

EBED



Sim Pairs

Commentary by Michael Byrne

Monday
9th May 2016

Welcome to the **English Bridge Education & Development (EBED)** Simultaneous Pairs.

The proceeds raised by this event will be used by EBED, **the national charity for the promotion and development of bridge**, to support EBED's activities in the areas of medical and or social research into the benefits of playing bridge. You can read more about this in the "Bridge for Brains" article in the current issue of English Bridge and at www.ebedcio.org.uk.

In addition EBED supplies Bridge for All teaching materials, organises Minibridge/Duplicate Bridge teacher training and club director training courses, and supports county organisations and individual volunteers at the local level to run youth events.

Do please encourage your friends to come to play in these events which raise vital funds for our work. We thank you so much for your support!

Richard Banbury

<p>♠AQ62 ♥J963 ♦K3 ♣AQ2</p> <p>♠1053 ♠K87 ♥Q854 ♥AK7 ♦Q42 ♦A6 ♣K86 ♣J10953</p> <p>♠J94 ♥102 ♦J109875 ♣74</p>	<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <p>A sedate deal to start with, as no-one at the table has a singleton. Strong no-trumpers will open one and their partners transfer to diamonds by whatever method they use; weak no-trumpers will open 1♥ and East will probably overcall 1NT, no doubt buoyed by the five card suit and crisp intermediates. The play in diamonds seems relatively simple; with the club finesse right and spade finesse wrong eight tricks are the limit. Since East has the ♥AK there doesn't seem to be any way that the defence can fail to cash their defensive tricks. In no-trumps East can always find a way home, he does best to win the ♦J lead with the ace and play on clubs. The best North can do is to lead spades and hold declarer to seven tricks....or is it? One thing worth trying as North is to switch to the ♠Q. Would you blame declarer who ducked, and then ran the next spade to the ten, correct if North had QJx, QJ9x or QJxx? I pity the East whose opponent finds that against him but well played to North.</p>																																										
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<p>♠82 ♥AK832 ♦K73 ♣984</p> <p>♠KJ65 ♠Q1073 ♥1096 ♥J7 ♦J42 ♦AQ5 ♣Q72 ♣KJ105</p> <p>♠A94 ♥Q54 ♦10986 ♣A63</p>	<p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <p>Most Easts will start with 1NT and this should buy the contract. (Overcalling 2♥ as North is utterly barbaric, a 5-3-3-2 shape should not be venturing in at any vulnerability let alone this one). 1NT should go down. On the ♦10 lead East wins and knocks out the ♠A and South can afford to play diamonds once more. He only has to find the heart switch when his second ace is dislodged. (East might slip two spades past him and then play clubs, which would be harder for South to unravel but he should still get it right) Those that play strong no-trump will sail into 2♠ on the 4-4 fit; with every suit 3-3 or 3-2 this can't possibly go down (well I suppose someone might revoke) and 110 will score well for E/W. If any foolhardy North does bid 2♥ his partner should make an unassuming cue bid, although personally I would be driving to game. 3♥ should scrape out for one off, good against 2♠ making but bad against 1NT going down.</p>																																										
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	W	1	-	-	2	-																																					

♠ J1093

♥ K853

♦ 1076

♣ 94

♠ A

♥ AQ92

♦ Q843

♣ KJ82

♠ Q852

♥ J6

♦ KJ52

♣ Q63

♠ K764

♥ 1074

♦ A9

♣ A1075

HCP

4

16

9

11

Makeable contracts

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

♠ -

♥ A8765

♦ AKQ

♣ QJ843

♠ KJ64

♥ 109432

♦ 4

♣ K76

♠ 109753

♥ Q

♦ J965

♣ A52

♠ AQ82

♥ KJ

♦ 108732

♣ 109

HCP

16

7

7

10

Makeable contracts

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

♠ K3

♥ 10752

♦ Q32

♣ KQ82

♠ 10842

♥ Q984

♦ A987

♣ 3

♠ Q76

♥ 3

♦ KJ10654

♣ J76

♠ AJ95

♥ AKJ6

♦ -

♣ A10954

HCP

10

6

7

17

Makeable contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	6	-	5	3	1
S	6	-	5	3	1
E	-	2	-	-	-
W	-	2	-	-	-

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

E/W have 25 points between them and stoppers in every suit, will everyone bid and make 3NT?

