## British Winter Virtual Sim Pairs



Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 Welcome to the British Winter Simultaneous Pairs, which we expect will continue to be played mainly online. I hope you enjoy the event and also the commentary provided by a leading expert. The commentator for this set of hands is Paul Bowyer. Please note that the Tuesday event will be in memory of Peter Jordan, the EBU's widely-known and much-loved Competitions department member who for many years was also responsible for running our overseas congresses. Barbara Jordan will be donating trophies for the winners on that day.

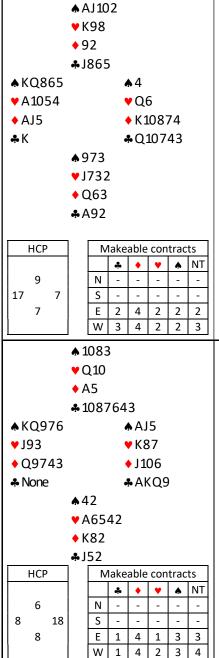
This is the start of the 2021 Simultaneous Pairs season, so it's a new year for prizes. Every host club will be entered in to a prize draw made at the AGM in November. So the club at which you have played today has a chance to win one of ten cash prizes of £250. The prize for the overall winners of each Sim Pairs is £100, and we wish you luck in trying to win it.

You can find all the full details, 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. Don't be too impatient for the results! 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.

Coming up in February (1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>) is the Junior Squad Simultaneous Pairs which raises money to help Junior Bridge. I hope you will support this event and look forward to you playing.

Ian Payn, Chairman EBU



Board					
West	North	East	South		
	Pass	Pass	Pass		
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass		
2NT	Pass	Pass	Pass		

There are some very awkward bidding hands in this selection today, exemplified by this first deal. West will surely open 1♠ in fourth seat and East can do little but respond 1NT. After that it's not at all clear where the auction is headed – indeed, many will rebid 2♥ on the West cards and play there after East finds himself with nowhere to go. As the cards lie, with values in the short suits, West does best to raise no-trumps, but that would be the wrong thing to do if East held hearts.

\*Deen Finesse suggests 3NT can be made (an unlikely low spade lead from South).

Deep Finesse suggests 3NT can be made (an unlikely low spade lead from South defeats it if East is declarer) but it is by no meads straightforward and, in any case, declarer may well get diamonds wrong. The contracts may vary greatly on this one and scores may well be all over the place. As usual with match-point scoring, any plus score won't score too badly as many will go minus on the East-West cards.

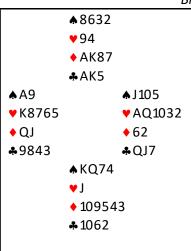
Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable								
West	North	East	South					
		1♣	Pass					
1♠	Pass	2NT	Pass					
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass					
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass					

be beaten. That's a slightly unlikely spot, though, given West's 5·3·5·0 pattern and the presence of a 5-3 spade fit. It looks normal to play this one in 4♠.

4♠ is a comfortable make on a passive black-suit lead as declarer has time to draw trumps and set up the diamonds — indeed, he may get all his hearts away on the top clubs and make an overtrick. However, the aggressive lead of the ◆A and another diamond will allow North-South to score two diamonds, a diamond ruff and the ♥A for one down. After West's 3♦ call, though, this

defence is a tad unlikely, so perhaps an overtrick is more likely than an undertrick.

East-West have the values to make game on this deal and, indeed, 3NT cannot



НСР	M	Makeable contracts					
		*	•	٧	٨	NT	
14	N	-	3	-	3	1	
10 10	S	•	3	-	3	1	
6	Е	1	ı	2	-	-	
	W	1	-	2	ı	-	

**♠**8632 ♥AQJ42 **♦** J9 **♣**A2 **♠** KJ94 AQ7 **9**86

**♥**K103 **♦**53 ♦ KQ1087 **♣**KQ75 **\$1098 ↑** 105 **975** ♦ A642 **♣**J643

НСР	Makeable contract					ts	
			*	•	>	٨	Ŋ
12		N	-	-	1	-	-
12	11	S	-	-	1	-	-
5		Ε	2	2	-	2	-
		W	3	3	-	2	1

1 2 2 **♠**Q10863 **¥**83 ♦ K32 **♣**J62 **↑**74 **♦**J52

♥A1062 **y**97 ♦ A8 ◆Q10964 **♣**AK953 ♣Q87 **A**K9 ♥KQJ54 **♦** J75

**\$**104

**HCP** 6 15 5 14

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

Board 3: Dealer South: EW vulnerable

West North East South **Pass** 

**Pass** 1NT **All Pass** 

This may look an uninteresting part-score deal but, in practice, there may be many twists and turns. East-West do well if they can get hearts in the frame and North-South do even better if they can compete in spades.

Much will depend on whether North-South are playing a weak no-trump and whether North opens one of those. If he can, and does, he may steal the deal and play there. East-West can cash the first five hearts and take the ♠A, but the fortunate diamond disposition allows declarer to make his contract.

