British Spring Sim Pairs

M0nday

4th April 2016

Welcome to the 2016 British Spring Simultaneous Pairs. Thank you for playing.
I hope you enjoy the event and also the commentary provided by a leading expert. The commentator for this set of hands is Paul Bowyer. We hope you welcome the prize structure with cash prizes both for leading players and also for clubs who run heats. £1000 was won by a pair and also the same for the first club drawn. There are numerous other cash prizes. There will again be a draw for major prizes at the AGM in November and a full list will be published on the website shortly after this.
You can find all the full details and results at www.ebu.co.uk/sims/ You can earn Blue points in these Sim Pairs (in England) and they are awarded to the top third of the field. Provisional master points are shown but the event is not finalised until all results are in and score corrections have been made. This usually takes about three weeks. It really helps us if you can keep your scorecard for that period. Clubs should keep the travellers if still used. All players need to check that the correct score and DECLARER have been entered when using Bridgemates.

Jeremy Dhondy, Chairman EBU

♠A982
♥A109643
♦73
♣9

♠5 ♠103
♥J852 ♥Q7
♦A105 ♦Q864
♣108643 ♣AKQJ7

♠KQJ764
♥K
♦KJ92
♣52

HCP	
8	
5	14
13	

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

Board 1: Dealer North: Love all

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♣	1♠
3♣	4♠	All Pass	

The bidding on this one may not prove to be so straightforward. It certainly isn't right in theory to open that North hand with a weak 2♥, but that won't stop many players from doing so. After East opens 1♣ and South bids 1♠ West does best to gum up the works with a pre-emptive jump to 3♣. Of course, some may be unable to do this, foiled either by system constraints or by the worry that partner's opening bid may not contain clubs. Playing a natural system West knows East has the suit; nowadays a 1♣ opening often shows a holding of thirteen cards with little more definition. If North bids just 3♠ over 3♣ South may well pass, fearing four losers. No, North has to take the bull by the proverbials and jump to game. E/W have a profitable sacrifice in 5♣ as that costs only 300 points against N/S's 420/450. Quite who might bid it, though, is hard to say. Note that many who play in 4♠ will hold themselves to ten tricks by misguessing diamonds.

♠A109
♥J9874
♦765
♣A5

♠J43 ♠762
♥52 ♥A1063
♦K109432 ♦-
♣Q9 ♣KJ8642

♠KQ85
♥KQ
♦AQJ8
♣1073

HCP	
9	
6	8
17	

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

Board 2: Dealer East: NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Playing natural methods with four-card majors the auction above is a possible route to the obvious game by N/S. Our old and trusted friend *Deep Finesse* tells us that this has no chance – but that is only if West kicks off with a club lead. Quite why he should do that is obscure; a natural diamond lead may well allow this one home. Those playing a strong no-trump may well bid 1NT – 2♦ – 2♥ – 3NT and equally well be favoured by a diamond lead into the ♦AQJ. Those who open the South hand 1♦ may well get themselves minus scores here – North will respond 1♥ and East may well seize the chance of overcalling in clubs. What will happen next is anyone's guess. Another possible auction is if South opens 1♠ and West, all gung ho, leaps into action with a weak 3♦. If North doubles for take-out, South should pass. 3♦ is cold, you may note, if you glance at the matrix on your left. However, it's N/S who will rake in nine tricks and E/W who will have to write down -1100

♠KQ5
♥KQJ94
♦-
♣AQ854

♠10743 ♠AJ98
♥6 ♥102
♦A1062 ♦KQ743
♣K1073 ♣J6

♠62
♥A8753
♦J985
♣92

HCP	
17	
7	11
5	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	-	6	-	1
S	3	-	6	-	1
E	-	2	-	2	-
W	-	2	-	2	-

Board 3: Dealer South: EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♥	Dble?	3♥
3♠?	4♥	All Pass	

This one clearly belongs to N/S in hearts. With the ♣K fortunately placed a slam is available, but do you really want to be in a slam that is slightly worse than a finesse? Not a good idea at teams and definitely a bad idea at pairs. Nonetheless, this is punters' paradise; those who bid a slam on the N/S cards will rack up 980 in no time. Should East bid over 1♥ on his right? Probably not, but this is pairs and many will make an attenuated take-out double. (Some may even bid 2♦, but that's fairly repulsive). After a double, South should make a pre-emptive raise to 3♥ and North little reason to bid more than game, whether or not West sticks his oar in with 3♠. At the vulnerability, East has no cause to venture to 4♠, a bid that may well cause his side to get socked for 500 points. Whether that earns any match-points will depend on how many 980s there are.

