British Winter Virtual Sim Pairs in memory of Peter Jordan



Tuesday 12th 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 Michael Byrne. 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 (1st to 4th) 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.

lan Payn, Chairman EBU

▲ 163	Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all
• 17	
• 17	A simple hand to start with as FW with 8 hearts between them and 24 points will
◆ K03 ◆ ∧ 10732	surely buy the contract in their best strain and the only question is how many
	tricks
	The bands fit reasonably well and game bas a fair chance. I would most pairs to
▲ 4075 ▲ 01084	and there with a sequence such as 1 × 1NT 24.2× 4× even playing traditional Acel
• K975 • Q1084	get there with a sequence such as 1+-101-2+-3+-4+, even playing traditional Acor
+ 10972	On the natural load of the Oth Fact faces on unbill battle providing that the
# 10872	defenders ferre declarer event time they get the lead. It containly and he made
▼ K95	action this start (double durant) since the lead. It certainly can be made
◆ J2	after this start (double dummy) since the JV dropping means that East can just
₩ Q195	about hold their losses to one trick in each suit other than spades, but the timing
	is tricky. East will need to run the second club, cross to the $Q \bullet$ and lead a heart
	to the queen, then rull the next club and lead a diamond to the 9. This just about
9 N 2	The lead heats it out of head, but this won't he a natural choice if Fast has hid
9 15 <u>S</u> 2	The J read beats it out of hand, but this won't be a natural choice if East has bid
7 <u>E</u> - 4 3	the suit.
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▲Q8	Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable
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▲Q8 ▼K965 ◆A8653	Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable NS immediately strike back with a game of their own, but many will be left
▲Q8 ▼K965 ◆A8653 ♣K7	Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable NS immediately strike back with a game of their own, but many will be left disappointed at the end of trick one.
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Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West will pick up a nice hand and find a fit if he is lucky, but the result will still be bad for him one way or another.

After P-1 North will have to decide how many hearts to bid. The 7222 shape is bad for pre-empting but the 10^{\clubsuit} is a great plus factor in not losing too many trump tricks (come to think of it, so are the Jack and the Queen) so some will bid 4^{\clubsuit} , 3^{\clubsuit} or even just 2^{\clubsuit} .

Those that bid 4♥ may buy it, but more likely West will double and East bids 4♠, if this avoids a double then they have done well.

If instead East leaves in a double then West will be disappointed since 4♥ is cold, one entry to take the heart finesse and another to lead up to the club, although some will go off by leading hearts twice.

4♠ is two off in top tricks with little scope for a defensive error, but some North players will lead the A♥ and give declarer a bonus trick, they will be lucky to get a plus score but +100 will still be terrible for them, losing even to those in part-score.

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West will surely pass and North will open 1NT, 1♣, 1♦ or 1♠ to taste. That will surely get past East, South will force to game in sensible fashion, surely ending up in 3NT. 1NT-P-3NT will be common, likewise 1♦-P-3NT, 1♣-P-3NT, or something slightly more cumbersome for those who opened 1♠.

Whatever the journey, the destination is the same, but of course it might affect the choice of lead.

The simple 1NT P 3NT will surely attract a spade lead, now North is up to 7 tricks and knocking out the diamond ace will give him 10, but of course the opponents can cash the club suit first. A polished EW will be able to signal club strength (West ducking the diamond ace for one round and East throwing a low heart away) but many will let it slip through the net. At pairs it is very risky for West to lead a club round to the Q10 when it is frequently North that will hold the ace.

Those Souths that play 3NT might get a diamond lead and again West will have to find the switch, perhaps easier when dummy has two small. East can throw a spade on the first diamond and a heart on the second.

Well done if you slipped 3NT through the net, though of course it is your opponents that you really need to thank for your good score.

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

With everyone having exactly the same number of points this will be a nip and part-score battle, being won by the side that has the spade fit.

North will pass and some Easts will open 1♣, some will pass. If East does open then South will overcall 2♣ for the majors and North will pick spades, West may make value showing double and East will probably compete to 3♣ but with such good spades North is entitled to go to the well once more and play 3♠, possibly doubled if West is feeling hungry.

If East passes then South must open 1♠ (or else the deal will be passed out) and North will bid 2♦ then 3♠ on the next round. (If East overcalls 3♣ as a passed hand this might tip NS overboard, South bidding 3♥ and North feeling he has to jump to game).

