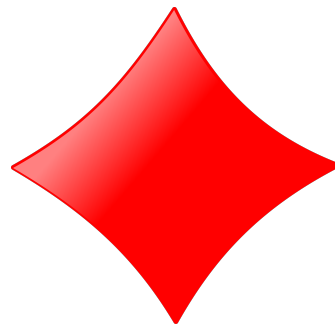
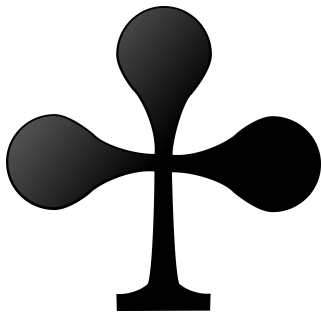
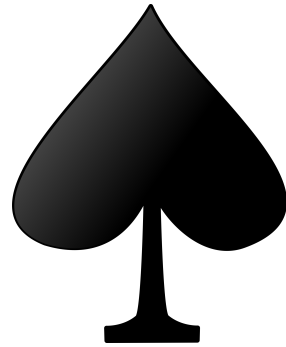


Club Stratified Sim Pairs



Wednesday

14th March 2018

Welcome to the seventh 'Club Stratified Sim Pairs'. Our commentator today is Brian Senior, experienced bridge teacher and writer.

You may wonder how stratification works and which strat you are in.

There are four categories of strats.

1. Strat 'A' is open to everyone but if either member of the pair is a Tournament Master or above you will be in this strat and can only get master points from the overall ranking.
2. If both of you are below the rank of Tournament Master you will be 'B' strat;
3. both below Master means you will be in 'C' strat and
4. both below District Master will make you 'D' strat.

Blue points and local points will be awarded to the top third of the overall ranking list. In addition the top third of each strat will get blue points and local points. If you are entitled to overall points and points for your strat, you will only get the higher of the awards – you won't get two lots of points. Master points cannot be allocated until after the event is finalised, usually about three weeks. Please keep your scorecard for that period. If we find any unusual scores we may need to contact the club scorer and also the players. Full results may be found at www.ebu.co.uk/sims/