Where North opens 1♦ (or a fashionable 1♣), East may overcall 1♥ and South may make a take-out double. Now North-South will surely play in spades, securing an excellent match-point score of 140 or even 170. If East-West bid too many hearts they will suffer an excessive penalty (the kiss-of-death -200) at this vulnerability.

Board 4: Dealer West: All vulnerable

West North East South 2♣\* 1NT 2 Pass Pass Pass

Another part-score deal with uncertain outcomes. If East-West are playing a weak no-trump then West may well open one of those, allowing North to intervene with some sort of conventional manoeuvre. Here, 2♣ suggests both majors.

Whether East would content himself with a modest 2♦ and whether North-South would allow him to steal the deal in that contract is moot. Many will bid overboard on the East-West cards, playing in no-trumps beyond the one-level. The routine ♥Q lead will see West held to seven tricks. Indeed, a low heart or the **Y**A will also do the trick.

Where West, playing a strong no-trump, opens 1♣ the outcome of the auction is unclear. North will overcall 1♥, East may try 2♦ and South may make a cheeky raise to 2♥. After that it all gets a little obscure.

Board 5: Dealer North: NS vulnerable

West North East South Pass Pass **1** Pass Pass **Pass** 1NT

Another part-score deal where the bidding may peter out in a gentle 1NT, as in the auction above. It's hard to think of a better call on the West cards after South opens 1♥; a 2♣ overcall doesn't appeal at all. 1NT is an easy affair win East-West having five clubs and two aces on top for an effortless score of 90. Might North-South steal the deal in spades? They might, especially if South

decides to open with an off-centre 1NT. West may double and North may take refuge in spades. East-West will score well now if they compete in clubs, but North may be allowed to play the hand. If so, East-West can defeat 2♠ but it takes razor-sharp defence to do so.

There will be scores, therefore, of 90, 100 and 110 to East-West with the odd maverick score of 110 to North-South on this deal.

South

**1** 

3♣

6NT

Board 6: Dealer East: EW vulnerable

Pass

Pass

Pass

**Pass** 

West North East

2♠

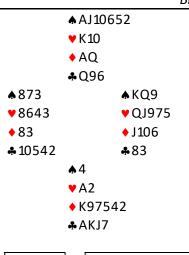
3NT

Pass

Pass

Pass

Pass



	НСР	
0	16 15	9

Makeable contracts								
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT							
N	7	7	2	5	7			
S	7	7	2	5	7			
Ε	-	-	-	-	-			
W	_	_	_	_	_			

2♠ on that North hand, for instance?) that the bidding will vary widely. The above auction is old-fashioned (but then so am I!) and mercifully brief. Board 7: Dealer South: All vulnerable

South West North East 1 2 🔻 Dble **1 Pass** Dble Pass 2♠ All Pass

and made is going to score a near top.

**♠** KJ86 ♥QJ85 **♦**53 **♣**J64 **♠**A953 **♠**Q1072 **♥**A102 **7**6 ♦ K64 **♦** Q2 ♣AK7 **4**109832 **4 ♥**K943 AJ10987 **♣**Q5

НСР	N	Лake	able	con	trac	ts
		*	•	٧	<b>A</b>	NT
8	N	-	1	2	-	-
18 4	S	-	1	2	-	-
10	E	3	-	-	3	1
	W	3	-	-	3	1

ΤИ

Another part-score deal with any number of possible auctions and a plethora of possible results. Some will pass that South hand, some will open 1♦ and some misguided souls may even open with a weak 2. If South does open 1. West may overcall 1NT rather than double and after that – who knows? If North-South get hearts into the auction they may well steal the deal; East-West can make 3♠ (according to Deep Finesse, anyway) but they have to play the cards well to do so. Some will play the hand in 3♥ by North. If that passes by unmolested, it should go a quiet one down for a fair score. If West sees fit to make a typical match-point pairs double, though, then it will cost the kiss-of-death score of -200.

A decent grand slam is available to North-South on this deal in three strains,

clubs, diamonds and no-trumps. All depend on a 3-2 diamond break, so are

just within the odds for bidding. Is it easy to reach these contracts? In my

view, no - it's very difficult to tie up all the loose ends in the bidding and

count thirteen tricks. Indeed, some will play this in game, recording 520 in 3NT plus four. Many will play in 6NT recording an overtrick and I am predicting that score (1020) to be above average. Anyone notching up 1520 for 7NT bid

The auction? Well, so much depends on system and style (should you respond

**♦**J82 **v**87654 ♦ K72 **.**92 **♠**Q93 **∧**K64 **¥**32 ♥AKQJ109 ♦ QJ109854 ♦ None **\$** 10 **♣**AQ87 **A** A 1075 ♥ None ♦ A63 ♣KJ6543

	НСР		İ
5	4 12	19	

Makeable contracts									
	<b>♣ ♦ ♥ ♠</b> NT								
N	-	-	-	-	-				
S	-	-	-	-	-				
Е	-	3	4	2	3				
W	-	2	4	1	2				

Board 8: Dealer West: Love all South West North East 3♦ Pass **4 All Pass** 

This looks to be an interesting deal. Many (the majority?) will open that West hand with a pre-empt and East has nowhere to go other than 4♥. Well, I suppose some may try a punt at 3NT hoping for a match-point top via six hearts, the ♣A, a trick on the lead and a trick from the gods. As it is, 3NT is going to make as South is sure to lead a club.