Those that stop in $3 \ge$ should make it through careful play, lose one heart and ruff one high, then draw trumps.

There isn't much chance a tenth trick will slip through the net so well done if made exactly +140, or indeed +730 from those tigers who underestimated you!

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable



EW have 24 points and a 4-4 fit, but despite chunky intermediates and well fitting doubletons game has no chance.

After East opens 1NT West would be well advised to pass at pairs, as although AAK is very crisp, 4333s are always a disappointment in the play - and so it proves here. Those that do get 1NT passed out will surely get a spade lead and now 9 tricks are possible, North getting the lead far too often for his liking.

Those that try stayman will reach spades, and might survive a raise to 3, though in practice East will often head for game.

Spades looks to make 8 or 9 tricks, East might well take two heart finesse which gives him 5 losers. To make 9 tricks East must knock out one spade then pitch the heart loser on the 13th diamond, possible but awkward, especially on a heart lead. In short, those that got a plus score as EW will score well, rewarded for the old advice at pairs "don't push for thin games, just bid to a sensible part-score and make as many tricks as you can".

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

This time NS have the values for game and can actually make one! The common resting place will surely be 3NT, reached (by everyone?) on an auction such as 1 + 1 = 2NT - 3NT or similar (those of you that still play 1 + 1 = 3NT to show 19 points and a balanced hand, please switch now, it is one of the worst bids left over from old Acol).

The spotlight will now turn to East who has to find a lead - spades, clubs or diamonds (certainly if North has hidden his suit and opened a cheeky 2NT) are all possible and will lead to variations in play.

On a club lead West might well stick the 9 in, North can now duck a heart although that won't bring in an extra trick with the suit 4-2.

The lack of entries to dummy is a real problem and some declarers will run the J ★ at trick two, if EW attack hearts then he might well struggle.

Despite deep finesse confidently making 4 diamonds 4 spades and two top hearts any declarer that emerges with even 9 tricks may feel satisfied, those that do get 10 can be delighted.

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

Back to a nip and tuck part-score now as the points are 21/19 with EW just edging it with their diamond fit.

Every West will open 1 \bullet (no letters please if you're partner had an ace hidden behind the 5 \heartsuit) and East will respond 1NT, again the 4333 shape making this hand just a little bit short of a two level response. South should pass (5332 hands must not overcall at the two level, especially when the hand on the right has just implied your suit) and West will either pass 1NT or bid diamonds again.

Those that end up in 1NT will see South attack in clubs, if the defence don't err then East has to cash out for 7 tricks to make his contract. (After 5 rounds of diamonds East can lead the $J \triangleq$ from dummy, when this gets small from North without a flicker he would be well advised to put the ace up)

In diamonds meanwhile the spade finesse is wrong but the heart finesse right, so there are at least 8 tricks available, maybe 9 if the defence don't find their spade ruff.

Those that do play well to score +110 will have earned their top score indeed.

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable



No surprise on this deal as with a ten card fit and 25 high card points EW have a sensible and making game in the form of $4 \ge 3$.

Those that open $3\clubsuit$ first in hand (grim but the vulnerability is right at least) might keep EW out of the auction, but more likely one of them will reluctantly overcall $3\bigstar$ and get raised to game (perhaps via a cue bid of $4\bigstar$ just in case).

Other than that EW will bid straight to 4♠ (no doubt via a Jacoby bid or other such modern gadget) and the question will be how many tricks are made.

South seems to have a fairly easy singleton club lead, East will no doubt draw trumps and throw a heart on the third club, before leading a diamond. NS do best to get South to push a heart through early, but in practice East rates to guess right more often than not, since North will have shown up with the ace of diamonds and jack of clubs by then, and people tend to under-lead the ace (not the queen) in these positions.

Perhaps East should instead draw trumps and lead a heart up before cashing the clubs, now South might be worried that the heart is a singleton...

Anyway a key guess to make, and game depends on it!

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

Back to 20/20 now and any dreams East had of his powerful spade suit dominating the auction need to be shelved, as once more his partner's hand is a huge disappointment (and South is waiting for him!)

1 \clubsuit -P and West has an unenviable choice, pass and risk the wrong part-score or respond and let partner leap in spades. Today pass is the winner as although EW belong in clubs (an easy 110, or 130 if they drop the K \bigstar) in practice those that respond will see partner bid $3\bigstar$ and there is no escape from that. (Whatever the sequence $1\bigstar$ -1NT-3 \bigstar -4 \bigstar shows in Acol, it's not this hand).