No - there will be a lot of variation here starting with some Souths who will open the bidding (a tactic I approve of when dealer at green). If South opens 1NT West will dredge up a double, now some Norths will be able to wriggle to show both majors, others will pass and take their medicine. The six tricks that deep finesse claims they are making in 1NT(a low spade out of hand at trick two) will not be found very often and most declarers will go for 300. Where South opens 1♣ West will bid 1NT (the least bad bid available) and now East will drive to game via Stayman. The ♣9 lead blows the suit as West can cover with the queen and finesse the ♣8 later, this will lead to three clubs, three diamonds, three hearts and a spade.

Finally where South passes E/W will bid 1♥ – 1♠ – 1NT – 2NT/3NT and play there on the ♠J lead, certainly the defence can hold it to eight tricks now.

Those that get any decent plus score as E/W will score well, in fact I think even +150 will be above average.

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

This time N/S have a misfit and will probably end in 3NT on an unconvincing auction. 1♥ from North and South will respond 1♠ (please don't tell me that East overcalled – though someone will) now 2♣ from North and South should bid 2NT. North might bid 3♣ now and South bid 3NT, which will amuse North somewhat given that he has three diamond stoppers to contribute!

Oddly enough the defence to beat it is to lead spades, West must lead one at trick one and then dive in with the K♣ and clear the suit while partner still has an entry. Of course South might be busily playing on diamonds, he is in for a rude shock when they are 4-1 leaving his nine top tricks to turn into eight.

I think in practice most people will make this, in fact on a heart lead an overtrick seems straightforward.

Any West who does find the spade lead, well done and take your great score with good grace and a quiet sense of dignity; no-one likes a gloater!

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

This is more like it – a good fit and low point count slam to cut our teeth on. After pass from North some Easts will open a weak 2♦ (or are people still playing this Benji convention?) and South will double, West can raise and get in Norths way. North will probably bid hearts and now N/S are in the wrong strain. In fact on a diamond lead the play in hearts looks tricky indeed, 11 tricks looks impossible in practice whatever deep finesse says.

Where N/S have a free run they might bid 1♣ – 1♥ – 4♦ – 6♣ and now the play is simple, the nine card fit proving to be a huge asset. Ruff one spade in dummy and the queen falls, hey presto. (Those that try ruffing diamonds in hand are in for a rude shock, as the 3-1 trump break and bad heart split means you won't make 6♣ on that line)

In practice I think a lot of N/S will struggle in hearts on this hand, so even a modest +650 (hearts on a club lead) will scoop most of the match-points. Those that do chalk up +1370 well done, I hope the auction was convincing!

