

♠AQ85
♥Q104
♦Q95
♣A95

♠J4
♥J83
♦K843
♣8432

♠973
♥A975
♦AJ10
♣J106

♠K1062
♥K62
♦762
♣KQ7

Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all

East will pass and South has an automatic pass in days of yesteryear. These days however a lot will open the South hand (yuk) no doubt citing the vulnerability or claiming the 10♠ is worth a trick (it isn't).

If South opens 1NT and North raise straight to 3 (surely right with a lot of queens and 4333 shape) then a traditional 4th best diamond lead will beat it out of hand, serving South right.

If instead North is allowed to open 1NT and South raises that, then a heart lead makes 9 tricks cold (actually anything does played by North) and game will be made.

I am not sure why I have devoted so much analysis to no trumps since most people will bid stayman, find the 4-4 fit and discover 9 tricks are the limit of the hand, regardless of the fact they are already in game.

Those cautious souls that bid P – P – P – 1NT all pass will have scored a goal and +150 and a fair number of match-points will be their just reward.

HCP	
14	10
5	11

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

♠A97
♥9765
♦Q63
♣J42

♠KJ102
♥J3
♦KJ1095
♣K6

♠Q3
♥1084
♦A72
♣A10987

♠8654
♥AKQ2
♦84
♣Q53

Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

There is more of a case for South opening the bidding here than on the previous deal but most will pass and West has a clear 1♦ opener. (1NT is tempting but diamonds and then a 1♠ rebid describes the hand well).

Those playing Acol, will bid 1♦ – 2♣ – 2♦ – 3♦ all pass, and now 9 tricks are easy and ten will depend on finding the Q♦.

Surely West will lead low to the ace and then back to the jack and make only 9 tricks?

Perhaps, but imagine this scenario...North leads a heart and South plays Ace, King, Queen. West ruffs and plays 3 rounds of clubs ruffing. At this point South has turned up with 11 points and didn't open the bidding, if West is on the ball they can run the J♦ and make +130 and take applause all round.

Those that play a strong no trump will bid 1♦ – P – 1NT – all pass, now after 4 rounds of hearts East should knock out the A♠ and then guess the diamond, the evidence is not so clear but some will get it right for +120.

HCP	
7	10
12	11

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

♠AKQJ9
♥AQ2
♦-
♣A8652

♠104
♥1087654
♦KQ973
♣-

♠-
♥KJ93
♦J10862
♣KQJ7

♠876532
♥-
♦A54
♣10943

Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

There is a certain amount of pleasing symmetry about this hand, with everyone having exactly one void each in a different suit.

West might start with a weak two or two suited bid (neither are classical, but it is board 32 for goodness sake) and North will double and then South can bid spades after East raises.

If instead West passes and North opens 1♠ then East might double and after 4♠ from South West will bid 5♥ (or 4NT to show two suits), North will have to guess how high to go.

If clubs were 2-2 then 12 tricks would be easy, if there were 3-1 then 11 would be easy. With clubs 4-0 North will have to be careful to eliminate things and then lead a low club to the 10, East can win the jack and is endplayed... hard work to end the night with!

HCP	
20	11
5	4

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4	-	-	5	2
S	4	-	-	5	2
E	-	3	4	-	-
W	-	4	4	-	-

British Winter Sim Pairs



Monday
13th January 2020

Welcome to the British Winter 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 Michael Byrne.

This is the start of the 2020 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. Clubs should keep the travellers if still used.

Coming up in February (4th & 6th) is the Bridge England Simultaneous Pairs. This year money raised will be to help support Junior Bridge. I hope you will support this event and look forward to you playing.

