

British Autumn Sim Pairs



Monday
3rd October 2016

Welcome to the British Autumn 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 Brian Senior.

This is your last chance in 2016 to qualify for cash prizes. The leading pair drawn win £1000 and the same is the case for the first club drawn. There are other cash prizes. There will be a draw for major prizes at the AGM in late November and a full list will be published on the website.

You can find all the full details, results and last year's prize winners at www.ebu.co.uk/sims/

You can earn Blue points and they are awarded to the top third of the field. Don't be too impatient for the results! Provisional results will appear quickly but they won't be finalised and nor will the master point awards until all results are in and score corrections have been made. This can take up to three weeks. It really helps us if you can keep your scorecard for that period. Clubs should keep the travellers if still used.

Jeremy Dhondy, Chairman EBU

<p>♠KQ ♥KQ109 ♦A8743 ♣84</p> <p>♠J9432 ♠A876 ♥AJ ♥7 ♦Q10 ♦65 ♣AK109 ♣QJ7653</p> <p>♠105 ♥865432 ♦KJ92 ♣2</p>	<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <p>The double fit and, in the case of E/W, friendly spade position, means that a lot of tricks can be made on this deal, with N/S making 4♥ if declarer drops the ♦Q and E/W making 4♠.</p> <p>If North opens 1♦ and South responds 1♥ (East doesn't really have a sensible call other than pass), West will double and East knows immediately that there may be a double fit. North will raise hearts, probably just to the two level if playing weak no-trumps – there is no need to stretch when your opening bid already promises something above a minimum, either in terms of high cards or of distribution. East should bid aggressively now and, though the clubs are longer, the major is the suit to bid, either at the three- or four-level. West will go on to game.</p> <p>I mentioned playing a weak no-trump, but what would you open with the North hand? I would prefer 1NT if weak as opposed to opening 1♦ and having to rebid that empty suit over a 1♠ or 2♣ response. Though 2-4-5-2 is not a classic balanced distribution, this hand looks more like a balanced hand than a single-suiter.</p>																																												
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<p>♠K5 ♥9643 ♦A3 ♣AQJ62</p> <p>♠Q97 ♠AJ2 ♥KQJ1075 ♥A8 ♦6 ♦KQ1098752 ♣1043 ♣-</p> <p>♠108643 ♥2 ♦J4 ♣K9875</p>	<p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <p>This has the makings of quite a lively set of deals. If playing the method, I guess that the East hand qualifies as an Acol two-bid so would be opened 2♣ by fans of Benjamin Twos. While one should normally respond to that with a 2♦ relay, those hearts are so good that West should respond 2♥, natural, positive, and showing an excellent suit.</p> <p>For those not playing Benjamin, East opens a simple 1♦ – the hand has far too much potential to open 5♦ – and may rebid 3♦ over the 1♥ response. As the cards lie, E/W can make 6♥, but that would be a rather optimistic effort and for most it should be a decision between 4♥ and 5♦. Some will insist on playing in their eight-card suit and one can understand that – after all, we don't pick up so many eight-card suits so to become dummy could be a bit of a disappointment. Nonetheless, if West keeps on bidding hearts, which must be correct holding a suit which, at a pinch, could play opposite a void, East should finally get the message and, with a perfectly respectable heart holding, put down dummy in 4♥.</p> <p>Declarer in a heart contract has to set up the diamonds before drawing trumps but can then make 12 tricks without difficulty.</p>																																												
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<p>♠ 73 ♥ KJ743 ♦ J10952 ♣ A</p> <p>♠ 1092 ♠ KQ86 ♥ 8 ♥ A2 ♦ 87 ♦ AK3 ♣ KQ109532 ♣ J876</p> <p>♠ AJ54 ♥ Q10965 ♦ Q64 ♣ 4</p>	<p>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <p>After a pass from South, West has a normal 3♣ opening. North passes and East's choice of action will decide the board.</p> <p>Because of the spade position, E/W cannot make any game unless there is a major mis-defence – defending against 5♣ South winning the first spade after the red suits have been eliminated and end-playing himself by doing so. However, East is far too good not to drive to game facing a vulnerable pre-empt, the only question being which one to bid. Looking at the East hand, it would appear that 5♣ is the more likely game to make, so would be the better choice at teams scoring, but when 3NT makes it will often be with overtricks, and that makes it the better choice at match-points. From East's point of view, 3NT will be successful whenever clubs come in without loss and normally on a non-heart lead. West may also have sufficient heart length or a little high-card help in the suit so that 3NT is successful.</p> <p>So, 3NT would be my choice but the heart lead means down two for a poor score, while 5♣ is down only one.</p>																																																
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<p>♠ 95 ♥ AK10984 ♦ A83 ♣ A10</p> <p>♠ J86 ♠ KQ432 ♥ QJ763 ♥ 2 ♦ 6 ♦ J9742 ♣ Q864 ♣ K7</p> <p>♠ A107 ♥ 5 ♦ KQ105 ♣ J9532</p>	<p>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <p>When North opens 1♥, East will overcall either 1♠ or perhaps a Michaels cue bid of 2♥. Where East makes the simple overcall, South bids 2♣, West raises to 2♠, and South may follow up with 3NT over North's 3♥ rebid.</p> <p>Declarer ducks until the third round of spades and plays on hearts. Double dummy, he can succeed by putting in the eight when West plays low, but it will be normal to play hearts from the top as declarer cannot afford to let East gain the lead.</p> <p>Not everyone will bid 3NT on this sequence as North's 3♥ is not quite forcing when not bid with a jump. In 3♥, declarer should lose two hearts and one trick in each black suit. Plus 140 should score OK.</p> <p>Where East makes the Michaels cue bid, South may start with a double and West bid 2♠. The winning decision for N/S is to double and collect a penalty, and that is something South should seriously consider, given that he has trump control and is very short in partner's suit. Plus, whichever minor East holds, South's holding rates to cause problems for the opposing declarer. Two Spades doubled should be a couple down and +500 will score very well for N/S.</p>																																																
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<p>♠ 4 ♥ AJ10942 ♦ J10 ♣ 9874</p> <p>♠ Q109 ♠ K52 ♥ 85 ♥ KQ763 ♦ A8742 ♦ 63 ♣ AQ2 ♣ J103</p> <p>♠ AJ8763 ♥ - ♦ KQ95 ♣ K65</p>	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <p>North has a classic weak two bid so opens 2♥. South hates that, of course, so may try 2♠. The new suit at the two level facing a weak two bid is normally played as constructive but non-forcing and, with a minimum hand and no spade fit, North passes.</p> <p>Two Spades should be defeated, but West has an awkward choice of opening lead and may occasionally let it make. Say that West leads a heart. South wins the ace, discarding a club, then plays ace and another spade and there is nothing the defence can do to prevent eight tricks. Ace and another diamond, on the other hand, beats 2♠. Declarer wins in dummy to take the club pitch then plays two rounds of spades. East wins the ♠10 and plays a third diamond for East to ruff. A club through now collects two tricks for the defence and the ♠Q is the setting trick.</p>																																																
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♠ A62

