



6th January 2014

Monday

British Winter

Sim Pairs

Commentary by

Michael Byrne



♠ A103

♥ J9

♦ 109872

♣ 875

♠ J52

♠ K64

♥ A7642

♥ K

♦ A54

♦ KQ6

♣ K9

♣ QJ10632

♠ Q987

♥ Q10853

♦ J3

♣ A4

| HCP | | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 5 | | N | - | - | - | - | - |
| 12 | | 14 | S | - | - | - | - | - |
| | 9 | | E | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | | | W | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

NS have to be spectators on the first board as with the majority of the points and a source of tricks in clubs it is EW who get to make game from the off.

This won't stop South overcalling 1♥ over 1♣ though, and now it will be up to EW to avoid taking a penalty, as +100/300 from 1♥^x is inadequate compensation against their game.

A pragmatic sequence might be 1♣ (1♥) 3NT, although ace empty in hearts is not a good holding, at least having five of them means a hold up play won't be a problem.

On a heart lead 11 tricks are there by knocking out the club first and then leading up to the spade, no danger is attached providing you have cashed the club and monitored their discards if South defends deceptively and cards as if he has the ♠ A (say clearing hearts with his highest one and then petering in spades and throwing a third one away) then West might cash out and settle for ten tricks.

The best lead is a spade, though I doubt either defender will find that one (perhaps South if he doesn't overcall, West bid hearts and then somehow he is on lead- unlikely) Anyone that tries 5♣ will scramble home after the ♠ A is right, but they won't get many match points for their troubles- although they will have learnt a valuable lesson about pairs.

♠ K76

♥ 96

♦ KQ98

♣ AK97

♠ AJ54

♠ 8

♥ J1083

♥ AQ742

♦ J104

♦ 65

♣ Q10

♣ J8532

♠ Q10932

♥ K5

♦ A732

♣ 64

| HCP | | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|----|---|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 15 | | N | 1 | 4 | - | 4 | 2 |
| 9 | | 7 | S | 1 | 4 | - | 4 | 2 |
| | 9 | | E | - | - | 2 | - | - |
| | | | W | - | - | 2 | - | - |

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

NS have an 8-card spade fit and just under the requisite game values, but 4♠ is straight forward due to the secondary diamond fit and useful doubleton club. (I suppose it's lucky that the ♥ A is right, but trumps are 4-1 offside as if to make up for it)

Most pairs should get there; perhaps the only ones to miss it might be the Precision pairs playing a 13-15 no trump. A normal sequence could be North opening 1♣/♦ in fourth seat and rebidding a strong no trump over the 1♠ response (with or without heart interference by east). Then South can either use check-back or bid 3♦, both of which should lead to the three-card spade support being located in North and game being reached.

The natural way to play the spade suit is low to the King and finesse on the way back (the argument being that you can pick up the suit for one loser when East has AJ8x but not when West has it) which will hold your losses to two trumps and the ♥ A on this hand. Might anyone make 11? That would involve running the ♠10, or more likely East leading a singleton trump (perhaps after a transfer auction) and squishing his partner's holding. 620 should be the norm here, but there will be quite a few in part-score and maybe just one or two making 650.

♠ KQJ8

♥ 876

♦ K94

♣ J75

♠ 92

♠ 10754

♥ 10543

♥ QJ92

♦ J1072

♦ Q8

♣ K64

♣ 982

♠ A63

♥ AK

♦ A653

♣ AQ103

| HCP | | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|----|---|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 10 | | N | 5 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 5 |
| 4 | | 5 | S | 5 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 5 |
| | 21 | | E | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | | W | - | - | - | - | - |

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

Two flat hands of 31 points and yet slam can be made in a 4-3 fit – you've got to love computer deals. Did anyone reach 6♠? (I think not)

Back on planet earth the world and his wife bid 2NT-3NT and make 11 tricks for a 50% score.

What points of interest can be gleaned from this hand then? The first one is that West has a close lead problem, the jack and 2 of diamonds as well as the 3 (or 5) of hearts each pulling the defender in their own direction. Put me down for a heart lead as the major suit is likely to hit length on the dummy, in declarer's hand it is just a guess of course.

The second technical point of note is the club suit – how many of you blithely ran the jack, not appreciating that a cover would reduce your four tricks to three when East had Kx? If East has Kxx both running the jack and leading low to the ten then low to the queen will work, and if East has K964 or K864 then neither will work (East can cover the jack whenever it is played). But holding any doubleton king he can cover, hence low to the ten, then low to the queen is slightly superior. All irrelevant on this hand of course but a flat board is no excuse for bad technique!

♠ 3

♥ A1082

♦ K632

♣ Q852

♠ AQJ1065

♠ 87

♥ Q973

♥ K64

♦ 7

♦ AQJ8

♣ K10

♣ J964

♠ K942

♥ J5

♦ 10954

♣ A73

| HCP | | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 9 | | N | - | - | - | - | - |
| 12 | | 11 | S | - | - | - | - | - |
| | 8 | | E | 1 | - | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| | | | W | 1 | - | 3 | 3 | 3 |

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

This hand raises a few good points about hands with 6-4 in the majors – how best to get both suits in?

1♠ P and East responds 2♣ (fairly grizzly really but best to be consistent with 4/4 in the minors) now West should bid 2♥, giving full weight to the ten of spades. Then 2NT from East and West's bid of 3♠ is now forcing, showing 6/4 in the majors and asking partner to pick the best game. [With a poorer hand West would be best advised to rebid 2♠, then bid 3♥ over 2NT classically showing 6/4 weak.]

What game should East pick then? If he hits something like this then 3NT is ok, but give West a small singleton club and now 4♠ has good chances of 11 tricks but 3NT might fail from the off. On this lay-out of course both games are playable but likely to go down, as the bad spade break means the suit doesn't run in 3NT and he has too many heart losers in a spade contract.

Having said that, perhaps 3NT will sneak through if South leads a diamond (unbid suit and all that) and North puts up the king. Now East is up to three diamonds tricks and three spade tricks, perhaps he can negotiate two clubs and a heart? All very complex but one thing is for sure - bidding and making any contract will score well, and bidding and making a game will be well over 90%.

