Bridge England Sim Pairs

Thanks to our commentators:

Mike Bell	Heather Dhondy
David Gold	Chris Jagger
Ben Norton	Tom Paske
Nicola Smith	Yvonne Wiseman

Monday/Tuesday

4-5·02·2019

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

2019 is a year which will see our Junior Teams (U16, U21, U26 Women, U26) play in the European Championship. The EBU provides funding for these teams and this event will help with the funding.

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

I very much hope you have enjoyed the hands and the expert commentary, which has been supplied by leading internationals, many of whom will be playing for our country this year. I also hope that you will continue to support this event and encourage your club to continue to participate in the future.

Jeremy Dhondy

February 2019

♠Q104
♥53
♦AKQ7
♣KQ93

♠J9632 ♠A85
♥109 ♥KJ82
♦J84 ♦963
♣1085 ♣J74

♠K7
♥AQ764
♦1052
♣A62

HCP	
16	
2	9
13	

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

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all **Chris Jagger**

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	All pass	

People have lengthy debates about which minor to open with four of each, but in truth it is not so critical. Over 1NT, South may have some way to check back for a heart fit, but in the absence of that she can bid three of partner's minor, forcing and giving him the chance to show heart support.

East has an ugly choice of lead, but given partner's failure to overcall in spades, should lead a low club. North can in fact make twelve tricks by playing on spades and taking the heart finesse. But he may think the clubs are coming in for only three tricks, and, without knowing about the diamonds yet, decide to play on hearts. Once the heart finesse holds, North either continues hearts, losing three tricks, or switches back to spades, making eleven or twelve.

♠KQ
♥K92
♦A543
♣10865

♠J63 ♠74
♥Q84 ♥AJ105
♦QJ ♦K10762
♣KQ972 ♣J3

♠A109852
♥763
♦98
♣A4

HCP	
12	
11	9
8	

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

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable **Chris Jagger**

West	North	East	South
		Pass	2♠
All pass			

Some people may think of some flaw to avoid opening the South hand a weak two – I think pass is flawed when you have a 6-card major. Over the weak two, the next two hands have easy passes, but some Easts may be tempted back into the auction, which will work well for them, with all three suits faring better than conceding 2♠.

If North-South are not playing weak twos, the bidding may well be passed to North to open 1NT, with South taking it out to spades. (I hope no Wests deemed their hand to be worth an opening bid!)

The play in 2♠ looks straightforward, with eight tricks seeming the only outcome. If West leads the ♣K, this is not the time for East to play the jack as a count signal!

♠7
♥AK1086
♦3
♣KJ10852

♠AK863 ♠1042
♥32 ♥QJ95
♦KJ984 ♦AQ762
♣9 ♣6

♠QJ95
♥74
♦105
♣AQ743

HCP	
11	
11	9
9	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	5	-	3	-	-
S	5	-	3	-	-
E	-	3	-	3	-
W	-	3	-	3	-

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable **Chris Jagger**

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♠	2♠	3♥	Pass
4♠	All pass		

West has an easy 1♠ opening, and North can come in with 2♠ to show hearts and a minor. In this case this could be a bad board for 'unspecific' Michaels: South assumes that partner has the red suits, and the 5♣ game may well be missed.

East has an awkward bid over 2♠. A 3♥ bid is clearly not natural when North has shown five hearts, and in fact is usually played as a raise of partner's suit. On this occasion 3♥ works well as West bids game, which probably silences North.

Even on the given auction, the vulnerability may lure North back in, a big success on this layout, but if you swap East's and South's minors, 5♣ goes for the proverbial "telephone number".

Declarer in spades will do very well to play trumps for one loser and make 9 tricks.