♥ KJ4

♦ 962

♣ K873

♠ 943

♥ 85

♦ Q53

♣ AQ1062

♠ KJ875

♥ 10763

♦ A874

♣ -

♠ Q10

♥ AQ92

♦ KJ10

♣ J954

HCP

11

8

13

8

Makeable contracts

♣♦♥♠NT

N1-1-2

S1-1-2

E-1-2-

W-1--

♠ 109754

♥ 104

♦ 7632

♣ Q7

♠ KQ6

♥ KQ95

♦ 984

♣ 852

♠ A

♥ A7

♦ KJ5

♣ AKJ10963

♠ J832

♥ J8632

♦ AQ10

♣ 4

HCP

2

10

8

20

Makeable contracts

♣♦♥♠NT

N-- --

S-- --

E63316

W533-5

♠ K8

♥ A109

♦ K109872

♣ 63

♠ QJ102

♥ Q7543

♦ A6

♣ K8

♠ 765

♥ K6

♦ QJ4

♣ Q10542

♠ A943

♥ J82

♦ 53

♣ AJ97

HCP

10

12

10

8

Makeable contracts

♣♦♥♠NT

N131-2

S131-2

E-- --

W-- --

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

South has a weak no-trump and that will be the opening bid at many tables. I expect most Norths to invite game although my personal view is to pass 1NT as I think inviting game will get to 2/3NT going down more often than 3NT making. North has 11 high card points, but is 4-3-3-3, the worst distribution as there is only one suit with a potential long-card trick, and a shortage of intermediate cards (9s and 10s). Where North does invite game South will accept more often than not. West's low club lead gives declarer two club tricks to go with four hearts and a spade. An extra trick can be established in both spades and diamonds. That comes to nine winners, but there is a danger of setting up too many defensive tricks if the timing is not just right, and 3NT will sometimes make and sometimes go down. I'm still happy to declare 1NT where the only pressure will be to make the maximum number of overtricks.

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

Both 6♣ and 6NT are cold if played by East, while a diamond lead defeats either slam if West is declarer. This being match-points, the top spot is therefore 6NT played by East. South will have to cash the ace of diamonds or declarer will make all 13 tricks. There will normally be three passes to East, who can open 2♣. While Acol includes a 2NT response to 2♣ to show around 8-10 high card points in a balanced hand, that often pre-empts the auction and my preference is to respond 2♦ on hands of this type and catch up later in the auction once a fit has been found (or not). Here a 2NT response would prevent the top spot being achievable as West would become declarer. After 2♣ – 2♦ – 3♣, West's best call is 3♥. East can repeat the clubs but may well prefer to gamble a little and try 3NT instead. If he does so, West can simply jump to 6NT and the top spot has been reached without difficulty.

