



The Irish Bridge Union

Autumn Simultaneous Pairs

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Commentary by Brian Senior

On behalf of the Irish Bridge Union I want to thank you for taking part our Simultaneous Pairs Event where the hands you play are being played in most clubs all over Ireland. Once again, thanks are due to Diane Greenwood, Enda Glynn and Brian Senior for sharing their wisdom with us in this booklet.

Your continued support in ventures like this helps us to promote, coach and send Irish players to participate in European and World Championships. Our wonderful Senior Team of Nick FitzGibbon & Adam Mesbur, Micheal & Pdraig O'Briain, Ranald Milne & B J O'Brien with their NPC Derek O'Gorman will be playing in the World Championship for the D'Orsi Bowl in Sanya, China in 2019 by virtue of their superb 4th place finish in the European Senior Teams Championships in Ostend in June 20'18

The Irish Bridge Union is a confederation of the Contract Bridge Association of Ireland (CBAI) and the Northern Ireland Bridge Union (NIBU). All members of the constituent bodies are automatically members of the IBU. The IBU organises participation in International Championship events on behalf of all Ireland. The Schools and Under 25 players benefit greatly from an IBU Annual Grant.

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Your support is greatly appreciated.

Anne Hassan

IBU President



Board 1. Dealer North. Vulnerability None

♠ K 10 9	
♥ K 9 8 3	
♦ 10 3	
♣ 10 8 6 2	
♠ A Q J	♠ 8 7 6 3 2
♥ Q 6	♥ J 10
♦ A 6 2	♦ Q J 9 8 5
♣ K J 9 4 3	♣ A
♠ 5 4	
♥ A 7 5 4 2	
♦ K 7 4	
♣ Q 7 5	

E/W have a borderline spade game. If the defence begins by cashing its heart winners, declarer will need to get the diamonds right to be successful. When declarer leads the ♦Q and it wins, he has a guess but most will continue with the jack. The hand illustrates why a defender should not automatically cover with king-doubleton. On a club lead, declarer has a discard for a heart loser, but must give up on the trump finesse to take that discard.

Board 2. Dealer East. Vulnerability N/S

♠ J 6	
♥ 7 6 4	
♦ A 8 6	
♣ A K 10 7 4	
♠ K Q 9 8 3 2	♠ A 7 5
♥ J 3	♥ A 10 9 5 2
♦ K Q J	♦ 9 4
♣ 8 6	♣ 9 5 2
♠ 10 4	
♥ K Q 8	
♦ 10 7 5 3 2	
♣ Q J 3	

This one doesn't look very exciting. E/W can make 3♠, while the N/S limit is 2♣. After two passes, West will usually open 1♠, though a few may choose a heavy 2♠ in third seat. North overcalls 2♣, East has an easy 2♣ raise and South an easy 3♣ raise. Though minimum in high-card terms, West has a sixth spade and should compete with 3♠, ending the auction.

Board 3. Dealer South. Vulnerability E/W

♠ 6	
♥ K J 9 8 6 3 2	
♦ K 8	
♣ Q 10 5	
♠ A J 8 7 3	♠ K 9 5 2
♥ —	♥ A Q 7 5
♦ A J 7 5 2	♦ 10 6 3
♣ A K 6	♣ 8 2
♠ Q 10 4	
♥ 10 4	
♦ Q 9 4	
♣ J 9 7 4 3	

West opens 1♠ and North bids 3♥, weak, over which East bids 3♠. West may make a slam try now and, if East likes the heart holding, some will get to 6♠. This is a very poor contract but the bidding gives a clue how to play. Say that North leads a heart, giving a free finesse. Declarer plays South for the spade length then leads the ♦10. If South plays low it is easy, just taking two finesses. If South covers, declarer has to judge who has the ♦K on the next round.

