Bridge
England
Sim Pairs

Thanks to our commentators:
Andy Bowles          Sally Brock
Fiona Brown          David Burn
Jeremy Dhondy   Gunnar Hallberg
Frances Hinden   Graham Osborne

Wednesday
3rd February 2016
Thank you for taking part in this Bridge England Simultaneous Pairs. I hope you have enjoyed the event and will take pride in having supported our international teams.

2015 was a good year with all our teams making their way through to the knock out stages in the World Championships. Our Women’s team continued their excellent form and gained a bronze medal. Our Open team finished 4th after two agonising close matches.

This event is to specifically raise funds for our Junior Teams. We have, for the first time, a team who will represent England at U16 level in the World Championships to be held in Italy in August. Our U26 team have also qualified.

The EBU provides funding for these teams. Other important areas, such as development and teaching also require support and that means that the international budgets are never as large as we would wish. The players receive no personal payment from the EBU and have each committed much time and energy to representing their country at the bridge table.

I very much hope you have enjoyed the hands and the expert commentary, much of which has been supplied by the players who will be playing for our country this year. I also hope that you will continue to support this event and encourage your club to continue participation.

Jeremy Dhondy
February 2016
If N short, No game is making for E suit opens 1 hearts. It will be difficult to show your shape later if the auction develops. If you play Acol, you are playing a Strong NT system, it should still lead to 3NT via Stayman.

Depending on which type of Blackwood you play, East may help by bidding diamonds too aggressively and being doubled. A score of +500 should be above average for N/S.

West should have little trouble wrapping up ten tricks in 3NT. After a heart lead, depending on which type of Blackwood you play, the defence can choose to cash top clubs and switch toive clubs and two hearts.

If you play Acol, don’t be tempted by 1 because if partner rebids 2♥, as he will on many hands, East can now afford 2♥. This would be a distinctly overbidding route if you were not a passed hand. On this occasion West rebids no-trumps and you can afford to check for a spade fit before passing 3NT. If you are playing a Strong NT system, it should still lead to 3NT via Stayman.

If North overcalls 1♥ on a heart lead, it does give partner the ability to bounce the auction if you play. That should lead to the slam. Depending on which type of Blackwood you play, the defence can choose to cash top clubs and switch to five clubs and two hearts.

Makeable contracts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HCP</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>W</td>
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If you play Acol, don’t be tempted by 1♥ on the West hand because of the bad hearts. It will be difficult to show your shape later if the auction develops. If West opens 1♥, should North overcall 1♣? It doesn’t take much room and it isn’t a good suit. However, it does give partner the ability to bounce the auction if he has a fit. No game is making for E/W on any sensible defence but it will be quite hard to stop short, irrespective of whether North intervenes or not.

If North leads a spade, the only chance is to run some diamonds and hope something goes wrong in the defence but a ninth trick will be hard to concede. In theory, the defence can choose to cash top clubs and switch to a heart which would lead to 3NT–4 but I can’t see that being a likely defence. Strong no-trumpers are also likely to get to game via 1NT–3NT.

**Forthcoming Sim Pairs**

**Club Stratified Pairs**
Monday 18th to Thursday 17th March 2016

**British Summer Pairs**
Monday 25th to Thursday 28th July 2016

**British Spring Pairs**
Monday 4th April to Thursday 7th April 2016

**EBED Autumn Pairs**
Monday 5th to Friday 9th September 2016

**EBED Spring Pairs**
Tuesday 3rd to Thursday 6th October 2016

We hope you, and your club, will take part. For more details visit www.ebu.co.uk/sim-pairs

* - Proceeds help support the work of the charity English Bridge Education & Development

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With both red suit finesses failing, it will be hard to score more than +420.

North might look for the minor suit game at teams, but with two outside aces and known diamond support opposite, trying for the no-trump game looks right, and there are nine top tricks.

5♥ would be a comfortable make on (e.g.) AK lead. You win, draw trumps and soon discard a spade loser on ♥K. You just lose a spade and a top heart.