Against 4, South has no decent lead. A black suit gives away an instant trick and a diamond lead allows declarer to set up the long suit in dummy. It's not often you are endplayed at trick one. A trump lead would be best but, alas, natural causes prevent that.

Did any South bid over 4♥? If that player believed his side was being chiselled out of a contract, he might double 4♥, hoping that North could maybe bid 4♠. Sadly, not today – North can only pass and take 590 points worth of medicine.

South

2NT

3♦

Board 9: Dealer North: EW vulnerable

2♠

Pass

All Pass

West North East

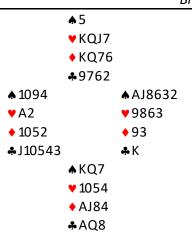
Pass

3♣\*

3NT

**Pass** 

Pass



	НСР	
5	11 16	8

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

Board 10: Dealer East: All vulnerable

eleven tricks and a fine match-point score of 460.

West North East South Dble 1NT 2 Pass 2 Pass Pass 3♦ All Pass

a non-vulnerable game.

**9**6 ♦J1098654 **♣**K9 **♠**Q54 ♠ KJ97 **♥**K1098 **743 ♦** Q3 AK7 **4**10642 **♣**J83 **♦**A62 ♥AQJ52 **2 ♣**AQ75

♠ 1083

	НСР		
7	4 17	12	

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

**♠**KQ9 **♥**A5 ♦ AKQ3 **♣**K1084

**▲** 107642 **∧**3 **♥**Q9 ♥J1076432 **♦**985 64 ♣A972 **♣**J6

**♠** AJ85 **♥** K8 ♦J1072 **♣**Q53

Makeable contracts					
	*	•	>	<b>^</b>	NT
N	5	6	1	5	6
S	5	6	1	5	6
Е	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Another deals where system will have an effect on the auction and the final result. If East-West are playing a weak no-trump, East may open one of those (brave, holding just 12 points in a 4·3·3·3 hand, but this is match-point pairs) and South will be delighted to double, hoping for a juicy penalty.

Another hand of marginal decisions. North doesn't have an opening bid

(4·4·4·1 hands so often disappoint in the play and are best left alone until

partner bids) and East doesn't have anything like a classic weak two. Still, I bet

many open 2♠ if given the chance, despite the four-card heart suit on the side.

Over 2♠, South has an easy 2NT overcall and North has plenty to raise to game

after a Stayman enquiry. Some Wests may raise to 3♠ obstructively, but that is unwise at the vulnerability; North may make a take-out double and South will be delighted to pass. 3♠ doubled does not play well for East and the penalty for bidding without due care and attention would be at least 500 against

After the ♠10 lead to 3NT, incidentally, East must play low or South will make

The lie of the cards makes 1NT unbeatable, though, and North does best to pull the double to 2♦. South is sure to bid 2♥ now and now North should insist on his seven-card suit. These hands play so much better in the trump suit of the weaker hand; the North hand is all but useless in hearts but has a lot of playing strength if diamonds are trumps.

Ten tricks are possible in diamonds, but declarer may have to guess the location of the ♥K. Still, making nine tricks for +110 won't score badly for his side.

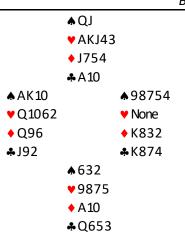
Board 11: Dealer South: Love all

West North East South Pass 2NT 3♣\* Pass Pass 3♦ Pass 4NT Pass Pass 6NT All Pass

A marginal slam is available to North-South on this deal with 6♦ and 6NT effectively the same contract. Some pairs will have the mechanism to locate the 4-4 diamond fit on this hand although there is no benefit to be had in playing in it with this layout.

In the auction above, incidentally, 4NT is not Blackwood as no trump suit has been agreed. Whether North should accept the invitation is moot - bidding a slam is a marginal decision.

Now, Deep Finesse smugly tells us that slam makes in both diamonds and notrumps. However, many will fail to make a slam because, unlike Deep Finesse, they cannot see through the backs of the cards. The percentage play is to play to the ♣Q and finesse the ♣10 on the second round. Correct play, but unlucky here.