♠J10862
♥Q92
♦2
♣Q632

♠943 ♠AQ5
♥KJ1064 ♥853
♦AK9 ♦J65
♣A4 ♣KJ75

♠K7
♥A7
♦Q108743
♣1098

HCP	
5	
15	11
9	

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

Board 4: Dealer West: All vulnerable

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

The old, old story, this one. Do E/W want to play in their 5-3 heart fit or do they want to play in 3NT? Often enough, there are the same number of tricks in both contracts, so 3NT may well be the right spot at pairs scoring. It is, though, easy to construct deals where the major suit is better. Here, East could bid 3♥ at his second turn to check on a possible eight-card fit. However, with honours in all the other suits and a 4·3·3·3 shape 3NT is not unreasonable. *Deep Finesse* tells us that ten tricks are available in both hearts and no-trumps. True, but both need careful handling. On the ♠J lead, for instance, the correct play is dummy's ace. Now the suit is *frozen* (assuming North has the ten) and cannot be led again without presenting West from making a second spade trick. Sure, South has only ♠Kx here but the aforesaid would be true even if South had ♠Kxx. Playing the queen on the jack would be a bad error. There is still work to do in 3NT and some will shun the club finesse, being satisfied with nine tricks. A mixture of results is possible here.

♠4
♥KQ1098
♦7642
♣AK3

♠QJ1063 ♠A952
♥A4 ♥J63
♦8 ♦AQ95
♣QJ1098 ♣74

♠K87
♥752
♦KJ103
♣652

HCP	
12	
10	11
7	

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

Board 5: Dealer North: NS vulnerable

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

These part score deals are always hard to predict. The hand belongs to E/W in spades, with 3♠ proving fairly easy to make (losing a heart, a spade and two clubs). However, some will reach a reasonable 4♠ (making if the spade finesse were to work) and some may allow the hand to be stolen cheaply by their opponents. After an opening bid of 1♥ many will respond 1NT on the South cards. Playing five-card majors (increasingly popular these days) South may well find a gentle raise to 2♥. In either case West can hardly pass. 2♠ looks obvious, although after the start to the auction of 1♥ – (Pass) – 1NT West might bid 2♥ if that shows "spades and a minor". After a spade overcall from his partner East surely must make a game try and 3♥ is designed for that purpose. With a hand lacking top cards West does best to decline, although it is hard to blame any pair who plays the E/W cards in 4♠ down one.

♠987
♥54
♦105
♣AK10876

♠AQJ642
♥J87
♦QJ7
♣3

♠10
♥K3
♦AK943
♣J9542

♠K53
♥AQ10962
♦862
♣Q

HCP	
7	
11	11
11	

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

Board 6: Dealer East: EW vulnerable

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

The best score available to E/W is 140 in 3♠, a contract that should lose two hearts, a trump and a club. Is it achievable? Yes, via the auction above. Very few players will pass that 1·2·5·5 hand as East these days so the early bidding is fairly obvious. Well, maybe some Souths will opt for a 2♥ overcall, depending on method but most will content themselves with a modest 1♥. After a 2♣ rebid by East, West has a problem in hand evaluation. 3♠ is non-forcing, of course, and is probably the best bid on his cards. If partner were to pass there would probably be no game available. Many players do not think in this fashion and there is likely to be a plethora of 2♥ bids made from the Western quarter. I predict loads of scores of 4♠ down one and 3NT down one.

♠KJ107653
♥63
♦10
♣Q102

♠94
♥84
♦97432
♣KJ74

♠AQ8
♥QJ1092
♦AKJ6
♣A

♠2
♥AK75
♦Q85
♣98653

HCP	
6	
4	21
9	

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

Board 7: Dealer South: All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	2♠	Dble	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3NT	All Pass

A ghastly problem for East after the bidding is opened with a weak two on his right. Well, some Norths will open with a full-blooded 3♠ but that bid, in many ways, will narrow East's choices. Is that North hand really a vulnerable pre-empt opposite a passed partner? Anyway… if North opens 3♠ then East has a decision between 3NT and 4♥, with both contracts making. In fact, on a non-club lead, 3NT will make an overtrick, outscoring 4♥. It's a harder problem, curiously, after a 2♠ opening bid. Now there are slam possibilities that East might want to explore. A take-out double should be the starting point, over which partner responds 2NT (*Lebensohl*) to show a rubbish tip. With West known to have tripe, slams are off the menu and East now has the same decision as over a 3♠ opener to whether to bid 3NT or 4♥. If he bids 3NT he is likely to gain 630 for his side as North is much less likely to lead a club.