What a horrible misfit! Often poor players never stop bidding when there is a misfit, but a much better rule is to stop as soon as you can. Some might choose to open the East hand with 1♥, but it usually works out best to open your longer suit. West starts by bidding his longer minor, but, when East rebids hearts, a modest 2NT is best and that will end the auction.

Although Deep Finesse may make that contract easily enough, it might not be so easy for a flesh-and-blood declarer. A diamond contract would be a little more comfortable if E/W can contrive to get there.

A long auction to the top spot. The first three bids are clear. Then it is easy for North to bid his good 3♠ suit and is whether South decides to look for the heart fit after the 1NT rebid. Those who play some sort of check-back 2♠ bid after a 1NT rebid may well unearth the 5-3 heart fit whereas the bashers will raise to a successful 3NT. 4♥ should fail on best defence because E/W can organise one trump, two diamonds and a club ruff. It will be two off on a club lead if declarer finesses in trumps.

In 3NT, the best E/W can do, in principle, is take three diamond tricks and a heart. If declarer plays ♦A early, it may pay East to play the nine on this trick. Seeing it as a day pay East to play the nine on this trick. Seeing it as a day pay East to play the nine on this trick. Seeing it as a day pay East to play the nine on this trick. Seeing it as a day pay East to play the nine on this trick. Seeing it as a day pay East to play the nine on this trick. Seeing it as a
**Board 28: Dealer West: N/S vulnerable**

**Board 29: Dealer North: All vulnerable**

**Board 30: Dealer East: Love all**

**Board 7: Dealer South: All vulnerable**

**Board 8: Dealer West: Love all**
Board 10: Dealer East: All vulnerable
West  North  East  South
1NT(12-14)  Dble  2♣  Pass
Pass  Dble (T/O)  Pass  Pass
red(dbl)  Pass  2♠  Dble***
All Pass

* Clubs and a higher suit
** Bid your other suit, partner! (bidding a suit would show 5 cards)
*** Penalty

E/W may escape if North bids 2♥ over 2♠ but with extra values there is a big upside to making a second double. We suggest playing the first double after the opponents run as take-out and subsequent doubles as penalty. 2♥ will probably score -800.
Those playing a strong NT will open 1♠ and are likely to defend a heart part-score.

Board 11: Dealer South: Love all
West  North  East  South
Pass  1♠  1♥  2♣*
4♣**  Pass  4♥***  Pass
4♠**  Pass  4NT Pass
5♠  Pass  5♣  Pass
6♥  All Pass

* 2♣ is not ideal and a slight underbid. I would double if denied four spades.
** 4♣ is a descriptive bid showing 1 or 0 clubs, 4♥ hearts and a good passed hand.
*** 4♠/5♠ 1♣ or 2♦ round control
5♠ 1 keycard
5♥  Q ask

How many pairs will bid 6♥? It will need good partnership judgment. West, as a passed hand, is happy to splinter and, if his partner is good enough to cue-bid 4♠, to make an aggressive cue-bid of 4♠. Given the opponents' bidding and West's bidding, West is very likely to have a club void. The fitting spade values now make slam look attractive. South may well double. With hearts breaking 2-1, the play is a stroll.

Board 12: Dealer West: N/S vulnerable
West  North  East  South
1♥  Dble*  2♥  Dble**
3♥**  Pass  Pass  4♠***
All Pass

* This double will not be to everyone's taste but it shows our values, four spades and puts us in a good position to compete.
** A classic responsive double because you are too strong to bid 2♠ or 3♠ and partner hasn't guaranteed 4♠ so bidding 4♠ is risky.
*** Bidding 3♥ here is effective because it makes much more difficult for the opponents and the vulnerability is on your side.
**** My preference with partnership agreement would be to double 3♥ rather than bid 4♠. However partner will bid 3♠ and we will be in the same contract.