Ian Payn, Chairman EBU

<p>♠ - ♥ AQJ ♦ KQJ853 ♣ Q973</p> <p>♠ Q10 ♥ K863 ♦ 762 ♣ AKJ5</p> <p>♠ AK852 ♥ 1097542 ♦ - ♣ 108</p> <p>♠ J97643 ♥ - ♦ A1094 ♣ 642</p>	<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <p>A perfect competitive deal to start our evening with, as NS have a big diamond fit and have a playable game their way, whilst EW have a ten card heart fit and also have a playable game their way. Every North will open 1♦ and most Easts will overcall 2♦ for the majors, the 6th heart proving some compensation for the paucity of high card points. South should raise diamonds (since spades are out the window as a trump suit) and West will surely try 4♥. North might be tempted to defend but knowing partner is short in hearts he should surely press on to 5♦. If EW play in hearts they have ten easy tricks (North getting three trump tricks) whilst the play in diamonds looks fascinating - have you seen the club position? If West zooms in with his AK then the fall of the 108 lets North finesse the 9 on the 3rd round, it doesn't help West to duck since then North can throw the club on the A♥. An exciting hand to start with and I predict the traveller will be littered with games making and going down on both sides.</p>																																										
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<p>♠ AKJ97 ♥ QJ63 ♦ K ♣ KJ4</p> <p>♠ 54 ♥ A972 ♦ Q862 ♣ 982</p> <p>♠ 10863 ♥ K10 ♦ A104 ♣ AQ107</p> <p>♠ Q2 ♥ 854 ♦ J9753 ♣ 653</p>	<p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <p>North has a nice hand but should banish any thoughts of higher contracts from his mind, once it becomes clear that partner is weak. Those Easts that start with 1NT will get doubled in the pass out seat by North, if South leaves it in then East will make 7 tricks easily and 8 tricks if he really tries hard. (4 clubs, 2 diamonds and 2 hearts). If South removes it then EW must have their knives ready, since NS can make the square root of.....nothing, actually. A spade part-score will go down by at least two, and diamonds is even worse. Those Norths that don't stop bidding in time will be in trouble indeed, although West is unlikely to wield the axe that low down. If East instead starts with 1♣ then West will respond 1♥ and North's 1♠ overcall might even be passed out, or North might double and then bid spades, again buying the hand. With NS vulnerable, the money for EW is in defending, and they might not even have to double to get a good score, +200 (known as the kiss of death) will be easy to come by.</p>																																										
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<p>♠ 87 ♥ 84 ♦ AQ876 ♣ 10876</p> <p>♠ A932 ♥ QJ10 ♦ K95 ♣ KJ4</p> <p>♠ KJ5 ♥ K972 ♦ 42 ♣ A932</p> <p>♠ Q1064 ♥ A653 ♦ J103 ♣ Q5</p>	<p>Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <p>EW have two balanced hands with 25 between them and honours in every suit, so it is a sad fact of life that 1NT is the limit of the hand. After a pass from South, West will surely open 1NT (or 1♣ for some) and show 12-14 balanced, East will invite and game will be reached. The good news is that a 4th best diamond lead from North will let West make the King, the bad news is that the contract has only 8 tricks and will still go one down. In fact this hand is a good advertisement for damage limitation, if West goes all out to make his contract by playing a spade to the Jack at trick two then he will go two down, if instead he accepts his fate with grim resignation and knocks out the heart ace then he will escape for one off which won't be a disaster. There will be some EW pairs that go plus (don't ask me how there always are) but in practice the score sheet will be littered with 50 and 100s..and perhaps a few -150s as well.</p>																																										
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<p>♠ A52 ♥ AK876 ♦ AK3 ♣ 98</p> <p>♠ Q93 ♥ J1042 ♦ QJ5 ♣ Q73</p> <p>♠ KJ76 ♥ 95 ♦ 10876 ♣ KJ4</p> <p>♠ 1084 ♥ Q3 ♦ 942 ♣ A10652</p>	<p>Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <p>NS will have to show caution here, although North has a beautifully crisp 18 count with a 5 card suit, partner doesn't quite have enough and 8 tricks are the limit in no trumps. A common sequence will be 1♥ – 1NT – 2NT – P, although some stronger no trumppers (for whom the raise shows 18-19) will upgrade the Q♥ and 5 card suit and raise to game. Of course game has no chance on the 4-2 heart break...or does it? Played by South West might well lead the Q♦ and South can throw a bit of misdirection into the mix by ducking trick one. West will surely continue and now when the 9♣ is run to the queen West will continue diamonds allowing 9 tricks to be made. In practice though most uninspired Souths will cash hearts and 8 tricks will be the limit. Well done if you score +600, but even +150 will be enough for a good score, with plenty of people going minus in game.</p>																																										
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S	3	2	3	1	2																																						
E	-	-	-	-	-																																						
W	-	-	-	-	-																																						