♠K82
♥J87
♦KQ985
♣86

♠Q9
♥AKQ9632
♦62
♣AK

♠J10543
♥10
♦J7
♣QJ753

♠A76
♥54
♦A1043
♣10942

HCP	
9	
18	5
8	

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

Board 8: Dealer West: Love all

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

West has nine playing tricks in hearts – and nine tricks are all his side can make. Will anyone play this deal in a part score? Maybe, but probably not. If West opens 1♥ (as some will) it is ***just*** possible that he plays there. More likely, though is that East responds 1♠, and now West will surely bid 4♥. Some, playing *Benjaminised Acol*, will open 2♣. After a 2♦ response and a 2♥ rebid surely East won't (surely he ***can't***) pass that? Some, playing three weak twos, will be too scared to open 1♥ and will open an Acol-style 2♣. That's hardly going to keep them out of game. Nope, all roads appear to lead to 4♥ down one. A string of 50s to N/S on the travelling score sheet tonight? We shall see.

♠1084
♥A76
♦3
♣AJ10973

♠J952 ♠Q76
♥K8 ♥J9543
♦AQ654 ♦K97
♣K8 ♣Q2

♠AK3
♥Q102
♦J1082
♣654

HCP	
9	
13	8
10	

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

Board 9: Dealer North: EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♦	2♣	2♦	3♣
All Pass			

There are likely to be three passes to West on this deal, and that player will do best to put the cards straight back into the board. Few will do that, though. The 1NT merchants may just open the bidding with their favourite toy, probably playing in 2♥ after East transfers. 2♥ is a fairly ghastly spot and will surely fail. 1NT is no thing of beauty, mind, should East pass and North lead a club. If West opens a slightly more rational 1♦ (opening a weak 1NT on 5·4·2·2 hands is not recommended), North has an easy 2♣ overcall. East might think of bidding 2♥ but supporting partner is more sensible. South should think along the same lines (support your partner) and raise to 3♣, leaving West to regret opening his mouth. He may bid 3♦ on the grounds that his side may well have a nine-card fit. However, that isn't the case and he may suffer the kiss-of-death -200 if he ventures to the three-level. 3♣ should make if declarer views the hearts correctly.

♠K4
♥KQJ6
♦Q104
♣AQ64

♠Q10985 ♠J72
♥7 ♥A10854
♦A87 ♦653
♣J1083 ♣72

♠A63
♥932
♦KJ92
♣K95

HCP	
17	
7	5
11	

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

Board 10: Dealer East: All vulnerable

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

All roads should lead to 3NT on this deal, but the manner of reaching it may be important. The auction above, while reasonable, puts West on lead and a spade is not what declarer wants to see. If declarer immediately plays on diamonds, dislodging the ace, he will be fine (provided he also ducks a round of spades). Now ten tricks will fall into his lap. However, if declarer leads a heart early, East will pounce on that with his ace and a spade return will sink the game. Bidding? Well, many will play this from the North hand, some having opened 1NT (15-17). An innocent heart lead from East will make life easy for declarer. Some will open 1♣ on the North cards. This may allow West to overcall 1♠, indicating the best lead. Finally, some may take the opportunity to open 2♠ on those West cards (*Lucas*, spades and a minor). This might make it slightly tricky to reach game and, again, declarer will have to knock out the right red ace to make his 3NT contract.

♠KJ943
♥J104
♦43
♣AK5

♠8 ♠A75
♥AKQ65 ♥9832
♦A95 ♦J876
♣9832 ♣64

♠Q1062
♥7
♦KQ102
♣QJ107

HCP	
12	
13	5
10	

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

Board 11: Dealer South: Love all

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

4♠ is a decent contract on the N/S cards, the only problem being bidding it. South should pass as dealer (it's wrong to strain to open these pesky 4·4·4·1 hands) and the first three bids of the auction are obvious. Now South has a small problem. Raise spades, yes, but to what level and how? 2♠ and 3♠ would be judged as pre-empts by North, who would pass such bids rapidly. With a singleton heart and four good trumps the best call is 3♥, a genuine game try in spades. North has a marginal bid now (5·3·3·2 hands have too many losers in general, but he has some good assets). He can deduce heart shortage in his partner's hand and has good black cards. With some trepidation, North might advance to 4♠ – should he do so he would be rewarded with a magnificent dummy. In spades there are only three losers (all aces) and ten fairly easy tricks.