♠AKJ8
♥AQ86
♦A975
♣Q

♠94 ♠Q1052
♥KJ954 ♥73
♦106 ♦Q42
♣AK83 ♣J1064

♠763
♥102
♦KJ83
♣9752

HCP	
20	
11	5
4	

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

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable **Nicola Smith**

West	North	East	South
1♥	Dble	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	All pass	

West's eleven points are worth opening with two fair suits. That gives North a problem: there's no suitable bid, so he starts with a double. South's response to the takeout double is clear-cut: she bids her better and higher-ranking suit.

Playing pairs, North's 2NT rebid is the most practical continuation – it shows a balanced hand too strong to overcall 1NT. At teams, 2♥ would be better, willing to play in 3♦ if South has no interest in game.

In 2NT, North needs to finesse the diamonds to make his contract, which should be a good score with game contracts failing. Ten tricks are available in diamonds, taking two club ruffs, for an excellent result.

♠92
♥K865
♦KQ82
♣765

♠AKQJ863 ♠107
♥- ♥QJ732
♦1076 ♦AJ54
♣J32 ♣109

♠54
♥A1094
♦93
♣AKQ84

HCP	
8	
11	8
13	

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

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable **Nicola Smith**

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♣
4♠	All pass		

At this vulnerability, it should be automatic for West to overcall 4♠ as it is important to use up the maximum bidding space. Neither North nor South has enough to bid or double, so West buys the contract. She'll be disappointed to see that East has hearts.

North should lead a trump, as he has values in the outside suits. If he chooses to lead his partner's suit, South must play trumps to stop the club ruff – not difficult with dummy's ruffing value on view. Now even with the diamonds favourably placed, declarer has no chance of making ten tricks.

Any West who bids the hand more gently gets the match-points for making a spade part-score.

♠KQJ43
♥KQ3
♦10
♣AJ87

♠962
♥10542
♦J973
♣K2

♠87
♥96
♦KQ65
♣106543

♠A105
♥AJ87
♦A842
♣Q9

HCP	
16	
4	5
15	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4	3	7	7	6
S	4	3	7	7	6
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable **Nicola Smith**

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
Pass	5NT	Pass	6♠
All pass			

The suggested sequence uses 2♦ game-forcing checkback: 2♠ shows three spades, denying five hearts. 3♣ is natural, 3♦ shows slam interest in spades, then after a series of control-showing bids North uses RKCB to check on aces on the way to slam. North ventures a grand-slam try with 5NT, but South has nothing extra.

With the club finesse working, declarer makes all the tricks with one high club ruff.

♠A853
♥4
♦AKJ65
♣K54

♠Q9
♥AJ1076
♦32
♣QJ73

♠J10642
♥Q9
♦Q108
♣986

♠K7
♥K8532
♦974
♣A102

HCP	
15	
10	5
10	

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

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

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All pass			

Some Wests may open something, but I expect the vast majority to pass. The first interesting decision comes for South after the 1♠ rebid, Alternatives to 1NT are 2♦, 3♦, or even 2NT. I expect the lure of no-trumps at match-points, coupled with the ten of clubs, to tempt many into bidding 1NT, although I secretly rather like 2♦, as with the spade ruffs I expect diamonds to play very well. 3♦ or 2NT would simply be overbids. After 1NT North just about owes a raise and South then has an easy 3NT bid. 3NT is a decent contract but will fail on careful defence so long as West avoids leading a heart or a small club. Anyone making 3NT will get a huge score and I expect anyone going plus 120, 130 or 150 to score pretty well too.

♠1083
♥1076
♦Q76432
♣7

♠A974
♥-
♦J105
♣AKQJ54

♠KQJ52
♥Q98542
♦98
♣-

♠6
♥AKJ3
♦AK
♣1098632

HCP	
2	
15	8
15	

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

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all **David Gold**

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	4♠	All pass

Some Norths may poke in a 2♦ or 3♦ bid, then the auction could take off, but I expect most tables to play in 4♠ one way or another. With the terrible club break 4♠ can be held to ten tricks on a diamond lead; in practice declarer will do well to take eleven whatever the lead. Since some East-Wests will get too high I expect that 420 will score slightly above average.