Jeremy Dhondy, Chairman EBU

<p>♠AK10864 ♥76 ♦K5 ♣AQ9</p> <p>♠73 ♠Q52 ♥KJ9542 ♥A10 ♦A74 ♦Q932 ♣J6 ♣8753</p> <p>♠J9 ♥Q83 ♦J1086 ♣K1042</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">HCP</th> <th colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">16</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">9</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	16		N	2	1	-	3	-	9	8	S	2	1	-	3	-			E	-	-	2	-	1			W	-	-	2	-	1	<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <p>North opens 1♠ and South responds 1NT. West will overcall 2♥ and now North has to decide whether to rebid 2♠ or 3♠. It is easy to see how a jump to 3♠ could lead to an unsuccessful contract, but equally a simple 2♠ could lead to a missed game. I expect the majority to choose the more optimistic 3♠ rebid and now it is South's turn to make an important decision.</p> <p>South has a middling hand with 7 HCP including a minor spade honour. Some may be tempted to go on to game, but the high cards are scattered and the queen of hearts is of dubious value so I would favour passing.</p> <p>West's overcall should see East lead ace and another heart, and West will win and play a third round, ruffed and over-ruffed. But East is now powerless. When declarer gains the lead he will draw trumps and four rounds of clubs allows a diamond discard if one is required, so there is no diamond guess.</p> <p>To have a chance to beat 3♠, West would have to switch to a low diamond at trick three. However, declarer rates to get that right because of the auction and, once he does so, if he continues with the top spades then four rounds of clubs, the diamond loser goes away and he has an overtrick for an excellent score.</p>
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<p>♠854 ♥Q863 ♦1042 ♣875</p> <p>♠- ♠KJ109 ♥AJ54 ♥1092 ♦K853 ♦J7 ♣QJ943 ♣K1062</p> <p>♠AQ7632 ♥K7 ♦AQ96 ♣A</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">HCP</th> <th colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">11</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	2		N	-	1	-	2	-	11	8	S	-	1	-	2	1			E	4	-	2	-	-			W	4	-	2	-	-	<p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <p>South has a very nice hand but as the auction progresses it will gradually start to look less attractive.</p> <p>South opens 1♠ and West doubles, with East responding 1NT. It is good news for South that the ♠K rates to be onside, but bad that North seems to have room for very little in the way of high cards. South may double, planning to convert a 2♥ response to 2♠, or may simple bid 2♠ immediately – few will want to offer diamonds as an alternative on a likely part-score deal.</p> <p>Two Spades can be made, effectively losing three spades and one in each red suit. That should score quite well for N/S as E/W can make ten tricks in a club contract if they can find a way to get there. That will probably be down to West, as East will be content to defend 2♠. If West doubles for a second time, 3♣ can be reached, but the problem with that is that East may expect more than 11 HCP for a second double. If East chooses to defend 2♠ doubled, looking for the magic +200 on a part-score deal, he will regret it.</p>
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<p> ♠K8732 ♥K ♦Q83 ♣Q1086 ♠5 ♥A8764 ♦K654 ♣743 ♠A109 ♥QJ1095 ♦109 ♣J95 ♠QJ64 ♥32 ♦AJ72 ♣AK2 </p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>10</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>S</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15</td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	10		N	3	2	-	3	-	7	8	S	3	2	-	4	-			E	-	-	3	-	-	15		W	-	-	3	-	-	<p>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <p>If North declares 4♠ the contract can be defeated by a diamond lead while West still has the ♥A entry to give partner a ruff – but why should East lead a diamond rather than an ace? Played by South, 4♠ is unbeatable. Meanwhile, E/W can make nine tricks in a heart contract if declarer can divine to drop the bare king of trumps – again, why should he? – but the vulnerability will probably deter E/W from getting involved.</p> <p>If South opens a strong no trump, North will transfer to spades and South can break the transfer with a jump to 3♠, raised to game by North. If N/S are playing a weak no trump, many Souths will open 1♠ and North may just raise to game. A 1♣ or 1♦ opening would leave room for West to overcall 1♥, but there is no great upside to getting involved with such an empty suit and a bare 7 HCP, while there is a definite downside at the prevailing vulnerability. North will respond 1♠, South raise to 2♠, and North make a game invitation of some kind, with South accepting. Plus 420 should be a very popular outcome.</p>
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<p> ♠K6 ♥10743 ♦QJ765 ♣A4 ♠94 ♥AK865 ♦AK3 ♣KJ2 ♠AJ10853 ♥2 ♦84 ♣Q1097 ♠Q72 ♥QJ9 ♦1092 ♣8653 </p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>10</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18</td> <td>7</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	10		N	-	-	-	-	-	18	7	S	-	-	-	-	-			E	4	1	2	4	3	5		W	4	1	2	4	3	<p>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <p>Playing standard methods the normal auction is 1♥ – 1♠ – 2NT – 4♠, while those playing weak jump shifts will provide a little variety in terms of the auction, 1♥ – 2♣ – 4♠, but none as regards the final contract.</p> <p>Four Spades can be held to ten tricks if South hits on a club lead to set up a ruff for partner. However, while some will no doubt find the club lead, I would have thought that the ten of diamonds was a more likely choice and now declarer can take the double finesse in trumps and, with no ruff to worry about, loses just one trick in each black suit.</p>
