

British Autumn Sim Pairs



Monday
7th October 2019

Welcome to the British Autumn Simultaneous Pairs. Thank you for playing. I hope you enjoy the event and also the commentary provided by a leading expert. The commentator for this set of hands is John Williams.

This is your last chance in 2019 to qualify for prizes. The leading overall pair drawn for this event will win £100. Every club which enters a heat of any EBU organised event, excluding any participating unaffiliated English clubs, will be included in a random draw. One 'entry' in the draw is awarded for every ten tables (or part thereof) which take part in any single heat. The draw will be made at the AGM in November.

You can find all the full details (including detail of the revised prize structure), results and last year's prize winners at www.ebu.co.uk/sims/

You can earn Blue points and they are awarded to the top third of the field. Provisional results will appear quickly but they won't be finalised and nor will the master point awards until all results are in and score corrections have been made. This can take up to three weeks. It really helps us if you can keep your scorecard for that period. Clubs should keep the travellers if still used.

Jeremy Dhondy, Chairman EBU

<p>♠ 87543 ♥ 3 ♦ 982 ♣ J1062</p> <p>♠ J2 ♠ AK106 ♥ AK1076 ♥ QJ ♦ Q7 ♦ AK4 ♣ 8743 ♣ AKQ9</p> <p>♠ Q9 ♥ 98542 ♦ J10653 ♣ 5</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="65 1249 188 1435"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="225 1249 464 1435"> <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>7</td><td>5</td><td>7</td><td>5</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>7</td><td>5</td><td>7</td><td>5</td><td>7</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		1		10	26	3		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	7	5	7	5	7	W	7	5	7	5	7	<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="480 801 986 952"> <thead> <tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>2♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>4♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>7NT</td><td>All Pass</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>It's very important to have a clear understanding as to what constitutes a positive response to partner's 2♣ opening. One very sound arrangement is to promise a 5-card suit headed by two of the top three honours (some like to also promise an outside ace or king but that's maybe a bit too restrictive). Scattered points (say, 8+) can be shown via 2NT. Here West's 2♥ response enables opener to immediately count 12 top tricks and after a natural 3♣ is raised to show 4-card support the total rises to 13. As it happens, a 4-1 club break negates that but, no matter, the bonus queen of diamonds fills that particular void.</p> <p>Whatever methods are employed, it's difficult to foresee any outcome other than 7NT – even if the partnership relies on a lucky break. No one will expect a major killing from bidding it but missing out will prove extremely expensive!</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass	4♣	Pass	7NT	All Pass
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<p>♠ A86 ♥ 109 ♦ A984 ♣ Q1032</p> <p>♠ Q9 ♠ 10542 ♥ K642 ♥ A73 ♦ Q52 ♦ K1076 ♣ AJ76 ♣ K9</p> <p>♠ KJ73 ♥ QJ85 ♦ J3 ♣ 854</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="65 1921 188 2107"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>10</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="225 1921 464 2107"> <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>1</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		10		12	10	8		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	1	1	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	1	1	1	-	-	W	1	1	1	-	-	<p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="480 1473 986 1579"> <thead> <tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>1NT</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>There will be an almighty scramble for seven tricks. EW have the balance of HCPs but if the defence unscramble their spades (low to the king and return to queen and ace), then switch passively to hearts after cashing two more spades, declarer has it all to do. However, I suspect he remains favourite in practice. The guess in diamonds is pivotal but the key to success is probably a club to the 9 at the first opportunity. And let's not forget that the opening lead may prove to be a critical bonus for declarer.</p> <p>An exciting little hand with the result surely split between +90 and -50 to EW.</p> <p>This will take a while before the dust clears....</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	Pass	1NT	All Pass						
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<p>♠ 54 ♥ KQ104 ♦ 8542 ♣ 965</p> <p>♠ AKJ10 ♠ Q9872 ♥ 93 ♥ AJ52 ♦ A97 ♦ K63 ♣ AKJ3 ♣ 7</p> <p>♠ 63 ♥ 876 ♦ QJ10 ♣ Q10842</p>	<p>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>2NT is the obvious and most descriptive opening bid (don't even think of paying undue attention to the weak hearts and opening 1♣ or 1♠). 3♠ in response is the universally accepted bid to show precisely five spades and four hearts, so East need look no further. The West hand is now looking good for slam provided partner has a heart control, so a cue-bidding sequence follows (West might prefer 5♦ to 5♣) and once he hears 5♥ the way is clear.</p> <p>Note that 6NT is equally cold, thanks to the favourable lie of the cards, but only those addicted to no-trumps at pairs are likely to reap the dubious reward for bidding it.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass	5♣	Pass	5♥	Pass	6♠	All Pass		
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5	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
20 10	N	-	-	-	-
5	S	-	-	-	-
	E	4	4	5	6
	W	4	4	5	6

