick in each black suit together with five diamond tricks. Of course, on another layout, it could be a disaster to be conceding a vulnerable doubled penalty.

Assuming East-West find their spade fit, there is a danger of getting too high.

♠ K 10 9 8
♥ 8
♦ Q 8
♣ Q J 10 7 6 2

♠ 6 2
♥ A K J 10 7 6
♦ K 7 5
♣ A K

♠ Q J 5 3
♥ Q 9 5 4
♦ A 9
♣ 9 8 5

♠ A 7 4
♥ 3 2
♦ J 10 6 4 3 2
♣ 4 3

HCP		
	8	
18		9
	5	

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

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♥	2♣	3♣ [1]	Pass
4♣ [2]	Pass	4♥	All Pass

[1] East is a bit good for a pre-emptive 3♥, especially non-vulnerable.
[2] West cue bids in case East is maximum (swap the ♠J for the ♠K for example).

This should be one of the flattest boards of the evening. With 27 HCP and a big heart fit, reaching the heart game should be easy even if East takes a cautious view in the bidding. 11 tricks are certainly easy to make.

How might you make 12 tricks? Suppose West wins the club lead, draws trumps and plays a spade. If South wins and switches to a diamond, declarer can ruff the third round of diamonds in dummy and finish the trumps. North then has a slight guess whether to keep the clubs or a spade. South avoids giving North this problem by returning a club (or a spade) when in with the ♠A or by discarding a club.

♠ 8 7 5 3 2
♥ A Q
♦ K Q 5
♣ K Q 2

♠ Q 10 | ♠ K J 9 6 4
♥ K J | ♥ 8 7 6 3
♦ A J 10 9 7 6 | ♦ 4
♣ 9 6 3 | ♣ 8 5 4

♠ A
♥ 10 9 5 4 2
♦ 8 3 2
♣ A J 10 7

HCP	
16	
11	4
9	

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

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

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

[1] Since the spades are very poor, North simply shows the strong balanced hand.
[2] Transfer to hearts, just as it would be over a 1NT opening.
[3] With two tens and a five-card suit, South insists on game while offering a choice.

Having refrained from showing the spades during the auction (the hand is weak and the vulnerability is adverse), East may well lead a fourth best spade.

Although the lead in itself looks like bad news, declarer is reasonably confident of a blockage (East would surely lead an honour from K-J-10-9-x or similar) and that West will have the key missing red honours. Indeed, the miracle layout in the heart suit means the defenders may need to cash their spades to stop an overtrick.

♠ J 9 3
♥ 2
♦ A 9 6 4
♣ A K 10 8 2

♠ Q 10 2 | ♠ K 7 5
♥ 9 8 6 | ♥ A K Q 5 4 3
♦ K Q 3 2 | ♦ J 10 7
♣ 9 6 3 | ♣ 4

♠ A 8 6 4
♥ J 10 7
♦ 8 5
♣ Q J 7 5

HCP	
12	
7	13
8	

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

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			Pass
Pass	1♣	1♥	Double [1]
2♥ [2]	Double [3]	3♥	All Pass

[1] Double shows four spades; bidding spades directly would show five.
[2] West has many losers but should raise to deny North an easy rebid.
[3] North does not want to sell out at the two level when East-West have a fit.

With the higher-ranking suit, East-West should buy the contract at most tables. East can ruff the second club, draw trumps and play on diamonds. North does best to hold up until the third round of diamonds and exit in clubs. If declarer then plays on spades and South does not twitch at all, there is then a guess whether to put up the queen (to gain access to the fourth diamond) or to finesse the ten. Given the values North has already produced, you should guess right, playing South for the spade ace.

If East-West do bid game, North-South can save a few matchpoints by sacrificing.