♠J108
♥42
♦KJ1043
♣Q87

♠765
♥AJ107
♦Q876
♣93

♠AK432
♥KQ65
♦A95
♣5

♠Q9
♥983
♦2
♣AKJ10642

HCP	
7	
7	16
10	

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

Board 12: Dealer West: NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	3♣
Dble	Pass	4♥	All Pass

This time, in contrast to the previous deal, it's E/W who have a simple-to-make but hard-to-bid game. 4♥ is relatively straightforward; with the two 3-2 breaks in the majors E/W have four spades, four hearts and the ♦A, the tenth trick coming from a club ruff in the East hand. Should they bid it? Well much depends on what N/S do in the auction and whether West bids or not. After East opens 1♠ in third seat some Souths will bid 2♣ and some 3♣. Now it's all down to West. If that player passes then game is almost impossible to bid. If he doubles (marginal) then East will bid 4♥. If West supports spades there is a danger that E/W end up in 4♠, a contract with four losers.

♠Q73
♥54
♦AQ2
♣AKJ108

♠KJ10982
♥Q108
♦1074
♣4

♠A5
♥J96
♦J653
♣9632

♠64
♥AK732
♦K98
♣Q75

HCP	
16	
6	6
12	

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

Board 13: Dealer North: All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♥
1♠	1NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

N/S have an easy 3NT on their cards, with ten top tricks. Strong no-trumpers may bid 1NT – 2♦ – 2♥ – 3NT, leaving East with a blind lead. That's a good thing for the defence as a spade lead from ♠Ax allows a possibly crucial second overtrick. If the bidding starts 1♣ – 1♥ (as it will at many tables) then West may choose to intervene. Neither 1♠ nor 2♠ should prevent North from declaring 3NT; however, such bids may induce East into fatal spade leads. It is possible that some will declare 4♥ on the South cards (maybe after a spade overcall?) *Deep Finesse* says that this cannot make. Well, of course the infernal computer is right (it's ***always*** right), but the winning defence of three rounds of spades, ruffed by East's ♥J or ♥9 is not exactly obvious. Where 4♥ is declared I expect it will sneak through, maybe with overtricks.

♠2
♥AQ8
♦62
♣AKQ10832

♠AJ93
♥1053
♦A1073
♣J6

♠KQ1087
♥KJ76
♦Q95
♣9

♠654
♥942
♦KJ84
♣754

HCP	
15	
10	11
4	

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

Board 14: Dealer East: Love all

West	North	East	South
		1♠	Pass
3♠	4♣	4♠?	All Pass

An interesting deal with uncertain outcomes. East should open 1♠ on his 11-count (I am not a fan of light opening bids but even I'd open that 5·4·3·1 hand with values in the majors). West has a textbook raise to 3♠ and now it gets interesting. Realistically East should pass that, certainly at pairs. With no aces and a minimum hand it looks dubious to bid the fourth spade. However, what if North, reasonably enough, lurches in with 4♣? Now East may take the view that there is no club wastage in the E/W cards and that the red honours should be well-placed. On that basis (and on the basis that he has no defence to 4♣) East may bid the extra spade. With both heart honours onside this contract can make – but only if declarer holds his diamond losers to one. The textbook play in diamonds, taking the suit in isolation, is to run the queen and then run the nine. After the bidding will East do that? If North declares in clubs he has to get diamonds right to make nine tricks, and he may fail to do so. Lots of guesswork on this one…

♠2
♥K85
♦AJ10952
♣QJ5

♠1096 ♠AQJ54
♥AQJ42 ♥106
♦73 ♦K86
♣1092 ♣AK6

♠K873
♥973
♦Q4
♣8743

HCP	
11	
7	17
5	

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

Board 15: Dealer South: NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♦	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♠	All Pass		

A hand of marginal decisions. After two passes it is clear for North to open 1♦, after that… who knows? East might overcall 1NT, he might overcall 1♠. It is easy for E/W to get overboard and reach 4♠ – and it's easy for N/S to let that through on a misdefence. What about 3NT? How on earth can that make? Try this esoteric line. The ♦Q is ducked and the next diamond is taken by the King. Next comes a low spade, South eventually taking the king. A low heart is taken by the ace and the ♣10 led, covered and taken by the king. The run of the spades forces North to keep the ♥K and two clubs, so he has to pitch diamonds. A heart exit now allows North to cash a diamond or two before having to concede the last two club tricks. Routine stuff(!) If any declarer finds that – maybe you should play in the premier league next year…? Surely no one will bid and make 4♥ on these cards?