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

When West opens 1♥, North has a minimum 2♦ overcall – alter the vulnerability to Game All and he might pass. If E/W play that a negative double here promises four spades then East will have to pass. South's action now will depend to some degree on partnership overcalling style. If North is prone to making light overcalls, South may pass 2♦ and now West may reopen with a double and East bid 3♣. South can double that – even facing a light overcall he has two-plus trump tricks and an ace – and 3♣ doubled would be three down on average. Facing a slightly sounder overcalling style, South might respond 2NT and play there. With diamonds three-two and the ace inside 2NT can always be made, as can 3♦.

♠84

♥Q873

♦J7

♣AJ973

♠Q1096

♥J92

♦85

♣KQ104

♠72

♥K10654

♦10632

♣82

♠AKJ53

♥A

♦AKQ94

♣65

HCP

8

8

21

3

Makeable contracts

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

South has a hand of huge potential if a fit can be found so most will open 2♣. While some will see a positive response in the North hand – 8 high card points and a fair five-card suit – to respond 3♣ would severely cramp the auction and a 2♦, waiting/negative response is better. That allows South to rebid 2♠ then show the diamonds over North's 3♣.

Two uninspiring doubletons in partner's suits, plus the knowledge that partner is short in clubs so that suit may be difficult to bring in, should convince North to downgrade his hand and bid a simple 3NT now. South could go on if holding a third club or even more extreme two-suiter but with the actual hand will pass 3NT. There are nine top tricks in 3NT. After a heart lead, declarer may play on clubs because a club finesse would be into the hand which cannot hurt him, while a spade finesse would be into the more dangerous West hand. Playing on clubs leads to an overtrick, while playing on spades does not – unless the defence presents declarer with a heart trick.

♠Q874

♥K9

♦A98432

♣5

♠AKJ6

♥642

♦10

♣AJ962

♠10932

♥AJ73

♦KJ

♣Q83

♠5

♥Q1085

♦Q765

♣K1074

HCP

9

13

7

11

Makeable contracts

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

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

There is no reason for East to upgrade the flat 11-count, particularly when vulnerable, so West will get the opportunity to open 1♣. If North overcalls 1♦, East can double to show two four-card majors and, though South can jump in support of diamonds, West will be comfortable in bidding 3♠ if necessary.

Three Spades cannot be defeated if declarer reads the position correctly, though there is work to be done by both sides in the play. Declarer should think that North is likely to have longer diamonds than his partner so may be shorter in clubs. In that case, even if North has not led the singleton club, which clarifies the position in that suit, declarer should start clubs by leading the queen rather than low to the jack. Plus 140 should score pretty well, because not everyone will manage to make nine tricks. Meanwhile, those N/S left to play a diamond part score will lose one trick in each suit.

♠K8

♥95

♦K4

♣KJ98754

♠J973

♥AJ4

♦J86

♣A102

♠64

♥KQ863

♦10973

♣Q6

♠AQ1052

♥1072

♦AQ52

♣3

HCP

10

11

12

7

Makeable contracts

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

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

South opens 1♠ and, unless playing two-over-one game-force, North will respond 2♣ and probably rebid 3♣ over South's 2♦ rebid. Three Clubs should end the auction. A heart lead looks normal against 3♣ so the defenders will take two of those and probably continue with a third round, ruffed by declarer, who will cross to dummy with a diamond to lead the singleton club towards his hand.

If clubs are three-two, any one of the king, jack or seven could be the winning play, so it is a guess. However, if clubs are four-one leading to the king gains against both bare queen and bare ten offside. Leading to the jack gains only against bare ten, while leading low to the seven never gains. The logic behind that last statement is that even if declarer drops a bare ace he still has to lose to both the queen and ten as well so has three trump losers.

All of the above leads us to declarer playing the king of clubs, a successful guess, and making nine tricks for +110.

♠ Q752

♥ J85

♦ A84

♣ J87

♠ A8

♥ Q107

♦ Q62

♣ Q10532

♠ KJ10

♥ K63

♦ K975

♣ AK4

♠ 9643

♥ A942

♦ J103

♣ 96

HCP

8

10

5

17

Makeable contracts

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

♠ J9654

♥ Q42

♦ A102

♣ 62

♠ AQ73

♥ 10

♦ 7643

♣ AJ103

♠ 108

♥ AJ653

♦ 9

♣ K9754

♠ K2

♥ K987

♦ KQJ85

♣ Q8

HCP

7

11

14

8

Makeable contracts

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

♠ KQ9

♥ 8

♦ J975

♣ AJ742

♠ AJ5

♥ J32

♦ 863

♣ K1065

♠ 42

♥ AK10954

♦ AQ1042

♣ -

♠ 108763

♥ Q76

♦ K

♣ Q983

HCP

11

9

7

13

Makeable contracts

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

If East opens a strong no-trump West will raise directly to game, while if East opens 1♦ and rebids 2NT over the 2♣ response he will again be raised to game. Most roads then lead to East declaring 3NT, against which South will lead the major of his choice. My choice would be to lead a spade as that is less likely to give declarer a trick he could not make on his own, and the ♥A is also retained as a possible entry to a long spade trick should there be one. Declarer will have eight black winners and one in each red suit for +430.