As an aside: after the 1♠ rebid East might bid 4♣ as a splinter for spades if the partnership has that understanding; now 4♥ from West as a cuebid, and East signs off in 4♠ due to the lack of a diamond control.

♠4
♥K1075
♦AJ10
♣Q6543

♠KJ7652 ♠AQ1098
♥AQ9 ♥84
♦K62 ♦753
♣10 ♣J98

♠3
♥J632
♦Q984
♣AK72

HCP	
10	
13	7
10	

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable **David Gold**

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♠	Dble	3♠	4♥
4♠	Pass	Pass	Dble
All pass			

It is very hard to predict the auction here. Some Souths will open 1♣ in third seat at favourable vulnerability, but the suggested auction is plausible and a rare case of two passed hands bidding a game (and even rarer that it's unbeatable!). I expect a huge range of results – 4♥ making, 5♣ making, both of these contracts sometimes doubled, 3♠ down one, 4♠ down two sometimes doubled, sometimes 3♠ making on second-best defence.

Say North leads a club against a spade contract, and South wins the king. Now West can place North with most of the red honours. The only switch by South which prevents his partner from a heart throw-in after the black suits have been eliminated is the queen of diamonds!

♠J542
♥9872
♦A842
♣5

♠AKQ8 ♠7
♥Q ♥AJ106543
♦K7 ♦96
♣KJ7643 ♣1098

♠10963
♥K
♦QJ1053
♣AQ2

HCP	
5	
18	5
12	

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

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

West	North	East	South
		3♥	Pass
4♥	All pass		

Most will pre-empt on the East cards, with a good seven-card suit and a shortage. South might venture a take-out double with this shape if ♥K were in a different suit. West's minor-suit kings are of questionable value and in practice this would be a good time to take the low road, but with a fitting heart honour and three quick spade tricks, West should probably raise, expecting a fair heart suit opposite at this vulnerability.

South will lead the ♦Q and declarer does best to duck, else North can take dummy's ♦K and obtain two club ruffs with the aid of a diamond entry. Declarer will then have to drop the ♥K to limit the loss to 200. If the ♦K is withheld, North will win the second diamond and take one club ruff. His best move is to then switch to a trump, forcing declarer to make a decision before he's had the chance to dispose of his remaining club on a spade. If East finesses, an embarrassing -300 will ensue.

♠AQ7
♥Q109432
♦J72
♣J

♠J1096 ♠85432
♥J6 ♥K8
♦Q8 ♦109543
♣107632 ♣8

♠K
♥A75
♦AK6
♣AKQ954

HCP	
10	
4	3
23	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	6	4	6	2	6
S	6	4	6	2	6
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

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

West	North	East	South
			2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	5NT
Pass	6♦	Pass	6NT
All pass			

South can keep the auction simple by raising hearts. North's 3♠ bid confirms that he has the ace of spades for his positive response, and South drives slam via RKCB or grand-slam force, preferring 6NT to 6♥ at match-points.

The best line in 6NT on a spade lead is to lead a small heart towards dummy. Even if declarer misguesses she will be able to try the hearts as well as the clubs. If instead declarer cashes the red aces (in case ♥K or ♦Q drops), crosses to ♣J, cashes dummy's spades, and relies on the clubs, hoping to make an overtrick on some lies, she will go off.

In 6♥, cashing ♥A is best for one loser, but running ♥Q may steal an overtrick.

♠QJ962
♥A32
♦-
♣Q8542

♠- ♠A10743
♥109765 ♥KQ8
♦K7542 ♦983
♣KJ6 ♣A7

♠K85
♥J4
♦AQJ106
♣1093

HCP	
9	
7	13
11	

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable **Ben Norton**

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	All pass		

Even playing a weak no trump, it's better to open the East hand 1♠, especially in third seat. The honour structure is best for suit play and should the auction become competitive, introducing the boss suit is rarely a bad idea. South shouldn't overcall 2♦ with this shape and at this vulnerability, lacking a sixth diamond. West doesn't have enough to respond at the two-level, so has to grit his teeth and bid 1NT.