<p>♠ AJ75 ♥ 9865 ♦ A54 ♣ K2</p> <p>♠ 843 ♠ KQ962 ♥ KQJ73 ♥ 2 ♦ K87 ♦ J963 ♣ 83 ♣ Q105</p> <p>♠ 10 ♥ A104 ♦ Q102 ♣ AJ9764</p>	<p>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This is the practical auction to the top spot. North has only a minimum opener and some might argue that South has only an invitational hand (in which case 3♣ describes it for most of us) but there is safety in numbers so any South who bashes 3NT will know that he's likely to be in good company and thus assured of a modest match-point return, even if the worst happens. Yes, there will be layouts where 5♣ is the only making game or where a club part-score – or even 2NT – is the maximum achievable result. However, the good intermediates encourage optimism.</p> <p>Bridge isn't always an exact science, which is part of its attraction. The decision to hope for the best will be easier for those who need a good result to right the ship after a disappointing start to the session. The rest is down to bullishness, pure and simple.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass			
West	North	East	South										
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All Pass													

HCP	Makeable contracts				
12	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
9 8	N	4	2	3	1
11	S	4	2	3	1
	E	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-

<p>♠ A74 ♥ AKQ86 ♦ A7642 ♣ -</p> <p>♠ 108632 ♠ KJ5 ♥ 43 ♥ 10975 ♦ J3 ♦ Q109 ♣ KQJ8 ♣ A62</p> <p>♠ Q9 ♥ J2 ♦ K85 ♣ 1097543</p>	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The bidding is straightforward. North is a shade light for his game-forcing rebid but he has no real choice, bearing in mind his shape and trick potential: after all, give partner king to four diamonds and a good black card and 6♦ might well be within range. As it is, he has to settle for 4♥ after false preference and hope that partner doesn't have some useless club holding.</p> <p>The play needs great care (5♦ would actually be a mite safer). East should realise that his trump holding warrants an attacking defence – so ace of clubs is called for. If declarer ruffs and draws trumps he will sink without trace as soon as he loses the lead in spades or diamonds. So, he needs to throw losing spades on the first two rounds of clubs, ruff the third round, draw trumps and play three rounds of diamonds before claiming the rest. Very difficult! Making 4♥ after a club lead will be a major triumph. On any other lead things are more peaceful.</p>	West	North	East	South		1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass	
West	North	East	South														
	1♥	Pass	1NT														
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥														
Pass	4♥	All Pass															

HCP	Makeable contracts				
17	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
7 10	N	2	5	4	2
6	S	2	5	4	2
	E	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-

<p>♠ 10983 ♥ A105 ♦ J7 ♣ A843</p> <p>♠ K75 ♠ AJ642 ♥ J4 ♥ 963 ♦ A8542 ♦ Q ♣ 652 ♣ KQ107</p> <p>♠ Q ♥ KQ872 ♦ K10963 ♣ J9</p>	<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> <td>3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>South has a problem after East opens 1♠ because he lacks the heart length or playing strength for a sound 2♥ overcall. He could pass and hope for the best, but the alternative is to show a weak red two-suiter by whatever means are at his disposal (here a Ghestem 3♣). Then, when 3♥ is passed round to him, it is West's turn to be bold. He knows that partner has either 15+ points or a 5-card spade suit, so 3♠ is a reasonable shot, which partner will not view as invitational.</p> <p>3♥ is an easy make for NS so 3♠ is an each-way bet for EW. It's tricky, given the adverse trump break, but the lie of the cards is kind otherwise, with no damaging opening lead available. Declarer needs to set up a heart ruff and then play clubs to advantage to reach his target. +140 to either side will score extremely well – but they won't be the only scores on the traveller!</p>	West	North	East	South			1♠	3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass	Pass	3♠	All Pass																																		
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<p>♠ J109 ♥ A8765 ♦ J5 ♣ K74</p> <p>♠ K2 ♠ 8763 ♥ 42 ♥ 93 ♦ AQ103 ♦ 42 ♣ AQJ63 ♣ 109852</p> <p>♠ AQ54 ♥ KQJ10 ♦ K9876 ♣ -</p>	<p>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1NT</td> <td>Dbl</td> <td>Rdbl</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>The auction is fraught with danger for NS. Note that after West's assumed intervention (which may be in the form of 2♣ rather than 1NT) there is a possibility that NS will go for a penalty and defend 2♣ doubled. This would be a very bad idea, as can be seen. The other danger is that South will become over-excited when partner shows good values with his original double. However, he should downgrade his expectations in view of West's helpful bidding, and respect partner's sign-off. It's true that 11 tricks can be made after a diamond lead by ruffing the third round high and eventually discarding two spades on the established diamonds. Even if West elects to pass initially, the auction should proceed 1♥-4♣-4♥-Pass. I suspect the great majority will be satisfied with +650 (but much less so with +620).</p>	West	North	East	South				1♦	1NT	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥	All Pass																													
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<p>♠ A10 ♥ 10863 ♦ AK86 ♣ J94</p> <p>♠ 7643 ♠ Q95 ♥ AQ9 ♥ K ♦ 93 ♦ QJ1074 ♣ Q1085 ♣ K763</p> <p>♠ KJ82 ♥ J7542 ♦ 52 ♣ A2</p>	<p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>South's use of Stayman, if followed by a 2♦ response and 2♥, would promise a 5-card suit supported by a 4-card spade suit. In that case North might now like the look of his hand but should stop to consider that he is minimum in terms of HCPs whilst partner need not be as strong as he actually is for the non-forcing 2♥ bid. Here, of course, he simply responds 2♥ to show his 4-card suit and South passes. End of auction.</p> <p>Nine tricks are easily available in hearts but there is no route to 10 unless EW find a way of crashing trump honours. This seems unlikely.</p> <p>It's difficult to see EW venturing to the three-level in diamonds – which would provide a possible happy bonus for their opponents – so +140 to NS looks to be a standard result.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥	All Pass																																					
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<p>♠ K8 ♥ QJ75 ♦ KQ9872 ♣ K</p> <p>♠ 75 ♠ 1032 ♥ K986 ♥ A32 ♦ AJ1063 ♦ - ♣ Q7 ♣ J1098543</p> <p>♠ AQJ964 ♥ 104 ♦ 54 ♣ A62</p>	<p>Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>This is how we would all like the auction to go though, to be honest, North is just as likely to raise spades to game as to bid 3NT: after all, he has the values for game and Kx opposite a known six-card suit is perfectly normal and adequate support.</p> <p>However, this is pairs, and some will consider that there may be the same number of tricks in no-trumps as in spades. It all depends on whether South holds ace of clubs or not. Unfortunately, there isn't time to try to find out, so 3NT will be a brave effort reserved for those who specialise in brave efforts. (It's assumed in all this that East hasn't backed in with 3♣, as such a bid means something else for most of us.)</p> <p>4♠ might succeed anyway, of course, unless the defence starts with ace and another heart, followed by ace and another diamond. Gnashed teeth, in that case!</p>	West	North	East	South		1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass	
West	North	East	South														
	1♦	Pass	1♠														
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♠														
Pass	3NT	All Pass															