If South leads a low heart, declarer should play dummy's ten. Assuming South to have at least one honour for the low-card lead, that will ensure two heart tricks whoever holds the jack or ace. If declarer plays low at trick one and North puts in the eight, forcing the king, he will have a guess next time the suit is led as North could play the eight from either jack-to-three or ace-to-three.

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

Unless E/W are playing weak two-suited openings, South will get to open 1♦. West has the wrong shortage to get involved at this point so will pass, planning to double if his opponents now bid 1♥ – 2♥. However, in practice North will respond 1♠ and South rebid 2♦ over East's take-out double or unusual 1NT overcall.

West will be happy to see partner's take-out bid, particularly a 1NT overcall which should guarantee at least five-five in the unbid suits. However, he will be mindful of the fact that East is a passed hand so is unlikely to look for game – though 11 tricks can always be made on the favourable lie of the cards. West will certainly compete to 3♣ over 2♦.

North in turn may compete to 3♦ but that is a long way from making – it can be down three on accurate defence – and at this vulnerability E/W will do well to choose to defend. Plus 300 should be an excellent result for E/W, a double only adding a little to their match-point score.

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

Those playing five-card majors will have the easiest auctions on this deal, with East opening 1♥ and going on to game when West makes a simple raise. The Acoll pairs will have a slightly more complicated auction but most should also end up in the heart game.

It is easy enough to come to ten tricks, losing one spade, one diamond and one heart or diamond ruff, but not everyone may manage it. Say that South leads a spade. Declarer should duck just as a matter of general technique. Say that the ♠J loses to the queen and a spade comes back to dummy's ace. If declarer guesses to use this one and only dummy entry to lead a diamond to the queen, he will be in trouble and could lose a second diamond as well as a heart and the spade already conceded. I would expect a majority to chalk up ten tricks and +420, but there will surely be some –50s.

♠ 7

♥ 753

♦ 875

♣ A107653

♠ KQ92

♥ A9

♦ AJ6

♣ KQJ9

♠ J86

♥ 10642

♦ Q9432

♣ 2

♠ A10543

♥ KQJ8

♦ K10

♣ 84

HCP

4

20

13

3

Makeable contracts

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

♠ KJ4

♥ 82

♦ Q1093

♣ QJ102

♠ Q87

♥ Q9

♦ AK654

♣ AK5

♠ A92

♥ J106

♦ J82

♣ 9843

♠ 10653

♥ AK7543

♦ 7

♣ 76

HCP

9

18

7

6

Makeable contracts

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

♠ 53

♥ J92

♦ 1064

♣ KJ543

♠ KJ872

♥ AQ6

♦ 53

♣ 986

♠ 1064

♥ 10843

♦ QJ7

♣ 1072

♠ AQ9

♥ K75

♦ AK982

♣ AQ

HCP

5

10

22

3

Makeable contracts

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

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

When South opens 1♠, West is way too strong to overcall 1NT and, with a 2NT overcall not be natural, West will have to start with a double. Should East respond 2♦ or 2♥?

This will not sit comfortably with many major-obsessed players, but when I am very weak in response to a take-out double I like to do my best to find our best fit, which means bidding my longest suit. If we have a game, there will still be time to find hearts, but for now 2♦ gives the best chance of a making contract.

Whether East bids 2♦ or 2♥, West will go on with 2NT, showing a hand too good for a 1NT overcall, so a good 18 to about 21 high card points, and that will be that. Whatever North leads is okay with West. South can be end-played to give an entry to dummy and the friendly diamond layout means that nine tricks can be made.

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

Too strong for even a strong no-trump opening, West will start with 1♦ and East has just enough to respond 1NT. If South passes, West should raise to 2NT but many will overbid with 3NT. South's low heart lead holds declarer to seven tricks at best and in practice probably six when declarer cashes the top diamonds rather than the more successful line of ace then low towards the jack.

3NT-2 is -200 and not good for E/W, while 2NT-1 is only -100 and could be okay, because many South's will overcall 2♥ and that can be made – declarer cashes the top hearts then plays on clubs and, with the defence never able to open up spades without losing their second trick in the suit, declarer eventually gets rid of two spades on dummy's clubs.

When South overcalls 2♥, West will not go quietly. Bidding 2NT with no sure heart stopper may not appeal so double could be a popular choice. If that is penalty or optional by agreement and gets left in, it could lead to -470. If, on the other hand, East judges to take out to 3♦, that is only one down and, with nobody looking able to double, -100 may be quite a decent result for E/W.