Board 4. Dealer West. Vulnerability All

♠ A 9 6 3	
♥ 8 5 3	
♦ Q 10 3	
♣ 8 3 2	
♠ K J	♠ 10 8 5
♥ J 2	♥ A Q 10 9 6
♦ J 8 2	♦ K 9 7 5
♣ A K Q 7 6 5	♣ 9
♠ Q 7 4 2	
♥ K 7 4	
♦ A 6 4	
♣ J 10 4	

Say that West plays 3NT on a low spade lead. If South puts up the queen declarer can set up a second spade as the ninth trick. But what if South plays low? Now it seems that the defence is in control. Where can declarer find a ninth trick? There is no ninth trick – yet. Cash six clubs, however, and the pressure is too much for the defence. Declarer still has to read the ending, but can always succeed.

Board 5. Dealer North. Vulnerability N/S

♠ K	
♥ J 8 7 2	
♦ 8 6 4	
♣ K J 8 4 2	
♠ 8 7 5 2	♠ Q 10 6 4
♥ 10 5 3	♥ A Q 9 6
♦ J 3 2	♦ Q 7
♣ A 6 5	♣ 10 7 3
♠ A J 9 3	
♥ K 4	
♦ A K 10 9 5	
♣ Q 9	

A possible auction is 1♦ – 1♥ – 1♠ – INT – 2NT – 3NT. In theory, there are only eight tricks, but that is on a spade lead, removing the entry to the long clubs. On any other lead, declarer can play on clubs and the defence is powerless to prevent a minimum of nine tricks. The most likely time to get a spade lead is if South makes a crude 2NT rebid instead of 1♠. I'm not a fan of such bidding so I'd say that justice had been done.

Board 6. Dealer East. Vulnerability E/W

♠ 9 7	
♥ 10 7 4 3	
♦ Q J 8 6 3	
♣ 8 3	
♠ A K Q J	♠ 10 3
♥ A 8 6 5 2	♥ Q J 9
♦ 10	♦ A K 5 2
♣ K Q J	♣ 10 5 4 2
♠ 8 6 5 4 2	
♥ K	
♦ 9 7 4	
♣ A 9 7 6	

The details of the auction will depend very much on the E/W methods, but the likely contract is 4♥ as West will open 1♥ and East show three-card support at some stage. 11 tricks is the normal outcome. There are a couple of double dummy lines to 12 tricks in no trump, and anyone who plays 3NT then finds a winning line will get a huge matchpoint reward.

Board 7. Dealer South. Vulnerability All

♠ 5 3	
♥ A Q 10 5	
♦ 9 6	
♣ A K J 8 4	
♠ K J 10	♠ 9 8 7 2
♥ K 3 2	♥ 7 6
♦ A 10 4	♦ Q 8 5 3 2
♣ 10 9 7 6	♣ 5 3
♠ A Q 6 4	
♥ J 9 8 4	
♦ K J 7	
♣ Q 2	

If South opens a weak no trump North will use Stayman then raise to 4♥. On the likely club lead, declarer draws trumps and can either pitch spades on the clubs then guess the diamonds, or pitch diamonds on the clubs then take the spade finesse. Pitching diamonds means 11 tricks, pitching spades 11 or 12 according to the guess. If South opens 1♣/♦ North is declarer and now a high spade lead may point declarer in the right direction.

Board 8. Dealer West. Vulnerability None

♠ A 4	
♥ Q 6 4	
♦ Q 8 4 3 2	
♣ K 3 2	
♠ K J	♠ 10 9 5 3 2
♥ J 10 8 7 3 2	♥ K 5
♦ K J 9	♦ A 7 5
♣ 10 4	♣ J 8 6
♠ Q 8 7 6	
♥ A 9	
♦ 10 6	
♣ A Q 9 7 5	

The combination of weak suit and maximum in high cards makes the West hand less than ideal for a weak two opener. Nonetheless, most will open 2♥ (or 2♦ multi). If East raises to 3♥, that should buy the contract for a probable -50. If East passes 2♥, South has unattractive choices – Pass, Double, 3♣. The last of those can be made but any bid is likely to get to 3NT. That fails, in theory, but in practice it may be made.