♠ K 9 6 5
♥ K 8 3
♦ 4 2
♣ K 10 7 2

♠ J 7 4 3 | ♠ A Q 10 2
♥ J 7 6 2 | ♥ A 10
♦ A K J 10 5 | ♦ Q 9 7 3
♣ - | ♣ J 8 5

♠ 8
♥ Q 9 5 4
♦ 8 6
♣ A Q 9 6 4 3

HCP	
9	
10	13
8	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	-	-	-	-
S	3	-	-	-	-
E	-	6	1	5	1
W	-	6	1	5	1

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
Pass	Pass	1NT	3♣ [1]
4♣ [2]	Pass	4♠	All Pass

[1] If 2♣ would be conventional, South has to jump to 3♣ (or pass).
[2] West takes the slight risk of going overboard to ensure finding the best fit.

If South stays quiet, Stayman should enable East-West to find their spade fit. Even if West only invites game, East would accept with good spades and a ruffing value.

The 4-1 trump split makes the play slightly delicate, for the overtrick that is. If you are not careful, dummy runs out of trumps and North can hold you to 10 tricks by waiting to ruff the fourth round of diamonds. Then you lose a spade, a heart and a club.

The very thin diamond slam is a lucky make thanks to favourable positions in three suits. With the short hearts in the North hand, the jack of hearts becomes good.

♠ 10 9 6 5 4 2
♥ 10
♦ K 7 6
♣ A 5 3

♠ 7
♥ K J 3
♦ Q J 9 4
♣ Q J 8 6 4

♠ K J
♥ A 8 7 4 2
♦ A 10 8
♣ K 10 9

♠ A Q 8 3
♥ Q 9 6 5
♦ 5 3 2
♣ 7 2

HCP		
	7	
10		15
	8	

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	Pass [1]	1♥	Pass
2♣	Pass [1]	2NT	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

[1] Given the poor spade suit, North is reluctant to bid unless East-West stop in 2♥.

At the prevailing vulnerability, I suspect that East-West will not get a free run at every table. Indeed North-South can take a profitable sacrifice in 4♠ doubled, where the only losers are a heart, a club and three diamonds.

There are two ways (maybe more) of making the heart game. The easy way is to take first-round trump finesse. Then you can afford to knock out the ace of clubs without the risk of having to ruff a spade with a high trump. The harder way is to develop the diamond suit, discarding a spade on the fourth round.

3NT goes down on any lead, a club being best and a spade worst defensively.

♠ 10 9
♥ K Q 6
♦ A Q 3
♣ A 9 6 5 2

♠ A K 3
♥ 4 2
♦ 10 8 7 2
♣ K Q 10 8

♠ Q 8 6 5 2
♥ A J 7 3
♦ 9 6
♣ 7 4

♠ J 7 4
♥ 10 9 8 5
♦ K J 5 4
♣ J 3

HCP		
	15	
12		7
	6	

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

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		Pass	Pass
1NT	Double	2♥ [1]	Pass [2]
2♠	All Pass		

[1] I have assumed that bidding a suit shows that suit and the next suit up.
[2] South is a bit weak to act and expects West to give preference to 2♠ in any case.

As on board 4, 1NT doubled is makeable. It seems to be the night for those feeling brave. With 5-4 in the majors and values concentrated in those suits, East is more likely to run.

The cards lie well for a spade contract. If North parts with the ace of clubs too early, you might make 9 tricks, losing just two diamonds and one trick in each rounded suit. Holding up the ace of clubs is easier if, as happens on the auction shown, the doubleton club is visible in dummy. Playing reverse count signals might also help (if East declares) as the three is clearly South's lowest club.

♠ Q 10 9 7 6
♥ J 10 9 6
♦ 5 2
♣ 9 8

♠ J 5 2
♥ A Q 4 2
♦ 8
♣ J 7 6 3 2

♠ 3
♥ K 3
♦ KQ107643
♣ A 10 4

♠ A K 8 4
♥ 8 7 5
♦ A J 9
♣ K Q 5

HCP		
	3	
8		12
	17	

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

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1♠
Pass	2♠	3♦	Double [1]
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

[1] Whether you play double as a game try or for penalties, South seems to have it.

3♠ should go one down on the obvious diamond lead. East might need to take a little bit of care to avoid going to bed with the ace of clubs – underleading it after South has a second diamond winner established would not be so clever. Depending upon how the play goes, East may also need to be careful not to duck the first round of hearts and then have to win the second round, forced to give a ruff and discard.