НСР			Makeable contracts						
				*	•	*	٨	NT	
	16		N	-	-	3	-	-	
12		6	S	-	-	3	-		
	6		Ε	1	1	-	3	-	
			W	1	2	-	3	1	

**102** ♦J10865 **♣**A2 **▲** 108 **∧** K6 ♥AQJ8 **♥** K9743 **♦** A3 942 **♣**K8653 **♣**J94 **AQ542 9**65 ♦KQ7

♣Q107

**♦**J973

	НСР		
14	6 13	7	

Makeable contracts						
	*	•	٧	٨	NT	
N	-	4	-	4	1	
S	-	4	-	4	1	
Ε	2	-	2	-	-	
W	2	-	2	-	-	

AQ73 **♥**K97 **♦** J93 **♣**Q104 **♦**K62 **▲J10985** ♥AJ2 **9**64 ♦Q654 ♦ K7 **♣**A53 **♣**K762 **4** ♥Q10853 ♦ A1082 **♣**J98

Н	СР		
14	.2	7	

Makeable contracts						
		*	•	>	<b>^</b>	NT
Ν	ı	-	2	2	-	-
S	,	-	2	2	-	-
E		-	-	-	2	-
W	/	-	-	-	2	-

Board 12: Dealer West: NS vulnerable

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

Another tricky part-score deal with North-South maybe finding it awkward to get hearts into the frame if West were to open with a weak no-trump. In the auction above, North makes a penalty double and South's double of 2♠ is essentially for take-out, saying that he believes North-South have the balance of the points.

Some North-South pairs may overbid this one to 4♥. That has little chance with two spade losers, a diamond loser and a club loser. With the 4-0 trump split as well, many will fail to negotiate the hand and 3♥ will fail to register nine tricks. One down will not be that disastrous, though, with East-West able to make 2♠ for 110. Indeed, *Deep Finesse* suggests that nine tricks are available in spades, but that does require some perspicacious cardplay.

Board 13: Dealer North: All vulnerable

South West North East Pass Pass **1** Dble 3♠ All Pass

East-West have the balance of the points here (by 21 to 19) but it's North-South who can make the highest scoring contract. In fact, with the preposterously lucky layout of the cards (spades 2-2 with the finesse right, clubs frozen so East-West can't lead them profitably), North-South can actually make 4♠. No one should reach that contract, of course, on these cards; anyone who records 620 on the North-South cards has no cause to moan about ill-fortune for at least a month.

After South opens 1♠ in third seat (did anyone prefer 1NT?) West does best to double. North should try to steal the deal with a pre-emptive jump to 3♠ and that should buy the auction. Should East make an overbid of 4♥ he will regret it as, after a diamond lead, he should finish at least two down for a disastrous match-point score of -200.

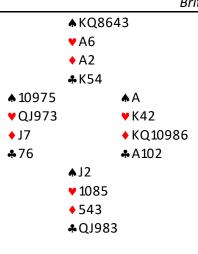
Board 14: Dealer East: Love all

West North East South **Pass Pass** 2♥\* 1NT Pass Pass 2♠ Pass **Pass** Pass

Another innocent looking part-score deal where many will play in (and make) 2♠ after West opens a weak no-trump in third seat and plays in spades after a transfer sequence. Life may not be quite so simple, however. Some Easts may open 2♠ (Lucas-style, showing spades and a minor) and settle the issue with a single bid. Where East passes, South may open 2♥ (odd that there are two Lucas-style opening bids on the same deal). Whether that silences West or whether that player makes a take-out double is moot.

If South gets everything right, he can make eight tricks in hearts, so stealing the deal will score well for his side. No doubt there will be scores on both sides of the travelling scoresheet tonight, so any plus score should be welcome.

British Winter Virtual Sim Pairs ~ Monday - 11th January 2021



НСР	M	lake	able	con	trac	ts
		*	•	>	٨	NT
16	N	2	-	-	2	-
4 16	S	2	-	-	2	-
4	Е	-	4	3	-	-
	W	-	4	3		-

	ΑA	
	<b>9</b> 86	
	♦ KJ1052	2
	<b>♣</b> A873	
<b>♦</b> 8543		<b>♦</b> KQ10972
<b>♥</b> KJ		♥AQ72
♦ A963		<b>♦</b> 87
<b>♣</b> 952		<b>♣</b> K
	<b></b> J6	
	<b>v</b> 10543	
	<b>♦</b> Q4	
	<b>♣</b> QJ106	4

НСР			Makeable contracts						
					*	•	>	٨	NT
	12			N	2	2	-	-	-
8		14		S	2	2	-	-	1
	6			Ε	-	•	-	4	-
				W	1	ı	ı	4	1
<b>♦</b> A8654									
<b>∨</b> J9									
	◆ A1062								

	<b>♦</b> A8654
	<b>♥</b> J9
	♦ A1062
	<b>4</b> 107
<b>♠</b> K2	<b>♠</b> 1097
<b>♥</b> A3	<b>♥</b> K54
<b>♦</b> 9754	<b>♦</b> KQJ
<b>♣</b> K9643	<b>♣</b> Q852
	♠QJ3
	♥Q108762
	♦83
	<b>♣</b> AJ

S

2 2

Makeable contracts

2

2 2

∧ NT2 -

**HCP** 

9

10

11

10

Board	15 : Dea	aler Sou	th : NS vulnerable
West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♠	2♦	Pass
Pass	2♠	Dble	Pass
3♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

A competitive part-score deal belonging to East-West in diamonds or hearts. It may appear that East-West can make 4 on the hand, but good defence can beat it. Against a heart contract, North has to lead a spade, duck a round of diamonds and then switch to clubs. After that defence, declarer can't quite manage to avoid four losers. Still, some pairs will surely make ten tricks in hearts.