♠ AQ1072

♥ 4

♦ KJ5

♣ AJ72

♠ KJ6

♠ 9

♥ Q832

♥ AK10765

♦ A864

♦ 10932

♣ Q5

♣ 106

♠ 8543

♥ J9

♦ Q7

♣ K9843

| HCP | | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|----|---|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 15 | | N | 5 | - | - | 5 | - |
| 12 | | 7 | S | 5 | - | - | 5 | - |
| | 6 | | E | - | 2 | 2 | - | - |
| | | | W | - | 2 | 2 | - | - |

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

NS get their revenge as with little over half the pack they can roll in 4♠ with an overtrick just by guessing which finesses to take. Of course in real life the play in the spade suit will be low to the queen which holds declarer to ten tricks, probably still enough for a good score.

How might we get there? 1♠ from North - does East bid? I would prefer 3♥ as a weak jump overcall, something similar to a weak two or three level pre-empt. Now 3♠ from South 4♥ from West and North goes on to game. West does best to sacrifice, as 5♥ is a mere 500 (two diamonds, two clubs and a spade) but saving against a game not everyone will bid (not to mention one against which you have several defensive tricks) is rarely a winning tactic at pairs.

There doesn't seem to be much in the play of 4♠ since the club suit is un-getwrongable (if that's not a word it should be) and there are no ruffs for EW.

♠ A

♥ J1096543

♦ Q42

♣ J7

♠ K7

♠ J863

♥ K

♥ AQ8

♦ K8653

♦ J7

♣ AK1032

♣ Q986

♠ Q109542

♥ 72

♦ A109

♣ 54

| HCP | | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 8 | | N | - | - | 1 | - | - |
| 16 | | 10 | S | - | - | 1 | - | - |
| | 6 | | E | 4 | 3 | - | 1 | 4 |
| | | | W | 4 | 3 | - | 1 | 4 |

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

A potential game for EW now, with plenty of values they must find a way to 3NT (easier) or 5♣ (can be beaten on best defence).

If South opens a weak two then West has an awkward choice of overcall, 3♦, 3♣ and 2NT (natural although looking at that hand it's hard to tell) all have some appeal.

Hopefully East should take his partner seriously and bid 3NT in any case, but there will be many who give their partner leeway and pass.

If South leads a spade against 3NT then low from the dummy will guarantee 9 tricks – it isn't a guess really as even if you put up the king and drop the hypothetical stiff queen you have gained nothing.

5♣ is the only game that might go down – played by East a spade lead and diamond back to that ace for a ruff, not that easy to find. South will have to decide what shape he thinks the missing hands are, perhaps East has shown club preference, in that case partner's diamond switch can't be a singleton and he is putting us on lead for another reason. By contrast played by West it will be easier for North to lead the ace of spades and switch, if he chooses a diamond then South should be up to the task of giving a ruff.

♠AQ984

♥10

♦J652

♣K95

♠K102

♥A42

♦1093

♣J642

♠J65

♥Q53

♦K74

♣Q1087

♠73

♥KJ9876

♦AQ8

♣A3

| HCP | | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|----|---|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 10 | | N | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| 8 | | 8 | S | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| | 14 | | E | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | | W | - | - | - | - | - |

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

Not for the first time 24 points are enough for game, the good heart pips proving to be a valuable asset. Perhaps 1♥-1♠-2♥-2NT-3NT will do the job but in practice many Norths will pass 2♥ (quite rightly as game is no bargain even when South has a relative power house) and score 170.

The play in hearts seems straightforward as you have two heart losers and a diamond, although if West leads the 10♦ then South can win the queen and the suit is frozen – neither East nor West can attack it without conceding a trick. If South judged to ruff the spades good and play trumps then EW will have to switch to clubs pronto and take the entry out of dummy before trumps have gone otherwise it's 2♥ +3 and +200 to NS. Some Norths might bid 2♠ over 2♥ but this would be quite wrong – 2♥ shows 6 (not 5, as 5-3-3-2 hands should open or rebid 1NT) and to take partner out into a probable 5-1 or 5-2 fit is an error. Remember on some hands with 3-card support partner would already have raised us, as a hand with say Kxx, Qxxxxx, AQx, x will play well with the ruffing done in the short trump hand.

Game can be made in four strains but if any NS bid and made 5♦ I would suggest they give their bidding system a quick once over!

♠AQ1094

♥83

♦Q96

♣954

♠5

♥AJ654

♦J5432

♣J6

♠8762

♥Q10972

♦7

♣AQ2

♠KJ3

♥K

♦AK108

♣K10873

| HCP | | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|----|---|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 8 | | N | 4 | 1 | - | 4 | 1 |
| 7 | | 8 | S | 4 | 1 | - | 4 | 1 |
| | 17 | | E | - | - | 4 | - | - |
| | | | W | - | - | 4 | - | - |

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

After three passes to South, can they reach 4♠? If South starts with 1♣ and partner responds 1♠, what should he rebid? Well if West has overcalled 1♥ and NS employs the traditional style of negative doubles then 1♠ shows five and South can have a pop at game, even if he is a bit thin for it. Otherwise he will have to reverse into 2♦ and North either bids 3♣ (forcing if playing some version of Blackout or Lebensohl) or failing that 2♥ as fourth suit forcing, over which South could jump to 3♠ to show 3-1-4-5 shape. If East raises hearts (and South can't tell about the fifth spade) then he should employ a take out double and raise the spade response to game.

The play in spades doesn't seem too hard, after a heart to the ace and a heart back, North can draw trumps and try some diamonds. When he discovers West is 5-5 he has time to risk a club to the king.

If East leads a singleton diamond then North must draw trumps and not take a heart discard – otherwise he is stuck on table and can't lead up to the ♣K. Instead he has to rely on the ace being favourably placed and lose two hearts and the ♣A. I take back what I said – the play seems very interesting indeed.