If East gets to play in 3♦, making it should not be a problem. Even if South leads or switches to a high club, declarer can avoid losing a club ruff by playing hearts before trumps. You will probably play hearts early in any case because you want to start trumps by finessing the ten.

♠ A 10 7
♥ Q 9 4 2
♦ K J 3
♣ K 5 3

♠ Q J 9 8 6 5 ♠ -
♥ A K 3 ♥ -
♦ 9 8 2 ♦ A 10 7 5 4
♣ A ♣ J10987642

♠ K 4 3 2
♥ J 10 8 7 6 5
♦ Q 6
♣ Q

HCP	
13	
14	5
8	

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♠	Pass [1]	1NT [2]	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣	All Pass

[1] Some will make an Italian style takeout double and strike lucky.
[2] The textbooks do not cover an 8500 shape. With a possible misfit and only 5 HCP, East takes the low road.

My auction has not worked out so well for North-South, who have just four top losers in a heart contract. Mind you, East-West can afford to bid on to the four level, so staying out of the bidding may not prove costly. Indeed, going one down doubled in 4♥ doubled would be a bottom.

If East prefers to respond 2♣ initially, West might go on over 3♣, presumably bidding 3♥ to show the stopper. In this case, East can still apply the brakes in time with 4♣. Anyone going all the way to a minor-suit game should record a minus score, with two diamonds and a club to lose.

♠ 8 2
♥ 9 5 3
♦ J 8 7 4
♣ K J 10 6

♠ K 10 9 3 ♠ J 6 4
♥ 2 ♥ A K Q 10 8
♦ A K 6 5 2 ♦ 10 9 3
♣ Q 4 3 ♣ 7 2

♠ A Q 7 5
♥ J 7 6 4
♦ Q
♣ A 9 8 5

HCP	
5	
12	10
13	

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

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	Pass	Pass	1♣
1♦	2♣ [1]	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♦ [2]	All Pass

[1] Being vulnerable, North has too many losers really for a pre-emptive jump to 3♣.
[2] As the cards lie, East may do better to pass.

Nobody can make much on this deal. Failing contracts will be common. In 3♦, North's trump holding should prove sufficient for two tricks by one means or another. Forcing dummy to ruff the third round of clubs is one way. Scoring a spade ruff is another. Scoring an overruff on the fourth round of hearts is another.

If North-South play in a club contract, a trump lead – hard to find from Q-x-x of course – works best. On any other lead, declarer can scramble 8 tricks.

The play in 2♠ is messy. Not everyone will make 8 tricks.

♠ 5 2
♥ J 4
♦ A Q 10 9 7
♣ J 10 6 3

♠ K Q 7 3 ♠ J 9 8 6
♥ A 10 9 7 3 2 ♥ 6 5
♦ J ♦ K 5
♣ A 9 ♣ K Q 8 7 4

♠ A 10 4
♥ K Q 8
♦ 8 6 4 3 2
♣ 5 2

HCP	
8	
14	9
9	

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

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

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

[1] Facing a passed hand, North might fancy a lead-directing 2♦ overcall.
[2] With only 14 HCP, a raise to game would be too much despite only five losers.

The play in the spade game should prove straightforward. Whichever rounded suit you play to develop, a single ruff suffices to set up the suit. Making an overtrick will be rare: the 4-2 club break prevents declarer from taking a quick discard on the third round of clubs, while North has no reason to be ducking a diamond.

A sacrifice in 5♦ doubled would prove very expensive, down 800 if West leads the ace of clubs and scores an overruff on the third round of clubs (East, if on lead, would need to lead a low club to achieve the same effect – tricky). 500 without the trump promotion would be too much at this vulnerability anyway.