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

South has a good 22 points – I know, you think there is no such thing as a BAD 22 points – and will open either 2NT or 2♣ according to his agreed ranges for strong balanced hands. It hardly matters whether South upgrades because of the good five-card suit and treats his hand as 23 high card points, as North will raise to 3NT as soon as he hears South's point range either way.

If West leads his long suit, the low spade goes to the ten and queen. Declarer plays ace then a low diamond – correct in case East holds queen-jack-to-four – wins the spade return and cashes the diamonds then clubs, coming to 11 tricks. West could save a trick by playing back a heart rather than a spade, but why should he know to do so? Maybe the defence can get it right if playing Smith Peters and West suggests a switch with his diamond plays?

With a strong balanced hand on West's right, it is quite likely that a spade lead will cost a trick. It would be by no means ridiculous to go for a passive lead instead – a club – particularly as West holds ten high card points so knows East is weak so less likely to hold a spade honour. Declarer will play the same way after a club lead but now ten tricks should be the limit.

♠KJ10742

♥AQ108

♦87

♣5

♠3

♥962

♦A10954

♣9862

♠Q865

♥J5

♦KQJ62

♣J4

♠A9

♥K743

♦3

♣AKQ1073

HCP	
10	10
4	16

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

♠J3

♥-

♦KQ9743

♣KQ865

♠9

♥AKQ75

♦A865

♣AJ7

♠K10

♥1098632

♦2

♣9432

♠AQ876542

♥J4

♦J10

♣10

HCP	
11	3
18	8

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

♠J1062

♥K3

♦932

♣10863

♠AK843

♥Q82

♦QJ107

♣7

♠Q

♥AJ1074

♦AK

♣QJ952

♠975

♥965

♦8654

♣AK4

HCP	
4	17
12	7

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

South opens 1♣ and reverses with 2♥ at his second turn, whether or not East overcalls 2♦. How the auction progresses from here is less clear. Where East has overcalled, West should make a pre-emptive diamond raise – I would choose 5♦ as the opposition surely have a game if they can find it. North can bid 5♥ now but getting to the good slam will require that someone make a good guess to bid on to the six level.

Where East has not overcalled, North will have more space. If his methods allow a forcing 3♥ raise slam should be reachable. South cue-bids 3♠ and North shows the club shortage. That does not in itself help South much, but it does tell him that North is willing to co-operate in a slam hunt. South can continue with 4♦ and now comes the key moment. With such good trump support, North can make a cue-bid above game and over 4♠ South may use RKCB then bid the small slam.

Life will be much tougher if the raise to 3♥ would not be forcing. Now North will have to go through Fourth Suit Forcing, bidding 3♦ over 2♥, and it will no longer be possible to agree hearts below the game level.

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

At favourable vulnerability South has a simple decision and should open 4♠ – he has a whole extra trick compared to a hand with only seven spades so to open only 3♠ would be a bit wet.

West doubles, in principle for take-out but East will often leave it in with weakish semi-balanced hands with which he doesn't expect to make anything at the five level and just hope to beat it. East is weak on the actual deal, but has sufficient distribution to bid 5♥ and hope that either that or 4♠ is making.

Four Spades is indeed making so even when 5♥ goes down it will have been the right decision to bid it. Making 5♥ is slightly double dummy if South avoids a spade lead, but far from impossible. Say that the lead is the ♣10, that looks like a singleton so declarer wins the ace and cashes a top heart.

When North shows out it is not too much of a stretch to play South to be 8-2-2-1 (we assume he would have led the diamond with 8-2-1-2). Play ace then ruff a diamond, a heart to dummy, followed by the ♠9 to the jack, king and ace. When South next leads the ♠Q, discard a club from dummy. South is end-played and dummy's last club goes away on the next spade as declarer ruffs in hand. Three clubs can be ruffed in dummy and declarer loses only the two spade tricks!

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

E/W have a borderline slam which happens to make on the friendly lie of the cards. West opens 1♠ and raises East's 2♥ response to 3♥. East may make a slam try now, presumably 4♦ as 3♠ would look like a natural bid in this situation. If West is willing to go past game to co-operate in the slam hunt East is likely to then drive to slam. However, with only three trumps and one key-card most Wests will sign off in 4♥ and East will probably call it a day – there is no security at the five level when holding that club suit as there is no reason to assume that West has a useful club holding. Twelve tricks are relatively straightforward but I expect +1430 to score very well with a big majority scoring +680.