♠J43

♥10863

♦J106

♣Q103

♠KQ7

♥42

♦AK942

♣K64

♠85

♥AQJ97

♦Q7

♣A952

♠A10962

♥K5

♦853

♣J87

| HCP | | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 4 | | N | - | - | - | - | - |
| 15 | | 13 | S | - | - | - | - | - |
| | 8 | | E | 5 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 5 |
| | | | W | 4 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 5 |

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

No-one has a singleton and sure enough a no trump contract it is. 3NT to be precise as with 28 points between the two hands even the most conservative of bidders should get to game.

| | | | |
|---|----|----|-----|
| P | 1♥ | 1♠ | 2♦ |
| P | 2♥ | P | 3NT |

seems sensible. West doesn't care if his partner has a five or six card suit for his rebid when holding a double spade stopper and a chunky 15 count.

The play should lead to 11 tricks as South wins the ♠A and ♥K in due course.

There doesn't seem to be a way for declarer to squeeze another trick out of the hands, or should I say for NS to lose a trick to which they are entitled. Even on the run of the diamonds, if North lets a heart go NS still get two tricks.

A flat board? That'll be the day – go on prove me wrong with a wild slam or dubious penalty.

♠AQ1053

♥107

♦96

♣10982

♠98

♠KJ7642

♥963

♥84

♦AQ10752

♦84

♣K5

♣J63

♠-

♥AKQJ52

♦KJ3

♣AQ74

| HCP | | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|----|---|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 6 | | N | 3 | - | 4 | - | 2 |
| 9 | | 5 | S | 5 | 1 | 5 | - | 3 |
| | 20 | | E | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| | | | W | - | - | - | 1 | - |

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

If East starts with a threadbare 2♠ (he shouldn't, point-count notwithstanding he has sterile shape 6-2-3-3 and terrible intermediates) then South will start with a double and soon be writing down +200/+500 and a bad score – there's no justice!

Where East passes, South should start with 1♥ (this won't be passed out with a void spade) and then bid 4♥ at his next go when West's 2♦ comes back to him. Anyone trying 3NT (good fun but rather hit and miss!) will get lucky with a trick on the lead and an entry to cash the ♠A.

So 4♥ will be played at most tables, how many tricks can we make? If West starts with a trump then South needs to win the ♥10 throwing a diamond and run the ♣10. If instead he plays one to the ♣Q West can exit with a spade and there is no endplay, West taking two diamonds to go with his partner's ♣J. Anything better than that? Well I suppose if South is really on good form then he might draw the inference that West has the ♣K for his bid and after winning the ♥10 play ♠A (throwing a diamond) and ruff a spade. Now draw trumps and exit with ace and another club and West must give you the ♦K. A bit fanciful? In practice yes, West might have a small doubleton club and ♠Kx and then you would be the only player in the room to go down.

♠87

♥1082

♦J105

♣QJ1092

♠3

♠KQ102

♥KJ4

♥AQ97

♦97642

♦K83

♣AK65

♣43

♠AJ9654

♥653

♦AQ

♣87

| HCP | | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|----|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 4 | | N | - | - | - | - | - |
| 11 | | 14 | S | - | - | - | - | - |
| | 11 | | E | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| | | | W | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 |

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

South will start with 1♠ but as usual his partner's hand will be a disappointment and EW will brush him aside. If West chooses to act then double is clear (anyone that overcalls 2♦ should be taken outside and beaten round the head with a used mop until they resolve never to do it again). Over that East might leap to 4♥ which should make on careful play (leading low diamonds each time since South is marked with the ace) or bid 3NT, again ten tricks are there if you get the diamonds right. Alternatively he might "flex" with 2♠, bidding hearts over the diamond response, now West will mark time with 3♠ and East bid 3NT.

If West passes 1♠ then North will probably pass (responding 1NT can be effective a tactic as an obstructive bid but it won't be a mainstream choice) and now East can bid 1NT (11-14/12-16/11-15 choose your poison – one size fits all) and West raise to 2NT, with East going on to game. If South bids 2♠ at any point then West may find a take out double and East should leave it. 500 is there if the defenders are careful – West should cash the top clubs and switch to a heart (a play not without risk since South could have ♥AQ not diamonds) now East cash the three hearts and exit a diamond and wait for three trump tricks. Alternatively they can switch to trumps, binning a trick there but denying declarer the diamond trick.

♠A4

♥A876

♦K

♣AK8642

♠Q

♠1065

♥KQ1043

♥952

♦A10654

♦Q9873

♣J5

♣103

♠KJ98732

♥J

♦J2

♣Q97

| HCP | | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|----|---|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 18 | | N | 6 | - | - | 6 | 2 |
| 12 | | 2 | S | 6 | - | - | 6 | 2 |
| | 8 | | E | - | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| | | | W | - | 1 | 1 | - | - |

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

1♥ from West (it's not much of a hand but being first at green requires little more encouragement!) Now North should bid 2♣, the singleton king not being full value to double and then bid clubs. South will respond 2♠ and over North's 3♥ cue bid (tell me more) bid 3♠ or 4♠, the former will see North raise to game and the latter might give North pause for thought. Might North shoot a slam? Quite possibly as he does have a control in every suit, a trick source and a good reason to believe the finesses through West will work. The slam is no great shakes, since it is slightly worse than picking up the trumps, a few handling charges still existing if for example clubs were 4-0 and the defence could get two rounds of trumps in.

As usual just playing in the right strain (spades) and making the correct number of tricks (12) will be worth 60% or so to NS.

6♣ is a fair contract mind you, as you have the option of ruffing the third spade, but you'll presumably need clubs 2-2 or spades 2-2 anyway since otherwise the third spade will get bumped off, North lacking the entries to draw trumps and then ruff it.