♠ A K
♥ 7 5
♦ A K 3
♣ K 9 8 6 4 2

♠ Q 9 7 6 3 ♠ 2
♥ 8 ♥ AKQ1042
♦ J 5 4 2 ♦ 10 6
♣ A Q 3 ♣ J 10 7 5

♠ J 10 8 5 4
♥ J 9 6 3
♦ Q 9 8 7
♣ -

HCP	
17	
9	10
4	

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

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			Pass
Pass	1♣	3♥ [1]	All Pass [2]

[1] At favourable vulnerability and holding a singleton spade, East is keen to shut out the spade suit.
[2] North cannot afford to reopen with a double in case South bids spades. 3NT does not appeal either, with no heart stopper and a broken club suit.

At some tables, East will overcall a simple 1♥ and someone will bid spades. North will then bid clubs again – the lack of a heart stopper counting against a NT rebid.

Making contracts will be a rarity. Even 1♥ could fail if South scores three club ruffs – North has to wonder why South does not lead a club at trick one and draw the right conclusion. If North plays in clubs, the defenders should score seven tricks if, as is possible, East scores two spade ruffs. Despite the 5-1 trump split, a spade contract plays best.

♠ K 10 9 4 3
♥ 10 8
♦ K 5 4 3
♣ 4 3

♠ Q J 8 7 5 ♠ 6
♥ Q 4 ♥ 9 7 6 5 2
♦ A J 10 ♦ 9 7 6 2
♣ A 9 5 ♣ Q 7 6

♠ A 2
♥ A K J 3
♦ Q 8
♣ K J 10 8 2

HCP	
6	
14	2
18	

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

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1NT [1]	Pass	2♦ [2]	Double [3]
Pass [4]	2♠ [5]	Pass	2NT
All Pass			

[1] With moderate spades and the no-trump orientated ♥Q-x, West opens 1NT.
[2] Transfer to hearts.
[3] Shows a hand that would have doubled 1NT.
[4] This pass denies 3-card heart support.
[5] It is hard for North to judge that East-West are in trouble.

There will be a variety of results on this deal. At some tables, North-South will have the methods (and the judgement!) to extract a useful penalty. Indeed, defending anything should yield a better result than playing in a partscore.

With 24 HCP and a couple of tens, some might reach 3NT. With the queen of clubs unexpectedly onside and East unable to gain the lead, this makes easily.

♠ A K J 3
♥ A Q 7 5 4 3
♦ 9 4
♣ K

♠ 8 5 ♠ Q 7 6 2
♥ 10 8 6 2 ♥ K J
♦ A Q 8 6 ♦ K
♣ J 8 4 ♣ Q109765

♠ 10 9 4
♥ 9
♦ J 10 7 5 3 2
♣ A 3 2

HCP	
17	
7	11
5	

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

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1♥	2♣	Pass
3♣	Double [1]	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♥	All Pass [2]	

[1] Double is more flexible than 2♠. North intends to correct diamonds to hearts.
[2] South cannot be sure that North holds four spades or that the 4-3 fit will play well.

In 3♥, in theory the only killing lead is the ♦K. This enables West to overtake and play a second round of diamonds. On a club lead, declarer can prevail by playing ace and another heart, leaving East no good exit.

If East-West do not get the bidding up to the three level quickly, North will have the chance to rebid 2♠, after which 3♦ from South will show more diamonds than it does on the illustrated auction. A diamond contract can produce as many as ten tricks because poor West has to keep following suit and cannot get in to prevent a club ruff in dummy.

♠ A 8 7
♥ K J 9 4 2
♦ 5 2
♣ 10 6 4

♠ K 9 6 4 3 2 ♠ 10 5
♥ 10 8 ♥ A Q 3
♦ 10 9 ♦ A Q 8 6
♣ 7 3 2 ♣ K Q J 9

♠ Q J
♥ 7 6 5
♦ K J 7 4 3
♣ A 8 5

HCP	
8	
3	18
11	

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

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

[1] This anticipates a possible 2NT rebid and subsequent lead from South into one of the red tenaces or a possible club slam. For some, system may dictate a 1♦ opening, which would then silence South.
[2] Most will not be playing transfers on this particular auction.

For some, the poor diamond spot cards will keep South out of the auction. West might then respond 1♠, regretting it when East rebids 2NT. Those playing a strong club system might score well, getting to play a spade contract from the East seat (via a 1NT rebid and transfer). On a diamond lead from North, the defenders may get to score two natural trump tricks, a diamond, a club and a trump promotion.

