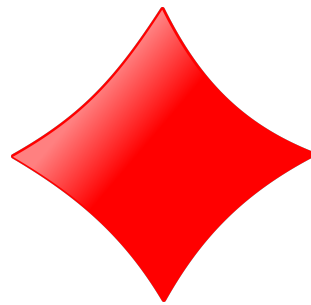
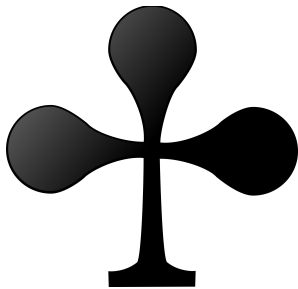
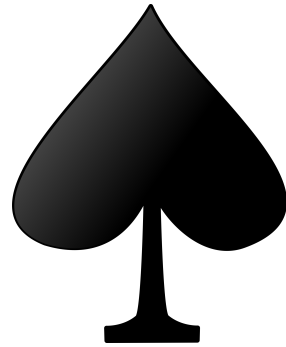


# **Club Stratified Sim Pairs**



***Monday***  
***11<sup>th</sup> March 2019***

Welcome to the eighth '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/](http://www.ebu.co.uk/sims/)

Jeremy Dhondy, Chairman EBU

<p>♠ 962 ♥ 1064 ♦ QJ32 ♣ AJ10</p> <p>♠ J843                      ♠ AKQ10 ♥ KJ852                    ♥ 3 ♦ 96                            ♦ AK754 ♣ 52                           ♣ KQ9</p> <p>♠ 75 ♥ AQ97 ♦ 108 ♣ 87643</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: left;">HCP</th> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: left;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50px;"></td> <td style="width: 50px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;">♣</td> <td style="width: 20px;">♦</td> <td style="width: 20px;">♥</td> <td style="width: 20px;">♠</td> <td style="width: 20px;">NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">21</td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</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;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts									♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	8		N	-	-	-	-	-	5	21	S	-	-	-	-	-			E	2	3	3	5	3			W	2	3	3	5	3	<p><b>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</b></p> <p>East has a powerful hand and some will be tempted to open 2♣. However, these three-suited hands rarely handle well after a 2♣ opening, particularly when the longest suit is diamonds, as the first natural bid comes at the three level, and a club fit could easily be lost in the shuffle.</p> <p>It is better in the long run to open 1♦ and just accept that once a year that will end the auction when we have game on. This time we survive because West has just enough for a 1♥ response and now, we can jump to 2♠ to force to game.</p> <p>Fast arrival is a sound principle in this situation – in other words, if West had any interest in slam, they could just raise to 3♠, forcing and leaving room for cue-bidding. With the actual hand, West jumps to 4♠, four-card spade support but unsuitable for a slam hunt.</p> <p>East is so strong, with powerful spades, that they may be unwilling to give up just yet – turn the ♥K into the ♥A and slam has some play, though it is against the odds – but if we ask for key cards, we will find partner with none and will have to quickly sign-off. Note that 5♠ is far from secure looking at just the EW hands. Give North the diamond shortage, and it might well fail. As it is, dummy cannot be over-ruffed so 11 tricks can be made.</p>
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<p>♠ QJ6 ♥ AQ974 ♦ AQJ ♣ J4</p> <p>♠ K1075                      ♠ A3 ♥ 32                            ♥ J6 ♦ 32                            ♦ K1097654 ♣ AK965                    ♣ Q7</p> <p>♠ 9842 ♥ K1085 ♦ 8 ♣ 10832</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: left;">HCP</th> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: left;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50px;"></td> <td style="width: 50px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;">♣</td> <td style="width: 20px;">♦</td> <td style="width: 20px;">♥</td> <td style="width: 20px;">♠</td> <td style="width: 20px;">NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">17</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">N</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 style="text-align: center;">10</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</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;">E</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</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;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts									♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	17		N	-	-	2	-	1	10	10	S	-	-	2	-	1			E	2	3	-	-	-			W	2	3	-	-	-	<p><b>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</b></p> <p>The East hand has a bit much outside the main suit for a pre-empt to be a matter of routine. However, I could not bear to pass and if I have to choose between 1♦ and 3♦ then the latter is my choice every day of the week. As on the previous deal, if we miss game once in a while, too bad – we can hope to gain far more often when the pre-empt causes problems for the opposition, or even makes life easy for partner. Remember, that the rules of bidding are largely geared towards teams scoring, where missing game is considered by some to be almost a capital offence. At match-points it is much more the frequency of the gain or loss that matters and missing the odd game is not ideal, but neither is it a disaster.</p> <p>The 3♦ opening gets NS too high. After two passes North will overcall either 3♥ or 3NT. There are only eight tricks in a heart contract, and South may raise to game, liking the heart support and diamond shortage more than they dislike the lack of high cards, while 3NT should be down two even after a diamond lead round to the tenace. It is far easier for NS to judge how high to go in hearts if East either opens 1♦ or passes as dealer, and 3NT is never a possibility.</p>
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<p>                     ♠A843                      ♥863                      ♦986                      ♣976                      ♠K10976      ♠J52                      ♥QJ974      ♥A2                      ♦K              ♦105432                      ♣32             ♣J108                        ♠Q                      ♥K105                      ♦AQJ7                      ♣AKQ54                 </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="134 537 506 716"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="6">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>4</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>6</td> <td>S</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	4		N	5	3	-	-	3	9	6	S	5	3	-	-	3	21		E	-	-	-	1	-			W	-	-	-	1	-	<p><b>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</b></p> <p>South should open 1♣ – the hand is well short of being a 2♣ opening, while the distortion of 2NT is just unnecessary and, on a different deal, could lead to a missed minor-suit slam as 2NT with a singleton always undervalues the hand. If South does open 1♣, West may bid 2♣, a Michaels Cuebid to show at least five-five in the majors. North will pass and East give simple preference to 2♠, which leaves South with an easy take-out double. North responds 3♣ and at some tables that will end the auction, though some Souths will surely be tempted to make one more move.</p> <p>Say that West leads the queen of hearts against a club contract, East winning the ace and returning the two. Declarer wins the ace, cashes top club and, with only one dummy entry, may lay down the ace of diamonds. The fall of the king is wonderful news. Declarer continues with a second top club then plays diamonds, ruffing the fourth round, and has 11 tricks.</p> <p>The same approach will prove to be equally effective in no trump – without the ruff, of course – and anyone who does open 2NT and is raised to game could score very well indeed.</p>