Combined odds are around 71%, since singleton ♠Q helps you out as well. In that case - well bid anyone who reached it!

| <div><div><div>♠ A73</div><div>♥ 109863</div><div>♦ AJ3</div><div>♣ 63</div></div><div><div>♠ KQ2</div><div>♥ J74</div><div>♦ K92</div><div>♣ AK87</div></div><div><div>♠ 1094</div><div>♥ AK</div><div>♦ Q764</div><div>♣ QJ95</div></div><div><div>♠ J865</div><div>♥ Q52</div><div>♦ 1085</div><div>♣ 1042</div></div></div> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th></th><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>9</td><td></td><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>16</td><td>12</td><td></td><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>3</td><td></td><td>E</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>W</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr></table> | HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | | 9 | | N | - | - | - | - | 16 | 12 | | S | - | - | - | - | | 3 | | E | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | | | | W | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | <div>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</div> <p>A more sedate deal now with EW holding 28 points and two balanced hands – dare I say everyone’s 3NT contract?</p> <p>1NT-3NT for the Acol players, a couple more bids for the strong no-trumpers, I’d guess, but it won’t materially affect the lead since South’s only four-card suit is spades, not mentioned by either player.</p> <p>On a spade lead to the king and ace, East has two spade tricks (he can finesse now or later) to go with four clubs, one diamond and two hearts to make nine. He also has time to set up the fourth diamond if North doesn’t switch to a heart at trick two, so it’s not a good advertisement for playing back partners suit blindly.</p> <p>Better defence is for North to duck the first spade without any thought, now East will cross in clubs to lead a diamond to the king (a more natural play as AJ or A10 with South feels easier to cope with, although the absence of the eight doesn’t make that true) and ace, a heart switch and East has a choice of plays for his ninth trick. If he just leads a spade to the queen then NS can cash three tricks and exit, waiting for their fifth trick.</p> <p>As usual - the smooth duck is a rare bird, but a tasty one at that!</p> |
|--|-----|--------------------|--------------------|---|---|---|----|--|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|----|--|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 9 | | N | - | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | 12 | | S | - | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3 | | E | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | W | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <div><div><div>♠ Q</div><div>♥ 9</div><div>♦ KQ97</div><div>♣ K1096532</div></div><div><div>♠ A8542</div><div>♥ J8652</div><div>♦ 542</div><div>♣ -</div></div><div><div>♠ 97</div><div>♥ AK1043</div><div>♦ 1083</div><div>♣ A87</div></div><div><div>♠ KJ1063</div><div>♥ Q7</div><div>♦ AJ6</div><div>♣ QJ4</div></div></div> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th></th><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>10</td><td></td><td>N</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>11</td><td></td><td>S</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>14</td><td></td><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr></table> | HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | | 10 | | N | 4 | 2 | - | - | 5 | 11 | | S | 4 | 2 | - | - | | 14 | | E | - | - | 3 | - | | | | W | - | - | 3 | - | <div>Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all</div> <p>East should definitely strike the first blow with a 1♥ opening here, regardless of what system is being used. (Playing Acol he has a choice of disgusting rebids over 1♠, either 2♥, 2♣ or some kind of Crowhurst 1NT)</p> <p>This will get a 1♠ overcall from South and 4♥ from West (yes really – five trumps a void and an ace is more than enough), giving North the final guess. Since 4♥ is off in top tricks, you could be forgiven for thinking that North should pass, but will South lead the diamond to beat 4♥? I think not, and any Norths who chicken out will concede 420 in straightforward fashion, East pitching a diamond on the ace of clubs and ruffing three losers in dummy after drawing trumps. So 5♣ it is and perhaps EW will forget to double that. There isn’t much play for the contract, as surely West will dive in with the ♠ A on the first round. East can make it easy for him by playing both top hearts at his first go: when North shows up with a singleton heart it is massively against the odds that he has a void spade, so West can get it right.</p> <p>At the tables where East passes, South will open 1NT and North probably transfer to clubs and bid again, South might try 3NT (not a success) or bid spades and get to 5♣ (a similar one down). Alternatively 1♠-2♣ -2♠-3♣ -3NT will lead to game as well. Any Norths that park the bus in part-score will have got an average looking 130 and all the match points, EW no doubt asking “what could we have done better?”</p> |
| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 10 | | N | 4 | 2 | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | 11 | | S | 4 | 2 | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 14 | | E | - | - | 3 | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | W | - | - | 3 | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <div><div><div>♠ 10542</div><div>♥ J72</div><div>♦ Q9</div><div>♣ KQ84</div></div><div><div>♠ AJ97</div><div>♥ AKQ5</div><div>♦ J8</div><div>♣ 972</div></div><div><div>♠ 863</div><div>♥ 1094</div><div>♦ AK643</div><div>♣ 105</div></div><div><div>♠ KQ</div><div>♥ 863</div><div>♦ 10752</div><div>♣ AJ63</div></div></div> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th></th><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>8</td><td></td><td>N</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>15</td><td>7</td><td></td><td>S</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>10</td><td></td><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr></table> | HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | | 8 | | N | 1 | - | - | - | 15 | 7 | | S | 1 | - | - | - | | 10 | | E | - | 2 | 2 | 3 | | | | W | - | 2 | 2 | 3 | <div>Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</div> <p>This time we have 15 facing 7 and two balanced hands, so it is merely a question of which EW pair can get to the right strain and get the most overtricks.</p> <p>Where EW are playing Acol they should bid 1♥ - P - 2♥ - all pass, and now North has to lead trumps to stop the club ruff in dummy. This won’t be found very often and 140 should be a fair result, four heart tricks, one ruff, two diamonds and two spade tricks. What about if East responds 1NT?</p> <p>Now South might lead a diamond to the jack, queen and ace and seven tricks are likely to be the limit. The only way to make eight appears to be spades and guess South has KQ tight, pretty hot stuff.</p> <p>Strong no-trumpers will open one, and now North has a choice of leads. If he tries the ♠5 West might work out what is going on and duck the first one; then the king comes back and he is up to eight tricks. Alternatively North might try a club lead and having cashed four tricks (west throwing a spade) he might switch to a spade. West can again cash four hearts cross to dummy and lead a spade up and make 120.</p> <p>Ironically spades seems to be the only strain where you can’t fail to make nine tricks as North can’t stop the ruff in dummy without sacrificing his trump trick, or you can try four rounds of hearts throwing a club as a bit of variation.</p> |
| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 8 | | N | 1 | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | 7 | | S | 1 | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 10 | | E | - | 2 | 2 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | W | - | 2 | 2 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

