British Autumn Sim Pairs



Monday
7th October 2019

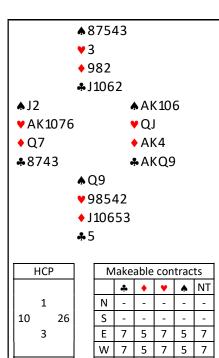
Welcome to the British Autumn Simultaneous Pairs. Thank you for playing. I hope you enjoy the event and also the commentary provided by a leading expert. The commentator for this set of hands is John Williams.

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



Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all						
West	North	East	South			
	Pass	2♣	Pass			
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass			
4 *	Pass	7NT	All Pass			

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.

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!

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			W	7	5	7	5	17
		^	86					
		v 1	09					
	◆A984							
		. C	10	32				
	♠ Q9	♦ 10542						
	♥ K642	♥ A73						
	♦ Q52			•	▶ K1	076	6	
	♣ AJ76			•	₽K9)		
		٨K	J73	3				
		v C) (18	5				
	♦ J3							
		. 8	54					
	НСР		N	1ake	able	con	trac	ts

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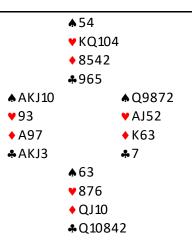
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Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable						
West	North	East	South			
		Pass	Pass			
1NT	All Pass					

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.

An exciting little hand with the result surely split between +90 and -50 to EW.

This will take a while before the dust clears....



HCP

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QJ 1 0							
Q10	842	<u> </u>					
Makeable contracts							
	*	•	*	٨	NT		
N	-	-	-	-	-		
						iΙ	

Board 3: Dealer South: EW vulnerable West North South Fast Pass 2NT Pass 3♠ **Pass** 4. Pass 4 • Pass 5. Pass **5** 🕶 **Pass** 6♠ All Pass

2NT is the obvious and most descriptive opening bid (don't even think of paying undue attention to the weak hearts and opening 1 + 0 or 1 + 0). 3 + 0 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 + 0 to 5 + 0) and once he hears 5 + 0 the way is clear.

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.

South 3NT

		W	4	4	5	6	
	^	J75	5				
	y 9	86	5				
	• A	154					
	. K	(2					
♦ 843			4	١K٥	296	2	
♥KQJ73			•	2			
♦ K87			•	J 9	63		
. 83			4	Q:	105		
	1	0					
	V /	104	4				
	♦ Q102						
	. A	J97	764				

Board 11 Bearer West 17 an					
	West	North	East		
	Pass All Pass	1NT	Pass		
		e practical			

Board 4: Dealer West: All vulnerable

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 3.4 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 5.4 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.

HCP Makeable contracts ٨ 4 12 Ν 4 3 1 9 8 4 3 1 4 2 11 F W

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.

	♦ A74				
	♥AKQ86				
	♦ A7642				
	♣ -				
♠ 108632	♠KJ5				
v 43	v 10975				
♦ J3	◆Q109				
♣ KQJ8	♣ A62				
	♠ Q9				
	♥ J2				
♦ K85					
	4 1097543				

HCP

17

6

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7

Makeable contracts					
	*	•	>	٨	NT
N	2	5	4	2	2
S	2	5	4	2	2
Ε	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West North East South

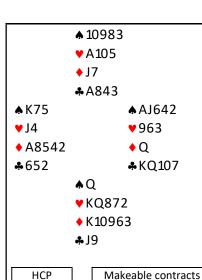
1 ♥ Pass 1NT

Pass 3 ◆ Pass 3 ♥

Pass 4 ♥ All Pass

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.

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.



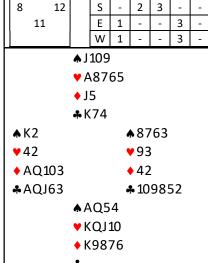
Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable						
West	North	East	Sout			
		1♠	3♣			
Pass	3♥	Pass	Pass			
3♠	All Pass					
playing	as a proble strength fo	r a sound	2♥ ove			

ast opens 1♠ because he lacks the heart length or ♥ 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.