1♣ would make, with an overtrick if South leads a heart.

♠ K 8 6 5 4 2
♥ K Q J 8
♦ K 10 3
♣ -

♠ J 9 3 ♠ A Q 7
♥ 9 5 ♥ 10 7 6 3 2
♦ A 7 5 4 ♦ 6 2
♣ 10 9 6 2 ♣ K 8 3

♠ 10
♥ A 4
♦ Q J 9 8
♣ A Q J 7 5 4

HCP	
12	
5	9
14	

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

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣ [1]
Pass	2♥ [2]	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

[1] With 14 HCP and a possible misfit, a reverse or jump to 3♣ would be too much.
[2] A new suit should be forcing, allowing North to take the auction slowly.

With 26 HCP, all suits stopped and no fit anywhere, reaching 3NT should be routine.

As is often the case on misfit hands, communications are difficult. The winning line is to play on spades early, while the North hand still has entries in the red suits. If you play on clubs instead, the defenders can beat you with three spades (West switches to the jack), a diamond and a club.

Woe betide any East-West pair that somehow gets in the bidding!

♠ K J 5 4 2
♥ 10
♦ A 9 8 7 3
♣ K Q

♠ A 10 7 ♠ Q 6 3
♥ A 7 4 3 2 ♥ K J 9
♦ 6 4 ♦ K 10 5
♣ 9 6 2 ♣ A J 5 3

♠ 9 8
♥ Q 8 6 5
♦ Q J 2
♣ 10 8 7 4

HCP	
13	
8	14
5	

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

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
Pass	1♠	Pass [1]	1NT
Pass	2♦	All Pass [2,3]	

[1] Lacking any shape or a fourth heart, a double would be very risky.
[2] With a hand that almost passed 1♠, South applies the breaks by passing.
[3] West's poor heart spots and the vulnerability count against reopening with 2♥.

Game all is the most boring vulnerability for part-score deals because everyone is aware of the danger of going down at a 100 a time (more if doubled).

East has a tricky lead if North plays in diamonds. A heart honour or a club works best as the cards lie, paving the way for a forcing game and taking out the entries to any long spades.

The miraculous layout of the club suit enables West to make nine tricks with hearts as trumps, just losing one trick in each suit.

♠ 9 7 6 2
♥ A J 8 7 4
♦ A
♣ 10 9 2

♠ K J 8
♥ 10 6
♦ 9 7 6 3 2
♣ A 8 3

♠ A Q 4 3
♥ K Q 5
♦ J 10 8
♣ K J 6

♠ 10 5
♥ 9 3 2
♦ K Q 5 4
♣ Q 7 5 4

HCP	
9	
8	16
7	

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

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠ [1]	All Pass		

[1] Even playing 4-card majors, raising is best with three trumps and a ruffing value.

Playing in spades, there is more than one way to arrive at nine tricks. The easiest way, even if you get an unhelpful lead, is to lead twice towards the heart honours, subsequently ruffing a club in dummy. In practice, South's lead will often prove helpful. Indeed a top diamond would crash honours and allow 10 tricks.

Reaching the NT game is tough. If East opened a strong NT, West would invite game. Then East, being mid-range for 15-17 but holding a sterile 4-3-3-3 shape, would probably decline the invitation. Making 3NT is far from easy either. Assuming a heart lead or switch (and that North retains the ace of hearts as an entry), you lack the time to set up the diamonds. You can nevertheless get home by exerting pressure on South in the endgame.

♠ Q 10 7 5 2
♥ A 7 6 5 4
♦ 4 3
♣ 6

♠ A 4
♥ Q J 3
♦ Q 9 8 5 2
♣ 10 7 3

♠ K 9 8 6
♥ 9 8
♦ K 10 7
♣ A K J 4

♠ J 3
♥ K 10 2
♦ A J 6
♣ Q 9 8 5 2

HCP	
6	
9	14
11	

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
		1NT	All Pass [1]

[1] Holding 5-5 in the majors, North would love to bid. Only 6 HCP is the problem.