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<p>                     ♠KJ82                      ♥J942                      ♦5                      ♣K1096                      ♠A76543      ♠109                      ♥K5             ♥A10                      ♦A7             ♦QJ1062                      ♣J43            ♣AQ72                        ♠Q                      ♥Q8763                      ♦K9843                      ♣85                 </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="134 1171 506 1354"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="6">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>8</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	8		N	-	-	1	-	-	12	13	S	-	-	1	-	-	7		E	2	3	-	4	2			W	2	3	-	4	2	<p><b>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</b></p> <p>4♠ is a comfortable make on the EW cards while a heart lead and continuation should see 3NT defeated.</p> <p>The EW auction starts smoothly enough: 1♠ – 2♦ – 2♠ – 3♣. Now West has a sixth spade which has not yet been promised but also has a heart stopper. To bid 3NT would be a bit committal and would work out badly on the actual layout despite partner turning up with a second heart stopper, but the spades don't really look worth a third bid. That leaves fourth-suit-forcing, 3♥, as the middle of the road action. And now East has an interesting choice. It is easy to be seduced by the ten of hearts into bidding 3NT, hoping for as little as jack to three with partner, but 3♠ is the way to keep both games in the picture. On the actual hand, West will now bid 4♠, the winning choice. Give West only five spades but a heart stopper and they should bid 3NT. If West has the ♥K or ♥Q, that will be fine. The only time East will wish they had bid 3NT themselves will be if West has the previously mentioned jack to three hearts, when 3NT by East could well be the best spot.</p>
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<p>                     ♠AJ7                      ♥Q942                      ♦1084                      ♣A82                      ♠Q106432      ♠K95                      ♥-                ♥J108765                      ♦K62            ♦5                      ♣K1075        ♣QJ3                        ♠8                      ♥AK3                      ♦AQJ973                      ♣964                 </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="134 1801 506 1978"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="6">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>11</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>7</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	11		N	-	3	1	-	3	8	7	S	-	3	1	-	1	14		E	1	-	-	3	-			W	1	-	-	3	-	<p><b>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</b></p> <p>Should East open a weak 2♥ with a poor suit and most of the high cards in the side-suits? Very definitely yes for me. I believe strongly in pre-empting whenever the opportunity presents itself. It's a fun way to play, and it causes problems for the opposition – and if once in a while it is partner who has the problem, well, we probably owe them a few for problems they've set us in the past. South has a routine 3♦ overcall and the void in partner's suit should keep West out of the action. North will respond 3NT, surprising South, who has two heart stoppers as well.</p> <p>3NT by North is unbeatable, and East is unlikely to find the most threatening lead of a low spade. If East chooses to look elsewhere than the heart suit, they will lead the queen of clubs. Declarer will have to win immediately or risk a spade switch. Having won the club declarer will take the diamond finesse and the defence can cash three clubs to hold the contract to nine.</p> <p>If East instead leads a heart, the jack gives declarer time for 10 tricks, while a fourth-best lead gives an extra trick and 11 in all. That last could leave EW with a very poor score.</p>
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<p>♠ J ♥ 962 ♦ AJ973 ♣ J1074</p> <p>♠ Q7542      ♠ 986 ♥ KQ5      ♥ AJ1073 ♦ 54      ♦ Q102 ♣ Q62      ♣ A8</p> <p>♠ AK103 ♥ 84 ♦ K86 ♣ K953</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="134 541 248 716"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>7</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="285 541 508 716"> <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>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		7		9	11	13		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	2	-	-	-	S	2	2	-	-	-	E	-	-	1	1	1	W	-	-	1	1	1	<p><b>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</b></p> <p>Should East open the bidding? The vulnerability says no, but the two red tens and fair five-card suit make it very tempting to do so. If playing strong no trump, I would pass, as I don't want to have to treat this hand as a single-suiter – and especially if playing two-over-one game-forcing, when partner's initial response may commit us to a thin game. Playing weak no trump, however, I would be happy to open 1NT, even at this vulnerability – we really can't value the heart suit at just five points, the same as AJ73.</p> <p>South would double a 1♥ opening but has to pass over 1NT and West transfers to spades then passes the completion. 2♠ should fail by a trick, and 2♥ should suffer the same fate. Meanwhile, NS can make eight tricks in a minor-suit part-score, but how good +90 will prove to be will depend on how many EWs are conceding –100.</p> <p>If East passes as dealer and South opens 1NT, this may end the auction. A spade lead gives a trick away, but the defence should still prevail with five heart tricks, the ace of clubs and a minor-suit queen.</p>
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<p>♠ K109852 ♥ A105 ♦ 109 ♣ 87</p> <p>♠ QJ63      ♠ A7 ♥ Q82      ♥ 943 ♦ K      ♦ AJ852 ♣ AQJ96      ♣ 1042</p> <p>♠ 4 ♥ KJ76 ♦ Q7643 ♣ K53</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="134 1178 248 1356"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>7</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>15</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="285 1178 508 1356"> <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>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		7		15	9	9		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	2	1	1	-	2	W	3	1	1	1	3	<p><b>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</b></p> <p>West will open 1♣ and North may make a weak jump overcall of 2♠. That might end the auction, as East is just shy of what is needed for a negative double, particularly when not holding four hearts, so will have to pass. When 2♠ comes back round to West, they have an easy pass because of the spade length, which tells them that East is not very strong.</p> <p>Best for the defence is for East to lead the ten of clubs, as they can just continue with three rounds of the suit. This is a plausible choice of opening lead as the opposing club length and strength will more often be in dummy than in declarer's hand.</p> <p>Most will lead a low club, however, and if declarer ducks West wins but is a little endplayed. West can cash the king of diamonds but must then switch. A low spade is best, declarer almost certainly going up with the king and losing to the ace. The defence will come to three spade tricks and two in each minor for down two and –200.</p> <p>West can make 3NT, but not many are likely to get there.</p>
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**Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable**