♠Q109853
♥K1075
♦AK
♣10

♠A762 ♠KJ
♥A6 ♥Q842
♦98742 ♦Q63
♣75 ♣A983

♠4
♥J93
♦J105
♣KQJ642

HCP	
12	
8	12
8	

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

Board 16: Dealer West: EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Dble	2♣
2♦	2♥	Pass	3♣
All Pass			

Another part score deal of marginal decisions. North has an obvious opening bid of 1♠ and East the thinnest of thin take-out doubles. (pass cannot be criticised, but who passes these hands at this form of scoring?) Now it's all a question of style. Should South bid 2♣ on a mere eight points? Probably, as his suit is so good. West has an easy 2♦ bid and North is hardly going to pass with ten major-suit cards. South has nowhere to go over 2♥ except back to clubs, and North should Pass 3♣ like a shot. This contract should fail by one trick but it is possible to see 3♣ slipping through on inattentive defence. Anyway, a score of -50 is not going to be too bad for N/S.

♠QJ963
♥A108
♦102
♣982

♠10854 ♠K72
♥K5 ♥J432
♦J9743 ♦A86
♣K5 ♣A73

♠A
♥Q976
♦KQ5
♣QJ1064

HCP	
7	
7	12
14	

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

Board 17: Dealer North: Love all

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1NT	All Pass

Well, the auction above (1NT – all pass) is possible, but not that likely. Firstly, that's a really minimum hand to open a weak no-trump – a 4-3-3-3 hand devoid of intermediates. Perhaps pass is more prudent? Still, it's pairs and who wants to stump up table money and pass 12-counts? Now what, South? There are few who play 2♣ as natural so do your methods allow you to bid? A penalty double is possible; after all, you do have a good lead. Whether West sticks it ("I had 7 good points partner!") or pulls it ("I only had 7 points, partner") is marginal. If he bids 2♦, what next? North bids 2♠, maybe? Perhaps South doesn't double 1NT, perhaps he has a gadget to show hearts and a minor. Perhaps N/S play in 2♥, scoring 110? That looks like a good score to me, the same score as if they play in clubs making nine tricks. The results on this one could be all over the place, especially as strong no-trumpers will open that East hand with 1♣. Now where is the auction headed?

♠J9654
♥-
♦QJ73
♣KQJ5

♠K107
♥53
♦K1094
♣8742

♠-
♥AJ10764
♦A82
♣A1093

♠AQ832
♥KQ982
♦65
♣6

HCP	
10	
6	13
11	

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

Board 18: Dealer East: NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1♥	1♠
1NT	4♠	Dble	All Pass

Hmmm. Interesting. Very interesting. Another deal of marginal decisions. East will surely open 1♥ at all tables but then what? Should South overcall 1♠? If so, West has another marginal call (pass or 1NT) and North, with five-card support and a void, is surely going to bid 4♠. East, holding three aces and knowing of a trump trick opposite (assuming West bid 1NT), is entitled to double. This should slip one off, losing a spade, two diamonds and a club. If West passes over 1♠ then N/S are likely to play 4♠ undoubled, escaping for -100. Some players believe that you shouldn't enter the auction when you have the enemy's suit well held. Here, if South passes over 1♥, E/W are likely to be given enough rope to hang themselves. Nothing makes their way and they may play in something inelegant – such as 3♥ (doubled?) There could be a lot of doubled contracts on these deal, with few making contracts.

♠-
♥J1087
♦K9632
♣K632

♠KQJ104
♥Q6
♦84
♣AJ104

♠A972
♥AK53
♦AQ75
♣8

♠8653
♥942
♦J10
♣Q975

HCP	
7	
13	17
3	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	3	3	5	7	6
W	3	3	5	7	6

Board 19: Dealer South: EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
5♠	Pass	7♠	All Pass

As shown in the *Deep Finesse* matrix below left, E/W can make a grand slam on this deal. In fact, 7♠ is not that bad a spot; the diamond finesse is superfluous to requirements. Played in spades West can cash three hearts and the ♦A and play the rest of the hand on a crossruff. Even a trump lead wouldn't stop that line of play; you will note that natural causes prevent that defence in any case. So the hand is all about bidding. I can't believe that any pair will play this below slam level – after all, East has a monster when West opens 1♠. However, it is all a question of system. What is the best response on the East cards? I believe the hand too good for a 4♣ splinter and that 2NT (game-forcing in spades) is appropriate. After that… well, you need methods and everybody's will be different. Good luck!