<p>♠ 7 ♥ 843 ♦ K842 ♣ 76542</p> <p>♠ AK10985 ♥ Q6 ♦ 976 ♣ 93</p> <p>♠ QJ643 ♥ J92 ♦ QJ ♣ QJ10</p> <p>♠ 2 ♥ AK1075 ♦ A1053 ♣ AK8</p>	<p>Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <p>South has a powerful hand and (for once) partner has the right bits and pieces to help him out. After two passes South will open 1♥ and West will overcall in spades, many will choose 2♠ as a weak jump overcall. North will pass and East will raise spades, how high is the question. If East raises to 3♠ then South can double and North will bid 4♥, the good game has been reached. If instead East bids 4♠ then South will double and North will pass, 800 will be the penalty. Although it looks like 4♥ is a very lucky make when the diamond comes in, in fact that is not the case if you play it correctly. South can draw trumps and set up the clubs, using dummy's modest suit to throw two diamonds away. I have sympathy with any NS pairs that bid and make game only to find everyone has gone for 800 the other way, but in practice 620 will still be ok.</p>																																										
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S	4	5	4	-	1																																						
E	-	-	-	1	-																																						
W	-	-	-	1	-																																						

♠Q963
♥985
♦10985
♣A7

♠8
♥72
♦AQJ3
♣KQJ953

♠K742
♥AK104
♦76
♣1062

♠AJ105
♥QJ63
♦K42
♣84

HCP: 6, 13, 10, 11

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	5	1	2	1	2
W	5	1	2	-	2

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

A rare hand indeed where EW will have to play in 5♣ exactly and nothing else. A common start will be 1♣ – 1♥ – 2♣ – 3♣ – 3♦ – ?

If East now bids 3NT (and in fairness the 4th spade will be fair protection against the suit being run in no trumps) then they have reached the wrong game. If instead East bids 4♣ or similar then West will raise to game and 5♣ has been reached, with trumps 2-2 there is no issue in the play, and EW will feel pleased....not so fast!

Let's return to 3NT by East, what will South lead? A spade will be popular (I don't recommend it with no trumps bid by East but that's because I can see partner has Q9xx spades and not K9xx!) and now 9 tricks are easy. In fact on the Q♥ lead (surprise attack, the suit they bid!) if East knocks out the A♣ North must be careful to switch to the 9♠ (the queen is not enough, East can duck the first round) which will beat it, if instead he plays a low spade then now ten tricks will appear!

♠A96
♥AKQ532
♦K10
♣65

♠Q4
♥1097
♦QJ653
♣J82

♠K1083
♥4
♦A87
♣AKQ74

♠J752
♥J86
♦942
♣1093

HCP: 16, 6, 16, 2

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

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

North has a prime hand here, and will be looking forward to playing a game or slam, better prepare to get your hopes dashed!

East will double 1♥ of course and West respond 2♦. However many hearts North bids (2 looks sensible but many will choose 3 for no reason) East should double again to show extra values without a primary fit. West should rebid diamonds and there the matter will rest.

The play in either minor seems straight forward, the defence can either force the dummy or exit passively, and South's possession of the diamond 9 will ensure that ten tricks are the limit.

The same will be true in clubs and +130 will be a common score for EW. Any frisky NS pairs that compete to 3♥ should be met with a sharp double and sensible passive defence (just throw clubs and trumps at it) will result in -300. Incidentally if East does switch to a spade he must choose the 10, a perfect example of a *surrounding play*, to trap the 9 in declarer's hand.