<p>♠ J6 ♥ J10752 ♦ KQ1085 ♣ J</p> <p>♠ AK5 ♠ 732 ♥ A943 ♥ KQ86 ♦ J93 ♦ 74 ♣ 1082 ♣ K764</p> <p>♠ Q10984 ♥ - ♦ A62 ♣ AQ953</p>	<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <p>The points are split 20/20 here so it's no surprise that the side with the fit in the higher ranking suits (spades and diamonds) wins the pot.</p> <p>South will open 1♠ second in seat and West should pass. (I am all in favour of take-out doubles on flat hands, this one is a bit too extreme even for me). Now North should bid a disciplined 1NT allowing South to show his second suit with 2♣. North could bid all sorts of things over this but simple preference to 2♠ is the best one, as a known fit is better than plunging into the dark by bidding a suit partner is known to be short in.</p> <p>N/S have only two top losers so some will make a lot of tricks. The best defence is for E/W to lead and continue hearts, which won't be obvious by any means. On a diamond lead for example South can win in dummy and run the ♣J before turning to trumps and knocking out the ♠AK. Where West starts by drawing trumps it will similarly be ten tricks. Any N/S that reach diamonds will make 150 unless E/W find the best defence of leading hearts to promote the ♦J. Trump leads might also have the same effect.</p>																																																		
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<p>♠ 954 ♥ J1095 ♦ 984 ♣ AK7</p> <p>♠ AKQ1087 ♠ J63 ♥ Q64 ♥ AK3 ♦ J10 ♦ AK63 ♣ 93 ♣ 542</p> <p>♠ 2 ♥ 872 ♦ Q752 ♣ QJ1086</p>	<p>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <p>A nice relaxing deal for everyone now. As E/W have nine spades and 27 points, dare I suggest the board will be flat in 650?</p> <p>The auction doesn't look too hard, playing Acoll 1♠-2♦-2♠-4♠ seems routine, I think 99% of the field will do that. (The other 1% playing 2/1 game forcing will bid 1♠-2♦-2♠-3♠, now West will show a poor hand by bidding 4♠ or a non-serious 3NT and East will pass or sign off in 4♠)</p> <p>Every North should cash two clubs and every West should claim 11 tricks. The only possible variations on this will be if North decides to lead the ♥J, now West might try running a few trumps and messing around in diamonds, this will come to nothing. I hope a few Easts bid 3NT over 2♠, which would get what it deserves when N/S cash five clubs – in fact it would be funnier if N/S blocked the club suit and let declarer make ten tricks – East would be smug until he realised he had a bottom as the world and his wife were making 650 in spades!</p>																																																		
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W	1	2	3	5	2																																														
<p>♠ 109 ♥ J4 ♦ 97632 ♣ AJ73</p> <p>♠ KJ8 ♠ AQ52 ♥ Q9752 ♥ K86 ♦ 8 ♦ AK1054 ♣ 9842 ♣ 10</p> <p>♠ 7643 ♥ A103 ♦ QJ ♣ KQ65</p>	<p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <p>A bit more scope for action here as the points are more evenly split and E/W must find their way to hearts to get the full Monty.</p> <p>After two passes East will open 1♦ and some Souths might double (pretty grim but love all is bidders' vulnerability). West should bid 1♥ and N/S can be silent after that. East has a good hand but a jump to 2♠ is game forcing and shows a king more than this, so he should re-bid 1♠. West will probably pass that (I would at any rate) and now E/W are in the wrong spot sadly. At least 1♠ will play well and make plenty of tricks, South will probably lead a club and East can scramble around on a cross ruff, making two diamonds, one heart, three ruffs in hand and three long trumps. For anyone that does end in hearts it is only the lucky diamond position that enables you to make ten tricks as the defenders can force the dummy and make life awkward.</p> <p>Well done if you got to hearts, 170 proving to be a good score and 420 a great score</p>																																																		
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♠ Q1087

♥ K63

♦ AK2

♣ J76

♠ K653

♥ AJ42

♦ 985

♣ 54

♠ J92

♥ Q1085

♦ 10

♣ K10932

♠ A4

♥ 97

♦ QJ7643

♣ AQ8

HCP

13

8

13

6

Makeable contracts

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

♠ Q86

♥ 107

♦ 53

♣ 1076542

♠ AKJ9

♥ K86543

♦ Q82

♣ -

♠ 742

♥ AQ2

♦ KJ109

♣ AKQ

♠ 1053

♥ J9

♦ A764

♣ J983

HCP

2

13

6

19

Makeable contracts

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

♠ 983

♥ AKQ52

♦ -

♣ A9653

♠ KJ10

♥ J10

♦ AKJ542

♣ J8

♠ AQ52

♥ 7643

♦ 10763

♣ Q

♠ 764

♥ 98

♦ Q98

♣ K10742

HCP

13

14

5

8

Makeable contracts

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

Acol players will bid 1NT-pass-3NT and East will be left with a choice of leads. Those playing a strong no-trump will bid 1♣-1♦-1NT-3NT, more information for East, and those playing strong no-trump and four-card majors (a popular system round my neck of the woods, I’m still not clear why) will bid 1♠-2♦-2NT-3NT.

What lead will everyone get?

Those Easts that lead the ♣10 will watch it travel to the jack, now declarer can repeat the finesse and cash out the diamonds. West will have to keep too many spades to guard his king meaning that declarer can lead a heart to the king in safety for 11 tricks.

Instead on a heart lead to the ace and a heart back North should chuck the jack of clubs onto the table. (He can run it safely if he views that hearts are 4-4) East is forced to cover and now North has his ten tricks.

Some cowardly Norths will win the heart king and run the diamonds, it is hard to make fewer than ten tricks but a few will manage it by avoiding the club finesse, they will get their deserved 20% score.

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

A good slam for E/W now, a real bidding challenge to get to 6NT (the real match-point winner).

Where East starts with 1♦ West will respond 1♥ and East jump to 2NT. Now West can bid 3♠ to probe gently and East will bid 4♥. West will drive to a heart slam now, but getting to 6NT looks a long way off.

What about where East opens 2NT? (Some play 19-20, or just upgrade to 20-22 for no reason) I still can’t see West bidding 6NT on any auction, even if he transfers and then bids spades East will go back to hearts.