Board 9. Dealer North. Vulnerability E/W

♠ K 4	
♥ 10 4 2	
♦ J 9 8 6	
♣ Q 7 5 2	
♠ 10 6 5 2	♠ J 9
♥ Q 3	♥ J 9 8 6 5
♦ K 4 3 2	♦ A Q 5
♣ K 8 6	♣ 9 4 3
♠ A Q 8 7 3	
♥ A K 7	
♦ 10 7	
♣ A J 10	

South opens 1♠ and raises the INT response to 2NT. Holding only 6 HCP, North will decline the invitation so 2NT becomes the final contract. If West leads a diamond East will win and, seeing dummy's diamond holding, should switch to a low heart. Declarer wins the heart and now the safe way to guarantee eight tricks is to play ace then jack of clubs from hand to establish two extra winners in the suit.

Board 10. Dealer East. Vulnerability All

♠ 9 8 6 4 3	
♥ A 6	
♦ A 7 6 2	
♣ 5 2	
♠ A J 5	♠ K 7 2
♥ 10 8 7	♥ K 5 4 3
♦ Q 9 8	♦ J 4
♣ A K 9 3	♣ 10 8 7 6
♠ Q 10	
♥ Q J 9 2	
♦ K 10 5 3	
♣ Q J 4	

At a different vulnerability South might be tempted by all the minor honours to open but, being vulnerable, is more likely to pass. West opens a weak no trump and plays there or opens 1♣ and rebids INT over the 1♥ response, again ending the auction. North will normally lead a spade. If declarer takes the double club finesse, there are eight tricks, though I suspect that many will come to only seven.

Board 11. Dealer South. Vulnerability None

♠	Q 10		
♥	8 6 5 2		
♦	J 7 6 5		
♣	A Q 7		
♠	J 8 3	♠	5 2
♥	A Q 9	♥	K J 7 3
♦	10 9 3 2	♦	Q 4
♣	K 6 2	♣	J 10 9 4 3
	♠	A K 9 7 6 4	
	♥	10 4	
	♦	A K 8	
	♣	8 5	

N/S can make game in either spades or no trump, but more often than not will stop in partscore. Playing weak NT Acol, the rule for whether to respond INT or make a two-over-one is to imagine that opener has 15-16 balanced. Now ask yourself if you would rather play in INT or 3NT. With the fitting spade honours, I think this North hand would prefer to be in game so should respond 2♦. North will, however, pass the 2♣ rebid.

Board 12. Dealer West. Vulnerability NIS

	♠	Q 10 8 5		
	♥	K Q 2		
	♦	10 9 5 2		
	♣	8 6		
♠	A J 9 6 2	♠	K 7 4	
♥	A 5	♥	10 7 4	
♦	4 3	♦	Q J 7 6	
♣	A Q 7 4	♣	K J 3	
	♠	3		
	♥	J 9 8 6 3		
	♦	A K 8		
	♣	10 9 5 2		

This time E/W have game values but no making game. West opens 1♠ and, if playing Acol, East responds 2♦. West has just enough to force to game so can rebid 3♣, and East will jump to 4♠. There are three red losers. On a good day, spades would be three-two with South holding the queen. This is not a good day and there prove to be two trump losers so the contract is down two.

Board 13. Dealer North. Vulnerability All

	♠	8 5		
	♥	Q 8 7 4 2		
	♦	10 8 7 4		
	♣	Q 2		
♠	Q 10 9 2	♠	J 6 3	
♥	A	♥	J 10 9 5 3	
♦	A	♦	K Q 9 2	
♣	A K J 10 5 4 3	♣	7	
	♠	A K 7 4		
	♥	K 6		
	♦	J 6 5 3		
	♣	9 8 6		

If there are three passes, West will open 1♣ and rebid 1♠ over the 1♥ response. East now bids INT and West can either bid a descriptive 3♣ or a slightly gambling 3NT. I fancy the latter, and it should be made with an overtrick as declarer will not have an entry to take the losing club finesse. If South opens 1♠ in third seat, West will have a tough bid. The unsubtle 3NT overcall keeps it simple.