Playing in spades East can limp home at the one level, on the K^{\clubsuit} lead he can play one back and come to 7 tricks via one club, one diamond, one heart and 4 spades, although he must be careful not to take the club finesse if North "kindly" gives him an entry to dummy.

A hard earned +80, but pairs is all about getting plus scores!

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

The points may be split evenly but this time there is no doubt as to the hand belongs to with two 9 card major suit fits and a void to boot.

After South passes West has the classic problem, should you open a weak two in hearts when holding 4 spades?

It is very tempting with that honour structure and many will do so. If North overcalls $3\frac{1}{2}$ (and why not?) then East can blast $4\frac{1}{2}$ and South will save in $5\frac{1}{2}$. When this comes back round to East he won't know of the enormous double fit, it could be right to double or to bid on.

If West does make a disciplined pass then East will overcall 1♠ after 1♣ opening and West can make a fit jump of 3♥, this might help East bid 5♠ over 5♣, although in practice the tempo of the auction might slow NS down (it won't be obvious to either of them they have 11 clubs between them).

The only interest in the play in hearts is whether North ducks the A, that would not be a good idea today, letting West make no fewer than 12 tricks! 5. Doubled is a simple two off of course, and a good save for NS.



Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable



West has a marginal opening bid, and what he opens will have a serious effect on what contract his side ends up in.

Those that open 1NT will see partner transfer to spades and then bid 3NT, since East has no real interest in playing in clubs and shouldn't bother bidding the suit with 8 points in his short suits. West will pass and NS will cash 5 heart tricks and the A = A for a quick and brutal two down.

Those that pass will see East open 1 \pm , they will respond 2 \pm and now East will reverse into 3 \pm . (Not pretty but not much alternative). With hearts now the 4th suit, EW will avoid no trumps and come to play in 5 \pm or 4 \pm . 5 \pm looks like it has fair chances, but 4 \pm will go down on repeated heart forces. (Yes, I can see 4 \pm may make by ruffing the 2nd heart and playing a spade to the 9, but normal declarers don't have a good peek before they play the hand – well, most don't anyway).

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

This time East's decision whether or not to open will simply determine which hand plays the final contract, rather than what it is.

With 29 points between the two hands, no major suit fit and stoppers in every suit I am confident everyone will play in 3NT (maybe 4NT at a stretch).

If East opens 1NT then a heart will be led, and declarer will have a choice of suits to attack. Actually if East passes then West will play 3NT and also get a heart lead, so let's look at the play.

Declarer might choose to play on spades, setting up an extra trick there, then after winning the second heart will probably try the club finesse. This will eventually lead to the loss of 1 spade, 1 club and the defence can cash the long heart when they win the $A \blacklozenge$, just 9 tricks.

Alternatively, declarer might attack diamonds, after the K wins he can switch to spades then clubs for ten tricks...not so fast, after the club finesse loses the defence can cash two diamond tricks to hold declarer to the same 9.

A frustrating deal, anyone that did make a tenth trick (running the J is the only play to make 11 so I discounting that) well done, this hand shows the beauty of pairs – every trick matters!

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

After East passes South will choose between 1^{e} , 2^{e} and no hearts at all, but all roads should lead to the same final contract – or will it?

A 2 \checkmark opening will probably work best as that shuts up West, North will raise to game and there the matter will rest. A 1 \checkmark opening (or a pass) works worst as West can overcall 2 \bigstar and East will bid 4 \bigstar , a good save.

Playing in hearts an innocuous 3 will be led, if South runs that to his king then it's a quick one down, West will ruff the diamond return and play a spade and lose the first 4 tricks. (It is possible West will get two ruffs and South then runs the Q to West's bare king, that seems unlikely).

Instead if South rises with the ace care is still needed, best play is the A♥ followed by 4 rounds of clubs, pitching two diamonds (or spades) as West ruffs, there will be a spade to lose but no more.

Playing in spades there are 5 top tricks to lose for -300, a good save if everyone makes 4 but a bad one if they go off.

The best sacrifices of all get the opponents to the 5 level − there is no making 5♥ on a diamond lead whatever you do!