♠ 876

♥ 10

♦ J87

♣ AK10972

♠ 104

♥ KJ85

♦ Q6543

♣ Q3

♠ KQ9532

♥ Q972

♦ 9

♣ 84

♠ AJ

♥ A643

♦ AK102

♣ J65

HCP

8

8

7

17

Makeable contracts

♣

♦

♥

♠

NT

N

5

3

-

1

4

S

5

3

-

1

4

E

-

-

1

-

-

W

-

-

1

-

-

♠ A764

♥ K9

♦ J6432

♣ Q3

♠ 32

♥ J107542

♦ K98

♣ 104

♠ 1098

♥ A

♦ AQ1075

♣ KJ76

♠ KQJ5

♥ Q863

♦ -

♣ A9852

HCP

10

4

14

12

Makeable contracts

♣

♦

♥

♠

NT

N

2

-

1

3

1

S

1

-

1

2

-

E

-

2

-

-

-

W

-

2

-

-

-

♠ KQ10852

♥ 1054

♦ Q82

♣ J

♠ A743

♥ K832

♦ A9

♣ 1053

♠ 96

♥ AJ976

♦ K73

♣ AQ6

♠ J

♥ Q

♦ J10654

♣ K98742

HCP

8

11

14

7

Makeable contracts

♣

♦

♥

♠

NT

N

-

1

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-

-

S

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1

-

-

-

E

2

-

5

2

4

W

1

-

5

2

4

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

North is a club short of a pre-emptive opening when vulnerable, while East may not like the four-card side-suit for a weak 2♠ opening so may also pass. That leaves South to open. If his methods include a strong no-trump that will be his opening and North may raise straight to 3NT. With clubs coming in for six tricks, declarer has ten on top and, if West leads from his longest suit, the diamond lead will give an eleventh. A 1♥ or 1♦ opening gives North a tougher decision – whether to stretch to a two-over-one response or bid 1NT. As it turns out, this decision will only affect which partner becomes declarer as South will rebid 2NT over 2♣ and be raised to game, or will raise a 1NT response to 2NT and North will go on to game.

North should only make ten tricks as East will lead a spade honour so will not give an extra trick. If South is declarer having opened 1♥, West will surely lead a diamond and give a trick, while if South has opened 1♦ the natural lead will be a heart, holding the contract to ten tricks.

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

When East opens 1♦ South has a book example of a take-out double and West, despite holding only 4 high card points, may bid the six-card heart suit. North was worth a jump to 2♠ without West's 1♥ bid so should still bid 2♠ now. That shuts out East's clubs, not that this matters and, while South might like the look of the diamond void, there is no premium on bidding thin games at match-points so 2♠ will often end the auction.

East may be tempted to cash the ace of hearts but, with West having no entry, he may never get the sought for ruff. Better is just to lead a trump on the basis that East has clubs and diamonds and West has bid hearts, suggesting that declarer might want to take ruffs in one hand or the other. Eight tricks are easy enough whatever the defence, with a possibility of a ninth. With E/W making only eight tricks in a diamond contract, any N/S who get too high and go minus should score very poorly.

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

There are likely to be two passes to North, who has a normal weak 2♠ opening. East has an unpleasant decision to make – pass, double and 3♥ are all possibilities. The trouble with either positive call is that East has a doubleton spade, an unexciting heart suit and a dull 2-5-3-3 shape. With only 14 high card points and facing a passed partner game is not that likely, so is it worth the risk of committing to the three level when vulnerable? The trouble with passing is, of course, that if East doesn't bid that may be it for the partnership when they do have a making contract.

Three Hearts looks to be the least bad option – at least left-hand opponent is also a passed hand, so there is less danger of suffering a huge penalty than might otherwise be the case. Today proves to be a good day, as West has three great cards and four-card heart support so has an easy raise to 4♥.

There is nothing to the play. The bare jack of clubs means that there is only one loser in that suit to go with one spade loser. Everyone should make 11 tricks and those in game will score a solid +650. There will be a few pairs who don't manage to get to the heart game and they will score poorly.

♠ Q93

♥ 10

♦ J984

♣ J8652

♠ K842

♥ A9743

♦ Q5

♣ A7

♠ A1075

♥ K852

♦ K103

♣ KQ

♠ J6

♥ QJ6

♦ A762

♣ 10943

HCP

4

13

15

8

Makeable contracts

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

♠ 974

♥ 862

♦ K642

♣ 753

♠ A1065

♥ Q105

♦ J109

♣ A84

♠ 8

♥ K73

♦ AQ853

♣ Q1092

♠ KQJ32

♥ AJ94

♦ 7

♣ KJ6

HCP

3

11

11

15

Makeable contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	5	4	2	1	4
W	5	4	2	1	3

♠ AQ106

♥ 954

♦ 102

♣ Q632

♠ 7

♥ AQ8732

♦ Q654

♣ 97

♠ 9843

♥ J

♦ KJ987

♣ A105

♠ KJ52

♥ K106

♦ A3

♣ KJ84

HCP

8

8

9

15

Makeable contracts

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

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

It would be normal for everyone to get to 4♥ on the E/W cards. I wonder how many will get too high?

West opens 1♥ and East makes whatever bid the system requires to show a high-card raise to game or better. For many, that will be some variant on a Jacoby 2NT. West is just worth a descriptive bid rather than the jump to 4♥ which would be made on any bad opening bid, and East will make a cue-bid. However, when West now signs off in 4♥, East should pass – East has forced to game then shown an okay game raise with the first cue-bid.