South

Pass

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!



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Makeable contracts

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2 5 2 1

Makeable contracts

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3 1

1 3 1 1

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W

♠ NT

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5 2 1

♠ NT

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HCP

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Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable					
West	North	East	South		
			1♦		
1NT	Dbl	Rdble	Pass		
2♣	Pass	Pass	4♣		
Pass	4♥	All Pass			

The auction is fraught with danger for NS. Note that after West's assumed intervention (which may be in the form of 2.4 rather than 1NT) there is a possibility that NS will go for a penalty and defend 2.4 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).

	♠ A 10	
	v 10863	
	♦ AK86	
	♣ J94	
↑ 7643		♠ Q95
♥AQ9		♥ K
♦ 93		♦ QJ1074
♣Q1085		♣ K763
	♦ KJ82	
	♥ J7542	
	♦ 52	
	♣ A2	

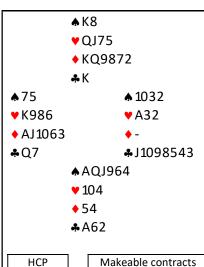
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Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all						
West	North	East	South			
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣			
Pass	2♥	All Pass				

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.

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.

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.



3 | 3

3 3

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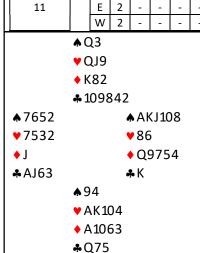
3 | 1 |

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable							
West	East	South					
	1♦	Pass	1♠				
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♠				
Pass	3NT	All Pass					

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.

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 3.4, as such a bid means something else for most of us.)

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!



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Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1♠	Dbl
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

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.

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.

Results will vary. What is clear is that 4 making will be a clear top and +170 a respectable score.

HCP				Makeable contracts					
					*	•	>	^	NT
8	8			Ν	1	ı	1	-	-
6		13		S	1	-	1	-	-
	13	13		Ε	-	1	-	4	-
			W	-	1	-	4	-	

♦9763 ♥AJ3 ♦K863 ♣K9

♦ KJ **♦** A10852 **♥** K64 **♥** Q10872 **♦** -

♥95◆AQJ94♣Q543

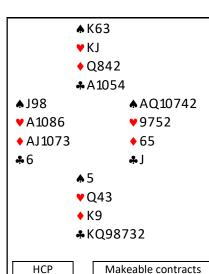
	HCP		Makeable contracts					ts
				*	•	>	^	NT
	11		Ν	ı	2	-	ı	-
12		6	S	-	2	-	-	-
	11		Ε	2	-	4	2	-
			W	3	ı	4	2	1

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

North	East	Soutl		
		1 🔷		
1♠	Pass	2♣		
3♦	All Pass			
	1 🛦	1♠ Pass		

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 fist 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.

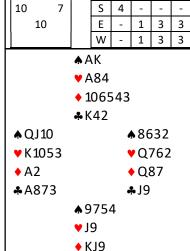
Mind you, it's one thing to reach 4♥ and quite another to make it. Some good guessing is required. +420 will be a wonderful but perhaps unlikely result for EW. Still, any plus score for them will be fairly good: even -50 will be no disaster, compared with -110.



Board 12	: Dealer W	est : NS vul	nerable
West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	2♠	3♣
4♠	5♣	Pass	Pass
Dbl	All Pass		

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.

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.



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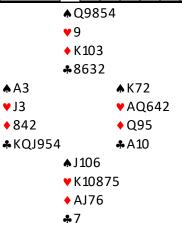
Board 13	3 : Dealer N	orth : All v	ulnerable
West	North	East	South
	1NT	All Pass	

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.

HCP Makeable contracts ♠ NT • 14 3 3 1 14 5 S 3 3 2 1 7 1 W 1

♣Q1065

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.



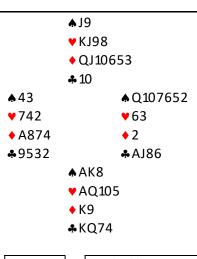
Board 14:			
West	North	East	South
		1♥	Pass
2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

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.