Declarer wins the club lead with the jack and plays a heart up. When the ♥K holds, declarer, short of entries to hand, will probably continue with the ♥Q. When♥J falls and North ducks, declarer proceeds to unblock the ♣A before clearing the hearts. She wins the club continuation, cashes her long hearts and exits with a diamond. The defence will then have to allow declarer to score the ♠A or ♦K for an overtrick.

If instead declarer tries ♦9 at trick three, the likely result will be 1NT just making since the long hearts should not score.

♠Q76
♥AJ5
♦AK1094
♣32

♠10984 ♠AK53
♥Q107642 ♥K
♦2 ♦J63
♣A6 ♣KQJ94

♠J2
♥983
♦Q875
♣10875

HCP	
14	
6	17
3	

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

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable **Yvonne Wiseman**

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Dble	All pass

North may well open 1NT whether it's weak or strong – the good diamonds make the hand look like 15 points. Either way East has enough for a penalty double. If West chooses to remove to 2♥ she'll probably play there for a poor score. Or if West passes, North may try 2♦, and now West is bound to bid, probably getting her side to 4♠ since the delayed bid implies some values.

If 1NT^{X} becomes the contract, East leads ♣K, and West can see that she can't afford to overtake. East doesn't know the club position, but he can afford to try a top spade: when West discourages East goes back to clubs and the defence cashes its seven top tricks.

If instead North opens 1♦, the auction may go 1♦-2♣-2♦-2♥, P-2♠-P-3♠, P-4♠. West would like more high cards to bid so much, but her hand has a lot of potential if a major-suit fit is found. North could make it harder by re-raising to 3♦, which might buy the contract.

♠Q1072
♥AK7532
♦63
♣3

♠AJ8 ♠543
♥9864 ♥QJ10
♦AQJ108 ♦K9
♣J ♣A10852

♠K96
♥-
♦7542
♣KQ9764

HCP	
9	
13	10
8	

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

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all **Yvonne Wiseman**

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♦	1♥	1NT	All pass

East has an awkward response to a third-seat 1♦ opening: my choice would be a conservative 1NT, allowing for partner not to be full value. 2♣ is a reasonable alternative, but you then have another problem when opener rebids 2♦. 2NT would be the optimist's bid: if West raises to game it will make unless South finds an inspired spade lead.

Any South who opens 3♣ will be punished, as East passes West's take-out double. That will probably be two off if West leads a passive heart, but four off on a diamond lead, since after the defence plays a round of trumps East will be able to discard spades on West's diamonds.

♠J104
♥A10754
♦4
♣K852

♠A762 ♠Q985
♥8 ♥Q93
♦K9872 ♦Q106
♣Q107 ♣J63

♠K3
♥KJ62
♦AJ53
♣A94

HCP	
8	
9	7
16	

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

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable **Yvonne Wiseman**

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
All pass			

If South opens 1♥, North's eight-loser hand is worth a raise to 3♥. South has seven losers, but her aces and jacks are better than their loser count so she bids game.

West has a difficult opening lead: I'd guess to try a diamond which this time is all right. Declarer will probably get the hearts wrong and come to ten tricks. It doesn't matter if she misguesses spades because she can then discard her club loser on the third round.

If South opens 1♦ and North becomes declarer in 4♥, East will probably lead a club. Now there's no time to discard a club on spades. Declarer could manoeuvre to set up the long club without letting East on lead, but that's not without risk and she may well choose to rely on the majors.

♠10764
♥AQ10532
♦2
♣A3

♠9 ♠KQJ3
♥874 ♥KJ
♦A9753 ♦QJ108
♣KJ62 ♣Q75

♠A852
♥96
♦K64
♣10984

HCP	
10	
8	15
7	

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

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable **Mike Bell**

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Dble	Pass
2♦	2♥	Pass	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	3♥
All pass			

North's hand, with its distribution and aces, is a clear opening bid. East should resist any temptation to overcall 1NT – the shape is better shown by a double, plus the single heart stop and lack of aces make 1NT an overbid.