Perhaps the real jackpot winners will be those that play in 6♥ and get a club lead – now they can play ♣AKQ throwing diamonds and ruff out the ♦A. Drawing trumps ending in dummy and suddenly they have 13 tricks.

I would venture in fact, that a club lead will be pretty common and those scoring 1430 might even get below average?...Surely not, bidding and making a slam at pairs always scores well.

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

West will open 1♦ second in seat (though some might abuse both their partner and the game of bridge with a 1NT opening of some description – all I will say is yuk!)

North has a choice between overcalling 1♥ and bidding the Unusual No-trump. If he bids 1♥ (the popular choice, people like playing the hands) East will show his spades (either with a negative double or by bidding 1♠) South pass and West rebid his diamonds. Now it is essential that North come back to the party with either a take-out double or a bid of clubs. Likewise East must raise diamonds, otherwise he will be defending, a bad idea on this deal.

How many tricks can everyone make? The play in diamonds looks pretty straight forward, North will cash two hearts and eventually come to a club (it shouldn’t be beyond West to notice diamonds are 3-0 and finesse the queen) ten tricks and 130 to E/W.

In clubs the defence can cash three spades, but in practice East will lead a diamond and now 12 tricks are pretty easy, one spade going on the ♥Q and another on the fifth heart – well done if you bought it in clubs.

♠ J107

♥ 108

♦ Q953

♣ AQJ8

♠ 9

♥ KQJ632

♦ J84

♣ K75

♠ 853

♥ 97

♦ A10762

♣ 642

♠ AKQ642

♥ A54

♦ K

♣ 1093

HCP

10

10

4

16

Makeable contracts

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

♠ AK10

♥ 1098

♦ KJ1094

♣ 102

♠ Q74

♥ Q63

♦ 85

♣ K9764

♠ J62

♥ KJ75

♦ A3

♣ AQ83

♠ 9853

♥ A42

♦ Q762

♣ J5

HCP

11

7

15

7

Makeable contracts

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

♠ 10

♥ KQJ85

♦ A76

♣ Q1063

♠ Q94

♥ 932

♦ K1083

♣ A72

♠ A863

♥ 6

♦ Q9542

♣ J94

♠ KJ752

♥ A1074

♦ J

♣ K85

HCP

12

9

7

12

Makeable contracts

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West will open either 1 or 2♥ and South will bid spades, eventually reaching game. A possible sequence is 1♥-pass-pass-2♠-pass-4♠, with a 2♠ bid in the protective seat showing a good opening bid. (I am a strong advocate of weak jump overcalls, but in the protective position they are no longer necessary or useful).

Alternatively if West opens a heavy weak two, (some do play 6-10 although that West hand is a bit chunky) then South can jump to 3♠ (strongish, about seven tricks) and again North will bid game.

Playing in spades 11 tricks look right, even with clubs 3-3 and the king onside, the defence are entitled to two winners, if South draws the trumps and discards his ♦K on the fourth club he ends up losing two hearts.

The only people to make 12 tricks will be those that slip past the ♦A, but hopefully East will not be dozing and jump in with it, since he can see the club suit is threatening discards.

Anyone dicing with danger in 3NT will emerge with a good score, but playing in such risky contracts is normally bad for the blood pressure.

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

Does North have an opening bid? I would say yes and be prepared to open 1♦ or a weak no-trump if that’s what I was playing. Where North does open 1NT East will probably pass (15 points with a bad lead is not an attractive double) and North wins the pot. Sadly his reward is to lose 300 points, since on a heart lead the defence have got five clubs, three hearts and the ♦A. A club lead might allow a defensive accident as West might cash five clubs and then switch to a spade, now North has time to knock out the ♦A and make +90.

Where North passes East will open 1♣, 1♥ or 1NT and go plus. Opening 1♣ will result in a club part-score which should yield 110 easily enough, 1♥ will be raised to 2♥ (easily the best response on the West hand) which should get them to +140, as nine tricks seem easy. A strong no-trump should go down as even on a spade lead North can win and switch to a diamond to garner seven tricks for the defence.

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

I would like to think most N/S pairs will sensibly stop in 4♥ here, as the bidding 1♠-2♥-3♥-4♥ seems like an auction that is hard to deviate from.

The challenge will be in making as many tricks as possible!