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.

Makeable contracts					
	*	•	>	٨	NT
N	1	1	-	1	1
S	-	-	-	1	1
E	3	-	1	-	ω
W	3	-	1	-	3

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.



	Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable						
West North			East	South			
				2NT			
	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥			
	Pass	4♥	All Pass				

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.

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.

Again, there are three likely results for NS: +420, +450 and +460. The big winners are +460 and the (not so big) losers +420.



Makeable contracts						
	*	•	*	٨	Т	
N	2	5	4	1	5	
S	2	5	4	1	5	
Ε	-	-	-	-	-	
W	-	-	-	-	1	

	W	-	-	-	-		
^ 7	2						
♥ A106							
♦ K	QJ	63					
♣ J	106						

♦ KQ9653	♠ AJ8
♥ K73	y 954
♦ 72	♦ A985
♣ K5	♣ A84
♦ 104	

- **♥**QJ82 **104**
- ♣Q9732

НСР		
11 11 1 5	3	

♥ K98

♦875

Makeable contracts							
N	2	1	1	1	1		
S	2	1	1	-	1		
Ε	-	-	-	3	3		
W	-	-	-	3	3		

Board 16: Dealer West: EW vulnerable West North East South 1 Pass 2 🔷 **Pass** 2 Pass 3NT All Pass

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.

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?

♥ J ♦ AQJ ♣A54 **♠** 10952

AKQJ64

♥AQ1064 ♦ K10942

♣K107

♣J98 **♦**873 **♥**7532

♣Q632

♦63

Makeable contracts					
	*	•	>	^	NT
Ν	2	1	1	4	2
S	2	-	-	4	2
Е	-	3	3	-	-
W	-	3	3	-	-

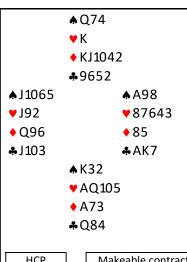
Board 17: Dealer North: Love all

West North Fast South 2 🕶 Pass 2* All Pass **3** 🕶 4

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.

There is nothing to the play, king of clubs being well-placed, so 4♠ making is sure to be the favourite landing place.

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?

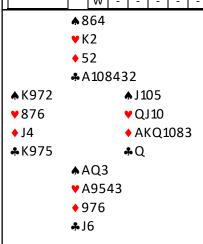


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Board 18	: Dealer Ea	ast : NS vu	nerable
West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
Pass All Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT

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♦.

HCP Makeable contracts Ν 4 2 4 4 3 9 5 4 4 2 4 11 S 3 15 W

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.



Board 19: Dealer South: EW vulnera					
West	North	East	South		
			Pass		
Pass	3♣	3♦	All Pass		

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.

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.

+110 to EW figures to be the normal result. Well done to any NS pairs who buck the trend.

HCP	Makeable contracts				ts		
			*	•	•	^	NT
7		N	1	1	1	1	-
7 15		S	1	1	-	-	-
11		Ε	-	2	-	1	1
		W	ı	2	ı	1	1
♠ Q98							

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West North East South

2♠ All Pass

♥ AJ42

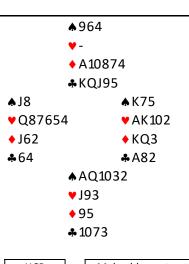
This is a very tricky one. If West has Lucas Two Bids available, showing a weak two-suited hand, he will surely open 2♠ here. If he has no such luxury but has weak two-bids available, he surely won't be able to resist opening 2♠ anyway. If he has neither option but hopes to get into the bidding later, 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).

♣QJ Makeable co

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.

	HCP		Makeable contracts				ts		
			*	•	•	٨	NT		
	9			Ν	-	-	-	-	1
7		15		S	•	-	•	•	1
	9			Ε	3	2	1	3	-
				W	3	2	1	3	1

Once again, conservative bidding at pairs proves the winner....



Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable					
West	North	East	South		
	1♦	Dbl	1♠		
2♥	2♠	4♥	All Pass		

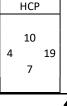
The only chance EW have to actually make a contract is for West to pass over $1 \triangleq$ and for East to double again after the $2 \triangleq$ raise. Then they might just be allowed to play in $3 \checkmark$. That would constitute a triumph, probably.

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.

Silly game sometimes, isn't it?

Pass

Scores on the traveller will vary between +50 and +140 to NS and +140 to EW. There may be some silly ones as well....



Makeable contracts						
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT					
Ν	3	1	-	3	-	
S	3	1	-	3	-	
Ε	1	ı	3	-	1	
W	1	-	3	-	1	

2 •

∧ K3 **∨** 753 **♦** 98743 **♣** 762

 ♠ A
 ♠ QJ107

 ♥ J92
 ♥ KQ64

 ♠ KQ652
 ♠ 10

 ♣ 10854
 ♣ AQJ9

- ♦986542 ▼A108 ◆AJ
- **♣**K3

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West North East South

1♣ 1♠

3NT

14 is the safest opening bid for East, leaving all possible fits open. However, when South overcalls 14 and West shows his diamond suit, East knows that no major suit fit is likely (West would have doubled 14 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.

All Pass

♠J8

Makeable contracts							
♣ ♦ ♥ A NT							
Ν	-	-	-	-	-		
S	-	-	-	-	-		
Ε	4	2	3	1	3		
W	4	2	3	1	3		

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....

↑7432 ▼964 ◆52 ♣KJ43

AΑ

VKJ875VQ2◆Q73◆AKJ1084♣A75♣Q862

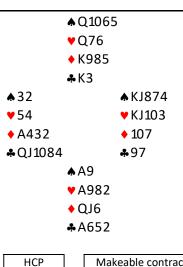
- **♦** KQ10965 ♥ A103
 - ◆96
 - **\$**109

	HCF	,	
11	4 9	16	

Makeable contracts					
	*	•	>	^	NT
N	-	-	ı	1	1
S	-	-	-	1	-
Ε	3	5	5	-	2
W	3	6	5	-	2

Board 23: Dealer South: All vulnerable West North East South 1 Pass 2♠ 3 • 3♠ Dbl Pass 4* Pass 5 🔷 All Pass

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.



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rac	ts	
٨	NT	
2	3	

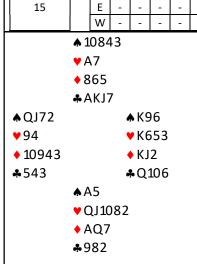
2 3

Board 24: Dealer West: Love all West North South Fast Pass Pass Pass **1** Pass 1♠ **Pass** 1NT **Pass** 2* Pass 2 • Pass 3NT All Pass

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.

South

2**♦** 3NT



west	Nortn	East	
	1NT	Pass	
Pass All Pass	2♥	Pass	
All roads	lead to 3	NT by Nor	th.
		n't be attr	

Board 25: Dealer North: EW vulnerable

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.

НСР Makeable contracts ٨ 4 2 3 12 Ν 2 4 12 4 2 4 2 3 13 Ε

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.

	♦ A107653			
	♥ A10			
	♦ 54			
	♣KJ2			
♦ J94		∧ K8		
♥K97432		y 8		
♦ 76		♦ KQJ932		
♣ A7		. 8643		
	♠ Q2			
	♥ QJ65			
	♦ A108			
	♣ Q1095			
	<u> </u>			

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable						
West	East	South				
		3♦	Pass			
Pass All Pass	3♠	Pass	4 🌲			

Those Easts playing weak 2s in three suits will be delighted to be able to open $2 \spadesuit$. In the absence of that, $3 \spadesuit$ is a fair gamble at game all. North will surely protect with $3 \spadesuit$ and South will bid one for the road, trusting in a six-card suit opposite,

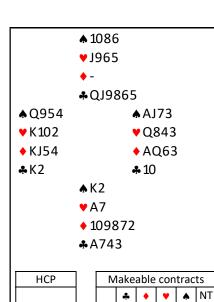
When king of diamonds is led, declarer needs to avoid two trump losers. Assuming the suit breaks 3-2, any sensible line works, after which a winning heart finesse is all that's required for +620.