Once upon a time, it was considered to be totally wrong to pre-empt when holding a four-card major on the side. Things have eased up since I started out in this game and now I would open the North hand without a qualm. The only question is whether to open 3♦ or 4♦. With the vulnerability in my favour and considering that I would open 3♦ with the same high cards but 2-2-7-2 shape, I would go for the bigger pre-empt with North's actual shape – 6-4 opens three, 7-4 opens four, would be a reasonable rule.

If North does open 4♦, East overcalls 4♠ and South stands on the table to slam the double card down. Don't tell me you would pass in fear that a double would see the opposition run to a better spot please – they are very unlikely to be able to make anything at the five level, so double and double again.

A 3♦ opening sees a 3♠ overcall and now there is much more case for a cunning pass, though I confess that I would still double and see what happened.

And if North doesn't open at all? East opens 1♠ and rebids 2♠, but has no reason to get any higher – no speculation by North, no accumulation by North.

HCP	
8	14
5	13

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

**Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable**

If West opens 1NT that is likely to end the auction.

North will lead the queen of spades, which is not best for the defence as West can win the ace and return a spade, ducking North's jack to retain communications within the suit. North has a tough play now, having seen no useful signals from his partner. He may go passive and return the four of spades rather than risk opening up a new suit and giving away another trick. Declarer wins the nine and leads a heart to the ten, king and ace. Most routes lead to seven tricks from here, for a fair score for EW.

If West opens 1♦ or 1♣, North may double and East bid 1♥. South has the minor covered and reasonable values so can bid 1NT and now he may play there. It doesn't seem as though West can find a lead to beat this, with anything helpful to declarer in one way or another. So, the most likely outcome is once again seven tricks for +90, but this time for NS.

HCP	
13	7
13	7

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

**Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all**

Three tens, two of them backing up jacks, which is when they are at their most valuable, make the West hand worth an upgrade to a weak no trump despite the 3-3-3-4 distribution. North will double and East either bid a simple 2♣ or use their system wriggle to get there.

The winning decision for NS is to defend 2♣ doubled, which should be –500, but that may not be straightforward to achieve. Say that East does bid 2♣ and South makes a forcing pass, if North makes a take-out double it is far from automatic for South to pass – it would be different were EW vulnerable when down one would be the magic +200 if this was a part-score deal.

Of course, if West either passes or, playing strong no trump opens 1♣, there will be no opportunity for NS to collect a penalty. They have 10 tricks in 3NT if the defence starts with ace and jack of clubs, otherwise an eleventh can be established.