Let’s say East leads a fourth best diamond to the jack, king and ace. North does best to play the ♠10 now, as East can either duck and go to bed with his ace, or rise with it and let declarer bring in the spade suit for discards to pitch the clubs. Of course if East ducks smoothly and North runs the ten he is in some danger of making only ten tricks, since he is likely to lose two clubs tricks in the fullness of time.

Since everyone should manage to bid and make at least 4♥ I predict +420 will be slightly below average and +450 a very good score.

<p>♠ K3 ♥ J875 ♦ 6532 ♣ K62</p> <p>♠ 642 ♠ AQJ10975 ♥ Q9643 ♥ - ♦ A84 ♦ Q7 ♣ 104 ♣ J875</p> <p>♠ 8 ♥ AK102 ♦ KJ109 ♣ AQ93</p>	<p>HCP</p> <table><tr><td>7</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>17</td></tr></table>	7	10	6	17	<p>Makeable contracts</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>♣</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♠</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>1</td></tr></table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	3	3	-	-	S	2	3	3	-	-	E	-	-	-	3	1	W	-	-	-	3	1
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<p>♠ KQ9852 ♥ Q8 ♦ 632 ♣ K4</p> <p>♠ A6 ♠ 43 ♥ A96 ♥ J743 ♦ Q1097 ♦ J85 ♣ A876 ♣ 10953</p> <p>♠ J107 ♥ K1052 ♦ AK4 ♣ QJ2</p>	<p>HCP</p> <table><tr><td>10</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>14</td><td>14</td></tr></table>	10	2	14	14	<p>Makeable contracts</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>♣</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♠</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	1	1	2	4	2	S	1	1	2	4	2	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-
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<p>♠ A98762 ♥ 6 ♦ AQ2 ♣ Q62</p> <p>♠ - ♠ Q1054 ♥ K1054 ♥ AQ973 ♦ K976 ♦ 85 ♣ K10843 ♣ J5</p> <p>♠ KJ3 ♥ J82 ♦ J1043 ♣ A97</p>	<p>HCP</p> <table><tr><td>12</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	12	9	9	10	<p>Makeable contracts</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>♣</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♠</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>5</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	2	-	4	1	S	-	2	-	5	1	E	1	-	3	-	-	W	-	-	3	-	-
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E	1	-	3	-	-																															
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<div><div><div>♠AQ9</div><div>♥J7</div><div>♦AJ9863</div><div>♣52</div></div><div><div>♠K852</div><div>♥Q643</div><div>♦10</div><div>♣AQ87</div></div><div><div>♠76</div><div>♥A1095</div><div>♦Q75</div><div>♣KJ96</div></div><div><div>♠J1043</div><div>♥K82</div><div>♦K42</div><div>♣1043</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>12</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td></td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		12		11	10	7		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	4	-	1	2		S	-	4	-	1	2		E	3	-	3	-	-		W	3	-	3	-	-		<div>Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</div> <p>After two passes West has a grotty 4-4-1-4 and might decide to open 1♣. This will lead North to overcall 1♦ and East to bid his hearts. South must raise diamonds (<u>always support your partner!</u>) and West will raise hearts (see previous maxim). Now it will be a private battle between North who wants to buy it in diamonds and West who wants to buy it in hearts.</p> <p>It's easy to see that if West competes too high when North ends up in 4♦ he will work out he is short in trumps and after cashing the ace will run the jack to make ten tricks, especially if East has doubled for penalties.</p> <p>Playing in hearts the ♠A is wrong for East but providing he doesn't panic he can always make nine tricks even if he gets forced in both hands.</p> <p>The best score will go (as usual) to the side that wins the auction then plays the hand well, either 140 to E/W or 130 to N/S, with the odd freak result such as -200 (a few will end up in spades by accident) putting a spanner in the works.</p>
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S	-	-	6	4	3																																														
E	-	1	-	-	-																																														
W	-	1	-	-	-																																														

♠QJ94

♥KJ5

♦743

♣KQ5

♠1073

♥Q763

♦AJ

♣J842

♠K652

♥1098

♦K962

♣63

♠A8

♥A42

♦Q1085

♣A1097

HCP

12

8

6

14

Makeable contracts

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

♠A8

♥10962

♦AK932

♣32

♠K1053

♥AK43

♦J5

♣A97

♠9742

♥7

♦876

♣KQ1084

♠QJ6

♥QJ85

♦Q104

♣J65

HCP

11

15

5

9

Makeable contracts

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

♠975

♥K7432

♦A64

♣A3

♠K102

♥65

♦Q7

♣KQ10852

♠AQJ8

♥AJ8

♦K108

♣974

♠643

♥Q109

♦J9532

♣J6

HCP

11

10

15

4

Makeable contracts

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

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

1NT-pass-3NT will be the auction at most tables (surely everyone has given up passing bad 12s haven't they?)