HCP	Makeable contracts					
14		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
10 5	N	-	3	1	3	3
11	S	-	3	1	3	3
	E	2	-	-	-	-
	W	2	-	-	-	-

<p>♠ Q3 ♥ QJ9 ♦ K82 ♣ 109842</p> <p>♠ 7652 ♠ AKJ108 ♥ 7532 ♥ 86 ♦ J ♦ Q9754 ♣ AJ63 ♣ K</p> <p>♠ 94 ♥ AK104 ♦ A1063 ♣ Q75</p>	<p>Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Dbl</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>Another auction which relies on a degree of wishful thinking. We all presumably play that a jump raise after the opponents double for take-out is pre-emptive: many like to promise a fifth spade, particularly if partner's opening promises only four, but here the jump is just too tempting to resist: four trumps, an ace and a singleton make 2♠ just a tad wimp-ish.</p> <p>Even then, East's raise to game is by no means clear-cut. He has good shape but needs partner to hold the right cards (primarily, ace of clubs!) Many will stay out of game – and cannot be blamed at all for doing so.</p> <p>Results will vary. What is clear is that 4♠ making will be a clear top and +170 a respectable score.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♠	Dbl	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass
West	North	East	South										
		1♠	Dbl										
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass										

HCP	Makeable contracts					
8		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
6 13	N	1	-	1	-	-
13	S	1	-	1	-	-
	E	-	1	-	4	-
	W	-	1	-	4	-

<p>♠ 9763 ♥ AJ3 ♦ K863 ♣ K9</p> <p>♠ KJ ♠ A10852 ♥ K64 ♥ Q10872 ♦ 10752 ♦ - ♣ AJ76 ♣ 1082</p> <p>♠ Q4 ♥ 95 ♦ AQJ94 ♣ Q543</p>	<p>Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>South's opening bid passes for commonplace these days, which silences West and leads to North making a value raise in diamonds after first showing his meagre spade suit. Should EW intervene? It's difficult to see how they can sensibly do so, though it would be a different story perhaps if North preferred to raise diamonds at his first turn. In theory at least, EW have a game available in hearts, whilst 3♦ will also make for NS unless the defenders can engineer a trump trick after playing spades to advantage.</p> <p>Mind you, it's one thing to reach 4♥ and quite another to make it. Some good guessing is required. +420 will be a wonderful but perhaps unlikely result for EW. Still, any plus score for them will be fairly good: even -50 will be no disaster, compared with -110.</p>	West	North	East	South				1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass	3♦	All Pass	
West	North	East	South														
			1♦														
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣														
Pass	3♦	All Pass															

HCP	Makeable contracts					
11		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
12 6	N	-	2	-	-	-
11	S	-	2	-	-	-
	E	2	-	4	2	-
	W	3	-	4	2	-

<p>♠ K63 ♥ KJ ♦ Q842 ♣ A1054</p> <p>♠ J98 ♠ AQ10742 ♥ A1086 ♥ 9752 ♦ AJ1073 ♦ 65 ♣ 6 ♣ J</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ Q43 ♦ K9 ♣ KQ98732</p>	<p>Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♠</td> <td>5♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dbl</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>The rule of 19 allows West to consider opening 1♦ but many might feel inclined to wait and see. If prudence prevails, meaning that North can open a standard 1NT, East will surely overcall 2♠ (perhaps encouraged a little by the vulnerability). If NS have Lebensohl in their armoury, then 3♣ shows decent values (2NT would be a prelude to attempting to play no higher than 3♣). West will surely come to life with 4♠, regardless of whether he opened with 1♦ or a pass, and the first of two unmakeable contracts will have been reached. The second is 5♣.</p> <p>The score-slip will feature a variety of results, topped by -50 or -100 either way. Any plus score greater than these on either side will surely look good.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	1NT	2♠	3♣	4♠	5♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl	All Pass																																		
West	North	East	South																																														
Pass	1NT	2♠	3♣																																														
4♠	5♣	Pass	Pass																																														
Dbl	All Pass																																																
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>♣</td> <td>♦</td> <td>♥</td> <td>♠</td> <td>NT</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>13</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>4</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td> <td>7</td> <td>S</td> <td>4</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		13		N	4	-	-	-	-	10	7	S	4	-	-	-	-			E	-	1	3	3	-			W	-	1	3	3	-	
HCP		Makeable contracts																																															
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13		N	4	-	-	-	-																																										
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		E	-	1	3	3	-																																										
		W	-	1	3	3	-																																										