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable



26 points between them and a nine card fit – surely everyone will play in $4 \ge 2$ South has a problem for Acol players, 1NT to show the shape or $1 \ge 1$ to show

the 5 card suit? Today it isn't an issue as over 1NT North will Stayman and the spade fit come to light, over $1 \ge 1000$ North will use whatever club he has in his bag to show a forcing raise (2NT Jacoby is becoming increasingly common) and again $4 \ge 1000$ will be the final stop.

With a certain diamond and heart to be lost, it will be the play of the trump suit that is critical - debate rages between those that take two finesses and the "ace and another brigade". Those that do like taking two finesses must be careful to run the 9 first, now when East shows out there is time to put the ace up and lead one back up. (Leading the 9 first works if East has singleton king, running the queen gains if West has singleton jack)

If any East players get busy in the auction this will probably tip declarer off to the trump break, since an over-call on a feeble suit (and mediocre hand) does suggest a shortage, probably in the enemy suit.

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

This time EW get to play in game, again holding no singleton and sufficient values they will surely come to rest in 3NT.

A common auction will be 2NT-3♥-3♠-3NT or similar, the 6 card club suit being ignored. Just to be clear, I am not sanctioning this bidding, a 6 card suit and all of the high cards makes that East hand far too powerful to show 20-22, evaluating it as about 23 and a half is broadly correct and will lead to the same contract being reached.

A diamond will be the popular lead and East has little choice but to win, cross in hearts and try something in clubs. It is very close between running the Jack (gaining against Kxx, Kx onside) and leading low to the queen (gaining against K, Kx onside) but both plays work today and a relieved declarer will take 11 tricks and a fair score.

Regardless of what should happen, experience shows that some people always play these hands in spades, clubs, a slam or a part-score, which means the normal +460 will be 65-75% for EW.

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

After two passes South will open the bidding, and again the choice of opening bid will influence the final contract.

Those that start with a middle of the road $1 \blacklozenge$ will see partner respond $1 \heartsuit$, they will rebid $1 \clubsuit$ and then get preference to diamonds (although some will hog the bidding with 1NT, or a dirty $2 \heartsuit$ rebid).

Those that open 1NT will have a simple transfer auction to 2Ψ , I can't see either East or West coming in on balanced hands with no suit.

So, how did everyone do?

Those in hearts by South will get the J^{*} lead ducked to the King, a diamond switch will set up a ruff and they can be held at 7 tricks if the defence attack spades in time.

(Hearts by North might get lucky on a club lead from the king).

Those in diamonds can always make 8 tricks but 9 can be made, only if declarer rises with the $A \clubsuit$ on a club lead and starts knocking out the hearts before the spades are dislodged.

As usual, lots of interest in a modest part-score board.



W 5 3 - 5 4

This time a marginal game awaits EW, although one doomed to failure.

East will open 1♠, 1♣ or 1NT, those opening 1♠ will either play in 3NT (if West rates their hand as a two level response) or 1NT (if West doesn't).

Those opening 1♣ will probably reach 3NT, as will the strong no trumpers who will get raised to game via stayman.

Played by East there doesn't seem to be much chance of 9 tricks, 6 are on top (4 diamonds and 2 clubs) and one can easily be built up (a heart trick), the 8th might come from spades, but the 9th trick is a long way off.

However played by West there is a good chance of 9 tricks, surely North will lead a heart. This will be ducked to the ace and a heart back to the king gives West two quick tricks and time to build up a spade trick for 9.

Even if the unlucky declarers can't appreciate the irony I would hope they can appreciate the symmetry - those in game make a part-score and those in part-score make a game.

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

South has an easy 1 opener, and after that it will only be a question of how many tricks are made in the inevitable 3NT contract.

With EW silent North will respond 2+ and South will rebid 2+, no controversies so far. Holding soft values (queens and jacks), no aces and a fitting honour in spades there seems little else for North to do but shoot out 3NT, which will surely be the room contract.

North has an easy 12 tricks – 3 hearts, 6 spades and 3 diamonds, but there is just the small matter of 3 missing aces, and it will be up to EW to make sure that neither of them "goes to bed" with an ace.

A club will surely be led at every table, it will go to the ace and the jack back to the King. If North leads a diamond to the ten and one back to the jack he paints a picture of his whole hand, it will be easy for East to cash the A^{\clubsuit} . Instead he should try the queen from hand (crossing to the A^A and leading one to the king is best but risks disaster when spades are 4-1) hoping a dozing East will win and continue clubs.