Strong no-trumpers might bid 1♣-1♦-1NT-3NT, or even 1♠-2♣-2NT-3NT. Will this affect the lead?

Well I would have thought so, and on such a flat hand where the world, his wife and the waiter next door will all be in 3NT, the overtricks will be more crucial than ever. On a diamond lead West will win and switch to a major. A spade switch might potentially be fatal as North can duck and if East puts up the king (and why shouldn't he?) that is four tricks for declarer. A heart switch lets declarer win the jack at no cost, he can then play spades for three tricks while the diamonds are blocked. On a spade lead North will win cheaply and carry on with spades, using club entries to unblock the suit. Three heart tricks, three spade tricks and three club tricks make nine.

I predict most will make 600, some will make 630 and the odd person will go down.

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

Even Stephens – the points are split 20/20 but the eight card spade fit rules supreme as ever. (A wise man once said “Spades are the boss suit”)

After two passes West will open 1♥ and some Norths will bid 2♦ (I'm not a fan but I can live with it) now East will have to pass for now. (A negative double with a bad hand and a singleton in partner's suit is not attractive). South should raise and this might keep West out, as the vulnerability is not attractive for a take-out double. The defence to diamonds is trivial, E/W taking two ruffs (AK and the 3 back as a suit preference signal) two clubs and the ♥AK for down two.

Of course West might open 1NT, now most Norths will pass and lead a diamond. To beat 1NT South must play a spade through, well done if you arranged this.

The only people to reach spades look like the weak no-trump five-card major players, as they will open 1♣ and allow East to respond 1♠ after a 1♦ bid by North. To make 140 E/W have to get the trumps right, anyone playing a lazy spade to the king will hold themselves to 110, although it will be a great score none the less.

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

E/W have 25 points between them, stoppers in every suit and a long minor, so I predict 3NT will be fairly universal.

A typical sequence might be 1♣-1♥-Dbl-pass-2♣-3NT, or similar with East showing his four card spade suit. On a heart lead there is no play, since North can put the king up, win the ♣A and play a heart back. The suit is blocked but hey presto, North has the ♦A and down two results.

This should be a fairly common result, but not common enough for it to be a flat board. What variations can there be?

Firstly some Norths will fail to overcall, (no doubt quoting some nonsense about the suit quality test). They will get a diamond lead and will probably play one back, no doubt worried partner has K10832 or the like.

Secondly some Norths will be worried that partner's ♥10 is a doubleton (leaving East with AQJ9) and fail to put the king up, giving 660.

And lastly some Souths will ignore their partner's bid and lead a diamond anyway, getting what they deserve.

♠ Q732

♥ 5

♦ 9654

♣ AQ64

♠ A1098

♥ AJ8

♦ KJ10

♣ 953

♠ J

♥ K10732

♦ Q73

♣ KJ108

♠ K654

♥ Q964

♦ A82

♣ 72

HCP

8

13

10

9

Makeable contracts

♣

♦

♥

♠

NT

N

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-

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S

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-

-

-

-

E

3

2

4

1

4

W

3

2

4

1

3

♠ A8

♥ K108532

♦ K963

♣ Q

♠ QJ97

♥ Q9

♦ QJ107

♣ 985

♠ K642

♥ 74

♦ 85

♣ AKJ42

♠ 1053

♥ AJ6

♦ A42

♣ 10763

HCP

12

8

11

9

Makeable contracts

♣

♦

♥

♠

NT

N

-

3

4

-

3

S

-

3

4

-

3

E

1

-

-

1

-

W

1

-

-

1

-

♠ A108

♥ J102

♦ 1075

♣ 10852

♠ 74

♥ AKQ87

♦ AKJ9

♣ K7

♠ 632

♥ 543

♦ 842

♣ AQ63

♠ KQJ95

♥ 96

♦ Q63

♣ J94

HCP

5

20

6

9

Makeable contracts

♣

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♥

♠

NT

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Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

This time E/W can make a game in no-trumps, with intermediate cards in every suit. If West opens 1NT then East will transfer and pass, lacking the values for an invite. This should lose the diamond ace, the club ace, and a trump trick one way or another. (Double dummy you can pick up trumps by running the ten and then playing low to the 8 but the defenders can get a club ruff anyway). 170 will be a fair score, those playing a strong no-trump and four-card majors might play 1NT by East after 1♠-pass-1NT (although most people that play that system fail to realise how many points a two level response shows) that should make ten tricks since South will probably lead his fourth best heart, and subsequently be rather disappointed.