The auction? Well, East probably does best to overcall 2♦ and then double on the second round when North rebids his spades. That allows West to get his five-card heart suit into the game. +140 to East-West will, I suggest, be above average for East-West.

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable West North East South

Pass 1 ↑ 1 ↑ Dble 2 ↑ Pass 4 ↑ All Pass

An easy 4♠ contract for East-West on this deal; easy to make, that is. There are some marginal decisions in the bidding – should South make a take-out double of East's 1♠ overcall? If so, East may devalue his heart holding as he may think that South sits over him with heart honours.

Should West raise spades pre-emptively with  $3 \triangleq$  or make a constructive spade raise with a cue-bid of  $2 \spadesuit$ ? If the former, there is a case for East to pass  $3 \triangleq$ , if the latter then East has an easy  $4 \triangleq$  call.

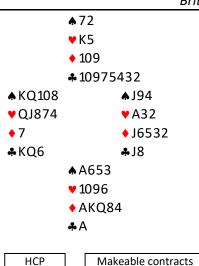
There is nothing much to the play; declarer should lose a spade, a diamond and a club. The only variation may come is if North tries the effect of underleading the ♣A, hoping to put East on a guess. That will result in East making eleven tricks instead of ten and of scooping up a large quantity of match-points.

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

WestNorthEastSouthPassPass2♥PassPassPass

After two passes South does best to open with a weak 2♥ rather than open 1♥. As the cards are, that will surely scoop the pool and end in a playable spot. 2♥ should lose one spade, two hearts, one diamond and one club and therefore record 110 points. Variations may occur (if West doesn't cover the ♠J for instance) and some declarers may end up with an overtrick.

Some may choose not to open that South hand at all and West certainly isn't going to make a bid on his minor-suit based rubbish. Anyone who throws the deal in (and there will be a fair few) has my sympathies. East-West will score above average for a passing the hand out and recording zero, I predict.

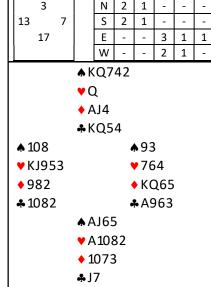


Board	18 : Dea	aler Eas	st : NS vulnerable
West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♦
1♥	Pass	2♥	2♠
Pass	3♣	All Pas	SS

Another of these difficult to judge part-score deals where North-South do best if they can finish in clubs.

After South opens 1♠, West has the choice between showing his five-card heart suit or making a take-out double, with the former being the more modern choice. After East raises hearts, South may feel that North's marked heart shortage makes a further bid a sound venture, but the hand is a misfit and North-South are entering dangerous waters. If North bids 3♣ now, South should pass as it becomes obvious that North has nothing but long clubs.

If East starts off by leading a heart, North might scrape home in his 34 contract, otherwise it should be defeated. One off won't be too bad a score, however.



Makeable contracts

| S | 2 | 2 | - | 5 | 3

\* | • | •

♠ NT

5 2

**HCP** 

17

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

WestNorthEastSouthPassPassPassPassAll Pass

Finally, after 18 boards of uncertain and varied auctions, we come across a deal where the world, his wife and the family dog will play in 4 - 4. A 5-4 fit and a combined 27 count leaves little room for any misadventure in the bidding and there will be few pairs who play in anything other than the spade game.

The play looks to be simple as well; declarer has to lose a diamond and a club and should rack up eleven tricks easily enough. Only the bizarre lead of the ♣A from East would allow a second overtrick and East has no reason to do that. A string of scores of 450 to North-South?

ш								
	10		Е	1	1	1	1	-
			W	1	ı	1	ı	-
		<b>^</b>	Q7	1				
		<b>♥</b> K	Q5					
		<b>♦</b> J	107					
		♣ J	103	2				
	<b>♦</b> 984			4	NJ 1	065	•	
	<b>♥</b> A862			•	<b>,</b> 19	74		
	♦ A93			•	85	•		
	<b>♣</b> AQ6			4	<b>₽</b> K5	54		
		۸K	32					
		<b>v</b> 1	03					
		<b>♦</b> K	Q6	42				

Tho favo Nor go can diai

НСР	IV	lake	able	con	trac	ts
		*	•	>	٨	NT
13	Ν	1	2	-	1	2
14 5	S	1	2	-	1	2
8	Ε	-	-	1	-	-
	W	-	-	1	-	1

**4**987

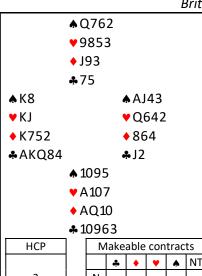
Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West North East South
1NT Pass Pass Pass

Those playing a weak no-trump will surely open the bidding with their favourite toy and steal the deal. That can be defeated by two tricks in North leads (or switches to) a diamond but the defence to 1NT can often go sour. If North-South defend passively and persist in leading clubs, West can establish a long heart. This way declarer can rack up two hearts, one diamond and three clubs for a total of six tricks. One off may not score so badly.