East will often get to play in 1NT. If South leads a club, nine tricks are certainly possible if declarer takes the winning view in diamonds. A spade lead, which attacks dummy's entries or a heart lead, which helps to set up North's suit, would be more successful.

If you take the winning view in the trump suit, you can make nine tricks playing in diamonds. If North scores a club ruff, South does not make a club trick.

Superficially, a heart contract has only five losers, two in spades and one in each other suit – West will be overruffing the spades with a natural trump trick. To make an extra defensive trick, either the defenders need to develop the communications to give West two spade ruffs or, more simply, they keep on leading trumps to stop South from ruffing a spade.

♠ K Q 9 6 3
♥ J 10 3
♦ K J 5
♣ 6 4

♠ J 10 4
♥ K 9 7 6
♦ Q 7 6 3
♣ Q 7

♠ A 8 7
♥ Q 8 4
♦ 10 4
♣ J 9 8 5 3

♠ 5 2
♥ A 5 2
♦ A 9 8 2
♣ A K 10 2

HCP	
10	
8	7
15	

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

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
			1♣ [1]
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT [2]
Pass	2♣ [3]	Pass	2♦ [4]
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

[1] A singleton diamond in partner's hand would be good, which is why I prefer 1♣.
[2] 15-17.
[3] Please tell me more (Checkback/Crowhurst).
[4] This shows a minimum without four hearts or three spades.

With 25 HCP, all suits stopped and no fit anywhere, most pairs should reach 3NT.

The play in the spade suit will be crucial. If West splits honours, or if declarer takes the inspired view to finesse the nine even after West has followed low, at least one overtrick results. Indeed, any initial lead bar a low diamond gives declarer a shot at eleven tricks.

♠ -
♥ K Q 10 8 6 3
♦ J 4
♣ Q 8 6 4 2

♠ A K Q 6 5 3 ♠ 10 9 4
♥ 7 2 ♥ A 5 4
♦ K 9 8 3 ♦ 10 7
♣ A ♣ J 10 9 7 3

♠ J 8 7 2
♥ J 9
♦ A Q 6 5 2
♣ K 5

HCP	
8	
16	5
11	

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

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♠	3♥ [1]	Pass	Pass
3♠ [2]	All Pass [3]		

[1] The disparity in suit quality suggests a weak jump overcall rather than Michaels.
[2] Double and 4♠ are reasonable alternatives.
[3] East has a few values and support but allows West some leeway.

Since either West or East might bid more aggressively than they have in the auction shown, many will play in the spade game.

If North bids 2♠ to show hearts and a minor, South has a decision to make. Bidding 3♣ 'pass or correct' may lead to playing in 3♣ doubled (West doubles for takeout, which East leaves in).

The 4-0 trump split is actually quite good news in a spade contract as it leaves the defenders powerless to stop you from ruffing two diamonds in dummy.

♠ K 7 6 4
♥ -
♦ Q 9 6 2
♣ A Q 8 7 4

♠ A 9 5 ♠ J 10 3
♥ 10 9 8 6 2 ♥ J 7 5 3
♦ A 5 4 ♦ K J 10 3
♣ J 10 ♣ 6 5

♠ Q 8 2
♥ A K Q 4
♦ 8 7
♣ K 9 3 2

HCP	
11	
9	6
14	

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

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦ [1]
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

[1] As jump preference to 3♣ would be non-forcing. South uses fourth suit forcing.

North-South have 25 HCP, no major suit fit and all suits stopped or almost stopped. At most tables they will reach 3NT. Barring four clubs in the East hand, the clubs will produce five tricks, which means that declarer has nine tricks by way of a spade, three hearts and five clubs.

The defenders can only beat 3NT by taking five tricks first. This means that West has to use the two pointed suit aces as entries for leading low diamonds. Of course, if East leads the jack of diamonds at trick one, this is no longer an option. I suspect that 3NT will slip home at quite a few tables.