<p>♠ AK ♥ A84 ♦ 106543 ♣ K42</p> <p>♠ QJ10 ♠ 8632 ♥ K1053 ♥ Q762 ♦ A2 ♦ Q87 ♣ A873 ♣ J9</p> <p>♠ 9754 ♥ J9 ♦ KJ9 ♣ Q1065</p>	<p>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Assuming that a 1NT opening is passed around to West, some bull-ish competitors in that seat will double, hoping for the best. The argument against doing so is that it's risky: on the other hand, there are two chances of the manoeuvre working out, against one of it failing – partner might be (a) strong and balanced (in which case, hurrah!) (b) strong and unbalanced (a bit messy, but should survive OK), against (c) weak and balanced (shame!). This is clearly a case where discretion is the working favourite. However, if 1NT doubled passes round to South he won't know which side has the balance of points and may opt to run to one of his two suits, to his disadvantage.</p> <p>On balance, we're probably dealing with 1NT undoubled here and that's straightforward for NS. On a heart lead declarer should lose no more than three hearts, one club and one diamond, by which time he has garnered eight tricks of his own. +120 should score reasonably well. There will be a mixed bag, however.</p>	West	North	East	South		1NT	All Pass																																									
West	North	East	South																																														
	1NT	All Pass																																															
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>♣</td> <td>♦</td> <td>♥</td> <td>♠</td> <td>NT</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td>5</td> <td>S</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		14		N	3	3	-	1	2	14	5	S	3	3	-	1	2			E	-	-	1	-	-			W	-	-	1	-	-	
HCP		Makeable contracts																																															
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																											
14		N	3	3	-	1	2																																										
14	5	S	3	3	-	1	2																																										
		E	-	-	1	-	-																																										
		W	-	-	1	-	-																																										

<p>♠ Q9854 ♥ 9 ♦ K103 ♣ 8632</p> <p>♠ A3 ♠ K72 ♥ J3 ♥ AQ642 ♦ 842 ♦ Q95 ♣ KQJ954 ♣ A10</p> <p>♠ J106 ♥ K10875 ♦ AJ76 ♣ 7</p>	<p>Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>This a textbook auction for most of us, 2♣ promising 10+HCPs and 2NT 15-19 (where 3NT would show 15-17 and no further interest in the majors. Holding a doubleton heart, West has no reason to look further than 3NT.</p> <p>The opening lead is likely to be a spade, offering declarer nine top tricks. Some greedy declarers might consider the heart finesse worthwhile and go down when South wins and finds the switch to a low diamond. On the other hand, if South wins and doesn't find the switch, there is an overtrick waiting.</p> <p>Of the three possible outcomes, -50, +400 and +430, it's possible that the +430s will outweigh the -50s, with the +400s forming the middle wedge. Who can tell? What is certain is that any who concede 50 or 430 will be mighty upset with themselves.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass																																		
West	North	East	South																																														
		1♥	Pass																																														
2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass																																														
3NT	All Pass																																																
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HCP		Makeable contracts																																															
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																											
5		N	-	-	-	1	-																																										
11	15	S	-	-	-	1	-																																										
		E	3	-	1	-	3																																										
		W	3	-	1	-	3																																										

<p>♠ J9 ♥ KJ98 ♦ QJ10653 ♣ 10</p> <p>♠ 43 ♠ Q107652 ♥ 742 ♥ 63 ♦ A874 ♦ 2 ♣ 9532 ♣ AJ86</p> <p>♠ AK8 ♥ AQ105 ♦ K9 ♣ KQ74</p>	<p>Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>It looks best for North to look for a heart fit, being open in two suits. The method used may be simple Stayman, as here, or any version of 5-card Stayman, but the end result is likely to be the same. There are 11 easy tricks most of the time but, if North is declarer then East has a possible singleton diamond lead, leading to a ruff and 10 tricks only. If South is declarer, West must find a club lead and East a diamond switch to achieve the same result.</p> <p>On the other hand, it is open to North to eschew science and simply raise 2NT to 3NT. That results in 11 certain tricks and a top score.</p> <p>Again, there are three likely results for NS: +420, +450 and +460. The big winners are +460 and the (not so big) losers +420.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass	
West	North	East	South										
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥										
Pass	4♥	All Pass											

HCP		Makeable contracts					
8	7	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
4	21	N	2	5	4	1	5
		S	2	5	4	1	5
		E	-	-	-	-	-
		W	-	-	-	-	-