Diamond part-scores should make in comfort, with ten tricks available. The play will be more interesting at the tables where North-South buy the hand, as declarer has to guess the layout in both the spade suit and the heart suit. A heart contract will normally get the ♠K lead, with an eventual spade ruff, but if the spades are untouched declarer might manage to start the suit with the ten, pinning the singleton nine – with East known to hold the length this is the only 4-1 break that can be picked up.

♠Q32
♥KQJ1062
♦4
♣A104

♠AJ87 ♠K1095
♥A754 ♥9
♦Q975 ♦KJ6
♣Q ♣J9732

♠64
♥83
♦A10832
♣K865

HCP	
12	
13	8
7	

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

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all **Mike Bell**

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥	Dble	3♥
3♠	All pass		

The North-South actions on this hand are clear; the question is, can East-West get into the bidding? With 2♥ likely to end the auction, East might be considered to be "protecting". If East passes, West might try a 2♠ overcall. South should compete (2♥ here promises six, even playing four-card majors) and East will raise to 3♠.

2♥ isn't makeable on best defence, but few tables will find that. A club lead gives the chance for West to score two ruffs using East's spade entries (East should lead ♣J for the first ruff to force out the king); drawing trumps then allows East-West to make a third spade trick as well. In 3♠, the defence can take the first four tricks via an underlead of the ♣A for the second ruff. If they don't find their ruffs ten tricks can be made, although on a heart lead most declarers will draw trumps prematurely. The most likely route to ten tricks is to concede precisely one diamond ruff.

♠AK3
♥7532
♦K10
♣AQ84

♠J
♥A1096
♦62
♣KJ10752

♠10542
♥QJ
♦AQJ54
♣93

♠Q9876
♥K84
♦9873
♣6

HCP	
16	
9	10
5	

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable **Mike Bell**

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
3♣	3NT	All pass	

With only six clubs, and a four-card major on the side, the West hand isn't a textbook pre-empt. However, in third seat, it is a clear 3♣ opening – indeed, I would still favour it even if East-West were vulnerable. Here, it works a charm – it pushes North into an unmakeable contract, while getting partner off to the right lead.

Declarer in 3NT has seven top tricks, and the battle is to find an eighth. East leads the ♣9 to declarer's queen. Declarer's first move should be to lead up to the ♥K. hoping to find the ace onside. Rather disappointingly, West wins the trick, but the communications to his hand have been severed; declarer can't be prevented from coming to a diamond trick.

♠J10
♥KQJ108
♦942
♣J107

♠KQ3
♥9652
♦AKQ6
♣Q8

♠8742
♥-
♦10875
♣AK643

♠A965
♥A743
♦J3
♣952

HCP	
8	
16	7
9	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	1	-	-
S	-	-	1	-	-
E	5	6	-	4	1
W	5	6	-	4	1

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable **Heather Dhondy**

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	All pass		

You can make game in three denominations (even a slam in diamonds) however you are most unlikely to reach any of them. The normal Acol opening of 1♥ will silence the opponents and you will wind up in 1NT as per the auction above.

Despite the 1♥ opening bid, North will begin with a top heart against 1NT and the defence will cash the first five tricks in the suit. Now it just becomes a question of whether they are able to take their spade as well, and South must encourage the suit on the last heart. If they don't cash it now, declarer can wrap up the remaining nine tricks in the minors when both suits break.

♠K765
♥AK64
♦Q75
♣AQ

♠J9
♥8532
♦K104
♣9832

♠AQ108
♥QJ10
♦AJ98
♣105

♠432
♥97
♦632
♣KJ764

HCP	
18	
4	14
4	

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

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable **Heather Dhondy**

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	All pass	

What call do you make with the East cards over North's 1♥ opening? You are just short of the values for a 1NT overcall and your shape is unsuitable for a double. A 1♠ overcall should be a five-card suit, so it is best just to pass.