HCP	
20	1
11	8

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

<p>♠ J10 ♥ J865 ♦ Q10 ♣ A8742</p> <p>♠ AQ8                      ♠ 9742 ♥ 10974                    ♥ AK2 ♦ J62                        ♦ A874 ♣ KJ3                        ♣ Q10</p> <p>♠ K653 ♥ Q3 ♦ K953 ♣ 965</p>	<p><b>Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</b></p> <p>Another flat 11-count for West but this time only one ten and no particular reason to upgrade. Most tables will see two passes to East who will often open a weak no trump. West has a borderline raise. If he uses Stayman and follows through with 2NT, East should pass, as partner is known to not have an opening bid. The likelihood is that the partnerships has two flat hands and only 24 HCP between them. However, bear in mind that there is no premium to bidding thin games at match-point scoring, unlike teams, so it would not be ridiculous for West to just pass out 1NT.</p> <p>South has no particularly attractive opening lead. If Stayman has been used the choice may be between the minors, while a spade becomes a little more attractive if 1NT is passed out or raised without the use of Stayman.</p> <p>Declarer can come to eight tricks by setting up two clubs and a third heart winner, but they will be much more comfortable if playing 1NT than 2NT. 3NT will need some help from the defence so anyone who bids and makes game should score very well indeed.</p>																																										
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<p>♠ A1063 ♥ 9 ♦ 109 ♣ KQJ752</p> <p>♠ QJ942                    ♠ K8 ♥ A876                     ♥ J105 ♦ J73                        ♦ AK54 ♣ 4                            ♣ A1063</p> <p>♠ 75 ♥ KQ432 ♦ Q862 ♣ 98</p>	<p><b>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</b></p> <p>Those clubs are so nice, and the order of the suits is so convenient to then show the spades, that I would be happy to open the North hand, for all that it contains only 10 HCP. A 1♣ opening should see a 1NT overcall from East and that should shut out South, leaving West to try for game while checking for a major-suit fit via whatever their methods dictate. There is, of course, no eight-card fit, and 2NT may be the popular outcome.</p> <p>South has no reason to do other than lead North's suit. There is a case for North playing low on the club lead so that declarer, who is marked with a double stopper if South leads top of a doubleton, is forced to use one of those stoppers immediately. North's hope is that South gets in early and has a club to lead to clear the suit, which would not be the case should North play the jack at trick one and East duck. It is to no avail, as declarer will play first on spades, knocking out North's side entry.</p> <p>The heart position is very favourable for declarer, who can set up three winners in the suit by pinning the bare nine, so the battle will be all about the ninth trick. Declarer can be held to eight, but I wouldn't be surprised to see a fair number of +150s and even the occasional +600.</p>																																										
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<p>♠ Q ♥ K10965 ♦ QJ9 ♣ KJ106</p> <p>♠ J10854                    ♠ 73 ♥ Q4                        ♥ J82 ♦ K87                        ♦ A65 ♣ A93                        ♣ Q7542</p> <p>♠ AK962 ♥ A73 ♦ 10432 ♣ 8</p>	<p><b>Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all</b></p> <p>South is worth a 1♠ opening with the ace, king, ace, and semi-three-suited hand, and North will respond 2♥ – I suspect that even those playing the 2♥ response as forcing to game will upgrade fractionally to do so. Unfortunately, South will raise to 3♥ and North go on to game and there are four losers.</p> <p>Even should the defence fail to take their winners at the start, there looks to be too much work for declarer to do to avoid four losers if the subsequent defence is accurate. Say that East leads a spade – declarer wins the queen and crosses to the ace of hearts to take two diamond discards on the ♠AK. East ruffs and puts West in with either a club or a diamond and a fourth spade promotes a defensive trump trick. And if declarer plays two rounds of hearts before trying to cash the spades? Now there is no trump trick to be established, but East simply discards on the third spade and waits. Declarer plays a club up and West can win and play a diamond to the ace. East cashes the ♥J and declarer has a second club loser for down one.</p> <p>There are other possible twists and turns declarer can try, but they are all doomed unless the defence co-operates.</p>																																										
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<p>                     ♠AK653                      ♥7432                      ♦Q10                      ♣94                      ♠J9842      ♠-                      ♥10            ♥QJ986                      ♦AK3         ♦J8742                      ♣A753         ♣Q82                      ♠Q107                      ♥AK5                      ♦965                      ♣KJ106                 </p>	<p><b>Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</b></p> <p>South has a weak no trump and West can come in over, though he will be much happier doing so if he can show spades plus a second suit, rather than being forced to only show spades on that ropey suit.</p> <p>A 2♠ overcall showing only spades may be passed out, as the popular style is to play take-out doubles here. That works out well for NS, because they collect about +150, while if North is able to make a penalty double East is likely to run and find the diamond fit, where 10 tricks can be made.</p> <p>A 2♠ overcall which shows five spades plus a four-card or longer minor, as in Multi-Landy, works only moderately as East looks for the minor-suit and West shows clubs. The diamond fit is missed, and it gets worse as now North can double for take-out and South leaves it in. Knowing that declarer will want to take spade ruffs in the dummy, North should lead the nine of trumps, and that should lead to down two if the subsequent defence is accurate.</p>																																												
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<p>                     ♠10                      ♥K5432                      ♦AKQJ95                      ♣K                      ♠KQ98            ♠542                      ♥J86              ♥Q109                      ♦104              ♦763                      ♣Q1097          ♣8653                      ♠AJ763                      ♥A7                      ♦82                      ♣AJ42                 </p>	<p><b>Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</b></p> <p>North has a hand of some potential if a fit can be found and sets the ball rolling with 1♦. Though the ♣K is of questionable value, the 6-5 shape justifies North's reversing into 2♥ over the 1♠ response. Though lacking a fit for either of partner's suits, South should now have some interest in a slam with the three aces. They will have to bid 3♣, 'Fourth Suit Forcing', if playing simple methods, and North will show the 6-5 distribution by bidding 3♥.</p> <p>South's next bid is quite tough. Two aces facing two black cards is a great start, but will the small doubleton diamond be sufficient support to make slam good? Remember, North has reversed, so should have significantly extra high-card values over a bare minimum opening, so I would bid 4♦ with the South hand and leave partner to take control. Turn the ♦Q into a small card and a small heart into the ♥Q, and slam is still good.</p> <p>North may just ask for key cards over 4♦, then bid 5NT to invite seven over the three-key-card response. South has nothing to add so signs off in 6♦, where all 13 tricks are made courtesy of the 3-3 heart split. 6NT can also be made via a squeeze/endplay against West, but it is not a good contract.</p>																																												
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<p>                     ♠QJ9                      ♥10                      ♦AK10986                      ♣Q107                      ♠A104            ♠752                      ♥7652            ♥AKQ943                      ♦Q53             ♦J7                      ♣J83              ♣K2                      ♠K863                      ♥J8                      ♦42                      ♣A9654                 </p>	<p><b>Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all</b></p> <p>North opens 1♦, East overcalls 1♥, and South makes a negative double to show four spades. West will raise hearts, the only question being in what fashion.</p> <p>The average club player may be content with a simple raise to 2♥, while an aggressive tournament player may go for a pre-emptive 3♥, muttering something about raising to the level of the fit thinking of the Law of Total Tricks. Better, would be if EW were playing Mixed Raises. One way to play a jump cue-bid of 3♦ here is to say that West has four-card heart support and about 7-9 HCP, give or take a point, not enough for a constructive raise to the three level, but with more high cards than a purely pre-emptive raise.</p> <p>Where does all this lead us? A jump to 3♥ shuts out North and a disciplined East passes, knowing the bid to have been pre-emptive. 3♥ is beaten by a trick. The 3♦ 'mixed raise' sees North take the opportunity to double to show the good diamonds but East bids 3♥ and NS have done their bidding so that is passed out. The simple raise to 2♥ sees most Norths rebid 3♦ despite their minimum, and East again bids 3♥. Most roads therefore lead to 3♥ down one, but there will no doubt be a whole range of other possibilities explored at various tables.</p>																																												
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<p>♠ QJ8 ♥ J10965 ♦ 1097 ♣ A10</p> <p>♠ AK5                      ♠ 973 ♥ K32                        ♥ 7 ♦ Q54                        ♦ AK32 ♣ Q972                      ♣ KJ853</p> <p>♠ 10642 ♥ AQ84 ♦ J86 ♣ 64</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td>11</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		8		N	-	-	-	-	-	14	11	S	-	-	-	-	-			E	5	5	1	2	2			W	5	5	1	2	2	<p><b>Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</b></p> <p>If paying Acol, East's 1♣ opening causes West some problems, as there is no forcing club raise available to them. They might simply jump to 3NT, 13-15 balanced and with something in every suit. If so, that will end the auction and North's heart lead should mean down one.</p> <p>The alternative is to invent a fourth diamond and respond 1♦, a common enough tactic which allows the auction to go more slowly. East will raise to 2♦ and West can now bid 3♣, forcing. West can see that there is a danger of a heart weakness if East has nine cards in the minors but hopes that East might now show a heart stopper. In practice, East is likely to bid 3♦ and now West might bid 3♠, still hoping to get to no trump. When East now bids 4♣, West raises to game and the careful auction is rewarded.</p> <p>Those playing inverted minor-suit raises will have it a little easier if West can raise to 2♣ immediately then exchange information about stoppers, when West should realise the danger of the heart position.</p> <p>I'm betting that more people get to 3NT than to 5♣, after all, the 3NT response to 1♣ is far from being a silly bid.</p>
HCP		Makeable contracts																																															
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<p>♠ Q86 ♥ K65 ♦ KQ953 ♣ 74</p> <p>♠ K932                      ♠ J1074 ♥ AQ10                     ♥ 8432 ♦ J106                      ♦ 4 ♣ KQ5                      ♣ AJ109</p> <p>♠ A5 ♥ J97 ♦ A872 ♣ 8632</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15</td> <td>6</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		10		N	-	2	-	-	1	15	6	S	-	2	-	-	1			E	2	-	2	3	-			W	2	-	2	3	-	<p><b>Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</b></p> <p>If playing Acol, West will usually open 1♠ and East has to decide how high to raise. Some will argue that the club holding should count as only one loser and that the Losing Trick Count therefore recommends a raise to 3♠. But both opponents are passed hands so may not need shutting out. I would rather play in 2♠ than 3♠ when holding a flat 15/16 count, so I would content myself with a quiet raise to 2♠. I would, however, raise to 3♠ playing five-card majors.</p> <p>Holding a flat 15 HCP, West has a routine pass and, while the opposition can come to eight tricks in a diamond contract, neither of them has an obvious bid.</p> <p>Despite the good fit – West has very little wasted facing East's singleton – there are only nine tricks to be made, so anyone who bids 1♠ - 3♠ - 4♠ should score poorly.</p> <p>If West is playing a strong no trump that will be what they open and, if it is passed out the defence should prevail. It will be a good time for East to use scrambling Stayman, but this is a gamble as if there is no eight-card fit, those weak four-card majors suggest a possibly uphill struggle in a 4-3 fit.</p>
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		E	2	-	2	3	-																																										
		W	2	-	2	3	-																																										