This should be a near-universal score to NS.

| ⁴ | ¹ | Oh yes?....

	НСР	
8	12 11	9

Makeable contracts						
	*	•	*	٨	NT	
N	3	-	1	4	1	
S	3	-	1	4	1	
Ε	-	1	-	-	-	
W	-	1	-	-	-	



N | 4

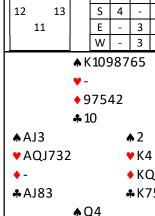
1 | 1

Board 27	' : Dealer So	outh : Love	all
West	North	East	South
			Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

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.

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!

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.



4

НСР

HCP

9

8 11

12

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West North East South

1 ♥ 3 ♠ 4 ♦ Pass

5 ♥ Pass 6 ♥ All Pass

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.

♠ NT 1 17 12 S 1 8 Ε 5 6 4 6 7 W 4 6 5

Makeable contracts

Makeable contracts

2

2

♠ NT

3

1

1

109865

♦ A83 ♣ Q96

A great hand – providing you end up without egg on your face!

	♠ J72	
	♥AK108	
	◆ 10863	
	♣ J7	
♦ KQ943	♠ 865	
♥ 64	♥ 73	
♦ Q7	♦ KJ92	
♣ KQ82	♣ A543	
	♠ A10	
	♥QJ952	
	♦ A54	
	4 1096	

N

S

W 3

3 | 1

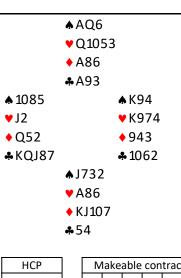
Board 25	e: Dealer N	ortn : All v	uinerabie
West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♥
1 🖍	3♥	3♠	All Pass

Deemal 20 - Deelen Neutle - All - . . Income le le

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.

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.

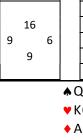
Another fine pairs hand.



Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all						
West	West North East					
		Pass	Pass			
Pass	1♥	Pass	1 🛦			
Pass	1NT	Pass	2 👫			
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT			
All Pass						

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.

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.



♦96
♥43
♦J1073

Makeable contracts						
	*	•	>	^	NT	
N	2	4	3	4	ω	
S	2	4	3	4	3	
Ε	-	-	-	-	-	
W	-	-	-	-	-	

♠ Q742		
♥ KQ5		
♦ AK5		
♣ QJ7		
	♠ 10853	
	v 102	
	♦ Q98	

HCP	· _
17 5 13	5

	Makeable contracts					
		*	•	•	٨	NT
	N	1	3	6	5	5
	S	1	3	6	5	5
	Ε	-	-	-	-	-
Ī	W	_	-	-	_	-

Board 31: Dealer South: NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♥
Pass	4 🔷	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♠	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

South has a raise to 2% 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 RKCB will take care of the rest. If South is wary of taking control and prefers 4.4% to 4NT, then it will be North who takes control by cue-bidding his king of diamonds. Slam is reached either way.

6♥ making should prove to be a popular score. There won't be too many match points for those who stay short.

13		Ε	-	-	-	-	ĺ
		W	-	-	ı	ı	
	1	094	1				
v 1092							
	♦ C	(43					
	♣ K	97	4				
♠ QJ65			4	72	<u> </u>		

♠ QJ65		↑ 72
♥ Q5		♥ J8643
♦ K62		♦ 975
♣ A653		♣ J82
	♠ AK83	

♥AK7 ♦AJ108 ♣Q10

 HCP
 Makeable contracts

 \$\frac{1}{4}\$
 \$\frac{1}{4}\$
 \$\frac{1}{4}\$
 \$\frac{1}{4}\$
 NT

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Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable				
West	North	East	South	
1NT	Pass	2♦	Dbl	
Pass	Pass	2♥	3♥	
Pass	3NT	All Pass		

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♥.

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.

A tricky hand on which to finish...