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

This time EW have a possible slam, but sadly today is the day when the finesses all lose. (That sounds like a good title for the next James Bond film, I better make a note of that)

Assuming North can resist opening a dirty weak 2♥ in second seat then EW will have a free run. Assuming East opens 1 and West responds 1 then East is well worth a jump to 2♠ and when West raises to 3♠ (to show 4 card support and non-minimum) East might well "take the black(wood)" and then bid 6 when one key card is missing.

Alternatively if West responds 1♠ then East might bid 3♥ or 4♥ as shortage, West might take the view to sign off with the K wasted, they will stop safely in game. On a heart lead East wins and crosses to the $A \blacklozenge$ to run the $J \blacklozenge$, a second entry is always there to lead a club to the queen. Not quite as good as one of two finesses (75%) as there are a few handling charges, but still a good slam none the less. Well bid if you reached it, although my kind words will be of little consolation for your 15% score.

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable



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North's choice of action will set the tone for the whole auction and decide whether EW get to game or defend a part-score.

Weak no trumpers will opens 1♣ (some might try 1♦ I suppose) and East will overcall 1NT, West should force to game opposite this as the heart intermediates and honour structure (Kings always work well) make this hand worth more than 7 points. A simple stayman enquiry will get EW to game with a minimum of fuss, there are 3 losers and not a penny more.

If instead North opens 1NT then East will pass (you should still play a double of a strong no trump as penalties but this hand with no good lead is not ideal) and it will be up to West to protect with 2^{sh} for the majors. On balance he should do this since the main aim of this sort of action is to compete the part-score and not let your side be stolen from.

East is entitled to bash 4 over this which will no doubt worry West but the same tricks are due to them as to the others.

If anyone does double 1NT then NS are in serious trouble and had better run to 2 of a minor, otherwise it's a big round 0 that awaits them.

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

Continuing the theme of "open the bidding then defend game" East will start with 1 and then watch NS brush him aside like a fly.

Whether you're a losing trick advocate or a devoted bean counter I'm sure everyone will open 1 + and South once more will overcall 1NT.

North has an 8 count with a 5 card suit, and with the Q+ of unknown value his hand falls into the category of "force to game at teams but invite at pairs" and South might well pass, although the 10♣ and 9♣ are both good cards (and indeed, they are worth the contract).

Playing in hearts there is no effective suit for EW to attack, and providing South is careful in the trump suit (low to the jack, cash the queen and then finesse the 9 having noticed East show out) ten tricks are easy. South doesn't even need three diamond tricks since both the spades and clubs are lying favourably, the gods are clearly on declarer's side!

Playing in NT the same ten tricks are available, well done if you realised that 47 and 3NT were likely to be similar contracts and chalked up 430 (460?) you will certainly claim the lion's share of the match-points.

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

NS have a pleasingly symmetrical misfit here, both hold a long suit and a 4 card suit on the side, with communication issues making this awkward to play.

South will open 14 and North respond 14, then South has a choice whether to rebid clubs or diamonds. If he rebids 24 then North might allow the heart stoppers to sway him into NT, more likely he will bid 3♠ or 4♠, over 3♠ South might press on in diamonds and North bid spades again, over 4 South will pass. Over a club rebid North will bid hearts and South NT, again North might hog the bidding with $4 \pm$ or leave it in 2 or 3NT.

North can make 4 but won't in practice as after a heart lead to the ace and a trump back he will finesse and lose 4 major suit tricks.

No Trumps makes only 8 tricks on accurate defence but in practice 9 tricks might be there for the taking if the defence lead and continue hearts, North can duck a diamond then use the top clubs as entries to develop the suit.

So well done if you bid the failing game of 3NT and made it, and bad luck if you bid the making 4♠ and failed!



Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

NS hold 27 points between them and two balanced hands with no major suit fit, so I am hoping that everyone found a way to exactly 3NT. (No complaints by postcard if your opponents found their way to part-score or a slam, just take your top and smile politely).

1♥-1♠-2NT-3NT seems sensible, or a variation for 5 card majorites, and West will have to choose between leading a long suit his opponents have already bid or a short one they haven't.

On a spade lead South can win the $8 \pm$ and lead hearts up twice, the defence can't build a club trick in time and he will make ten tricks.