Ten tricks are easy, but 11 are possible. The overtrick requires that declarer take the finesse against the jack of diamonds, which risks the contract if the finesse fails. However, some Norths will lead a diamond and now declarer can put in the ten for free. Say that South wins the ace and continues with a second diamond. Declarer wins the queen, cashes the ace and king of hearts then the ♦ K for a spade discard. Two top spades and two top clubs are followed by a heart exit to South, and the forced ruff and discard allows declarer to dispose of the last spade from hand.

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

East is just worth a 1♦ opening and, though South has support for all the other suits, the modern style is to start with a 1♠ overcall to get the fifth spade into the game, intending to double next time around to show the extra values and interest in suits other than spades.

West has 11 high card points in a balanced hand with a sure spade stopper plus the possibility of a second stopper. A jump to 2NT is the natural call and that should end the auction – South can hardly bid a second time in the face of such a bid from left-hand opponent.

North will lead partner's suit and West may win immediately and play on diamonds. When the king proves to be onside there are five diamond tricks, and declarer can play on clubs, starting with the queen from dummy, and bring the total to nine. It should not be necessary to bid the very thin and poor game to score well. Plus 150 should be fine for E/W.

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

N/S can make 2♠ but the deal belongs to E/W, who can make either 3♥ or 4♦.

If South opens 1♣, it is easy for West to come in, either with 1♥ or possibly a weak jump overcall of 2♥. North would make a negative double, which finds the spade fit. It isn't clear that East will bid, given the lack of heart support, so N/S might get to play 2♠.

Where South opens 1♠, West has a slightly less clear cut action. To overcall at the two level when vulnerable and facing a passed partner will not appeal to everyone, but no doubt the majority will bid 2♥. Again, however, North's 2♠ may end the auction as East has some high cards but only a singleton heart.

Finally, if South opens a strong no-trump, West will overcall once again. If 2♥ just shows hearts, North may double for take-out and South bid 2♠. With no guarantee of a fit, East will go quietly. However, some will bid 2♥ showing hearts and a minor. While North can still make a take-out double, East will now think there is a good chance of finding a playable fit so bid 2NT to ask for the minor. Getting to 3/4♦ should be worth a lot of match-points with so many pairs defending against 2♠ on the E/W cards.

♠ 432

♥ Q106

♦ QJ93

♣ A52

♠ K86

♥ AJ7

♦ K764

♣ Q63

♠ Q975

♥ K9842

♦ 10

♣ J84

♠ AJ10

♥ 53

♦ A852

♣ K1097

HCP

9

13

6

12

Makeable contracts

♣

♦

♥

♠

NT

N

2

2

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-

1

S

2

2

-

-

1

E

-

-

1

1

-

W

-

-

1

1

-

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

If South opens 1NT there will be two passes to East. Though East has only 6 high card points and two moderate suits, West is marked with decent values by N/S's stopping in 1NT. If East's methods permit both majors to be shown – the simplest artificial defence to 1NT, Landy, would fit the bill nicely with 2♣ showing the majors – then he should certainly compete. Love All is the best time to declare on a competitive part score deal as both sides are going down only in 50s. It would be another matter at, say, Game All, or if East did not have the methods to show a two-suiter.

In response to a Landy 2♣, West can bid 2♦ to ask for the overcaller's longer major. North may double that to show some values and East will bid 2♥. If that ends the auction, East should make seven tricks for down one – better than defending against the unbeatable 1NT. Of course, if someone could double, –100 would be very bad for E/W, but it is hard to see anyone doing so.

It could get even better for E/W if N/S compete to 3♦, as that should be down one and now East's weak intervention will have turned a minus score into a plus and a lot of match-points.

♠ KJ

♥ AQ5

♦ K853

♣ A975

♠ 4

♥ K97

♦ 964

♣ QJ10863

♠ 108753

♥ 843

♦ J1072

♣ 4

♠ AQ962

♥ J1062

♦ AQ

♣ K2

HCP

17

6

1

16

Makeable contracts

♣

♦

♥

♠

NT

N

4

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E

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W

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-

-

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

N/S are cold for 13 tricks in no-trumps or either major, though that requires a fortunate heart position. 6NT is where you would want to reach, making 12 or 13 according to the heart finesse. With a combined 33 high card points and a good five-card suit, that is where we would all hope to get to if left to ourselves.

If North opens 1NT South will look for a major-suit fit then invite the no-trump slam and North, looking at a maximum, will accept.

If North opens 1♣/♦ South will respond 1♠ and North rebid 1NT. Now South uses some version of checkback and, on finding that there is no fit, invite slam in no-trumps and again North should accept.

An aggressive West may trade on the vulnerability and open 3♣. North will probably overcall 3NT and N/S's methods will now be tested in a situation where few pairs seem to be confident what they are doing. As likely as not, South will just close his eyes and raise to 6NT.

All roads, then, lead to 6NT. A flat board at +1470? Somehow I don't think so.