♠ 9
 ♥ J8652
 ♦ K5
 ♣ QJ974
 ♠ Q753 ♠ AKJ82
 ♥ KQ ♥ 973
 ♦ 84 ♦ A107
 ♣ AK1053 ♣ 86
 ♠ 1064
 ♥ A104
 ♦ QJ9632
 ♣ 2

| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 7 | | N | - | 1 | 2 | - |
| 14 | | 12 | S | - | 1 | 2 | - |
| | 7 | | E | 2 | - | - | 4 |
| | | | W | 2 | - | - | 4 |

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

EW have game values and nine spades between them – surely everyone will reach game? 1♣ -1♠-2♠-4♠ or 1♣ 1♠-3♠-4♦-4♥-4♠ will surely work out fine, although a 3-3 club break would give you twelve tricks so we shouldn't be too scathing of those that do reach a slam. On this lay-out they are doomed of course, but no-one ever said bridge was easy.

Let's say that EW bid peacefully to 4♠ and NS remain silent. ♦ Q to the ace and what does East do? If he wants to make 12 tricks when clubs are 3-3 he can't afford to draw three rounds of trumps first since that will leave him without a route back to the dummy to cash it. So he tries the ♣K and – disaster! South ruffs, plays a diamond to the king gets another club through! East can recover and ruff high, and with trumps now 2-1 he can just about scramble home for ten tricks.

Actually this isn't such a disaster – even on a club lead with declarer alerted to the bad split he can't make 11 tricks. If he draws three rounds of trumps he has only one ruff in the dummy and if he doesn't then he suffers a ruff either way. (play it through – it seems like he should be able to negotiate to ruff one heart low and one diamond high, but he has no route back to hand)

So an interesting deal- everyone makes ten ... or do they?

♠ AJ
 ♥ J953
 ♦ 10543
 ♣ A53
 ♠ 97632 ♠ K1084
 ♥ AQ2 ♥ 1076
 ♦ KQ7 ♦ AJ2
 ♣ 109 ♣ KQ6
 ♠ Q5
 ♥ K84
 ♦ 986
 ♣ J8742

| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 10 | | N | - | - | - | - |
| 11 | | 13 | S | - | - | - | - |
| | 6 | | E | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| | | | W | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 |

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

This time EW have only 24 points between them and a 4-3-3-3 facing a 5-3-3-2 yet 4♠ is ice cold since spades are 2-2 with the ace onside and the heart finesse working. In fact EW might actually make eleven tricks, the ♣KQ providing discards for the ♥2, assuming EW don't get around to hearts soon enough.

How will EW get there?

1NT from East, pass, and a transfer from West (though Stayman is possible). East should break the transfer even though he has poor shape, since he has good controls and reasonable spades. West should probably raise to game on the grounds that everyone else will, but it won't be a cast iron decision by any means.

If South starts with a club to the ace then it is game over with eleven tricks; if he leads a heart, East will probably play safe and play low from dummy, and then ten it is.

A diamond might look passive but East will play a trump and NS have no way of stopping eleven tricks.

Probably everyone will make eleven tricks in practice but those that start with a heart will have earned their 85%.

♠ K10872
 ♥ 92
 ♦ AK102
 ♣ A4
 ♠ 95 ♠ QJ63
 ♥ QJ1087543 ♥ -
 ♦ - ♦ 87653
 ♣ KJ2 ♣ 9753
 ♠ A4
 ♥ AK6
 ♦ QJ94
 ♣ Q1086

| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 14 | | N | 2 | 5 | - | 3 |
| 7 | | 3 | S | 2 | 5 | - | 2 |
| | 16 | | E | - | - | 1 | - |
| | | | W | - | - | 1 | - |

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

NS get the bit of shape here but it is EW that have a void each – sadly in each other's longest suit!

South will open 1♣/♦ second in seat and West will blast 4♥ (3♥ if feeling vulnerable, or having looked at the vulnerability and discovered he isn't vulnerable). North will then either double or bid spades. Over 3♥ a double might get South to pass, and now 500 is easy and 800 possible if South switches to a club (the right card is the ten in case West has AJx) and West mis-guesses. If North bids 3♠ then South plays 3NT and will make ten tricks, unless he finds the spectacular play of running the ten of spades. (Since most doubletons are irrelevant running then gains against 96, 95, 93, and stiff 9 and loses to J9, Q9, and QJ as well as bare queen or jack, so it is closer than it looks)

If West bids 4♥ then North should look at the vulnerability and double - South won't have a problem there!