<p>♠ J8 ♥ Q106 ♦ AK532 ♣ Q97</p> <p>♠ 652                        ♠ AKQ10943 ♥ KJ87                     ♥ A542 ♦ 109876                 ♦ Q ♣ 6                         ♣ J</p> <p>♠ 7 ♥ 93 ♦ J4 ♣ AK1085432</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>12</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>16</td> <td>S</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		12		N	4	1	-	-	-	4	16	S	4	1	-	-	-			E	-	-	4	4	-			W	-	-	4	4	-	<p><b>Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</b></p> <p>North opens a weak no trump and East has an interesting bid to find. With eight likely winners a double has its attractions, but is unlikely to be left in. Neither 2♠ nor 3♠ does the hand justice, so the popular choice is likely to be 4♠. South will bid 5♣ over that and now West has a decision to make. The old rule that 'The five-level belongs to the opposition', particularly when they have been bullied into it, would win the day here, as 5♣ should be defeated, but the combination of three-card spade support and singleton club will be a temptation to West to bid on to 5♠. That too should be defeated, but it can be let through if, for example, South cashes a top club then switches to the jack of diamonds. Declarer can set up diamonds for heart pitches.</p> <p>That defence is more likely to occur at tables where North has opened 1♦, though it will be rare that a diamond switch is necessary to beat the contract as East will not often have two diamond losers, and the actual lay-out looks a real danger.</p>
HCP		Makeable contracts																																															
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<p>♠ J842 ♥ AJ842 ♦ A6 ♣ 54</p> <p>♠ KQ93      ♠ A1065 ♥ 963      ♥ Q5 ♦ Q7      ♦ KJ1092 ♣ J976      ♣ AQ</p> <p>♠ 7 ♥ K107 ♦ 8543 ♣ K10832</p>	<p><b>Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</b></p> <p>East opens 1♦ and raises the 1♠ response to 3♠, West declining the invitation. North's natural lead is a club and that forces declarer to take the finesse. When it loses there are five losers for down one. Were trumps not 4-1 and clubs 5-2, it might be essential for South to find the tough heart switch now, but on the actual layout declarer will be unable to get a heart away whatever the return. If playing a strong no trump, this may well be East's choice of opening bid – it gets the overall strength across well and there is definitely mileage in getting the lead to come round to those two queens.</p> <p>Some Wests will pass a 1NT opening, arguing that game can at best be borderline when they have only eight HCP including a loose queen and jack. While 1NT can be defeated double dummy, in practice the club lead will allow declarer to get home with seven tricks.</p> <p>If West uses Stayman and finds a 4-4 spade fit, they are likely to raise to 3♠ and East go on to game. A diamond lead would give declarer some control but still only nine tricks, while a club round to the ace-queen would make life very interesting – except that declarer will probably fall foul of the 4-1 trump split.</p>
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HCP		Makeable contracts				
10		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
8	16	N	1	-	2	-
		S	1	-	2	-
		E	-	1	-	2
		W	-	1	-	2