Finally those playing a strong no-trump and five-card majors will probably bid 1♣–1♥–1NT–2♥ or similar, now if South finds a troubling spade lead they might lose two trumps (one to the queen and one to the fourth trump via the force) and hold themselves to 140, which will not be a good score.

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

North will open 1♥ and again East has a marginal action, most will bid 2♣. South should raise to 2♥ no matter what system is being played and West should raise to 3♣ (though loads of people seem to like passing and then blaming the vulnerability – ironically they would be right on this deal as 3♣ goes for 200 but that’s only because East doesn’t have his bid).

North, if feeling ultra-aggressive, might scrape up a 3♦ bid but in practice 3♥ seems likely and will end the auction. Making ten tricks in hearts is purely on getting the trumps right, and everyone will do this since East is known to be longer in clubs than West, it would be a strange decision indeed to cash the king and then finesse. So the traveller will be a string of 170s and the odd person that has shot game and emerged with 420, and no doubt a pair of disgruntled opponents.

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

Two passes to West, what will he start with? It seems like the worlds most obvious 1♥ opening to me, but I bet you more than half the field open 2NT. There will be no justice for them at all, as East will raise to 3NT and North will lead the ♥J (maybe a club). West will cash his hearts and clubs and then probably chicken out and spurn the diamond finesse. That will be ten tricks for 630, but hopefully a bad score. Did I say they would get no justice?

1♥-pass-1NT-pass-3♦-pass-4♥ (fast arrival – bad hand) and North will lead a heart or club once more. Now West can draw trumps and take his spade discard and then play diamonds correctly at no cost, he will get 680.

The real winners will be those that stake everything on the diamond finesse, bidding gaily to 3NT they cash five hearts, three clubs (North should not discard one on the run of the hearts) and then take the diamond finesse. 690 and all the match-points but at least he had to work for it.