Board 14. Dealer East. Vulnerability None

	♠	Q 8 4 2		
	♥	A Q 5 3		
	♦	7 6		
	♣	K J 8		
♠	K 6	♠	10 9 5 3	
♥	K J 9	♥	8 7	
♦	K 10 9 5	♦	A J 3 2	
♣	A 10 9 6	♣	5 4 2	
	♠	A J 7		
	♥	10 6 4 2		
	♦	Q 8 4		
	♣	Q 7 3		

West has the type of hand which I might open with INT whether playing 12-14 or 15-17 – the two ten-nines are surely worth an upgrade – and INT will often buy the contract. It looks to be between six and seven tricks, depending on the defence. If West opens 1♣/♦, North may double and the heart fit be found. Eight tricks is the normal outcome, and that should be worth a very useful matchpoint score to N/S.

Board 15. Dealer South. Vulnerability NIS

	♠	9 8 6		
	♥	10 7 6		
	♦	Q J 9 7 5 3		
	♣	8		
♠	K 10 3 2	♠	A J 7 4	
♥	K 5 2	♥	A J 9 8 3	
♦	K 8 4 2	♦	—	
♣	A K	♣	6 5 4 3	
	♠	Q 5		
	♥	Q 4		
	♦	A 10 6		
	♣	Q J 10 9 7 2		

Double dummy, E/W can make 7♠, but that would take some serious overbidding as well as good viewing of the play. If South opens 1♣, West can overcall INT and East use Stayman to find the spade fit. It is normal to play the opening bidder for the ♠Q, and then just a question of what to do about hearts. Again, there is a good case for playing South for the queen with only 14 HCP missing.

Board 16. Dealer West. Vulnerability E/W

♠ J 9 8	
♥ A J 10 8	
♦ 7 4 2	
♣ K Q 6	
♠ Q 7 3	♠ A 5
♥ K 7 4	♥ 9 6 5
♦ K Q J 9	♦ A 10 8 5
♣ 9 8 3	♣ J 7 5 2
♠ K 10 6 4 2	
♥ Q 3 2	
♦ 6 3	
♣ A 10 4	

Will anyone open the bidding? West has a 4-3-3-3 11-count with little in the way of intermediates, and the vulnerability is all wrong for an upgrade. North might open – also a 4-3-3-3 11-count, but two honour combinations and some intermediates, plus favourable vulnerability. So maybe either INT or 1♣ then rebid INT. With the heart outside declarer is on the spade guess for an overtrick. However, the majority may pass this one out.

Board 17. Dealer North. Vulnerability None

♠ 10 9 4	
♥ K Q 4	
♦ A 3	
♣ A Q J 8 2	
♠ A K Q 8 6	♠ 7
♥ 6 3	♥ A J 8 5
♦ 8 7 2	♦ K Q 10 9 6 4
♣ K 10 7	♣ 6 4
♠ J 5 3 2	
♥ 10 9 7 2	
♦ J 5	
♣ 9 5 3	

The deal belongs to E/W in diamonds, where 10 tricks can be made. If South leads a club, declarer can play low and now North is caught. If he cashes the ♣A there are three discards for declarer's heart losers, but if he does not cash it the second club goes away instead. It is easy to get to diamonds after a 1♣ opening, but a little tougher where North opens INT.

Board 18. Dealer East. Vulnerability N/S

♠ 7 4 3	
♥ J 8 4 3 2	
♦ A 10 2	
♣ 8 2	
♠ A 10 9 8	♠ J 6 2
♥ A Q 10	♥ K 9 6
♦ K	♦ 9 8 7 5 4
♣ Q J 7 4 3	♣ 10 5
♠ K Q 5	
♥ 7 5	
♦ Q J 6 3	
♣ A K 9 6	

If South opens 1♦ West has an easy double, North bids 1♥ and South rebids 1NT. Maybe West bids 2♣ now, which would be down one. If South opens 1♣, West should pass. North again bids 1♥ and South 1NT. West could double to show a good hand with club length, but may think he is outgunned with 15-17 on his right so go quietly. One No Trump is probably just made. A strong NT opening will buy the contract unless West has a bid to show a four-card major and longer minor.