If West, playing a strong no-trump, opens 1♣ the outcome of the auction is unclear. It is possible East-West play the hand in 2♥, probably down one. It isn't easy to see how North-South can get into the act. If they could play in no-trumps, recording 120, they would do very well. I suspect that the modal score will be 100 points to North-South. We shall see.

British Winter Virtual Sim Pairs ~ Monday - 11th January 2021



Board 21: Dealer North: NS vulnerable

West North East South Pass **Pass** Pass 1♣ Pass **1** Pass 3NT Pass Pass Pass

North-South had an easy game on Hand 19 - by way of balance the computer has allocated an easy game to East-West on this hand. 3NT is unbeatable whether played by East or West on this deal and declarer should really rack up ten tricks (two spades, two hearts, one diamond and five clubs). The spade finesse might produce an eleventh but that would be icing on the cake.

Bidding? Well, the auction above is somewhat agricultural. Some will prefer a reverse into 2 on the West cards and some a scientific rebid of 2NT (many play that as 18-19 points these days). Whatever route is chosen, though, all roads lead to Rome; few pairs will play this in anything other than 3NT.

**♣** | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT 3 19 8 10 Ε 4 3 4 4 W 4 ω 4 4 **1**0

> ♥ KJ876 **♦**7653 **\$**1062

**♦**852

**♣**AJ87

**♥** A ♦ QJ1042 Board 22: Dealer East: EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

**▲**AQJ9764 **10943** 

A deal where East-West will probably end up in 44, a contract where the only issue in the play is one of overtricks. Yes, Deep Finesse says that you can make a slam on these cards and, in truth, we have all been in worse spots than 64. Still, how might you bid it? Much depends on East's rebid after the 2. response – what do you suggest? 3♠ is an overbid, 2♥ looks weird on a 7-4 shape with lousy hearts and 4♠ is just a punt.

**♥**Q52 ♦ K98 ♣KQ943

**∧** K3

A

**\$**5

As to the play... with a trump loser, East has to get rid of his three losing hearts. The winning play is to ruff them on table (in which case he needs to avoid playing any trumps at all). He might take the ruffing diamond finesse instead, in which case he would certainly lose two tricks. The right line would become more obvious if South has revealed the location of the missing high cards with an unwise 2♣ overcall.

	_						
НСР		N	lake	able	con	trac	ts
			*	•	٧	<b>^</b>	N
4		Ν	-	-	1	-	-
12 11		S	1	1	1	1	-
13		Ε	1	3	-	6	2
		W	1	3	1	6	14

**♠**Q52

Board 23: Dealer South: All vulnerable th

West	North	East	Sout
			1♣
2♥	3♣	4♥	5♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

**9**87 ♦ K43 **K** 10873 **∧** K9 **▲**J108743 ♥A109653 ♥QJ42 **10865** ♦ J97 ♣Q None **♠**A6 **♥** K ♦AQ2 ♣AJ96542

An interesting deal, this one where there may be some fierce competitive bidding. North-South have a rare 7-5 club fit and have a laydown 5♣ contract, losing just a heart and a spade. Meanwhile, East-West are able to make nine tricks in hearts, assuming they can guess spades correctly, so they would do well to bid to the five-level and concede a mere 500 in 5♥ doubled. That won't happen often, I suspect, as both East and West will be wary about pushing North-South into a makeable slam.

Makeable contracts The above auction is reasonable, assuming that East-West are playing weak ٨ NT 1 jump overcalls. Where West overcalls 1♥ over 1♣ it will be even less obvious 1 for East-West to sacrifice in 5♥ over 5♣.

\* Ν 5 5 Ε 1 3 1 3

Just one other point. Did anyone manage to commit grand larceny on the South cards by sneaking through 3NT with overtricks?

South

2

**3**♦\*

Board 24: Dealer West: Love all

Pass

**Pass** 

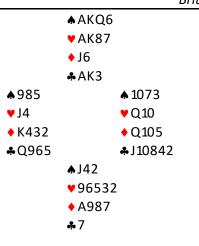
West North East

2.

2NT

Pass

Pass



	HCP	Makeable contract					ts
			*	•	>	<b>^</b>	NT
	24	N	3	3	6	7	6
6	5	S	3	3	6	7	6
5	5	Ε	-	-	-	-	-
		W	-	ı	ı	ı	1

AKQ9 **♣**64 **♠**94 **★**K107652 **♥**K83 ♥A754 **♦**8732 106 **♣**K1082 **.**7 **♠**Q **♥**J109 ♦ J54

**♣**AQJ953

**♠** AJ83 **♥**Q62

	НСР	
6	16 11	7

Makeable contracts								
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N7								
N	3	3	2	1	2			
S	3	3	2	1	2			
Ε	-	-	-	-	-			
W	-	-	-	-	-			

**♠**Q109 ♥J6532 ♦ Q87 **♣**K10 **A**K4 **♦**J8762 **♥**K984 **♥**AQ **10652** ♦ None **♣**AJ85 **♣**Q973 **♦**53 **v** 107 ◆ AKJ943