<p>♠ 72 ♥ A106 ♦ KQJ63 ♣ J106</p> <p>♠ KQ9653 ♠ AJ8 ♥ K73 ♥ 954 ♦ 72 ♦ A985 ♣ K5 ♣ A84</p> <p>♠ 104 ♥ QJ82 ♦ 104 ♣ Q9732</p>	<p>Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>There is a good case for the auction proceeding as above: when East is as flat as this, with no ruff available in the short trump hand, it is very possible that the same number of tricks are available in no-trumps as in spades. But this isn't certain, of course: suppose West's king of hearts is the king of diamonds – then there are just three losers in spades but possibly 5 in no-trumps, if hearts are led and turn out to be 5-2.</p> <p>It's very unfortunate that 4♠ has no real chance of success, except on the unlikely opening lead of ace of hearts (and who would do that with king of diamonds an obvious alternative?) Declarer will have no choice eventually but to lead up to his king of hearts, with fingers crossed. By contrast, even a heart lead can't damage 3NT. Who knows what will be the commonest score for EW – a triumphant +600 or an agonising -100?</p>	West	North	East	South	1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass
West	North	East	South										
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass										
2♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass										

HCP		Makeable contracts					
11	13	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
11	5	N	2	1	-	-	-
		S	2	1	-	-	-
		E	-	-	-	3	3
		W	-	-	-	3	3

<p>♠ AKQJ64 ♥ J ♦ AQJ ♣ A54</p> <p>♠ 10952 ♠ - ♥ K98 ♥ AQ1064 ♦ 875 ♦ K10942 ♣ J98 ♣ K107</p> <p>♠ 873 ♥ 7532 ♦ 63 ♣ Q632</p>	<p>Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>3♥</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>4♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Assuming East gets in the way with 2♥, South's pass will serve as a negative and West's 3♥ will further the competitive barrage. North, with nine top tricks, will surely take any pressure off partner by jumping to 4♠, though 3♠ would be enough in practice as partner's ruffing value and outside queen would allow him to raise to game with confidence.</p> <p>There is nothing to the play, king of clubs being well-placed, so 4♠ making is sure to be the favourite landing place.</p> <p>Note that super-optimistic EW pairs can get away with -300 in 5♥ doubled, losing just two clubs and two diamonds. However, it's likely that only those desperate for a good result will take that particular plunge. Or am I wrong?</p>	West	North	East	South	3♥	2♣	2♥	Pass		4♠	All Pass	
West	North	East	South										
3♥	2♣	2♥	Pass										
	4♠	All Pass											

HCP		Makeable contracts					
22	12	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
4	2	N	2	-	-	4	2
		S	2	-	-	4	2
		E	-	3	3	-	-
		W	-	3	3	-	-