<p>♠7652 ♥J6 ♦103 ♣QJ965</p> <p>♠Q103 ♠J98 ♥Q975 ♥AK42 ♦K42 ♦QJ8 ♣K83 ♣1072</p> <p>♠AK4 ♥1083 ♦A9765 ♣A4</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>15</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		4	11	10	15	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	2	-	-	2	-		S	2	-	-	2	-		E	-	1	2	-	1		W	-	1	2	-	1		<p>Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <p>A relatively tame deal now as no-one at the table has a singleton.</p> <p>Where South starts with a 1♦ opening West will pass, North will probably pass and East should bid 1NT. South should pass that but North can protect with 2♣ when it comes round to him. This might seem brave, but remember partner is likely to be semi balanced and a 5-2 fit won't play too badly.</p> <p>If instead North responds 1♠ (as I would do) then South will rebid 1NT and buy it there.</p> <p>Those left in 1♦ should go down but in practice will often be allowed to make it, as even if the defence stops the heart ruff in dummy West may get the lead with the third round of spades late in the day, and find he has to surrender a club trick.</p> <p>Those in NT will make six tricks N/S building up three diamonds and the ♠AK and ♣A. Anyone playing in clubs or spades will make eight tricks and receive a good score for their bravery.</p>
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<p>♠AK973 ♥43 ♦K102 ♣Q73</p> <p>♠QJ106 ♠854 ♥K85 ♥972 ♦AJ3 ♦Q986 ♣1042 ♣A86</p> <p>♠2 ♥AQJ106 ♦754 ♣KJ95</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>11</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		12	6	11	11	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	3	1	4	2	2		S	3	1	4	2	2		E	-	-	-	-	-		W	-	-	-	-	-		<p>Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <p>N/S have two opening hands facing each other but game is by no means a done deal. If North opens a weak no-trump then South will transfer to hearts and then bid either 3♣ (which will result in 3NT by North, going down on a diamond lead) or 2NT which will result in North passing and 2NT being made.</p> <p>Most Norths will open 1♠ and after partner responds 2♥ they will rebid the suit. South should dredge up 2NT now which again will end the auction. West has no attractive lead and it is easy to see nine tricks slipping through, for example on a club lead.</p> <p>Will anyone find the miracle 4♥ contract? It doesn't seem too bad a spot, basically needing the ♦A right and nothing too bad in the side suits. Perhaps 1♠-2♥-2♠-3♣-3♦-3♥-4♥, although that needs a few good views by N/S, perhaps we should leave that one for a teams match!</p>
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<p>♠832 ♥- ♦K108732 ♣Q1063</p> <p>♠AQ104 ♠K9765 ♥10643 ♥A9752 ♦5 ♦A ♣J752 ♣AK</p> <p>♠J ♥KQJ8 ♦QJ964 ♣984</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>10</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		5	18	7	10	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	3	-	-	-		S	-	3	-	-	-		E	1	-	4	4	3		W	1	-	4	4	3		<p>Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <p>E/W have a marginal slam now, basically needing hearts 2-2 (40%) and then sorting out trumps (100% if you're careful). On this lay out no-one will be making a slam though!</p> <p>Some Norths will open a weak 2♦ (pretty grizzly on that suit but the void gives it a bit of bite) and East will show the majors (perhaps 3♦ or 4♦ for some). West should pick spades and they are out of trouble. South might save in 5♦, rather nail biting at this vulnerability but nine tricks are there as the club ruff is with the ace of trumps, and -500 will be huge for N/S.</p> <p>Otherwise E/W will bid 1♠-2♠-4♠ (East might stop off and bid hearts on the way I suppose) and South will surely lead the ♥K. This might present a dilemma for North, as if the lead of the King can be from either AK or KQ North doesn't know whether to ruff it!</p> <p>Discarding on the ♥K leaves East on a claim for 650, if it is ruffed then East has to play well. Win the switch and eliminate the clubs then lead a low heart from hand – and bingo, it's 650, a good score and applause for partner.</p>
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<p>♠K96 ♥Q105 ♦8432 ♣QJ4</p> <p>♠AQ543 ♠8 ♥A64 ♥K983 ♦AK ♦75 ♣752 ♣AK10983</p> <p>♠J1072 ♥J72 ♦QJ1096 ♣6</p>	<p>Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all</p> <p>East has a marginal opening here, and this will lead to a possible slam. If East passes, West will open 1♠ third in seat and rebid no-trumps over the 2♣ response, the final contract will be 3NT no doubt. Ten tricks look likely as West will play clubs from the top allowing North to clear diamonds (assuming he led one at trick one).</p> <p>Most Easts will open 1♣ and now the job is to bid to slam, 6♣ looks like a good spot needing clubs 2-2 (40%) or 3-1 (52%) with the ♠K right and spades 4-3 (32%). Sadly on this lay out neither happens but some will make 6♣ by ruffing out the ♠K, a line which requires a 4-3 break (62%) and the king in the short holding (total odds of 27%). South might push them into the right line by leading the ♠J but most will start with the ♦Q.</p> <p>Back to the bidding! 1♣-1♠-2♣-2♥ seems best, now East raises to 3♥ and West bids 3NT. East should move to 4♣ now as whether West has a good hand or diamond doubt East wants to explore. West can suggest 6♣ as an option, his enormous amount of controls surely giving it a play.</p>																																																
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<p>♠5 ♥K1083 ♦AQ2 ♣109754</p> <p>♠KJ1073 ♠Q96 ♥A62 ♥J9 ♦984 ♦J10753 ♣A3 ♣K86</p> <p>♠A842 ♥Q754 ♦K6 ♣QJ2</p>	<p>Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</p> <p>If anyone has made it as far as board 32 (I'm sure the result of an interesting movement and not a mammoth 16 x 2 board rounds) they will be rewarded with a peaceful hand where nearly everyone is 4-3-3-3 and every suit breaks. Weak no-trumpers will open 1♣ and that will either run to South who will bid 1NT (though there is a case for passing) or East will respond 1♦ and West will rebid 1NT. If West plays in no-trumps it is hard to see any number of tricks other than six being made, on any lead or defence.</p> <p>If South plays it then West will have to find the crucial diamond switch at the critical juncture (when he wins the ♥A). He should certainly try the ♦A requesting an attitude signal, it can only cost a trick if South has Q7x and even then he will probably be too scared to play the suit later on anyway. East should encourage (he can afford the queen but the ♦7 will do as well) and that leads to just 90 for N/S, less than they would get by passing out 1NT and beating it one.</p>																																																
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