♠ Q 7 3
♥ 8 5
♦ K 10 6
♣ K Q 7 6 5

♠ 8 6 4 2 ♠ A K J 10 9
♥ A K Q ♥ 10 3 2
♦ 8 5 4 2 ♦ A 9
♣ A 10 ♣ 9 4 3

♠ 5
♥ J 9 7 6 4
♦ Q J 7 3
♣ J 8 2

HCP	
10	
13	12
5	

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

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		1♠	Pass
2NT [1]	Pass	4♠ [2]	All Pass

[1] This is a game forcing spade raise.
[2] Some will play as here that the jump to game shows a minimum with good trumps.

The defenders have two obvious tricks to take in the minor suits against the ubiquitous spade game. Making an overtrick depends on the trump guess. Most will go with 'eight ever nine never' and play for the drop, making only ten tricks.

If you happen to meet this board towards the end of the evening, it provides a good opportunity for 'swinging'. You can play for a very good (or very bad) score by going against the field and taking the trump finesse. Likewise, if you happen to play in 3NT (players who have been reading certain bridge columns will bid 1NT-3NT), you should take the spade finesse. With no club ruff available in a NT contract, you have to hope to guess the trumps better than do the declarers in 4♠.

♠ 10 4
♥ Q 9 6 4
♦ K 7 6
♣ A 7 4 2

♠ A K 9 6 5 | ♠ 7 2
♥ 10 | ♥ A K J 5 3 2
♦ A Q 3 2 | ♦ 10 8 4
♣ 10 8 5 | ♣ J 6

♠ Q J 8 3
♥ 8 7
♦ J 9 5
♣ K Q 9 3

HCP	
9	
13	9
9	

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

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥ [1]	Pass
2♠	All Pass [2]		

[1] Holding a six-card suit and 9 HCP, East has enough to respond at the two level.
[2] East knows that rebidding the hearts may be changing a 6-2 fit to a 6-1 fit and will certainly be raising the level.

My example auction leads to the inferior major suit partial. Except on an initial lead of a diamond, West should make no more than eight tricks in spades.

A heart contract should yield nine tricks because the defenders cannot attack West's diamond entries. This means declarer can set up a long spade, losing just two tricks in clubs and one in each red suit. There are even other ways to make nine tricks.

Nine tricks are also possible in diamonds unless South leads the ♦5 at trick one.

♠ A J
♥ A K 9 7 2
♦ Q 8
♣ Q J 10 5

♠ K 9 7 5 2 | ♠ Q 4
♥ Q J | ♥ 6 5
♦ K 5 3 2 | ♦ A J 10 9 6
♣ A 7 | ♣ K 9 8 2

♠ 10 8 6 3
♥ 10 8 4 3
♦ 7 4
♣ 6 4 3

HCP	
17	
13	10
0	

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

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♠	2♥ [1]	Double [2]	Pass
3♦	All Pass [3]		

[1] In the old days, North would have doubled.
[2] With 10 HCP, East is not really quite good enough to bid a forcing 3♦.
[3] At matchpoints, it does not pay to search for thin games, especially 11-trick ones.

Defending against 3♦, you might expect North to cash a couple of top hearts before switching to the ♣Q. Knowing of length in hearts and apparently clubs as well in the North hand, it will be tempting to finesse South for the trump queen. Then again, if you play for trumps 2-2, you can easily ruff clubs in dummy – glad it is your guess!

Playing four-card majors, West might elect to rebid 2♠ rather than 3♦. I do not feel strongly. In a spade contract, so long as you guess the diamonds correctly, you can hold your losses to two in each major. Clearly, after the first round of trumps goes to the jack and queen, you will not be putting up the king on the second round.