| <p>♠ A97 ♥ Q987 ♦ 952 ♣ A102</p> <p>♠ QJ32 ♠ K ♥ 42 ♥ AKJ653 ♦ QJ108 ♦ K76 ♣ 973 ♣ Q64</p> <p>♠ 108654 ♥ 10 ♦ A43 ♣ KJ85</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th></th><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>10</td><td></td><td>N</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td></td><td>16</td><td>S</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>8</td><td></td><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr></table> | HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | | 10 | | N | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 6 | | 16 | S | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | | 8 | | E | - | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | | | | W | - | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | <p>Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <p>Another part-score hand? Where are all the delicate 6/6 slams?</p> <p>East opens 1♥ and South might well dredge up a non vulnerable overcall of 1♠. This might not pass any of these rigid suit quality tests that are bandied about with alarming frequency but it has the merit of getting NS into the auction easily and cheaply, and the player shortest in the opponents’ suit must be the one to act. Over 1♠ West might try 1NT (I can live with pass) and North should show a good raise to 2♠ by bidding 2♥ (An Unassuming Cue Bid). East might pass and then bid 3♥ or he might bid 3♥ straight away. NS must resist the temptation bid any further as they are about to get +200 and most of the match-points, although they (and by that I mean North) can chance a double if they fancy it, which (having pushes EW around enough already) is like pouring salt onto a fresh wound.</p> <p>If NS don’t bid then East would be well advised to rebid 2♥ after 1♥ P 1♠ since his stiff king and poor intermediates are liabilities. In the real world few will do so and the only issue will be can East sneak a spade to his singleton king. I suspect a few Norths will be enjoying their afternoon nap and allow East to make eight tricks, completing a traveller filled with 200s, 100s and the occasional 110, along with those fiends who have collected their 500.</p> |
|--|-----|--------------------|--------------------|---|---|---|----|---|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|----|--|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|--|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 10 | | N | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | 16 | S | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 8 | | E | - | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | W | - | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>♠ A973 ♥ 2 ♦ K842 ♣ K652</p> <p>♠ Q862 ♠ J5 ♥ AQ98765 ♥ 1043 ♦ 10 ♦ AQ96 ♣ 10 ♣ J974</p> <p>♠ K104 ♥ KJ ♦ J753 ♣ AQ83</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th></th><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>10</td><td></td><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td></td><td>8</td><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>14</td><td></td><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr></table> | HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | | 10 | | N | 2 | 3 | - | 1 | - | 8 | | 8 | S | 2 | 3 | - | 2 | - | | 14 | | E | - | - | 4 | - | 1 | | | | W | - | - | 4 | - | 1 | <p>Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <p>South starts with 1NT – what does West do? Anyone showing the majors needs a lesson in trump management, as when partner has one heart and three spades you still want hearts as trumps. (In fact if partner is 3-0 in your suits hearts will still play better). You can bid 2♥, 3♥ and even 4♥ has some attraction (if you’re a gambler). North will double any number of hearts, being take-out at the two and three level and showing “a few bits and pieces” over 4♥. East should support his partner and game will be reached. Should it be made? If North leads a diamond at trick one then West has an immediate decision. The argument for finessing is that if it wins you can pitch a club and make it on any lay out. The argument against is that if you finesse and it is wrong you are down immediately. Many Wests will put up the ace and attempt to ruff two spades in the dummy (can that ever work?) It needs the fourth spade to be with the hand that has ♥KJ and for the opponents never to lead trumps) but they will be disappointed. If instead North leads a club to the ace and a low one comes back then West knows North has K♣ and South AQ (North would not lead the 2 from KQ52!) and you also know South has a top spade and need him to have the ♥K. Now the diamond finesse becomes odds on and 4♥ will make.</p> <p>I suspect many NS will buy the hand in part-score and go -200 but 620 (790?) will be a good top.</p> |
| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 10 | | N | 2 | 3 | - | 1 | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | 8 | S | 2 | 3 | - | 2 | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 14 | | E | - | - | 4 | - | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | W | - | - | 4 | - | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>♠ J84 ♥ K84 ♦ A8543 ♣ 76</p> <p>♠ Q9765 ♠ K102 ♥ AQ5 ♥ J7632 ♦ Q ♦ 76 ♣ AJ43 ♣ K92</p> <p>♠ A3 ♥ 109 ♦ KJ1092 ♣ Q1085</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th></th><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>8</td><td></td><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>15</td><td></td><td>7</td><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>10</td><td></td><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>-</td></tr></table> | HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | | 8 | | N | - | 3 | - | - | - | 15 | | 7 | S | - | 3 | - | - | - | | 10 | | E | 3 | - | 3 | 3 | - | | | | W | 3 | - | 3 | 4 | - | <p>Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <p>Any EW over-bidders will get away with it this hand, as 4♠ is there for the taking if they can locate the ♠J. All very unlikely though, and I daresay the main aim of this hand is to buy the contract in spades and make 140.</p> <p>The bidding should start 1♠ Pass 2♠ playing any system in the world; now if West passes (as he should with poor spades and a singleton ♦Q) North would be doing well to even consider bidding. As usual these part-score boards are where all the match points are available and if North does pile back in with a double (intending to correct clubs to diamonds) the diamond fit will be found and NS can press on to 4♦, even doubled -100 will score very well as most will be left to play in 2♠ making at least eight tricks.</p> <p>How should the play in spades go? North might lead a trump. Now West can draw trumps and knock out the ♥K (perhaps finessing if he can win the third round of trumps in dummy) and make ten tricks easily – eleven if the defence don’t switch to diamonds! If North leads a club then West might win and play a spade to the king, now South can win and play a diamond and its 140 for EW. On a really bad day South might play a club back to the 9 and East run the ♠K to North . . . he puts South in with the ♦K to get a club ruff and only 8 tricks! Bah humbug.</p> |
| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 8 | | N | - | 3 | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | | 7 | S | - | 3 | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 10 | | E | 3 | - | 3 | 3 | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | W | 3 | - | 3 | 4 | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

♠ AJ3
 ♥ KQ973
 ♦ 53
 ♣ K105
 ♠ 9652 ♠ 104
 ♥ AJ1052 ♥ 6
 ♦ J10 ♦ AKQ982
 ♣ 83 ♣ QJ97
 ♠ KQ87
 ♥ 84
 ♦ 764
 ♣ A642

| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | |
| | 13 | | N | 1 | - | 3 | 2 | - |
| 6 | | 12 | S | 1 | - | 3 | 2 | - |
| | 9 | | E | - | 3 | - | - | 1 |
| | | | W | - | 3 | - | - | 1 |

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

This time North has the old dilemma – do I open 1♥ or 1NT? It may seem a bizarre aspect, but the presence of three good spades in your hand really makes a difference in favour of opening 1♥. Why? Well the potential rebids problems if you open 1♥ are that you have to rebid 2♥ after a 1♠ response which nominally shows six – but with this hand you can raise 1♠ to 2♠, solving the issue. (Over a dustbin 1NT you will of course pass, and rebidding 2♥ over 2♣/♦ doesn't carry the same 6-card issues as you are often 4-5-2-2 or 4-5-1-3 lacking the values to reverse into spades)

Of course here it is all irrelevant since East will overcall 2♦ and when South doubles and West passes you have a different problem – bid 2♥ and risk a 5-1 fit or bid 2♠ and risk a 3-3 fit? Here they both turn out well and although nine tricks in hearts seems fanciful the hand literally plays itself – try it out. Three rounds of diamonds which you ruff and say play a club to the ace and a trump to the king. Now a spade to the king and a trump to the queen – oh no bad break! But you can cash the other top club and two top spades and then play the fourth spade and ruff cheaply – total nine tricks. (Hang on – West has thrown a club on the third diamond, that doesn't work! Yes, but you'll still make eight even if you follow this line and don't guess to run the ♥ 8 on the first round). In spades it is slightly messier and eight tricks are a hard slog. EW are likely to push on to 3♦ though, and that is a straight forward 110, so -100 won't be bad.