On a diamond lead South will win in dummy and run the Q_{\clubsuit} , if West finds the 9_{\clubsuit} switch then the defence can hold declarer to only 9 tricks.

A club lead is best (the 9 works well today but the 8 is the standard card from this holding) and a heart lead the worst.

Did you make the precious over-trick? It's of vital importance today...

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West will surely get a free kick here, as although all of the other three players nearly has an opening bid (well between the three of them they have enough points for two!) there isn't much purpose in any of them opening.

West will start with $1 \ge and$ North can overcall whatever he likes, $1 \lor$, 2NT, $1 \diamond$ (if he's feeling a bit twisted), this will set East a problem depending on the methods being used. If $1 \ge a$ is natural then he can simply raise it to $2 \ge a$ (or $3 \ge a$ pre-emptive in the duplicate style) West might bid on, showing his spades.

If North does overcall 2NT (or 1 \blacklozenge) then NS will get to their best contract of 3 \blacklozenge fairly efficiently, it will be up to EW to outbid them to 4 \clubsuit .

What can everyone make? EW can be held to ten tricks in clubs on the A \pm lead (possible) and then an underlead in diamonds (hard to find unless South has raised enthusiastically), in practice most that bid 5 \pm will make it. 3NT has no chance at all even if North leads a heart to start with, likewise spades suffers a bad break.

Any decent sized plus score will do well for EW since at least a third of the field will go minus, well done if you slipped 5♣ through the net!

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

East will start brightly with 1 but NS will soon move in and take over with their major suit assets.

South has a fantastic suit and must bid it at some level, 1♠ for most but 2♠ for others (whether that be weak or a shaded intermediate), West can't really come to the party.

Now we enter murky territory as North will bid 2 - is that forcing? If so should South raise hearts or rebid spades? Does rebidding the spades show anything or is it just the default action?

All these questions need to be answered by regular partnerships, but most pick up partnerships will need to muddle through as best they can.

The good news for NS is that both spades and hearts makes 11 tricks, just losing the minor suit aces. Actually EW can put up a tricky defence to a spade contract, two rounds of diamonds forcing the dummy to ruff. To make 11 tricks South must ruff with the queen and finesse the ten of trumps – not easy at all....



Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

South does not in any way have an opening bid, but that won't stop some people who will open whatever local poison they fancy, which will lead to some unusual results (more on that later!).

Assuming most EW pairs get a free run then 3NT seems the best resting stop, perhaps $1 \div -2 \div -2 \div -2 \div -3 \div -3$ is a fair auction, the West hand is close to rebidding $3 \div$ on values but the clubs are poor and a singleton in partner's suit is always a liability.

The trouble is that 3NT will only make 9 tricks, and even that requires West to cash out and run for home, taking a diamond finesse (a reasonable line of play when North discards on the 3^{rd} heart) is a quick one down.

I would expect most defenders to lead spades (maybe South might avoid it if somehow East is declarer? Unlikely) so +400 will have to do, whether or not South blocks the suit.

Any Souths that do open 1 will get what they deserve when West overcalls and East blasts 3NT, as they won't know to lead a spade!

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

This time EW have enormous combined assets and the over-bidders will win as the low point count 6NT is cold.

(I am assuming of course that North passes throughout, the vulnerability acting as a suitable deterrent).

On a spade lead West should play K^{\bullet} , heart to the Jack, then play on diamonds to knock out the king. After cashing a load of black winners and hearts it will be tempting to finesse the 10, (North has shown up with 6 spades, 3 hearts and at least one club) but South's club discards may give the game away. I think few pairs will bid a slam so +490 will still score respectably for EW.



NS can make a miracle 3NT, will anyone reach it? Let's find out...

North will pass and East will also, unless playing a 2 suited opening (and even then the hand is too weak, you need respectable suits at this score) which gives South a free go.

1♣, 1♠ and a gratuitous upgrade to 2NT are all possibilities. 1♣ might get a double from West and North is worth a jump to 3♣, that might well prompt South to have a stab at 3NT. A 2NT opening will certainly get raised to 3NT, North simply has no other choice.

A 1♠ opening (ghastly) will be passed out, at least NS will make it, even on a diamond attack.

The play in 3NT is very simply, 9 tricks on any lead by forcing out the A Ψ , no chance of a tenth.

Well done if you chanced your arm and made 600, bad luck if you played it safe and scored something else.



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