The only making contracts are by East-West; however there is more than one way to get a good board, and accurate defence to North's 1♥ should beat it by at least one trick. The key is to try to get it two down to beat the part-scores by East-West. Say East leads a club: declarer wins the ace and plays three rounds of hearts. Now he's threatening to make two more clubs and a small trump by ruffing the fourth round of clubs, so East has to find West's entry straight away. In a well-tuned partnership, West will follow upwards in hearts to show a top diamond (or downwards from the five to show a top spade, and in some other order to show neither), and East will be watching!

♠KJ42
♥93
♦763
♣A754

♠Q73
♥1064
♦A82
♣QJ32

♠A
♥A852
♦QJ10
♣K10986

♠109865
♥KQJ7
♦K954
♣-

HCP	
8	
9	14
9	

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

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable **Heather Dhondy**

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♣	1♠
1NT	3♠	All pass	

Another part-score battle, although East-West can make a rather fortunate 3NT.

What call do you make with the West cards if South overcalls 1♠ (which is far from automatic) over your partner's 1♣? Supporting clubs works well on this hand as it will enable your side to compete more effectively when spades are raised, however this is pairs and it is tempting to respond 1NT. Now if North makes a raise to 3♠ (the level of the fit), East-West are in trouble. Neither has an automatic further action and they might pass it out.

3♠ has five obvious losers, however undoubled they lose just 100 compared to the 130 available in clubs or 150 in no trumps.

♠AJ10742
♥10
♦K65
♣Q105

♠K
♥KQ43
♦Q974
♣A732

♠983
♥652
♦AJ2
♣J864

♠Q65
♥AJ987
♦1083
♣K9

HCP	
10	
14	6
10	

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable **Tom Paske**

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1NT	2♠	Pass	3♠
All pass			

Many people might disagree with the West hand opening 1NT but imagine the problems you will have if you open 1♦ and partner responds 1♠, as he often will! I have found opening 1NT with a singleton king and 4-4-4-1 shape to be a highly profitable bid.

North has an easy 2♠ overcall: now South would like to be able to show a good raise to 3♠ – jumping straight to 4♠ would be aggressive but reasonable. However at this vulnerability partner could be quite light so 3♠ would be my bid if I didn't have an invite available. East should lead a trump hoping to cut down on ruffs in dummy. On a trump lead there are nine clear tricks: six spades, a club, a heart and a ruff. You haven't got the entries to ruff out and enjoy the hearts, so you'd need to guess the jack of clubs to make a tenth trick.

♠AQ2
♥95
♦K1032
♣KQ53

♠K3
♥KQJ7
♦A765
♣A98

♠105
♥86432
♦QJ94
♣107

♠J98764
♥A10
♦8
♣J642

HCP	
14	
17	3
6	

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

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable **Tom Paske**

West	North	East	South
			2♠
Dble	4♠	All pass	

Whilst some people won't be won over by the quality of South's spades, I can't stand the idea of passing with 6-4 shape and having the boss suit. After West's double you could try and be delicate with the North hand and start with a redouble, but 4♠ is what your hand is worth after West has advertised the majority of the outstanding points.

On the natural heart lead there is little to the play – you have to hope for something good to happen in spades. When the queen holds and the ace drops the king, you can cross back to hand in spades and try a low diamond towards the king for a bonus trick. If West has recovered from the festive season she will take her ace and cash a heart to hold the contract to just making.

♠AQ5
♥AQJ9
♦AQ9
♣Q83

♠K9 ♠1042
♥6 ♥K732
♦K10753 ♦862
♣K9754 ♣AJ2

♠J8763
♥10854
♦J4
♣106

HCP	
21	
9	8
2	

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

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all **Tom Paske**

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	All pass	

With the very weak South hand opposite North's 2NT opening you would like to find out if partner has a four-card major. But unfortunately if you hear a 3♦ response to Stayman you would be forcing your side to game. I believe that partner having a four-card major is about 50% and partner having three or more spades is more likely, so I would simply transfer to spades.