On the singleton diamond lead, you will win in hand and play 4♥ (East has shown up with ♦K. West is known to have ♦A and ♦K) A crafty declarer will be able to make 12 tricks by finessing ♦Q and running ♦10.

Board 25: Dealer North: E/W vulnerable
West  North  East  South
1♣  4♥  All pass

Not much to say about the auction, though I suppose it is possible that East might bid more slowly (perhaps with an eye on 3NT). Not much to say about the play either – South leads ♦2, North switches to a heart, 620 for E/W.

There exists, though, one possibility. South might lead ♠3, pursuant to the MUD convention. Why anyone plays this at all, let alone in partner’s suits, has always been a mystery to me.

North, who does not know whether East's ♦Q is a false card or that South holds ♥A, might try to cash a second diamond in the hope of a doubleton with South and a trump promotion. Not exactly a triumph for inglorious MUD.

Board 26: Dealer East: All vulnerable
West  North  East  South
1♠  Pass  1NT Pass
2♥  Pass  Pass
All Pass

With 5/5 shape and crisp honours, West has an obvious pass. The standard lead against this auction is a trump since the North has shown up with his weak 5-card suit and dubious kings and queens. West rebids his second suit and East may even help the ♦A lead.

How will those that try the unsound 2♥ overcall fare? Well, East should be silenced since a double would show four hearts, and if South raises to 3♥ passed back to East, he can double now for penalties which will result in the magic +200 for E/W and most of the match-points.

Board 27: Dealer South: Love all
West  North  East  South
1NT Pass  2♠ Pass
2♣ Pass  3♥ Pass
4♥ All Pass

The very good fit, with no wasted values in clubs, means that E/W can make 5♥, by throwing two diamonds on the spades and then ruffing a diamond in dummy.
However, E/W would be doing very well to reach this slam. A spade slam would not be quite so wise. Its only chance is for South to be on lead and try ♦A.

In the meantime, N/S can make nine tricks in clubs, so ♦5 is a cheap save against game if they find it. Of course, E/W can compete to 5♥, and N/S's save may even help E/W to find their heart slam.
It’s the kind of deal where any plus will score well.

Not that it matters very much, since West will take the push to the five level if necessary (and if South has bid clubs at some stage North might venture a speculative double on the strength of his singleton). 650 for E/W will be normal, but some N/S’s may get away with -500 and a fine score.

This is the way the cool school bids nowadays (although in some months the South hand is considered a routine 3♦ opening and in some sixteens East will have opened 1♣ first). South’s 4♠ and North’s 4♥ are not suggestions of alternative contracts – rather, they indicate values that may be of interest in terms of directing the defence or further bidding.

Some Wests will open the bidding, but then some people will do anything. If they do open they will find it hard to stop short of game, which will fail when the heart fineses lose. If they don’t, they may find themselves able to back into the auction later when N/S show limited ambitions.

It’s not very likely that the theoretical par contract of 4♦ doubled by N/S will be reached, but it’s the kind of deal where any plus will score well.

Some Wests might well lead a heart, low or the Jack, make your choice. Ten tricks can be made – 3NT is the way the cool school bids nowadays (although in some quarters the South can’t stand risking a finesse for an extra overtrick, my advice would be: Stay in bed, it’s not very likely that the theoretical par contract of 4♦ doubled by N/S will be reached, but it’s the kind of deal where any plus will score well.

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Bridge England Simultaneous Pairs  ~   Wednesday 3rd February

Board 16 : Dealer West : E/W vulnerable

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<th>West</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Makeable contracts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>1NT</td>
<td>All Pass</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

South will lead a heart around to declarer’s King. Rather than expose the location of his high cards by playing spades, declarer should probably play diamonds at trick two. If he plays a diamond to the nine and North’s ten, North will attack clubs, hoping to find his partner with the King or ten. To cater for the possibility of South’s holding a10xx, he should switch to the Queen, preparing to smother the Jack on the next round. Declarer will win, play a diamond to the ace, and another diamond to North’s queen. Now N/S’s signals will be put to the test.