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<p> ♠A873 ♥J ♦J64 ♣AK986 ♠962 ♥10874 ♦87 ♣Q432 ♠KJ1054 ♥A2 ♦953 ♣1075 ♠Q ♥KQ9653 ♦AKQ102 ♣J </p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>13</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>3</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>8</td> <td>S</td> <td>3</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17</td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	13		N	3	6	5	2	2	2	8	S	3	6	5	2	2			E	-	-	-	-	-	17		W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <p>North will open 1♣ and East overcall 1♠. South holds a hand of great potential if a fit can be found and starts off with 2♥. North's rebid has been taken away by the overcall – he can hardly bid 2♠ now – and being too weak to rebid 2NT, he is forced to repeat the clubs. South will bid 3♦, North 3NT, and most Souths will continue with 4♦.</p> <p>If North now appreciates the fact that he has excellent control cards and that South will have no right to expect better than three-card support for diamonds, he can cue-bid 4♠ now, and South may check on key cards then bid the diamond slam. The jack of hearts proves to be full value and helps to make 6♦ a very easy contract. Plus 1370 should score pretty well, as there will be pairs playing in various game contracts. Hearts makes +650, while 3NT can be defeated by the lead of the king of spades. However, not many will find that, and if they instead lead a different spade there are 11 tricks.</p>
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<p> ♠ KJ92 ♥ KJ43 ♦ AKQ ♣ 72 ♠ 73 ♠ A6 ♥ A6 ♥ Q982 ♦ J832 ♦ 1095 ♣ KJ954 ♣ 10863 ♠ Q10854 ♥ 1075 ♦ 764 ♣ AQ </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="138 1123 251 1291"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>17</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="284 1123 511 1291"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		17	6	9	8	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	1	2	3	1	S	-	1	2	3	2	E	1	-	-	-	-	W	1	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <p>Playing Acoll, most Norths will open 1♥ and raise the 1♠ response to 3♠. South has a spare queen but, more importantly, a fifth spade, so should accept the invitation and bid 4♠.</p> <p>If playing a strong no trump, that is what North will open, and South will transfer to spades. Holding a maximum with four decent spades and a ruffing value, North should break the transfer and rebid 3♠, South going on to game.</p> <p>Four Spades should be defeated, as there are two hearts, a club and a spade to be lost. Of course, if played by South, there is the possibility of a club lead away from the king, and now the contract is successful. Otherwise, East has a couple of opportunities to lead a club through and that should be good enough to get the contract one down.</p>
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<p> ♠ - ♥ AJ10542 ♦ K2 ♣ Q9742 ♠ AQ543 ♠ J108 ♥ 987 ♥ K3 ♦ - ♦ QJ9876 ♣ AKJ106 ♣ 83 ♠ K9762 ♥ Q6 ♦ A10543 ♣ 5 </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="138 1753 251 1921"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>10</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td>9</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="284 1753 511 1921"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		10	7	14	9	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	1	-	-	S	-	-	1	-	-	E	1	1	-	2	-	W	1	1	-	2	-	<p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <p>Time was, when there was much debate about what to open when five-five in the black suits. Nowadays most people open 1♠ and don't worry about the possibility of losing the club suit. If West opens 1♠ North could make a two-suited overcall but, with the major both longer and stronger than the minor, I would make a simple 2♥ overcall.</p> <p>East can bid 2♠ now, even if playing four-card majors, and South may compete with 3♥, perhaps as much in the hope of pushing his opponents up one more level as anything. And West will surely be happy to take that push with his good two-suiter.</p> <p>If West is left to play 3♠, the bad breaks in both black suits should lead to one down. But will North be happy to defend or will he go on with 4♥ on this auction, hoping for a little help in clubs as well as heart from partner. He will be very disappointed with the dummy, which has only a doubleton heart and no club help at all. Four Hearts is hopeless – a heart contract can be held to seven tricks on perfect defence. Did either North or South do anything too horrible? It wasn't compulsory for South to compete with 3♥ on a doubleton, but it could have worked out a whole lot better, while North had a lot of extra distribution compared to what had been shown by the initial overcall.</p>