♠ 5
 ♥ A1095
 ♦ Q1087432
 ♣ Q
 ♠ K86 ♠ AQJ72
 ♥ QJ32 ♥ K8
 ♦ J ♦ 95
 ♣ 86432 ♣ J1095
 ♠ 10943
 ♥ 764
 ♦ AK6
 ♣ AK7

| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | |
| | 8 | | N | - | 5 | 2 | - | 2 |
| 7 | | 11 | S | - | 5 | 2 | - | 2 |
| | 14 | | E | 2 | - | - | 2 | - |
| | | | W | 2 | - | - | 2 | - |

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

At last a game contract to cut our teeth on. 1♠ from East what does South do? I think all you can do is pass, as whilst I am in favour of these ultra-balanced take out doubles of 1♣/1♦ there is much more risk attached when you double 1♠. (Here a fruity double would get North to 5♦ no problem so bien joué if you got away with it!). Anyway West will raise to 2♠ (surely no 1NT bidders with a side singleton?) and North bids some number of diamonds. 2♦ seems a distortion but the suit isn't good enough for 4♦ vulnerable (although varying your pre-empts against regular opponents always keeps them on your toes), so 3♦ seems right. East has nothing to say so South should bid 3♠, good raise and a try for game over which North can jump to game. Although it seems the stiff queen of clubs is what makes game good remember East isn't leading spades so you'll make eleven tricks without it anyway (throw a spade on the ♣ A K and ruff the 4th heart in dummy).

Anyone not playing weak jump overcalls and not fancying a first round bid can always protect later but I doubt they will be able to reach game.

♠ -
 ♥ KQ109653
 ♦ 8753
 ♣ 84
 ♠ KQ42 ♠ J653
 ♥ AJ ♥ 842
 ♦ 10 ♦ 964
 ♣ AJ9652 ♣ Q73
 ♠ A10987
 ♥ 7
 ♦ AKQJ2
 ♣ K10

| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | |
| | 5 | | N | - | 4 | 4 | - | - |
| 15 | | 3 | S | - | 5 | 5 | - | 1 |
| | 17 | | E | 1 | - | - | 1 | - |
| | | | W | 2 | - | - | 1 | - |

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

South starts with 1♠ (5/5 higher ranking – but I bet many people open 1♦) and West bids a gentle 2♣. What now for north? Put me down for a simple 4♥, getting the hand off your chest in one go. South might well have a good hand but with no fit and dubious ♣K under the club bidder he should take the low road and pass.

On a club lead from East, ten tricks are the limit, so any trips to the 5-level will be punished. If instead North bids 2♥ or even 3♥ (whatever that means- I think modern Acol defines it as a fit jump though everyone has their own idea of what it should be) then it might be hard for South to slow the train down. 5♦ on the solid 9-card fit is a cake walk as well (assuming that South is declarer!) though there doesn't seem to be any chance of an overtrick even if the club ace isn't led.

Anyone managing to play 4♥ from the South hand (as well as more prosaically those Easts who don't lead partner's suit) will get an overtrick, +450 and all of the match points going.

♠ AK9
 ♥ 104
 ♦ K104
 ♣ K10762
 ♠ QJ854 ♠ 102
 ♥ Q83 ♥ AJ9
 ♦ AQ85 ♦ 73
 ♣ - ♣ AJ9843
 ♠ 763
 ♥ K7652
 ♦ 962
 ♣ Q5

| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 13 | | N | - | - | - | - |
| 12 | | 10 | S | - | - | - | - |
| | 5 | | E | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| | | | W | - | 3 | 1 | 3 |

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

1♠ from West. Should North bid? Anyone that read my comments about the East cards on board 20 will get the answer to that – NO!

A 2♣ overcaller will deservedly get carted out on a stretcher when East passes and West doubles, going for at least 500 despite the wealth of high cards.

5-3-3-2 hands should never overcall at the two level – they have no playing strength and lots of defensive value. Here if North passes he might find that clubs become trumps!

Certainly a possible auction is 1♠-2♣-2♦-3♣ pass, which would be the winner if East had say ♠x, ♥KJx, ♦xx, ♣KQ109xxx. More likely West will press on with 3♦ and East might try 3NT, which is as good (or bad) as anything. Although the hand is a horrible misfit at least every suit is 3-3 and eight tricks can be made. So can 3♠ or 3♦ though, so going minus won't be a good result for EW.

♠ A
 ♥ Q65
 ♦ K8753
 ♣ AQJ4
 ♠ J10854 ♠ Q7
 ♥ 98743 ♥ AKJ2
 ♦ - ♦ A102
 ♣ 983 ♣ K752
 ♠ K9632
 ♥ 10
 ♦ QJ964
 ♣ 106

| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 16 | | N | - | 4 | - | 2 |
| 1 | | 17 | S | - | 4 | - | - |
| | 6 | | E | 1 | - | 3 | - |
| | | | W | 1 | - | 3 | - |

Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

1♦ from North and East will bid 1NT. What should South do?

A lot of people play methods here similar to a 1NT opening, and one version certainly includes 2♥/♠ showing five and support for partners minor (2♦ showing a single suited major). That would certainly work here as North can remove to 3♦, making ten tricks easily, as opposed to 2♠ which is hideous on a heart lead and forcing defence.

Alternatively South might choose to raise diamonds: 2♦ would be feeble, but 3♦ will buy the auction and again make 130.