<p>♠ 103 ♥ 10 ♦ AJ982 ♣ KJ754</p> <p>♠ A97      ♠ KQ64 ♥ QJ864      ♥ K952 ♦ 103      ♦ 76 ♣ A106      ♣ Q92</p> <p>♠ J852 ♥ A73 ♦ KQ54 ♣ 83</p>	<p><b>Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</b></p> <p>How many times has West had a borderline opening bid during this session? If this West hand is to be opened with anything it should be with a weak no trump, as it just doesn't look like a one-suiter, ruling out 1♥. However, at this vulnerability I would not be in a hurry to open flat 11-point hands and prefer a pass. Mmm, time for everyone to go to the bar as if West doesn't open, the deal should be passed out.</p> <p>So, let's suppose that West does open the bidding. If with 1♥, East has an invitational raise to 3♥. To beat that North must underlead in diamonds to put South in to lead a club through, setting up a club ruff for the setting trick – not very likely.</p> <p>But North may overcall 2NT, both minors, and that will see South compete to the four level, making 10 tricks if declarer gets the clubs right.</p> <p>And if West opens 1NT? Then North may again bid 2NT. East will double, finding the heart fit, but South can once again compete to 4♦.</p>
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HCP		Makeable contracts				
9		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
11	10	N	2	4	-	-
		S	2	4	-	-
		E	-	-	2	-
		W	-	-	2	-

<p>♠ 974 ♥ KJ75 ♦ 532 ♣ 1084</p> <p>♠ Q3      ♠ K106 ♥ 109432      ♥ AQ6 ♦ J1064      ♦ AKQ9 ♣ 96      ♣ AQJ</p> <p>♠ AJ852 ♥ 8 ♦ 87 ♣ K7532</p>	<p><b>Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</b></p> <p>There will be three passes to East except at tables where South's system permits a 2♠ opening. East will open 2♣ and, if playing traditional methods, has to rebid 3NT as 2NT would be non-forcing and showing a point or two fewer than this. South will lead a spade round to the ten and declarer perhaps use the diamond entry to dummy to take the heart finesse. When that passes off peacefully a club and then a spade can be given up establishing 10 tricks for a decent score.</p> <p>Double dummy, South will avoid the spade lead and can hold the contract to nine tricks, while also double dummy EW can make 4♥, playing the trump suit for one loser. I think we can agree that we are happy to be in 3NT on the actual layout.</p> <p>On another day, West will have a slightly different hand on which it is important to get to a major-suit contract, and the jump to 3NT has left no room to explore. A clever solution is the Kokish convention, in which 2♣ – 2♦ – 2NT is game-forcing and leaves room to use Stayman, transfers, etc, while 2♣ – 2♦ – 2♥ is two-way, either hearts or 23-24 balanced. Responder bids a 2♠ relay to ask which, and if opener bids 2NT over that there is room again to use Stayman and transfers. This is very popular amongst expert pairs as it solves a problem at very little cost.</p>
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HCP		Makeable contracts				
4		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
3	25	N	-	-	-	-
		S	-	-	-	-
		E	2	5	4	2
		W	1	4	4	1

<p>♠ J873 ♥ A942 ♦ K543 ♣ A</p> <p>♠ A1065      ♠ KQ42 ♥ KQ            ♥ J1063 ♦ QJ6            ♦ 87 ♣ KJ53          ♣ 742</p> <p>♠ 9 ♥ 875 ♦ A1092 ♣ Q10986</p>	<p><b>Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all</b></p> <p>If West opens a strong no trump, that may end the auction and the contract is between seven and eight tricks, depending on declarer's play of the clubs. Acol players will usually open 1♠ and East raise to 2♠. West doesn't quite have enough to try for game so will pass and 2♠ will often end the auction, just making eight tricks despite the trump loser if declarer gets clubs right. But, NS can make 3♦ if they can get there, needing to take ruffing club finesses perhaps. It isn't at all clear who is supposed to bid for NS, though the vulnerability, or lack of it, should see both players strain to find a way to balance if the opposition get to 2♠. South is short in spades but has only three hearts and six HCP, so to double the 2♠ raise seems a lot to ask, while when 2♠ comes back to North they know that partner was short in spades yet could not find a bid, so it is a bit scary for North to get involved either. Nonetheless, if someone is to bid for NS, it surely has to be North in pass-out seat. Double, with the intention of converting a 3♣ response to 3♦, seems simplest and works out just fine on the actual deal.</p>																																																
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		W	-	-	-	2	2																																										