♠54
♥J53
♦874
♣A10964

♠AKJ10
♥872
♦J96
♣J52

♠9732
♥AK1096
♦Q52
♣8

♠Q86
♥Q4
♦AK103
♣KQ73

HCP	
5	
10	9
16	

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

Board 20: Dealer West: All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	2♣	Dble	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	3♣
All Pass			

One of those part score deals that may be hotly contested. Of course, strong no-trumpers may be smug on this hand as they will open 1NT in fourth seat and might play there unmolested. East might protect, though, and E/W may declare the hand. In 1NT nothing can prevent declarer from making five clubs and two diamonds for his contract. Those playing a weak no-trump may be pushed around. East shouldn't miss the opportunity to bid at his second turn. With 4-5 in the majors it is moot whether double is right or 2♥ is the better call; however, you can't let South steal the deal in 2♣ at match-point scoring. 3♣ has four top losers – provided West doesn't cash the ♠AK prematurely declarer has a diamond to lose as well. Anyone allowed to play the E/W cards in a low-level part-score should score exceptionally well.

♠J
♥987
♦1098432
♣AKQ

♠Q1098653 ♠A2
♥K ♥QJ42
♦6 ♦K
♣9743 ♣J108652

♠K74
♥A10653
♦AQJ75
♣-

HCP	
10	
5	11
14	

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

Board 21: Dealer North: NS vulnerable

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

Who knows what this hand will bring? N/S can make 4♥ (losing two trumps and a spade) and 5♦. E/W can make very little (just seven tricks, in spades) but West will be sorely tempted to bid all day after East opens 1♣. The auction above is not that fanciful, but I doubt that many will follow it… Surely no one will open that North heap? East might pass his hand too (no arguments there) but, should he open 1♣, he is also opening a can of worms. South has to overcall 1♥, West may try a quiet 1♠ and North may try 2♣, showing a sound raise in hearts. South's jump to 3♦ will startle North – there is now a danger of getting too high on the N/S cards. 5♦ is all right as a contract but no higher. This looks to me like a free-for-all with E/W playing this many times, usually doubled.

♠9873
♥4
♦Q543
♣6532

♠KJ54 ♠102
♥Q52 ♥K983
♦A982 ♦K106
♣J9 ♣A1084

♠AQ6
♥AJ1076
♦J7
♣KQ7

HCP	
2	
11	10
17	

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

Board 22: Dealer East: EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
Pass	Pass	1NT	All Pass

Surely all Souths will open 1♥ in second seat on this one and that will be passed to East. It is usually not right to allow the enemy to steal the deal at the one-level and it is right in theory (and here, in practice) to protect with 1NT. That bid should secure the contract, probably making eight tricks. Some may fear that bidding will allow N/S to find a superior fit (spades?) and they will pass out 1♥. South may scramble five tricks if left at the one-level in hearts and -100 won't be too bad. Perhaps the major variations will come when ill-disciplined Souths bid a second time. After 1♥–pass-pass–1NT it is foolhardy to bid again, although many will. With cannons to the left of him and cannons to the right, South should take the discreet option and pass; 2♥ being especially imprudent. If South does go to the well again in hearts a sharp double by West and a loss of 500 or so may teach South the error of his ways.

♠J10765
♥J98
♦J93
♣A8

♠AK84 ♠Q3
♥2 ♥K7653
♦8742 ♦Q65
♣K732 ♣Q94

♠92
♥AQ104
♦AK10
♣J1065

HCP	
7	
10	9
14	

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

Board 23: Dealer South: All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
All Pass			

Now here's a curiosity. N/S can make a modest part score in all five strains. Weak no-trumpers are likely to play in 2♠ after opening 1NT and being transferred into North's five-card suit. Effectively that may lose a club and four trumps, just making the contract. Some Norths may take the view that it's right to play in no-trumps, passing out 1NT. That may play rather better than 2♠, especially as West may lead a spade, getting his side off to a poor start. Making eight tricks for 120 is sure to be a good score for N/S. Strong no-trumpers may well play this one in 1NT (via 1♣ – 1♠ – 1NT – pass). This time West won't lead a spade but the hand plays well enough against either a passive diamond lead or a club lead.