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<p>♠ QJ52 ♥ K65 ♦ 104 ♣ QJ43</p> <p>♠ A864 ♠ - ♥ 98 ♥ Q10743 ♦ A9732 ♦ QJ65 ♣ 85 ♣ AK106</p> <p>♠ K10973 ♥ AJ2 ♦ K8 ♣ 972</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>9</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>12</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>2</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>- 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>2</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>- 3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	9		N	-	-	-	-	8	12	S	-	-	-	-	11		E	2	5	3	- 3			W	2	5	3	- 3	<p>Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <p>East opens 1♥ in third seat, South overcalls 1♠, and West bids 1NT. North will be happy to compete with 2♠ and may be surprised to hear that six tricks is the limit, at least double dummy.</p> <p>East can double 2♠ for take-out and West will show the diamonds. If left to play there, West can make 11 tricks courtesy of the friendly trump position. At a different vulnerability, N/S might compete to 3♠, but that would work out poorly this time with the contract going down in 100s. If anyone does bid 3♠, it should surely be North, who is maximum for the initial 2♠ and has the ninth trump – if you know about the Law of Total Tricks, you will understand the importance of having the extra trump to compete these part-scores where the high cards are roughly equally held by the two sides. South may have 11 HCP, so a spare high card, but the South hand has a lot of potential losers and that spare high card is as much use on defence as offence.</p>
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<p>♠ AKQ9 ♥ AK842 ♦ A98 ♣ K</p> <p>♠ J1087 ♠ 4 ♥ Q5 ♥ J1063 ♦ K432 ♦ 76 ♣ J63 ♣ 1098752</p> <p>♠ 6532 ♥ 97 ♦ QJ105 ♣ AQ4</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>23</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>2</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> <td>6 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>1</td> <td>S</td> <td>2</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> <td>6 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	23		N	2	6	5	6 5	7	1	S	2	6	5	6 5			E	-	-	-	-			W	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <p>How do you handle the North hand – 1♥, 2♣ then rebid 2♥, 2♣ then rebid 2NT? I don't suppose it will be a popular answer, but I would go for the 1♥ opening as, if I survive the first round (in other words, get a second chance) I expect to be better placed than if I opened 2♣.</p> <p>Take this deal. If I open 1♥ partner responds 1♠ and we are off to the races. If I open 2♣ it immediately gets messy. Say partner responds 2NT, I bid 3♥ and is he really going to introduce that weak spade suit? Or suppose partner responds 2♦ and I bid 2♥. Again, he will not bid those spades, so maybe 2NT? OK, now I can bid 3♠ and he can cue-bid 4♣ – it must be a cue-bid because he didn't bid 3♣ when he had the chance to do so. Now I am in a good place again. The auction to avoid is the one that starts 2♣–2NT, as that really pre-empts us.</p> <p>Six Spades is the place to get to, and Deep Finesse assures us that it can be made. But try it on a club lead. Would you win the ace and queen, pitching hearts, then take the diamond finesse? That wins the contract. Or would you win the ♣K, cash the top trumps then play three rounds of hearts, ruffing. The clubs take care of the diamonds so no need for a finesse, and this line works when either major splits favourably. I fear I might go down in this one.</p>
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<p>♠ K76 ♥ KJ1052 ♦ KJ6 ♣ A2</p> <p>♠ 54 ♠ 832 ♥ Q98 ♥ 76 ♦ A97 ♦ 10832 ♣ K10765 ♣ QJ93</p> <p>♠ AQJ109 ♥ A43 ♦ Q54 ♣ 84</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>15</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> <td>6</td> <td>6 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>3</td> <td>S</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> <td>6</td> <td>6 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	15		N	1	3	6	6 5	9	3	S	1	3	6	6 5			E	-	-	-	-			W	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all</p> <p>I like to use judgement when deciding whether to open 1NT or one of a major with a 5-3-3-2 hand, deciding by looking at the strength of the five-card suit and all-round texture of the hand. This South hand contains such a good spade suit that I would open 1♠ and be quite happy if I had to rebid the spades. When North responds 2♥, it is not necessary to rebid the spades because there is known to be an eight-card heart fit, so I raise to 3♥ to show my minimum opener. North, of course, has plenty to go on to game, so 4♥ it is.</p> <p>A simple soul will win the club lead and play ♥A and a heart to the jack. When that holds, cash the ♥K and take a club pitch on the spades, making 12 tricks. Some may be tempted by the combination play – ♣A, ♥A, ♥K, spades. This is better than the simple line when East has ♥Qx, obviously, and also when East has ♥Qxx and three or more spades, as the club loser goes away before East can ruff and cash the club. As well as the actual lay-out, the second line loses out if West has queen to four hearts as declarer will not be able to get rid of the club and he could have picked up the hearts without loss by finessing twice.</p>
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<p> ♠ Q ♥ A10 ♦ J9865 ♣ J9874 ♠ KJ954 ♠ 10863 ♥ K75 ♥ J9862 ♦ 743 ♦ Q ♣ Q2 ♣ 1065 ♠ A72 ♥ Q43 ♦ AK102 ♣ AK3 </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="138 1155 251 1331"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>8</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="284 1155 516 1331"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>N</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		8		9	3	20		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	6	7	1	-	6	S	6	7	1	-	6	E	-	-	-	1	-	W	-	-	-	1	-	<p>Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <p>South opens 2NT and many Norths will have no methods to show a minor two-suiter, or will raise to 3NT anyway because they don't want to risk playing five-of-a-minor at match-points. Those who do play 3NT will receive a spade lead and declarer will be quite nervous for a second or two until East follows low and dummy's bare queen scores. With both minor suits coming in without loss there are 13 tricks now.