<p>♠ Q74 ♥ K ♦ KJ1042 ♣ 9652</p> <p>♠ J1065 ♠ A98 ♥ J92 ♥ 87643 ♦ Q96 ♦ 85 ♣ J103 ♣ AK7</p> <p>♠ K32 ♥ AQ105 ♦ A73 ♣ Q84</p> <table border="1"> <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> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>9</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>11</td> <td>S</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>15</td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		9		N	4	4	3	2	4	5	11	S	4	4	3	2	4			E	-	-	-	-	-		15	W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Should East open the bidding with 1♥? An ace and an ace-king are usually considered to be ample excuse these days but opening 1♥ on 5-small carries obvious risks when it comes to a rebid. Those who pass, feeling inadequate, will be mightily relieved to hear South opening 1♥ instead! North has to stretch a little to respond 2♦ but the now working king of hearts and the decent suit make the bid slightly preferable to 1NT, which might wrong-side the play crucially. South has an obvious 3NT bid over 2♦.</p> <p>3NT is a slightly fortunate make as no opening lead is particularly damaging as the cards lie. Declarer can win a spade lead with the king, for example, and take the diamond finesse the right way to protect his queen of spades in dummy. Then the kindly fall of jack of hearts provides an overtrick. Well done, as not all will get there.</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass			
HCP		Makeable contracts																																																															
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																											
9		N	4	4	3	2	4																																																										
5	11	S	4	4	3	2	4																																																										
		E	-	-	-	-	-																																																										
	15	W	-	-	-	-	-																																																										
West	North	East	South																																																														
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<p>♠ 864 ♥ K2 ♦ 52 ♣ A108432</p> <p>♠ K972 ♠ J105 ♥ 876 ♥ QJ10 ♦ J4 ♦ AKQ1083 ♣ K975 ♣ Q</p> <p>♠ AQ3 ♥ A9543 ♦ 976 ♣ J6</p> <table border="1"> <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> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>7</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>15</td> <td>S</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>11</td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		7		N	1	-	-	-	-	7	15	S	1	-	-	-	-			E	-	2	-	1	1		11	W	-	2	-	1	1	<p>Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♣</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The auction looks normal enough, though some intrepid Souths will venture a 1♥ opening - not ideal with a weak-ish suit and uncertain assets outside in the form of queen of spades and jack of clubs. Even if South opens, the contract looks likely to be played in a diamond part-score. Anyone attempting game in no-trumps is sure to fail in quick time.</p> <p>3♦ by East can be defeated on the unlikely lead of a low heart because there is then a third-round ruff to go with top tricks in spades and clubs.</p> <p>+110 to EW figures to be the normal result. Well done to any NS pairs who buck the trend.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	Pass	3♣	3♦	All Pass				
HCP		Makeable contracts																																																															
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																											
7		N	1	-	-	-	-																																																										
7	15	S	1	-	-	-	-																																																										
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<p>♠ Q98 ♥ AJ42 ♦ Q4 ♣ 10954</p> <p>♠ K65432 ♠ A ♥ 3 ♥ K876 ♦ 8 ♦ AJ7652 ♣ A8763 ♣ K2</p> <p>♠ J107 ♥ Q1095 ♦ K1093 ♣ QJ</p> <table border="1"> <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> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>9</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>15</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>9</td> <td>W</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		9		N	-	-	-	-	1	7	15	S	-	-	-	-	1			E	3	2	1	3	-		9	W	3	2	1	3	-	<p>Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This is a very tricky one. If West has Lucas Two Bids available, showing a weak two-suited hand, he will surely open 2♠ here. If he has no such luxury but has weak two-bids available, he surely won't be able to resist opening 2♠ anyway. If he has neither option but hopes to get into the bidding later, he will get that chance after a 1♦ opening by partner and a pass by South. What will happen after that is anyone's guess: over 1♠ East may rebid 3♦ or a dubious 2♥ (the latter works better, oddly enough, because West is likely to persist with 2♠ and play there).</p> <p>The chances are that EW will overstretch one way or another and go minus, meaning that 2♠ making is a decent score – even better with an overtrick.</p> <p>Once again, conservative bidding at pairs proves the winner....</p>	West	North	East	South	2♠	All Pass										
HCP		Makeable contracts																																																															
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<p>♠ 964 ♥ - ♦ A10874 ♣ KQJ95</p> <p>♠ J8 ♠ K75 ♥ Q87654 ♥ AK102 ♦ J62 ♦ KQ3 ♣ 64 ♣ A82</p> <p>♠ AQ1032 ♥ J93 ♦ 95 ♣ 1073</p>	<p>Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> <td>Db1</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♥</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>The only chance EW have to actually make a contract is for West to pass over 1♠ and for East to double again after the 2♠ raise. Then they might just be allowed to play in 3♥. That would constitute a triumph, probably.</p> <p>However, those who bash 4♥ and go the inevitable one down will soon discover that they have achieved a save, in the sense that 3♠ by NS is an easy make.</p> <p>Silly game sometimes, isn't it?</p> <p>Scores on the traveller will vary between +50 and +140 to NS and +140 to EW. There may be some silly ones as well....</p>	West	North	East	South		1♦	Db1	1♠	2♥	2♠	4♥	All Pass																														
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<p>♠ K3 ♥ 753 ♦ 98743 ♣ 762</p> <p>♠ A ♠ QJ107 ♥ J92 ♥ KQ64 ♦ KQ652 ♦ 10 ♣ 10854 ♣ AQJ9</p> <p>♠ 986542 ♥ A108 ♦ AJ ♣ K3</p>	<p>Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>1♣ is the safest opening bid for East, leaving all possible fits open. However, when South overcalls 1♠ and West shows his diamond suit, East knows that no major suit fit is likely (West would have doubled 1♠ to show a 4-card heart suit). As West has also promised 10+ HCPs, 3NT becomes the obvious resting place. This assumes that West prefers his diamond bid to supporting clubs: it's optional but flexible, in that if North can support spades, he can still show club support, if able.</p> <p>Declarer will have no problem in arriving at nine tricks, whatever the opening lead. A spade opening sets up North's king, to go with king of clubs and the two red aces, so an overtrick is unlikely. Still, it will be unlikely for +600 to EW to be the only score on the traveller....</p>	West	North	East	South			1♣	1♠	2♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass																														
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<p>♠ 7432 ♥ 964 ♦ 52 ♣ KJ43</p> <p>♠ J8 ♠ A ♥ KJ875 ♥ Q2 ♦ Q73 ♦ AKJ1084 ♣ A75 ♣ Q862</p> <p>♠ KQ10965 ♥ A103 ♦ 96 ♣ 109</p>	<p>Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Db1</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5♦</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Even if playing weak two bids of 6-10 HCPs rather than the normal 5-9, the South hand is arguably too strong for a weak 2♠. This shuts out West, who hasn't quite enough for a vulnerable 2♥ overcall and it gives North the opportunity to up the ante with 2♠. East has no sensible alternative to a 3♦ overcall now. South persists with 3♠, denying West the opportunity for a forcing 3♥ bid: he has to choose between raising diamonds and making a strength-showing double (this could never be interpreted as a trump stack!). East will try 4♣, raised by West to 5♦. All very convoluted, thanks to NS. Anyone who bashes 6♦ now will be at risk of disaster on a club lead (East would have had no such problem). Note that the other potential disaster is 3NT – no chance on a spade lead. Anyone who lands 6♦ will have a top: playing in hearts is less likely but represents a good second best. 5♦+1 is OK too.</p>	West	North	East	South				1♠	Pass	2♠	3♦	3♠	Db1	Pass	4♣	Pass	5♦	All Pass																								
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<p>♠ Q1065 ♥ Q76 ♦ K985 ♣ K3</p> <p>♠ 32 ♠ KJ874 ♥ 54 ♥ KJ103 ♦ A432 ♦ 107 ♣ QJ1084 ♣ 97</p> <p>♠ A9 ♥ A982 ♦ QJ6 ♣ A652</p>	<p>Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>West</td> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>The above auction will be fairly common, assuming North employs 2♣ as a check-back mechanism to see whether partner holds five hearts (the 2♦ reply shows a minimum 1NT rebid without five hearts or three spades). North will tend to proceed to 3NT anyway, playing with the field, though he will be aware that the contract is on a knife-edge. 3NT takes some playing after the obvious club lead. There is little time to mess around. The winning line is to win in hand and establish diamonds, win the second club, cash king of diamonds and play a spade to the ace, then throw East on lead by running the 9. By now he will have discarded a heart and a spade perforce. The ninth trick will materialise in spades or hearts, depending on how the play develops. Anyone who makes +400 thoroughly deserves his top. -50 is a likelier score and Cautious Cuthberts may well find +120 to be above average.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass	
West	North	East	South																		
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥																		
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT																		
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦																		
Pass	3NT	All Pass																			