In the unlikely event that South passes 1NT (say North opens a precision 1♦ downgrading the stiff ace and South decides to bid later or some such) then West should use Stayman and the heart fit will be found. 4♥ seems to be a good shot actually, and even looking at all four hands it's not obvious how to beat it. (I think it involves South gaining the lead with the ♣10 and giving North a spade ruff, then a trump exit leaves East a trick short – Deep Finesse is never wrong!)

So perhaps West should be bidding after South raises diamonds after all – 4♦ to ask partner to bid their best major!? All good fun really, but anyone playing twenty-nine boards in a duplicate normally expects to be given a run for their money and be made to work hard.

♠ J5
 ♥ A75
 ♦ KJ952
 ♣ AQ6
 ♠ AK982 ♠ 743
 ♥ 10982 ♥ K3
 ♦ 103 ♦ A876
 ♣ 107 ♣ 8432
 ♠ Q106
 ♥ QJ64
 ♦ Q4
 ♣ KJ95

| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| | 15 | | N | 3 | 3 | 2 | - |
| 7 | | 7 | S | 3 | 2 | 2 | - |
| | 11 | | E | - | - | - | - |
| | | | W | - | - | - | - |

Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all

A dull hand but not a happy outcome, as with two balanced hands and 26 points between them NS can't make game. A low spade lead (or top spade and low spade continuation) put paid to 3NT and anyone trying the old Moysian fit of 4♥ is off in top tricks.

So the answer is to get North to play it and have West forget to overcall. Well I suppose some things are easier said than done – three passes to North who opens a strong no trump, raised to 3NT by partner – easy! (Perhaps Stayman might make a guest appearance but shouldn't affect the result)

If instead North opens 1♦, then 1♥ from South and West must bid 1♠.

Again that suit needs to be bid to get led. People often don't appreciate that holding a bad hand is a good time to make a lead directing bid; if you add several queens to the West hand then he wouldn't mind what his partner led, but holding AK98x and nothing he must get the spade lead in at all costs.

West might open a dubious weak two third in seat; whilst I don't always applaud these tactics it certainly works on this hand.

♠ Q102

♥ Q85

♦ 874

♣ J972

♠ A96

♥ J32

♦ 53

♣ AKQ86

♠ 5

♥ K964

♦ AKJ62

♣ 1053

♠ KJ8743

♥ A107

♦ Q109

♣ 4

| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | |
| | 5 | | N | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| 14 | | 11 | S | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| | 10 | | E | 4 | 3 | 3 | - | 1 |
| | | | W | 4 | 3 | 3 | - | 1 |

♠ AKQ

♥ 97

♦ 1087

♣ A9742

♠ 942

♥ Q105

♦ J65

♣ KQJ6

♠ 7653

♥ KJ4

♦ AKQ92

♣ 5

♠ J108

♥ A8632

♦ 43

♣ 1083

| HCP | | Makeable contracts | | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|
| | | | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT | |
| | 13 | | N | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| 9 | | 13 | S | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| | 5 | | E | - | 2 | - | 1 | 2 |
| | | | W | - | 2 | - | 1 | 2 |

Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

South is well worth a 1♠ opening here (light opening bids have long been a part of Acoll which is why weak twos took so long to catch on in the UK (as opposed to say France or the US), and West has a close decision: some will bid 1NT (a bit thin to say the least!) others will bid 2♣ (at least the suit is good), others with discipline will pass.

The 1NT bidders will quickly reach 3NT via Stayman, the 2♣ bidders will see partner make an UCB and should drive to game, and as for the passers? 1♠ P 1NT/P X 2♠ now West should bid 3NT, or mess around with a cue bid.

3NT is a fair spot on the auction, if the clubs ran then it would be a simple matter to run them, which would strip squeeze south - watch him squirm holding Q109 diamonds and the ace of hearts as he is forced to throw away winners. Sadly that won't come to pass since with clubs 4-1 3NT is booked for two down (and 10% to EW) on most sensible defences.

5♣ gets out for one off, it might even make if North can be panicked into switching to a heart when he gets the lead with trumps. All the match-points go to the people who sneak through a game (unlikely) and the rest to those that make 130.

Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

And finally a peaceful part-score to end with. North will open 1NT, should East bid? A good hand for Asptro (spades and another suit) or many of the two suited bids that are popular these days. Otherwise East chooses between pass and 2♦. 2♦ will work well if South passes, but he should bid 2♥ (competitive) and force EW to 3♦, one down on every defence.

If East does use Asptro then West might bid 2♠ and North will find himself on lead with AKQ trumps! However amusing it might be he mustn't lead one otherwise the diamond ruff goes begging. He can still beat 2♠ if he leads a spade and switches to a heart and South ducks (not too hard as people who open a weak no-trump rarely have a singleton!) They can get a ruff later and the jack of trumps scores the sixth defensive trick. If instead North blithely draws trumps then 110 is there for EW and a lesson learnt for North.

New Cash Prize Structure

Overall winners: The overall winners of the EBU Spring and Autumn Simultaneous Pairs, and the British Simultaneous Pairs Events will now each receive a cash prize of **£50 per pair**. There is no cash prize for the overall winners of the Bridge England Sims or the Club Stratified Sims, however see below for prizes for heat winners.

Heat winners: The winners of every heat – i.e. the pair which achieves the best score within their club in any event – will be entered into a prize draw. This includes the heat winners of all EBU organised events – i.e. the EBU Spring and Autumn Simultaneous Pairs, the British Simultaneous Pairs Events, the Bridge England Sims and the Club Stratified Sims. The draw will be made at the AGM in November.

The prizes are:

1st prize - £1000 per pair

2nd prize - £500 per pair

3rd prize - £200 per pair

plus 15 additional runners-up prizes of £100 per pair

Club winners: Every club which enters a heat of any EBU organised event will be included in this prize draw, with one entry for each heat held. The draw will be made at the AGM in November.

The prizes are:

1st prize - £1000

2nd prize - £500

3rd prize - £200

plus 15 additional runners-up prizes of £100