♠ AK108754

♥ Q84

♦ A7

♣ Q

♠ J6

♥ KJ97652

♦ K98

♣ 8

♠ Q2

♥ 3

♦ 1064

♣ KJ96543

♠ 93

♥ A10

♦ QJ532

♣ A1072

HCP

15

8

6

11

Makeable contracts

♣

♦

♥

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NT

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S

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2

6

6

E

-

-

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-

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W

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-

-

Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

North opens 1♠ – despite the seven-card suit the hand is not really right for a 4♠ opening – and an aggressive East may make a weak jump overcall of 3♣. I say aggressive because that suit would make for an automatic 3♣ non-vulnerable but is a bit ropery for a vulnerable bid. South may pass, hoping for a reopening double which South will also pass, or may stretch very slightly and bid 3NT. If South bids 3NT North will bid 4♠, while facing a pass North will bid only 3♠ and South raise to game. Often, East will pass and South respond 2♦. Now West may overcall either 2♥ or 3♥, as much for the lead as anything. Whatever West's call, North can jump to 4♠, ending the auction.

East will lead the singleton heart with or without a heart bid from West. There are 12 tricks if declarer gets the position right, and he will certainly start on the right track by winning the ace if West has bid, but with no clue from the auction against two silent opponents he may well duck the heart and concede a ruff.

Plus 680 should score okay, with +650 well below average.

<p>♠AQ8754 ♥K53 ♦Q64 ♣9</p> <p>♠- ♠96 ♥A10864 ♥QJ972 ♦J932 ♦A85 ♣QJ65 ♣742</p> <p>♠KJ1032 ♥- ♦K107 ♣AK1083</p>	<p>Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all</p> <p>South opens 1♠ and, though West has support for all the other three suits, the hand is just too weak to make a take-out double. After a pass from West, North can make a 4♣ splinter and that will suit South, who can see that there will be no club loser. There are several possible ways forward from here. South could jump to 5♥, Exclusion Keycard Blackwood, and discover that one of the major-suit aces is missing so settle for 6♠. Or perhaps South will make a simple diamond cue-bid and take it slowly.</p> <p>Not everyone will get to slam, but everyone will make 12 tricks without difficulty, pitching a diamond on the king of clubs and basically cross-ruffing after drawing the missing trumps.</p>																																																
<table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>14</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th colspan="2">NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>6</td><td colspan="2">3</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>6</td><td colspan="2">3</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td colspan="2">-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td colspan="2">-</td></tr></table>	HCP		11	7	8	14	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	3	1	-	6	3		S	3	1	-	6	3		E	-	-	2	-	-		W	-	-	2	-	-		
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<p>♠93 ♥AK753 ♦2 ♣QJ742</p> <p>♠84 ♠AKJ72 ♥J942 ♥- ♦AKJ86 ♦975 ♣A10 ♣K9865</p> <p>♠Q1065 ♥Q1086 ♦Q1043 ♣3</p>	<p>Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</p> <p>E/W can make game in either spades or diamonds – double dummy – but that requires a touch of inspiration in the diamond suit and neither is particularly likely unless there has been a lot of opposition bidding to paint a picture of the distribution. More likely E/W will fail if they play a game contract. Remarkably, given that they have a good five-four trump fit and both hands contain a side-suit singleton, N/S can make only seven tricks in a heart contract. I suspect that they will often bid quite a bit beyond the one level.</p> <p>Even vulnerable many Norths will open 1hx on the good five-five, and East may bid 2hx, spades and a minor. South will bid a semi-pre-emptive 3hx (2sx would show a better raise to 3hx), and West will be in a bit of a quandary, having good high-card values but suspecting that there is no fit. Perhaps a double here should be for penalty, as 4cx would be pass or correct, and if East and West both see it that way there is a 500 penalty to be collected. That will be a pretty good effort by E/W and they will deserve the excellent match-point score that it will deliver.</p>																																																
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<p>♠1086 ♥953 ♦J1072 ♣1085</p> <p>♠K542 ♠AJ3 ♥A ♥KJ1062 ♦A954 ♦863 ♣QJ76 ♣A4</p> <p>♠Q97 ♥Q874 ♦KQ ♣K932</p>	<p>Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</p> <p>West will open either 1♣ or 1♦ according to personal or partnership style and will rebid 1♠ over the 1♥ response. East should use Fourth Suit Forcing and West may make a natural raise or may bid 2NT. East will raise the latter to game or convert the former to 3NT, so almost everyone should play that contract from one side or the other.</p> <p>There is no good reason why anything other than the fourth suit should be led and the outcome should be much the same whichever suit that is except when it is North on lead and that lead is a club. The point is that this takes an entry out of dummy while the hearts are still blocked, thereby limiting declarer to two heart tricks. On a diamond lead, declarer could win, cash the ♥A and use the black aces as entries to create four heart winners.</p> <p>On a club through the ace and a club back, nine tricks should be the limit. On a diamond lead or club away from the king, ten should be possible.</p>																																																
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