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
10	N 1	3	3	2	3
7 8	S 1	2	2	2	3
15	E -	-	-	-	-
	W -	-	-	-	-

<p>♠ 10843 ♥ A7 ♦ 865 ♣ AKJ7</p> <p>♠ QJ72 ♠ K96 ♥ 94 ♥ K653 ♦ 10943 ♦ KJ2 ♣ 543 ♣ Q106</p> <p>♠ A5 ♥ QJ1082 ♦ AQ7 ♣ 982</p>	<p>Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>West</td> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>All roads lead to 3NT by North.</p> <p>A heart lead won't be attractive to East. Neither will anything else but if leading from a 3-card suit a spade looks best, seeing that the opponents have not investigated a fit there. And it's the best lead, setting up a possible three tricks quickly. Declarer won't be aware of any blockage in the spade suit so will have no choice but to knock out king of hearts and then rely on a successful finesse in either clubs or diamonds.</p> <p>Is there anything to guide declarer as to which finesse is the best one to go for? Absolutely nothing, though West's discards may prove helpful. As it happens the cards lie so favourably that either play works, making +400 a near-universal score. On a non-spade lead, even +430 is possible.</p>	West	North	East	South		1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass			
West	North	East	South														
	1NT	Pass	2♦														
Pass	2♥	Pass	3NT														
All Pass																	

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
12	N 4	2	4	2	3
3 12	S 4	2	4	2	3
13	E -	-	-	-	-
	W -	-	-	-	-

<p>♠ A107653 ♥ A10 ♦ 54 ♣ KJ2</p> <p>♠ J94 ♠ K8 ♥ K97432 ♥ 8 ♦ 76 ♦ KQJ932 ♣ A7 ♣ 8643</p> <p>♠ Q2 ♥ QJ65 ♦ A108 ♣ Q1095</p>	<p>Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>West</td> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>3♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Those Easts playing weak 2s in three suits will be delighted to be able to open 2♦. In the absence of that, 3♦ is a fair gamble at game all. North will surely protect with 3♠ and South will bid one for the road, trusting in a six-card suit opposite,</p> <p>When king of diamonds is led, declarer needs to avoid two trump losers. Assuming the suit breaks 3-2, any sensible line works, after which a winning heart finesse is all that's required for +620.</p> <p>This should be a near-universal score to NS.</p> <p>Oh yes?....</p>	West	North	East	South			3♦	Pass	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass			
West	North	East	South														
		3♦	Pass														
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠														
All Pass																	

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
12	N 3	-	1	4	1
8 9	S 3	-	1	4	1
11	E -	1	-	-	-
	W -	1	-	-	-

<p>♠ 1086 ♥ J965 ♦ - ♣ QJ9865</p> <p>♠ Q954 ♠ AJ73 ♥ K102 ♥ Q843 ♦ KJ54 ♦ AQ63 ♣ K2 ♣ 10</p> <p>♠ K2 ♥ A7 ♦ 109872 ♣ A743</p>	<p>Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">West</td> <td style="text-align: center;">North</td> <td style="text-align: center;">East</td> <td style="text-align: left;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>4♠ is a normal spot but can only make if the defence is kind (eg queen of clubs to the ace followed by ace and another heart).</p> <p>A totally different result is available if South finds a diamond return at trick two. He needs to lead the 10 to be sure of a heart return and a second ruff. That's two down!</p> <p>If the contract is played by East, ten of diamonds becomes a perfectly reasonable opening lead and North can't go wrong in returning to partner's hand for a second ruff: either a heart or a club will do. Indeed, after a club return, a second ruff and a trump exit, declarer should be left to play hearts himself. Ouch! EW scores will vary between -150 and +420, the latter being a very lucky top.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass
West	North	East	South														
			Pass														
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass														
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass														

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
4	N	4	-	-	-
12 13	S	4	-	-	-
11	E	-	3	-	1 1
	W	-	3	-	2 1