<p>♠ K863 ♥ J10 ♦ Q10852 ♣ 108</p> <p>♠ AQ1095      ♠ 742 ♥ KQ96          ♥ 53 ♦ J63            ♦ AK97 ♣ 2                ♣ Q654</p> <p>♠ J ♥ A8742 ♦ 4 ♣ AKJ973</p>	<p><b>Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</b></p> <p>Some people play that a 1♣/♦ opening denies a five-card major. I don't like that style at all. It seems silly to me to be obliged to open this South hand with 1♥ when the clubs are both longer and stronger – just open 1♣ and if necessary, overbid a little to get the hearts into the game. If South does open 1♣, West will overcall 1♠ in modern style rather than double, and that will shut out North. East may raise to 2♠ and South follow through with the original intention and bid 3♥. If West doubles for penalty, North will give unenthusiastic preference to 4♣ and East may double that. If so, well done to EW, who can collect +300 and plenty of match-points. But some EWs will play that West's double of 3♥ is not penalty but rather is a game try double for spades, very useful on a different type of hand, so South will escape unscathed. If EW compete to 3♠ that should be made exactly for a solid +140, with careful play.</p>																																																
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	13	E	-	3	-	3	1																																										
		W	-	3	-	3	-																																										

<p>♠ Q932 ♥ AJ963 ♦ QJ ♣ 85</p> <p>♠ J10654      ♠ A7 ♥ K10            ♥ Q8754 ♦ A106            ♦ K3 ♣ K73            ♣ J1064</p> <p>♠ K8 ♥ 2 ♦ 987542 ♣ AQ92</p>	<p><b>Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</b></p> <p>For a second time we have a deal which is in serious danger of being passed out. It would be a different matter at Love All, but I would not open the West hand in third seat when vulnerable. I think 1NT is a very dangerous action, while 1♠ leaves me with the risk of having to rebid the suit in some auctions, while hardly getting partner off to the best lead if North wins the contract. Well, enough of my pessimism. Say that West opens 1NT; North may have a way to compete to show both majors, Landy for example, though if so, they will regret using it as EW don't even need to double the final minority-fit to score well. Meanwhile, if North passes over 1NT, East may transfer to hearts and North will suddenly be very happy, though 2♥ may be only one down. And if West opens 1♠, as long as North does not make a silly overcall, which should get what it deserves, East will respond 2♥ and West pass it out, another satisfactory outcome for North. And finally, if EW play in 1NT from either side of the table, the most likely end result is seven tricks for +90, though I am sure there will be people making both more and fewer.</p>																																																
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		W	2	-	1	1	1																																										

<p>♠97632 ♥962 ♦10986 ♣7</p> <p>♠AK4                      ♠J85 ♥A10                      ♥KJ543 ♦J754                      ♦A ♣KQ54                      ♣A1062</p> <p>♠Q10 ♥Q87 ♦KQ32 ♣J983</p>	<p><b>Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all</b></p> <p>Double dummy EW can make 7♥ or 7NT, via a squeeze and a lot of inspiration. In real life, they want to get to 6♣.</p> <p>Say that West opens a strong no trump. East will transfer then bid clubs and, on the reasonable assumption that partner would never bid a suit they were unwilling to play in, West should raise to 4♣ to set trumps on this maximum hand. It should be just about automatic to get to slam after this start.</p> <p>If playing weak no trump, West might open 1♣ or 1♦. 1♣ works much better this time, with West rebidding 1NT, 15-17, over the 1♥ response, and East using some variety of checkback to set up a force before agreeing clubs at the three level. Once again, with a maximum and excellent trumps and control cards, West should be willing to past 3NT in search of a slam and 6♣ should be reached.</p> <p>Bidding slam and making it are two different things with the awkward trump position. Say the lead is a diamond; declarer may win and cash the ♣KQ, getting the bad news. Three rounds of hearts ruffs out the queen and wins when the ♠Q drops, but declarer, knowing North is short in clubs so maybe long elsewhere, might instead try ♥A then ♥10 to the jack, winning if North has queen-to-four, and that is down.</p>
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HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
0	N	-	-	-	-	-
17      13	S	-	-	-	-	-
10	E	6	3	7	4	7
	W	6	3	7	3	7

<p>♠KQ93 ♥J95 ♦43 ♣K942</p> <p>♠-                              ♠J10765 ♥KQ843                      ♥762 ♦AKJ987                      ♦106 ♣J5                              ♣A87</p> <p>♠A842 ♥A10 ♦Q52 ♣Q1063</p>	<p><b>Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</b></p> <p>Another wrong-way-round two-suiter and again I would open 1♦ rather than 1♥. East will dredge up a 1♠ response and West reverse into 2♥ – no, a 5-4 hand would not reverse with only 14 HCP, but this is a 6-5 hand with nearly all the high cards in the two long suits.</p> <p>I guess that East will rebid 2NT, whether natural or Lebensohl, and West will rebid the hearts to confirm the 6-5 shape. Is that still forcing? Probably, though I would be prepared to take a view and pass with a complete misfit, such as the same shape but no useful high card – e.g. two black queen-jacks – even with three-card support for the major. Here, East has three hearts and an ace, so should bite the bullet and raise to 4♥. The 3-2 breaks in both red suits should mean that declarer can hold the losers to two hearts and one club.</p>
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HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
9	N	1	-	-	1	-
14      5	S	2	-	-	1	-
12	E	-	4	4	-	1
	W	-	4	4	-	1