♠854
♥AKJ72
♦QJ
♣972

♠A6
♥8643
♦A8
♣KJ1063

♠K3
♥Q105
♦109642
♣A84

♠QJ10972
♥9
♦K753
♣Q5

HCP	
11	
12	9
8	

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

Board 24: Dealer West: Love all

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♥	1NT	2♠
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
3♣	All Pass		

Another hotly contested auction is possible here. In fact, I suspect many may steal the deal in 2♠ by South, recording an excellent score of 110 points. In the auction above should East bid again after 2♠ comes round to him? Is double for take-out? These are difficult questions. In fact, difficulties abound in the auction. Maybe 2♠ by South is forcing and North cannot pass it? Are these points you have discussed with your partner? By contrast, the play is easy. If West plays 3♣ the defenders are likely to play three rounds of hearts, South ruffing the last. Declarer gets in, draws two trumps and ruffs his last heart on table. Nine tricks. In spades, played by N/S, there are eight easy ones. Declarer cannot avoid the loss of two spades, two clubs and a diamond. After that, though, there are nothing but winners.

♠10973
♥A107
♦AQ
♣J1084

♠QJ2
♥K953
♦762
♣765

♠A86
♥642
♦10983
♣K92

♠K54
♥QJ8
♦KJ54
♣AQ3

HCP	
11	
6	7
16	

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

Board 25: Dealer North: EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Well, the world, his wife and their dog will play this one in 3NT, making overtricks. Thank you, Mr *Deep Finesse*, for pointing out that you can make a slam on this deal. However, that requires three (count them, ***three***) finesses and a fortunate club break to boot. My unreliable arithmetic makes that about one-eighth of 40%. Say 5%, give or take. Anyone who reaches 6NT on this one and records 990 is not entitled to moan about bad luck for at least a month. (The reverse is true for any luckless E/W pair on the receiving end of such larceny). The normal score on this deal should be N/S +490. In fact, some players may get their entries tangled and emerge with just eleven tricks.

♠A8543
♥K102
♦J62
♣76

♠K1062
♥A73
♦54
♣AJ92

♠7
♥Q964
♦A109
♣KQ853

♠QJ9
♥J85
♦KQ873
♣104

HCP	
8	
12	11
9	

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

Board 26: Dealer East: All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
3♣	All Pass		

That's a marginal opening bid for East but these 5·4·3·1 hands are quite attractive. After an uncontested auction of 1♣ – 1♠ – 2♣ West has a nasty choice. With 12 points 3♣ looks a little feeble but what is better? Yes, we all know that many punters will take a flyer at 3NT ("It is pairs, partner!") and they may succeed in this horrible venture. With hearts 3-3 and the king lying right there are nine tricks available for declarer. True, N/S can set up five tricks first, but it isn't easy to untangle the spade blockage, nor for North to find the killing diamond lead. 3♣+1 ought to score well for E/W but there will be many scores of 600 or more by the 3NT gamblers.

♠KQ94
♥1082
♦QJ864
♣Q

♠A108762 ♠J53
♥K74 ♥96
♦K ♦A932
♣J54 ♣K1092

♠-
♥AQJ53
♦1075
♣A8763

HCP	
10	
11	8
11	

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

Board 27: Dealer South: Love all

West	North	East	South
			1♥
1♠	2♥	2♠	Pass
Pass	3♦	Pass	Pass
3♠	Dble	All Pass	

Another marginal hand, with a hard-fought part score auction. After 1♥ – 1♠ overcall North has an awkward problem. With 10 points (although is it really worth 10 points?) 2♥ is a little feeble but 2♦ seems exaggerated. In these part score auctions it is frequently right to support partner first, ask questions later. East has an easy raise to 2♠ and North can hardly sell out when that gets back to him. 3♦ offers South a choice of contracts. Maybe South should pass 3♦ – it's close. Anyway, West, with a known nine-card spade fit, is always going to contest to the nine-trick level. At this form of scoring North should lower the boom on 3♠, hoping for a score of 300. Well, with careful play, declarer can get out for one off and everyone can be content with the result.