Board 19. Dealer South. Vulnerability E/W

♠ Q J	
♥ A J 10 3	
♦ Q	
♣ A K J 8 6 2	
♠ 10 8 4 2	♠ A K 6 3
♥ 9 7 5	♥ 8 4 2
♦ 8 4 2	♦ K J 6 5
♣ Q 5 4	♣ 7 3
♠ 9 7 5	
♥ K Q 6	
♦ A 10 9 7 3	
♣ 10 9	

N/S make game in hearts, clubs or no trump. After 1♣ – 1♦ – 1♥, South has a tricky rebid. Unwilling to raise hearts with only three-cards, or give preference to 2♣ on a doubleton when holding quite a decent hand, South may compromise by bidding 1NT despite the lack of a spade stopper, as at least that gives partner another chance without distorting South's distribution. North can raise to the making game.

Board 20. Dealer West. Vulnerability All

♠ Q 10 9 8 7 4 3	
♥ 8	
♦ 9 7 4 3	
♣ 7	
♠ K 6 5	♠ J
♥ 10 9 7 5 3	♥ K Q 6 2
♦ Q 10	♦ A K 8 2
♣ K 4 2	♣ A 8 6 3
♠ A 2	
♥ A J 4	
♦ J 6 5	
♣ Q J 10 9 5	

Despite the 7-4 distribution, most will think that a 3♣ opening is a bit rich when vulnerable. That does not mean they should pass, however. A weak 2♣ is a good compromise and East will double. After a pass from South, West is just worth a 3♥ response if playing Lebensohl, when an immediate suit bid shows some values and weak hands go through an artificial 2NT. East can raise to game with confidence, while if 3♥ did not promise values he would be guessing.

Board 21. Dealer North. Vulnerability N/S

♠ A J 10 6 4 2	♠ Q 7
♥ Q	♥ A 7 5 3
♦ A Q 9 8	♦ K 6 2
♣ 10 6	♣ A 7 3 2
♠ 8 5 3	♠ K 9
♥ K J 10 8	♥ 9 6 4 2
♦ 3	♦ J 10 7 5 4
♣ Q J 9 8 4	♣ K 5

North opens 1♠ and East is just worth a double. When South bids INT, West may bid 2♥ rather than 2♣ to get the major into the game. That works well, cutting out North's diamonds. North rebids 2♠, East passes on his minimum, as does South, but now West can show the clubs. E/W can make either 3♣ or 3♥, while N/S have 10 tricks in spades or diamonds. North therefore needs to bid 3♦ if his side are to score well on the Board and now South will compete further.

Board 22. Dealer East. Vulnerability E/W

♠ A K 5 4	♠ 9 8 2
♥ A Q J 7	♥ K 6 5
♦ K 10 5	♦ Q 8 6 4 2
♣ J 10	♣ 9 6
♠ 6 3	♠ Q J 10 7
♥ 10 8 3	♥ 9 4 2
♦ A 9 7	♦ J 3
♣ A K Q 8 7	♣ 5 4 3 2

If West opens INT, North will double and East run to 2♦. North will double again, this time for take-out, and now N/S should get to 2♠, their top spot. If West opens 1♣, North will again double and East may bid 1♦. South will pass for now but North is worth a second double and once again the spade fit should be found.