Whilst only nine tricks are available in theory playing in spades, transferring the declarership to North gives East a difficult lead. A diamond would be my choice and that leads to ten tricks – declarer ruffs the third round of diamonds in dummy, has the good fortune to pick up the spades, and loses the heart finesse. A major suit lead is equally helpful: the only way to hold declarer to nine would be to lead a club to the king for a heart switch before dummy can get on lead to play trumps. No one's going to find that!

♠AJ7
♥A94
♦10985
♣KQ7

♠K10862 ♠953
♥106 ♥J853
♦KQJ3 ♦2
♣94 ♣J10853

♠Q4
♥KQ72
♦A764
♣A62

HCP	
14	
9	2
15	

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

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable **Chris Jagger**

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT
All pass			

The auction looks straightforward, any West venturing in being in danger of conceding a large penalty.

On the ♣J lead, nine tricks look easy, and ten are available. North could start by running the ♦10 and West will return a club. If declarer then cashes two heart tricks then runs ♦9, West has to give declarer a tenth trick in spades or diamonds.

Another way to ten tricks would be either an original heart lead or an injudicious East playing the ♥8 as a count signal, allowing declarer to later finesse the ♥7. The ♥8 is the correct count signal in isolation (as the ♥5 is too ambiguous before a second round is played). However you should play the highest you can afford – in this case, ♥5, or just not bother giving count here.

♠A6
♥AQ975
♦1093
♣K104

♠9854 ♠KQ32
♥43 ♥J102
♦A52 ♦K76
♣Q532 ♣A76

♠J107
♥K86
♦QJ84
♣J98

HCP	
13	
6	13
8	

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

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable **Nicola Smith**

West	North	East	South
		1NT	All pass

In general, it is right to disturb their 1NT, but game all is the worst vulnerability for competing the part score, and North has not enough strength to double, not enough shape to bid. So the percentage action is to pass out 1NT.

Against 1NT South has an automatic diamond lead – good suit. With the hearts wide open East should win ♦A in dummy and lead a spade to his king. Declarer has no more entries to dummy so will have to play the second round of spades out of hand. Therefore, South should drop an honour to give him the losing option of playing for J10 doubleton, but against an opponent who knows enough to do that, restricted choice says to play North for the doubleton ace.

If declarer gets it right he'll make three spades, two diamonds and a club for one off, which should be a good score when North-South can score +140 in hearts.

♠1065
♥A5
♦AQ1072
♣Q86

♠QJ7 ♠A983
♥K7 ♥62
♦654 ♦KJ83
♣AK752 ♣J104

♠K42
♥QJ109843
♦9
♣93

HCP	
12	
13	9
6	

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

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all **David Gold**

West	North	East	South
			3♥
All pass			

3♥ seems fairly normal, although these days some open 4♥! West and North make heavy passes and East has to decide – double or not? It is close, and I do not mind double, but personally I would pass. Put one of my hearts in any other suit and I would bid for sure.

If East does double then West will bid 3NT and may play there undoubled. North does best to lead hearts. Declarer can escape for -100 if he plays on diamonds and reads South's nine as a singleton but may well do something else and go more off. If declarer does make seven tricks that should be good score since North-South can make 140 in hearts on the favourable layout in the majors, and may even score ten tricks if the defence sets up the queen of clubs for a spade discard.

♠107
♥AQJ752
♦AJ
♣KQ9

♠AJ962 ♠4
♥3 ♥98
♦983 ♦Q107652
♣AJ83 ♣10765

♠KQ853
♥K1064
♦K4
♣42

HCP	
17	
10	2
11	

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

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable **Ben Norton**

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♥	Pass	4♥
All pass			

The West hand is certainly worth opening. With two sources of tricks, all the high cards in the long suits, and a shortage, not to mention the suitable position and vulnerability, it's a great opportunity to introduce the spade suit. North could double then bid hearts later, but a direct 2♥ overcall is fine. South raises that straight to game with his excellent support.