♠2
♥QJ642
♦AJ106
♣1054

♠843 ♠AK107
♥AK873 ♥9
♦854 ♦Q7
♣J3 ♣AK9872

♠QJ965
♥105
♦K932
♣Q6

HCP	
8	
8	16
8	

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

Board 28: Dealer West: NS vulnerable

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

With a lovely 16 points opposite a decent 8 it is annoying to find that no game contract makes for E/W. What do you bid on the West cards after the first three bids? Passing out 1♠ just looks wrong, wrong, wrong. 2♥ on a five-card suit doesn't appeal and 1NT with a "stopper" in the unbid suit of ♦8 5 4 just looks weird. I am a strong supporter of putting partner back to his first bid suit with a preference bid of 2♣. East can try 2♦ (*Fourth Suit Forcing* – "Do you have a diamond stop for no-trumps?") and West can now emphasise his hearts. With game apparently off the menu East should probably give up now with 3♣. Of course, some may open that North hand 2♥ (*Lucas*, hearts and a minor). If East doubles for take-out N/S may have to declare 2♥ doubled. Good luck with that one…

♠J3
♥QJ8
♦6432
♣10976

♠KQ42 ♠965
♥K72 ♥A1054
♦KQ95 ♦J108
♣A3 ♣Q84

♠A1087
♥963
♦A7
♣KJ52

HCP	
4	
17	7
12	

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

Board 29: Dealer North: All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT
Dble	All Pass		

Well, strong no-trumpers may laugh – if South opens with a weak 1NT in third seat he may play there, doubled and lose his shirt. It doesn't have to go like this, of course. After a (dubious) 1NT opening bid and a penalty double many pairs play a "wriggle" of some description and may escape to 2♣ on the N/S cards. That doesn't play too badly, and may escape a double. Also, if West defends 1NT doubled he has to lead diamonds – a spade lead is not so good for his side. As it happens, with a well-defined yellow streak, I would not open 1NT in third seat, vulnerable with just 12 points. The fact that partner is a passed hand sways the balance, although there are many who disagree. Left unmolested, E/W may reach 3NT. Played by West that is vulnerable to a club lead. Played by East, the lie of the cards makes it untouchable.

♠A854
♥AKJ972
♦J3
♣Q

♠Q1062
♥3
♦AQ65
♣10976

♠K3
♥Q4
♦1092
♣AKJ832

♠J97
♥10865
♦K874
♣54

HCP	
15	
8	13
4	

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

Board 30: Dealer East: Love all

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

In this set of deals we seem to have a number where the auctions may be fiercely contested. Here, N/S have ten hearts and E/W have ten clubs. Applying the ***Law of Total Tricks*** we'd expect there to be twenty tricks available. N/S can make eight in hearts, E/W can make eleven in clubs, so there are, in fact, just nineteen. 5♣ is a lucky make on the E/W cards – it needs the diamond finesse and then something good happening in spades to set up a discard to avoid losing two aces and a diamond. In practice, every East will be happy to make 4♣ on these cards. N/S have to lose two spades, two diamonds and a club in hearts, so 3♥ is always failing. Who bids and makes what on this deal is hard to foretell.

♠K109853
♥102
♦K53
♣85

♠42
♥KQ95
♦Q108764
♣9

♠AJ6
♥87643
♦A2
♣K42

♠Q7
♥AJ
♦J9
♣AQJ10763

HCP	
6	
7	12
15	

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

Board 31: Dealer South: NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♣
2♦	Pass	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	3♦	All Pass

Another hard-to-predict, competitive auction. After the obvious opening bid of 1♣ West may well decide to keep shtum. However, the vulnerability is ideal for E/W to clown about. A weak 2♦ overcall might (indeed, does) get up North's nose. Too weak to bid a forcing 2♠, North has to pass and await developments. East passes 2♦ and watches as South bids 3♣. With a marginal decision, East may try his luck with 3♦ after 3♣ gets passed back to him, maybe securing the contract. He may pass out 3♣, allowing South to drift one off after a heart lead. North may enter the fray with 3♠, winning the auction that way. A veritable free-for-all, with scores on both sides of the traveller.

♠AKQ432
♥KQ98
♦6
♣K2

♠J109
♥6
♦KQ1094
♣QJ104

♠85
♥J104
♦AJ853
♣975

♠76
♥A7532
♦72
♣A863

HCP	
17	
9	6
8	

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

Board 32: Dealer West: EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♣
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

Is 6♥ biddable on the N/S cards? Well, it's a decent contract for sure and, with spades 3-2 and trumps 3-1, cannot be cracked. The above auction is a little fanciful but not outrageous. After 1♠ – 1NT (what else could South respond?) North really has to bid 3♥. Now it is time for South to wake up. 4♣ must agree hearts and show a club control, and North's hand is improving by the second. 4NT confirms that there are not two aces missing and 6♥ would be playable opposite only four-card heart support. As it is, East better put the ♦A on the table at trick one or watch it rot forever.