Board 23. Dealer South. Vulnerability All

♠ A J 8 2	♠ 9 5 4
♥ 10 8 7	♥ K Q 9 5
♦ 6	♦ K J 9 3
♣ K Q 5 3 2	♣ 7 6
♠ 10 7 6 3	♠ K Q
♥ A J 3 2	♥ 6 4
♦ 4 2	♦ A Q 10 8 7 5
♣ J 9 4	♣ A 10 8

South opens 1♦ and North responds 1♠. This is a situation where players have greatly different styles but, for me, South is between a 2♦ and a 3♦ re-bid. This time, 2♦ ends the auction, while 3♦ sees North cross his fingers and try 3NT. South may try to compromise by rebidding INT – not ideal with two low hearts, but at least it gets the strength across. Today, hearts are 4-4 and 3NT rolls in, so the 2♦ rebidders score badly.

Board 24. Dealer West. Vulnerability None

♠ Q J 8	♠ 6 4 3
♥ Q 6 3	♥ K 7 5 4
♦ K J 2	♦ 8 5
♣ Q 10 9 2	♣ 6 5 4 3
♠ K 10 7 5 2	♠ A 9
♥ J 10 8 2	♥ A 9
♦ A 7	♦ Q 10 9 6 4 3
♣ A 8	♣ K J 7

N/S will do well to go plus on this deal. West opens 1♠ and after two passes South overcalls. 2♦ may get 2NT from North, which South raises to game. An intermediate jump of 3♦ gets 3NT, while a mildly off-centre INT sees North invite game and South accept. If the defence plays spades at every opportunity 3NT is down one, while a heart switch from West can get the contract two down.

Board 25. Dealer North. Vulnerability E/W

♠ K Q 10 5	♠ A 9 8 2
♥ A 7 6 3	♥ K
♦ A K	♦ Q 6 5 4
♣ Q 9 7	♣ A J 5 3
♠ J 7 3	♠ 6 4
♥ Q J 10 8 4 2	♥ 9 5
♦ 10	♦ J 9 8 7 3 2
♣ 8 6 2	♣ K 10 4

If North opens 1♥, East will double and South pass. Now West should pass, something that happens probably less than once a year for most of us. North would be held to six tricks in 1♥ doubled, but should run to INT, over which South will bid 2♦. There are 10 tricks in a diamond contract. If North opens 1♣, East should pass, South respond 1♦, and North rebid 2NT. That can be made by playing East for the ♣J, though South may correct to 3♦ at many tables.

Board 26. Dealer East. Vulnerability All

♠ Q J 7 6	
♥ 10 6	
♦ J 10 3	
♣ K 6 4 3	
♠ A 10 2	♠ 5 4
♥ K 8 7	♥ A Q 5 3 2
♦ 4	♦ K Q 9 2
♣ A J 9 7 5 2	♣ Q 10
♠ K 9 8 3	
♥ J 9 4	
♦ A 8 7 6 5	
♣ 8	

E/W should get to 4♥ without difficulty. On a spade lead there are 10 tricks, but what if South leads the singleton club? If declarer plays low and runs into a ruff there are still 10 tricks, but there are 11 if he goes up with the ace and remembers to drop the queen from hand to avoid a blockage. After the ♣ A declarer draws trumps then plays the ♠ 10 to the jack and sets up the rest of the clubs.

Board 27. Dealer South. Vulnerability None

♠ J 10 9 7 3	
♥ A K J 8	
♦ 9 7	
♣ A 6	
♠ A 2	♠ K 6 4
♥ 3	♥ Q 9 7 2
♦ A K 5 4 3	♦ J 10 2
♣ K 10 9 7 3	♣ Q 8 2
♠ Q 8 5	
♥ 10 6 5 4	
♦ Q 8 6	
♣ J 5 4	

E/W can make 5♣ or 5♦, but either game requires the diamond finesse plus a winning play in clubs, so it would be better to stop in partscore in the long run. West will open 1♦, North overcall 1♠ and East make a negative double to show the hearts. South may make a pre-emptive raise to 2♠ now and West bid 3♣. If North passes, East will give preference to 3♦. If N/S compete further they are held to seven tricks.