**♣**642

	НСР		
18	8	6	

Makeable contracts							
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT							
Γ	N	-	1	-	-	1	
	S	-	1	-	-	1	
	Ε	5	-	2	5	-	
١	W	5	-	2	5	-	

4♣\* Pass Pass 4 Pass **6**♥ All Pass North-South have a thin slam on this deal with 6♥ makeable simply because hearts break 2-2. It's actually not a very good contract (a 2-2 break comes in at 40%) but the auction above shows one way of getting there. 2NT shows 23-24, 3♦ is a transfer and 4♣ agrees hearts, showing a club control. 4♦ shows the ♦A and 6♥ is a random punt. It's not a great contract but, as an erstwhile partner

Yes, Deep Finesse says 7♠ is makeable. True enough — and that's about as good a spot as 6♥. It also needs hearts 2-2, the thirteenth trick coming from a club ruff in the South hand. How many played this deal in spades? About none would be my rough estimate.

of mine once put it, a lucky contract scores exactly the same as a good one.

Board 25: Dealer North: EW vulnerable

West North East South 1♠ Pass 2. Pass 2NT Pass 3NT Pass Pass **Pass** 

North-South are sure to reach 3NT on this deal, whether by the route above or by other means. Deep Finesse tells us that 3NT can be beaten, but it is not so easy for the defence. If North conceals his spades (by opening a strong no-trump, for example) then East may well lead one and that would make declarer's life easy.

Even after a low heart lead (best) 3NT may slip through. East may duck the second heart and now declarer could make the hand by cashing the ♣A, four rounds of diamonds and exiting with a heart. Even if he takes the more likely option of trying the club finesse, West may duck the king (fatal, as declarer would switch to spades).

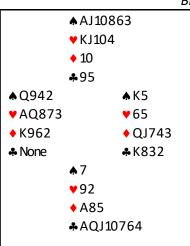
All in all, 3NT is likely to slip through, so 400 to North-South is more likely than 50 to East-West. We shall see.

Board 26: Dealer East: All vulnerable

West North East South Pass 2 Pass 2NT 3♣\* **Pass** 3♦ **Pass** Pass 3♠ 4♠ Pass Pass Pass

Another awkward deal with many possible auctions. Those who play a weak two in diamonds will surely open that on the South cards, giving West a headache. 2NT is an uncomfortable shot but the alternatives don't appeal at all. Now East may be able to show a non-forcing hand with 5-4 in the majors via Stayman and 44 may be reached, but it's not that easy. North may also cause the East-West wheels to come off by raising to 3♦. If East doubles for take-out, West may pass that and defend the hand. 200 is all that is realistically available and that's poor compensation for a vulnerable game.

4♠ is easy enough to make but the overtrick does need some care and attention. 650 to East-West will score very well for their side.



НСР		Makeable contracts					ts	
			*	•	>	<b>^</b>	NT	
9	9	N	4	-	-	2	1	
11 9		S	5	-	-	3	1	
11		Ε	-	2	-	-	-	
		W	-	2	-	-	-	
. 1764								

**♣**J764 ♥A53 **♦**74 **\$9853 ♠** AK102 **♠**95 ♥QJ1082 **♥**764 **1062** ♦ KJ95 **\$**6 ♣Q1042 **♠**Q83 **♥** K9 ♦ AQ83 ♣AKJ7

НСР	V	lake	able	con	trac	ts
		*	•	>	<b>^</b>	NT
5	N	4	1	1	3	2
10 6	S	4	1	1	3	2
19	Ε	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-

♣9 ♦A854 ♦73 ♣J109864 ♣QJ8765 ♠A103 ♥93 ♥KQ762 ♦KJ1054 ♦Q98 ♣None ♣52 ♠K42 ♥J10 ♦A62

	_					
НСР		Makeable contra				
			*	•	>	٨
5		Ν	4	-	-	-
7 11		S	4	-	-	-
17		Ε	-	3	-	4
		W	-	3	-	4

NT 3

3

♣AKQ73

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

West North East South

1♣

1♥ 1♠ Pass 2♣

Pass 2♠ Pass 3♣

Pass Pass Pass

North-South are likely to play this one in a club part-score. True, 5♣ makes on the hand as West is unable to lead a trump, but I can't see that being bid all that often.

Variations may occur if West decides on a take-out double of 1♣ rather than make a simple 1♥ overcall. Now East-West might compete vigorously in diamonds. Quite how high the bidding will go then is hard to say, but North-South are likely to still win the auction in clubs. East-West will have to be careful not to push South into a game that he wouldn't bid under his own steam.

5 doubled, you may note, is too expensive as it might, on accurate defence, cost 500 against a non-vulnerable game.