<p>♠Q92 ♥K863 ♦KQ10 ♣743</p> <p>♠A654                      ♠K1087 ♥A105                      ♥QJ94 ♦9732                      ♦4 ♣K5                              ♣AJ62</p> <p>♠J3 ♥72 ♦AJ865 ♣Q1098</p>	<p><b>Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</b></p> <p>This time it is East who has a borderline opening bid. I am sure that most people will open the hand with 1♣, but it is far from being compulsory to do so. East is vulnerable and 4-4-4-1 hands are often not that great. The problem is that we open one suit, bid another, and partner assumes that we are at least 5-4, offering more playing strength than we actually hold. An auction such as 1♣ – 1♦ – 1♥ – 3♣ is always a bit of a worry to opener, as only when dummy goes down, do we know that partner has four trumps for the invitational jump preference.</p> <p>Anyway, none of that is very relevant to the actual deal, as the trick is to get to game on the combined 21-count and 4-4 spade fit. If East opens 1♣ West will respond 1♠ and East raise to 2♠. West is worth a game try and the most descriptive one is 2NT, over which East should go back to 3♠ to confirm the fourth trump. Now West, with two aces plus the king of partner's side suit, can go on to game.</p> <p>The hands fit together beautifully, with West having nothing facing East's shortage. The ♥K is offside, but trumps break 3-2, so 10 tricks are straightforward enough so long as declarer is careful.</p>
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HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
10	N	-	1	-	-	-
11      11	S	-	1	-	-	-
8	E	1	-	3	4	1
	W	1	-	3	4	1

<p>                     ♠ 10954                      ♥ 9532                      ♦ Q10                      ♣ J72                      ♠ KJ2                      ♠ A83                      ♥ A7                              ♥ K10864                      ♦ A9854                      ♦ K3                      ♣ 953                              ♣ AK8                      ♠ Q76                      ♥ QJ                      ♦ J762                      ♣ Q1064                 </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="136 541 250 716"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>12</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="285 541 509 716"> <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>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>4</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>4</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		3		12	17	8		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	4	6	6	5	6	W	4	6	6	5	6	<p><b>Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all</b></p> <p>East opens 1♥ and rebids a forcing 2NT over the 2♦ response. The main benefit of 2NT being forcing is that it leaves room for West to checkback for a 5-3 heart fit, but that is not relevant on this deal and the auction will be completed with a simple raise to 3NT.</p> <p>No fewer than 12 tricks can be made if declarer reads the position correctly, but that is by no means guaranteed to be the case at every table. South may lead a club to the jack and ace and if declarer plays a heart next the jack or queen will appear. That may be sufficient to persuade declarer to switch to diamonds for now, and three rounds of those establishes two extra winners. Win the club continuation, take the spade finesse, and cash the diamonds and if declarer plays for the drop in hearts there are 12 tricks. There are, however, other lines of play that are less successful.</p>
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<p>                     ♠ Q4                      ♥ AJ65                      ♦ J973                      ♣ AQ7                      ♠ 876                              ♠ AKJ3                      ♥ KQ2                              ♥ 93                      ♦ K65                                ♦ Q8                      ♣ 10532                              ♣ KJ984                      ♠ 10952                      ♥ 10874                      ♦ A1042                      ♣ 6                 </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="136 1180 250 1354"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>14</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="285 1180 509 1354"> <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>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		14		8	14	4		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	2	2	-	-	S	-	2	2	-	-	E	3	-	-	2	2	W	3	-	-	2	2	<p><b>Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</b></p> <p>If North opens a weak no trump, East is close to doubling, but probably not quite. A natural 2♣ overcall, a double to show a four-card major and longer minor, or 2♦ to show spades and another, would work well today, but other defensive methods are less suitable to this particular distribution so many Easts will have to pass. South is weak enough to suspect that 1NT will be very hard work for partner, so may try scrambling Stayman. Finding the 4-4 heart fit greatly improves the contract and, if 2♥ ends the auction, it can be made.</p> <p>EW can make 3♣ but it is unclear that they will be able to compete after this start to the auction as, from East's perspective, South may be much stronger and about to drive to game. Coming into the middle of the opponents' auction could prove to be very expensive.</p> <p>If North is left in 1NT, there will be a free trick on the lead, with a club round to the ten and queen, and declarer can then set up three diamond tricks, but the defence should still prevail, setting up the clubs and holding declarer to two of those, three diamonds and the ace of hearts for down one.</p>
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<p>                     ♠ J843                      ♥ 2                      ♦ K107                      ♣ 108754                      ♠ 975                                ♠ AQ6                      ♥ J1074                              ♥ 653                      ♦ 93                                    ♦ A842                      ♣ KQJ9                              ♣ 632                      ♠ K102                      ♥ AKQ98                      ♦ QJ65                      ♣ A                 </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="136 1810 250 1984"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="285 1810 509 1984"> <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>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</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		4		7	10	19		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	4	3	3	1	S	2	3	3	3	1	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-	<p><b>Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</b></p> <p>There will be three passes round to South, who will open 1♥. At many tables that may end the auction, with nine tricks the likely outcome.</p> <p>However, it has always been my belief that if I don't like the contract we are in, I should try to improve matters. Hence, I would respond 1♠ on the North cards despite holding only four HCP and a weak four-card suit. Even if partner rebids 3♥, at least I will have the comfort of knowing that they have a decent six-card suit, rather than possibly jack-to-four or similar (of course, that will be little consolation if partner makes seven or eight tricks and I have turned a plus into a minus by bidding).</p> <p>South is likely to rebid 3♦, in principle game-forcing. However, I would now double-cross partner and pass the forcing bid, having at least found a more palatable trump suit. 3♦ is an easy enough make, with the play mostly revolving around a possible overtrick, which the defence can just prevent. But though I have improved the contract, I will have converted +140 into +110 or +130, so you see now why I am commentating rather than playing in the competition.</p>
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