<p>♠ K1098765 ♥ - ♦ 97542 ♣ 10</p> <p>♠ AJ3 ♠ 2 ♥ AQJ732 ♥ K4 ♦ - ♦ KQJ106 ♣ AJ83 ♣ K7542</p> <p>♠ Q4 ♥ 109865 ♦ A83 ♣ Q96</p>	<p>Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">West</td> <td style="text-align: center;">North</td> <td style="text-align: center;">East</td> <td style="text-align: left;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♥</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>4♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>If North lacks the resolve to interfere in spades, EW have an easier ride (1♥-2♦-3♣-4♣-6♣, or somesuch). It's still the case that those reaching 6♣ or 6♥ and making their contract will fully deserve their excellent result. Even 7♣ is makeable with a good guess in trumps – but only if played by West. If 6♣ is played by East, North might just chance a Lightner double in the hope of a heart lead, though in practice this will misfire in the likely absence of a second trick.</p> <p>It's conceivable that 4♥ +2 won't be a terrible score and that 6♥ making will be a top. Reading the club position is pivotal and picking up the suit without loss is maybe a little easier if North has pre-empted in spades, suggesting shape in the absence of HCPs.</p> <p>A great hand – providing you end up without egg on your face!</p>	West	North	East	South	1♥	3♠	4♦	Pass	5♥	Pass	6♥	All Pass
West	North	East	South										
1♥	3♠	4♦	Pass										
5♥	Pass	6♥	All Pass										

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
3	N	-	-	1	-
17 12	S	-	-	1	-
8	E	6	4	6	- 5
	W	7	4	6	- 5

<p>♠ J72 ♥ AK108 ♦ 10863 ♣ J7</p> <p>♠ KQ943 ♠ 865 ♥ 64 ♥ 73 ♦ Q7 ♦ KJ92 ♣ KQ82 ♣ A543</p> <p>♠ A10 ♥ QJ952 ♦ A54 ♣ 1096</p>	<p>Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">West</td> <td style="text-align: center;">North</td> <td style="text-align: center;">East</td> <td style="text-align: left;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>South's opening is quite acceptable third-in-hand, as is North's pre-emptive raise after the 1♠ overcall. The winning action for EW now is a penalty double followed by two rounds of clubs and a spade switch – but that's unlikely on all counts.</p> <p>Otherwise, it becomes imperative for East to contest with 3♠, which should end the auction and result in a fine score for his side. Declarer has only to play carefully, leading trumps from dummy twice, in order to hit the jackpot. Left to play in 3♥ undoubled, South will escape for -100 and an excellent score. Indeed, if the opening lead is king of spades, he will actually achieve an even better result with +140.</p> <p>Another fine pairs hand.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠	3♥	3♠	All Pass
West	North	East	South										
	Pass	Pass	1♥										
1♠	3♥	3♠	All Pass										

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
9	N	-	-	2	-
12 8	S	-	-	2	-
11	E	3	1	-	3 -
	W	3	1	-	3 -

<p>♠AQ6 ♥Q1053 ♦A86 ♣A93</p> <p>♠1085 ♠K94 ♥J2 ♥K974 ♦Q52 ♦943 ♣KQJ87 ♣1062</p> <p>♠J732 ♥A86 ♦KJ107 ♣54</p>	<p>Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>As in a previous hand, South's 2♣ is "checkback", asking about playing strength and the possibility of a fifth heart or third spade. The latter doesn't interest him here, but the jump indicates a good 16 or 17 points, so 3NT becomes the final contract.</p> <p>If East happens on a club lead, declarer will be up against it and is very likely to make a wrong choice, playing East for club length and finessing diamonds into what he perceives as the non-danger hand. That will result in a quick demise. Finessing diamonds the other way, coupled with the favourable lie of the spade suit, spells happiness. Results will be split between happiness and grief.</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass																					
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<p>♠Q742 ♥KQ5 ♦AK5 ♣QJ7</p> <p>♠96 ♠10853 ♥43 ♥102 ♦J1073 ♦Q98 ♣A6432 ♣K1085</p> <p>♠AKJ ♥AJ9876 ♦642 ♣9</p>	<p>Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>South has a raise to 2½♥ by way of rebid. 2♥ would be an underbid but the slight overbid of 3♥ is justified by the decent 6-card heart suit, the strong spade holding and the singleton club. This slightly bold action means that North will waste little time in cue-bidding his ace of diamonds and RKC/B will take care of the rest. If South is wary of taking control and prefers 4♠ to 4NT, then it will be North who takes control by cue-bidding his king of diamonds. Slam is reached either way.</p> <p>6♥ making should prove to be a popular score. There won't be too many match points for those who stay short.</p>	West	North	East	South				1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♦	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♠	Pass	6♥	All Pass																					
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<p>♠1094 ♥1092 ♦Q43 ♣K974</p> <p>♠QJ65 ♠72 ♥Q5 ♥J8643 ♦K62 ♦975 ♣A653 ♣J82</p> <p>♠AK83 ♥AK7 ♦AJ108 ♣Q10</p>	<p>Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Dbl</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>For most of us, a double of the 2♦ transfer in this sequence would be merely lead-directing, but one has to start somewhere. When East runs to the obvious 2♥ South has to come out of the bushes: 3♥ is the strongest noise he can make in doing so, promising four spades and a pretty big hand (it's also superior to 2NT, which may confuse partner as to overall strength and may lead to disaster if partner also has short clubs and bids 3NT notwithstanding). South might well prefer a hopeful 3NT to 3♥.</p> <p>3NT is marginally better played by South, as it happens, because queen of hearts lead adds an additional chance of arriving at nine quick tricks. Played by North on a heart lead, it's critical to guess clubs correctly. Otherwise, a minus score beckons.</p> <p>A tricky hand on which to finish...</p>	West	North	East	South	1NT	Pass	2♦	Dbl	Pass	Pass	2♥	3♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass																											
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