East will lead his singleton spade, regardless of whether his partner bid the suit. West captures dummy's king and returns the ♠2, a suit preference signal for clubs. East ruffs and shifts obediently to the ♣7, a high card denying interest in the suit. In this way, West knows that the only chance for a setting trick is to promote a trump. He wins the ♣A and plays a third spade, hoping his partner started with ♥QJx or ♥Qxx and declarer misguesses. No such luck.

♠AJ82
♥KQ4
♦K9542
♣9

♠KQ10 ♠953
♥98753 ♥A102
♦AQ ♦J106
♣KQ4 ♣10853

♠764
♥J6
♦873
♣AJ762

HCP	
13	
16	5
6	

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

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

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1NT
Dble	Pass	2♣	All Pass

After 1♦-P-1NT, the best action is double, take-out of diamonds. East hasn't got enough to pass, so has to make do with 2♣. If that ends the auction, North-South are booked to score +200, a very satisfactory result. Or if North is tempted to make a take-out double, South passes and everything depends on whether West guesses to remove to 2♥, which is favourite to make.

♠A1074
♥J107
♦K93
♣Q87

♠52
♥AK542
♦A65
♣K102

♠9863
♥63
♦QJ42
♣AJ9

♠KQJ
♥Q98
♦1087
♣6543

HCP	
10	
14	8
8	

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

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

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	All pass

For those playing a weak no-trump, there are many reasonable approaches with the West cards. I routinely open 1NT with five hearts to avoid rebid problems, but that tends to be less relevant in third seat.

Those that open 1♥ will indeed face the nightmare scenario when East responds 1♠. Any of pass, 1NT, 2♣, 2♦ and 2♥ could be the winning action, but I would be choosing between the overbid of 1NT and the slight misdescription of 2♣. These are both way ahead of 2♥, which rates to be a silly contract whenever partner has a singleton heart.

When West is declarer in no trumps she will usually make eight tricks whichever red suit she plays on. Heart contracts should make nine tricks, with declarer avoiding the club guess by throwing a club on dummy's long diamond.

♠K84
♥A65
♦976
♣KJ86

♠10975
♥KJ10984
♦8
♣102

♠AQJ6
♥Q3
♦AKJ103
♣Q5

♠32
♥72
♦Q542
♣A9743

HCP	
11	
4	19
6	

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

Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable **Heather Dhondy**

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All pass

Would you open a weak 2♥ with the West hand? I think there are too many down-sides. The position at the table (second seat after one pass) increases the likelihood that partner has values, and if that is the case you don't want to mislead them into thinking you are stronger, or possibly lose the spade suit. On this occasion it makes little difference even though partner is strong with four spades: four of either major will make with little problem in the play as both suits break and the spade finesse is working. There may be the odd pair missing game, so +420 for East-West will be marginally above average.

♠A10952
♥8
♦76432
♣Q4

♠QJ3
♥AK9762
♦Q
♣A93

♠764
♥54
♦AKJ1098
♣87

♠K8
♥QJ103
♦5
♣KJ10652

HCP	
6	
16	8
10	

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

Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable **Tom Paske**

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	All pass

Whilst game is a very poor contract here, I think it is normal to get to 4♥. As the hearts and diamonds break so poorly you are in danger of going several off. If you manage to get out for two down, you might be surprised at the score you get for minus 200!

If you bid the cold 3NT, you'll score even better, especially if you play it from the West side on a spade lead. South may switch to clubs, but it's completely safe to duck one round, win the continuation, cash your red-suit winners and play a spade at trick twelve. With only spades remaining, North has to give you your spade winner to make the last trick for +630.