♠ A 9 7
♥ K J
♦ K 9 7 6 4
♣ A Q 4

♠ K Q 8 6 | ♠ -
♥ 9 6 4 2 | ♥ Q 10 8 3
♦ Q 3 | ♦ J 8 2
♣ K 9 7 | ♣ J 8 6 5 3 2

♠ J 10 5 4 3 2
♥ A 7 5
♦ A 10 5
♣ 10

HCP	
17	
10	4
9	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	5	2	6	4
S	1	5	2	5	4
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT [1]	Pass	2♣ [2]
Pass	3♠ [3]	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

[1] 15-17.
[2] If you are sure North will not have a singleton, you can bid 4♠ rather than ask.
[3] North shows a maximum with 3-card spade support.
On the likely lead of a heart from West, you cannot avoid losing two tricks in a spade contract. Even if you play in inspired fashion, finessing the queen of clubs at trick two and later finessing the seven of spades, West can shut out the long diamond by refusing to overruff the third round of diamonds and later splitting honours in trumps. Even if North declares and East leads a heart, as could happen playing a strong NT and transfers, you need an inspired view in the trump suit to make 12 tricks. Most will make only 11.

♠ K 9 8 4
♥ 9 8
♦ A 9 7
♣ A K 8 4

♠ 5
♥ J 7 6 3
♦ 10 6 4 2
♣ 9 5 3 2

♠ A 10
♥ A Q 4 2
♦ K Q J
♣ Q 10 7 6

♠ Q J 7 6 3 2
♥ K 10 5
♦ 8 5 3
♣ J

HCP	
14	
1	18
7	

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

Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all

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

[1] Weak jump overcalls come up much more often than the strong variety.

With the ace of hearts onside, as you would expect whatever opening bid East makes, the spade game comes home. You lose one trick in each of spades, hearts and diamonds. There is no second diamond loser because you can discard one on the second top club. You discard a diamond rather than a heart because you can ruff the third round of hearts in dummy.

If East-West sacrifice in 5♥ doubled, the defenders have a choice of ways of getting 500. The easy way is via a club ruff, which gives them a heart, three top winners and a ruff. Another way to do it is by a sort of forcing game, playing a spade to make dummy ruff, followed later by further spades so that declarer lacks the time to set up a club trick.

♠ J 10 2
♥ K 8
♦ Q J 7 3
♣ K Q 4 3

♠ Q 8 4
♥ 10 7
♦ K 6 2
♣ 10 9 8 6 5

♠ K 9 6 5
♥ J 6 5 3
♦ 9 4
♣ A 7 2

♠ A 7 3
♥ A Q 9 4 2
♦ A 10 8 5
♣ J

HCP	
12	
5	8
15	

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

Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦ [1]
Pass	3♦ [2]	Pass	3NT [3]
All Pass			

[1] The change of suit rebid should be forcing after the two-level response. You do not want to have to rebid 2NT on a hand like this.
[2] North has maximum for the raise. Some will prefer to use fourth suit.
[3] You would not want to play in the diamond game at IMPs, still less at matchpoints.

West's best lead (to stop the overtrick) is a spade, the unbid suit. When East covers the ten or jack with the king, declarer has to win to ensure a second stopper. If the play continues with a heart to dummy and a losing diamond finesse, the defenders can clear the spades, leaving East a long spade to cash upon getting in with the ace of clubs. If instead declarer plays on clubs, the defenders can play the suit back, setting up a club trick for West.

♠ 7 3 2
♥ K J 9 7 6 4
♦ Q J 2
♣ 6

♠ 4
♥ A 5 2
♦ A 9 5 4
♣ J 9 8 7 5

♠ A Q J 10 5
♥ 8
♦ K 7 3
♣ A Q 4 3

♠ K 9 8 6
♥ Q 10 3
♦ 10 8 6
♣ K 10 2

HCP	
7	
9	16
8	

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

Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
Pass	2♥	2♠	All Pass

North's weak two opening makes life very difficult for East-West. It would not be ridiculous for the auction to proceed as shown. Perhaps, with a five-loser hand, East should start with a double. In that case, South raises to 3♥ and West makes a responsive double. Although this shows minors more than spades, East would then jump to 4♠, after which West will probably squirm and pass.

The play in a spade contract requires an element of care. South can continue hearts after getting in with the king of spades to shorten East's trumps. Declarer cannot afford to ruff that and pull all the trumps. Discarding a diamond is one solution. Leaving one trump out is another.

620 (or 170 as the case may be) is available in clubs too. North's weak opening makes it an easy decision to play for a ruffing finesse against South's king of spades, which means you just lose a trump.