Board 28. Dealer West. Vulnerability N/S

♠ 10 9 8 2	
♥ J 10 9 8 7 3	
♦ J	
♣ K 8	
♠ A K J	♠ Q 7 6 4
♥ 5	♥ 6 4 2
♦ K 9 6 5 3	♦ Q 8 7
♣ A J 9 7	♣ Q 3 2
♠ 5 3	
♥ A K Q	
♦ A 10 4 2	
♣ 10 6 5 4	

West opens 1♦ and the vulnerability will dissuade North from making a weak jump overcall so East will be allowed to respond 1♠. West will follow the classic route to show a good three-card spade raise, first showing the clubs, then bidding 2♠ over East's 2♦ preference. With dummy's spade honours being used to ruff hearts, 2♠ is a tricky little contract but one which should be successful if declarer is careful.

Board 29. Dealer North. Vulnerability All

♠ Q J 10 7 6 4 3	
♥ 8	
♦ K Q 2	
♣ 8 3	
♠ 8	♠ A K 9
♥ J 7 2	♥ 10 6 5 4
♦ A 8 7 6 4 3	♦ J 5
♣ Q 6 4	♣ A J 10 7
♠ 5 2	
♥ A K Q 9 3	
♦ 10 9	
♣ K 9 5 2	

Even vulnerable, the North hand is a normal 3♣ opener, and nobody has anything to add. On the likely heart lead, declarer can take the top hearts and discard both clubs from hand then lead a diamond up. As long as West plays low on this trick, the defence should still come to two diamond tricks and two spades, so the contract is just made.

Board 30. Dealer East. Vulnerability None

♠ Q 10 9 8	
♥ 9	
♦ K 8 6 3	
♣ A 9 8 2	
♠ 7 6 2	♠ A K J 5 3
♥ A 6 4 2	♥ K J 8 7 5
♦ A Q 2	♦ J 9
♣ 7 6 4	♣ 10
♠ 4	
♥ Q 10 3	
♦ 10 7 5 4	
♣ K Q J 5 3	

Those playing five-card majors will have a simpler answer, but what is an Acoll player to respond to East's 1♠ opening? 2♥ normally shows five while 2♣/♦ shows four, and West is too strong for a simple 2♠, which can sometimes be bid with three-card support. The normal solution is to bid a three-card club suit, but that isn't great with three to the seven. West will have to bid 2♣ or 2♦ then raise the 2♥ rebid to 3♥. East will go on to game and should have 10 tricks on careful play.

Board 31. Dealer South. Vulnerability N/S

♠ Q 7 6 4 2		♠ A K 5
♥ A		♥ K 10 8 3 2
♦ A 6 5 3		♦ K Q 2
♣ A J 9		♣ Q 3
♠ J 10 9		
♥ Q 7 4		
♦ 9 8 7 4		
♣ K 5 2		
♠ 8 3		
♥ J 9 6 5		
♦ J 10		
♣ 10 8 7 6 4		

When North opens 1♠, East has an awkward choice of bids. 2♥ overstates the hearts compared to the all-round hand, while 1NT loses the fifth heart and double commits East to following through with 2♥ over 2♣♦, overstating the strength of the hand. For me, 1NT is the least of evils. If that ends the auction, it is a question of whether declarer can find the overtrick. But North may choose to bid 2♦ and will then have to struggle in 2♠, down at least two tricks.

Board 32. Dealer West. Vulnerability E/W

♠ A K 7		♠ 9 8
♥ A J 10 6 3		♥ Q 5
♦ A 8 7 4		♦ 10 6 5
♣ 6		♣ A K Q 10 8 3
♠ Q J 5 4		
♥ K 8 7		
♦ K J 3		
♣ J 9 4		
♠ 10 6 3 2		
♥ 9 4 2		
♦ Q 9 2		
♣ 7 5 2		

West is just shy of opening values so North will get to open 1♥ and East overcalls 2♣. West may try 2NT and an optimistic East raise to 3NT. The defence should come out on top by a trick. 3♣, meanwhile, can always be made once declarer appreciates that North has almost all the missing high cards. Plus 110 should score OK, with more going down in 3NT than making it.

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