If North plays ace and another club, declarer will finish with nine tricks. If South manages to convey that he doesn’t have a10, North will play a heart and the defense will cash out to hold the contract to eight tricks.

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

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<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>1NT</td>
<td>All Pass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At love-all, playing match-points, you should accept any excuse for coming in over 1NT. Natural overcallers will bid 2♣; pairs that play Astron or one of its variants will reach 3♣; exponents of Multi-Landy may have to take their chances against 1NT.

If North makes the natural lead of 10, that gives West the information he needs to make an extra heart trick, by covering with the Jack and later leading to the eight. Even on a non-heart lead, an astute declarer may avoid three heart losers. Once North has shown up with 4♠ and 5♠, South is marked with all remaining high cards for his 1NT opening, so West knows his only chance in hearts is to lead to the eight. West also wants to ruff a spade, but ruffing a spade before touching trumps fails as the cards lie – North will win the first trump and play his fourth spade, giving South a ruff. Instead, West may play a trump to the Jack early. If North wins that, declarer can ruff a spade and then take another diamond finesse. A very clever North could thwart that plan by ducking the first diamond.

Board 18 : Dealer East : N/S vulnerable

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<thead>
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<th>West</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Makeable contracts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>1♣</td>
<td>3♥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many different auctions are possible, depending on whether East opens, how high E/W compete, and how well N/S judge the auction. N/S can make 3♥ but no more. E/W have a cheap save in 4♠.

If they find that, it may be hard for N/S, with their double fit, to resist competing to 5♦ or 5♥. However, North, with all his values in clubs, may judge to defend 4♠. On this occasion he’d be right.

Board 19 : Dealer South : E/W vulnerable

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>West</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Makeable contracts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>2♣</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>2♥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

A close decision for North with 12 HCP and useful middle cards in each suit, but pairs scoring demands some caution in game bidding. South has a nice 5-card suit but the rest of his hand is not so good. All the same, I expect with 13 HCP most will take a shot at game. A heart lead runs to the Queen and declarer will have 11 easy tricks with the aid of the diamond finesse.

Against strong no-trumpers, after a 1♣ opening, some Wests may try an aggressive overcall of 1♥. Now the contract is more likely to be played by North. East’s heart lead will be through the Queen and declarer will end up with only ten tricks and a poor score for the declining side.

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

<table>
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<th>West</th>
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<th>East</th>
<th>South</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>2♣</td>
<td>All Pass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This hand has the potential to be an interesting part-score battle. The weak NT opening is passed round to South who protects with 2♥, perhaps showing hearts and a minor for some pairs. East, in turn, now has a protective decision. Some may go quietly with a pass. With better spades, you could try 2♦ (showing four cards only since you passed the 1NT opening) but here a double is more flexible, taking a slight chance on the diamond suit. Over 2♥, North too has a decision, with three-card heart support and a ruffing value, but the strong spades argue in favour of defending.

A club lead against 2♥ should secure six tricks for the defence. 2♥ by N/S can be defeated if the defence find their diamond ruff, but (say) 4♠ to the Ace and a trump switch will not be good enough.

Board 21 : Dealer North : N/S vulnerable

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<th>West</th>
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<th>East</th>
<th>South</th>
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<td>Pass</td>
<td>1NT</td>
<td>2♦</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td></td>
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For the third deal running, the bidding may well commence with a weak NT and again an interesting part-score contest may develop. South has a marginal double but with a singleton 4♠ and, with partner being a passed hand, overcalling is certainly reasonable. West tries a negative double, locating the spade suit. North only has one HCP but a good shape and 4-card support for partner and thus chances pushing the opponents higher.

Holding a spade contract to eight tricks requires North getting two ruffs in diamonds and thus the lead of ♦ which will be out of the question unless E/W have announced a diamond fit during the auction. More normal will be E/W scoring nine tricks in a spade contract but if the defense slips and allows declarer a tenth trick, they will score poorly.

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