</p> <p>Others will be able to respond 3♠ to show at least five-four in the minors, and asking opener to go past 3NT only with both support for one of the minors and a suitable hand to at least consider slam. South has very good controls with, effectively, five key cards facing a minor-suited hand, so should bid 4♦. Though he has only jack-high suits, North didn't bid 3♠ to give up on slam without making an effort, so will cue-bid 4♥ and now South is likely to drive to 6♦.</p> <p>Slam is not that great. On a non-heart lead it needs the minors to play for at most one loser, when the hearts will go away on the long clubs. The problem is that on a heart lead declarer has to run it. No problem this time, but if East has the king declarer will then require both minors to play without loss to succeed.</p>
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<p> ♠ J10 ♥ KQ ♦ AKQ1087 ♣ K43 ♠ A653 ♥ A53 ♦ 954 ♣ AJ2 ♠ Q7 ♥ 864 ♦ J32 ♣ 109865 ♠ K9842 ♥ J10972 ♦ 6 ♣ Q7 </p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>18</td> <td>3</td> <td>N</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>4 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13</td> <td>6</td> <td>S</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>4 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	18	3	N	1	3	4	4 3	13	6	S	1	3	4	4 3			E	-	-	-	-			W	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <p>If West opens a weak no trump North should double. East will run to 2♣ in whatever fashion his methods demand, and the best N/S can do is to double for +500. That, however, is tough to do, with the only reason to even consider defending the fact that E/W are vulnerable against not. More likely North will bid the diamonds, after which it will be a question of whether they can find their way into one of the three game contracts available to them. I think those who get to game will score OK despite the missed opportunity for a penalty.</p> <p>If West opens 1♣, North will either overcall 1♦ or double with the intention of showing diamonds at his next turn. I would expect the average club player to start with a double, but more experts start with the overcall, planning to catch up later. The problem with double is that North lacks support for either major, and partner is quite likely to insist on playing in one or the other opposite a double. As it happens, ten tricks can be made in either major, but North will never be comfortable to play other than in diamonds or no trump. Fortunately, 3NT is also a lucky make.</p>
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<p> ♠ Q76 ♥ AQ74 ♦ A64 ♣ K82 ♠ J9 ♥ 10952 ♦ KJ10 ♣ QJ105 ♠ K108 ♥ KJ3 ♦ Q32 ♣ A763 ♠ A5432 ♥ 86 ♦ 9875 ♣ 94 </p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>15</td> <td>13</td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>4</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>1 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>1 2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	15	13	N	-	-	-	-	8	4	S	-	-	-	-			E	3	2	3	1 2			W	3	2	3	1 2	<p>Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <p>After two passes, some Norths will open a strong no trump and play in 2♠ after a transfer from South. East does not have a very attractive lead but fortunately the least unattractive lead, a low diamond, works nicely. If the defence avoids dropping a trick, 2♠ can be down two, losing one heart and two in each of the other three suits.</p> <p>If North opens 1♥, South may respond 1♠ in hope of finding something better. North will rebid 1NT and South will either pass or go back to spades.</p> <p>If South plays in spades, West has an easy club lead and two down should be pretty automatic. If North plays in 1NT, East will lead a low club, giving a club trick but opening up the defensive communications. Declarer's best shot is to just pretend that the ♠Q is a small card – win the ♣K and duck a spade, and when he regains the lead duck a second spade. That should lead to down only one, much better than anything that could be achieved on a different line of play.</p>
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<p>♠Q95 ♥AK54 ♦976 ♣1093</p> <p>♠1082 ♠J743 ♥986 ♥Q2 ♦53 ♦Q842 ♣A8642 ♣KQJ</p> <p>♠AK6 ♥J1073 ♦AKJ10 ♣75</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>16</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</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> </tbody> </table>	HCP		9	11	4		16		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	4	5	3	2	S	2	4	5	3	2	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <p>If South opens a strong no trump North will use Stayman and raise the 2♥ response to 3♥ to invite game. With all South's honours in combination, he should accept the invitation and bid 4♥.</p> <p>If playing Acol, South will open 1♥ and North will raise to 2♥. South has just sufficient to try for game and the most descriptive action is 2NT, showing a balanced hand with which South wants partner to have a maximum, rather than pointing his attention at any particular side-suit. North could not have more than 9 HCP so will jump to 4♥.</p> <p>Ten tricks are easy, with 11 if declarer guesses to drop the doubleton queen. However, the problem with playing for a doubleton queen, quite apart from the fact that it against the odds, is that the play becomes potentially more difficult if West has queen-to-four. Now finessing on the second round is much better. A small number will no doubt make the overtrick, but ten is the normal outcome.</p>
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