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

\*West North East South\*

Pass Pass Pass 1♣

1♥ 2♣ 2♥ 2NT

Pass 3♣ All Pass

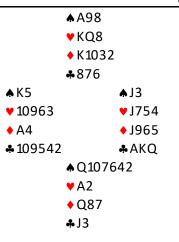
Another part-score deal with some marginal decisions (the theme of this set of deals tonight). Some may open that West hand, leading heaven knows where  $-2 \spadesuit$  by North, possibly, after  $1 \blacktriangledown - \mathsf{Pass} - 2 \blacktriangledown - \mathsf{Dble} - \mathsf{Pass} - 2 \spadesuit - \mathsf{All}$  Pass around the table.

If there are three passes to South, that player may, according to system and whim, open 1♣ or 1♣. West is sure to bid now and some may choose a take-out double over 1♣. If North raises clubs (which some may be unable to do if South is not promising the suit), South may take a punt at no-trumps, a contract that plays rather poorly. The best North-South can do is to play in clubs and record 110 (yes, *Deep Finesse* tells us that 130 is a possibility, although it's not a likely one when you can't see through the backs of the cards).

Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♣
2♠	4♣	4♠	5♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Who knows about this one? North-South have the majority of the points and a 6-5 club fit but it is East-West who can make game. Mind you, a spade lead will allow 5♣ to make as a diamond will disappear from the North hand on the ♠K. The defence need to lead a diamond at trick one – and that's not easy. Many will open 1♥ with those East cards despite the barren nature of the hand and the dispiriting 5·3·3·2 pattern. After South opens 1♣ what should West do? Is 2♠ the right bid? And what should North do with six-card Club support? Some Souths will open with a strong no-trump and West may well lurch into action with some conventional bid. After that it is hard to say where the auction is heading. If East opens 1♥, South may double and, once again, it is hard to predict the subsequent bidding. All the fun of the fair on this one.



		<b>4</b> J	3					
HCP Makeable contracts								
				*	•	>	٨	NT
12			N	-	2	-	3	-
	12		S	-	2	-	3	-
9			Ε	2	-	1	-	-
			۱۸/	2		1		

**↑**76 ♥9742 ♦ J942 **♣**Q84 **♠**J3 ♥AKQJ105 **v**83 ◆Q87653 **\$**1092 **AK1098542** 

**♣**K765 НСР

3

10

**9**6

♦ None

7

**♠**Q

♦ AK10

♣AJ3

24

Makeable contracts								
N	-	-	-	4	-			
S	-	-	-	4	-			
Ε	1	5	4	-	-			
W	1	5	4	-	-			

**AK10542 ¥**32 **♦** A9

**\$863 ♠**963 **♠**QJ87 **♥**K108 ♥AQJ65 ♦ K10752 **•**86 **♣**J4 **♣**K2 ♠ None

**974** ◆ QJ43 ♣AQ10975

Makeable contracts							
	*	•	٧	٨	NT		
N	5	1	-	3	2		
S	5	1	-	3	2		
Е	-	-	1	-	-		
W	-	-	-	-	-		

Board 30: Dealer East: Love all West North East South 1NT All Pass

This is another board where the bidding may peter out in dull fashion (see the auction above) or it may spring into life. If East opens 1NT he may win the auction. South will lead a spade and West is on the horns of the proverbial. If he plays dummy's ♠K he will lose a lot of tricks, indeed, he will probably be three down. If he calls for a low spade at trick one, then he will surely make his contract.

Deep Finesse tells us that 1NT should go down, but then Deep Finesse knows enough to lead a diamond, removing an entry to dummy's clubs. No mortal South is going to lead anything but a spade, though.

What if East passes initially or opens 1♣ or 1♦? Now South will surely overcall in spades and North-South will steal the deal in spades, possibly 3♠. That will score 140 points, still losing out to those who record 1NT down three.

Board 31: Dealer South: NS vulnerable

West North East South 4♠ **5\(\psi\)** Pass **Pass Pass** 

Wow! What a hand.

South has a fairly obvious 4♠ opener on his 8·1·0·4 hand and that catches West with a whale – 24 points. Some may double "in rage", hoping for a 500 point penalty, but 4♠ is cold, losing just two clubs and a heart. Some Wests may take a flyer at 6♥ and be delighted at the sight of dummy. 6♥ is an excellent contract, defeated only by the cruel 4-0 diamond split. North doesn't even have to lead a diamond at trick one to defeat 6v; the defence can simply lead spades.

In fact, even 5♥ is beaten by a spade lead and a club switch. If South were to lead two rounds of spades, though, West can get home in 5♥ by means of a squeeze on North. The precise details will be left as an exercise for the reader.

Board 32: Dealer West: EW vulnerable

West North East South Pass 1. 2 Dble 3♥ Pass **Pass** 4♣ Pass Pass **Pass** 

A difficult part-score deal with much depending on system and style. In the auction above is 4♣ forcing in your methods? If so, South has to bid his hand in a different way. Mind you, passing out 3♥ would not be so bad as North-South can hold East-West to seven tricks and a penalty of 200.

Yes, once again, Deep Finesse tells us that a game is available for North-South. True, it is. 5♣ makes because there are no diamond losers (the finesse works) and no club losers (the clubs are 2-2 with the king right). My unreliable arithmetic makes the chances of that about 10%, so it's not a contract anyone should be proud of reaching.