♠83
♥98432
♦J732
♣92

♠QJ642
♥AJ5
♦5
♣Q875

♠AK5
♥K107
♦KQ109
♣J63

♠1097
♥Q6
♦A864
♣AK104

HCP: 1, 10, 16, 13

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

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

A straight forward 3NT for EW now, and with stoppers in every suit I am sure... hang on a minute! I have just noticed an 8 card major suit fit...and a singleton!

If East opens 1NT then a transfer auction will surely see East pull to 4♠ (although the 4333 shape will give some pause for thought) and now a club ruff will be found and send it to a quick death.

If East opens 1♦ then West will respond 1♠ and East rebid 1NT, now perhaps a check-back auction will discover the 8 card fit and 4♠ will again be reached, the difference now being that North is on lead. I have to say it doesn't look obvious to me to lead a doubleton (club) when holding two small trumps, and a heart lead will prove fatal to the defence. (Well I say fatal, declarer can still carve it from there but most will make in practice).

The winners of the bidding challenge will be those that play in 3NT, if West shows diamond shortage then East can bid 3NT with a clear conscience, well done I you reached it.

♠AK10985
♥76
♦J5
♣KJ5

♠J73
♥AK10
♦K1062
♣632

♠Q42
♥5432
♦743
♣Q104

♠6
♥QJ98
♦AQ98
♣A987

HCP: 12, 11, 13, 4

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

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

South has excellent pips and soft values suitable for No trumps here, so I would expect most to reach the best (and making) game that their hands suggest. A simple auction would be 1♠ – 2♣ – 2♠ – 3NT – P, with North respecting his partner's decision.

On a diamond lead South can win and play spades from the top (low to the ten is not the correct play in the suit, gaining against QJxx outside but losing to Qxxx or Jxxx, much more likely) to set up five spades, two diamonds, two clubs and perhaps a trick in the wash for 430.

Those that play in game in spades don't seem to have much chance at all, on a diamond lead there are 4 defensive winners straight away and even on a heart lead West can exit a trump and there aren't the entries for anything clever (such as throwing the club on the 3rd heart then ruffing the clubs good). Many will make 4♠ though as some West players will cash both hearts, allowing North two discards when the ten drops on the 3rd round, they don't really deserve their good score, but that won't stop them enjoying it!

♠KQ
♥AK76
♦654
♣K1084

♠976
♥Q
♦AJ97
♣AQJ97

♠A102
♥10982
♦1032
♣652

♠J8543
♥J543
♦KQ8
♣3

HCP: 15, 14, 7, 4

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

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

Another nip and tuck part-score deal here, but in traditional fashion the major suits rule the world and NS will win the bidding war.

If West opens 1♣ (and I'm sure almost everyone will) then North will probably stretch to 1NT, placing some weight on the nice club pips (K108x often being a trick better than K432) and ignoring the doubleton spade honours.

That will work well when South responds Stayman, although he must be careful not to get too ambitious. It wouldn't be wild for South to use Stayman then blast game, but at pairs pushing for thin games is rarely necessary, 3♥ is more prudent and will be passed out.

An unlikely diamond lead will hold a heart part-score to 8 tricks but 9 are more likely after a club lead, the even spade break proving beneficial.

Ten tricks seem impossible since East will surely ruff in and lead diamonds at some point, even if he fails to find the switch when in with the A♠.

Those playing in spades can make 8 tricks and again many will make 9 if EW get distracted by the spade ruff and fail to get diamonds going.

♠K6
♥KJ104
♦A2
♣Q8752

♠J82
♥Q62
♦K107
♣AJ94

♠Q943
♥9
♦QJ943
♣1063

♠A1075
♥A8753
♦865
♣K

HCP: 13, 11, 11, 5

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

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

A traditional game contract now, with NS owning 24 points and a 9 card fit I would expect most players to bid and make 4♥.

North should open 1NT if playing one (opening 1♣ and rebidding 2♣ after a 1♠ response is grizzly) and South will Stayman then raise, North should go onto game with 13 and two useful doubletons.

There is potential for a lot of different number of tricks here, with some declarers making 10 or 11 (and perhaps a few careless ones making 9!)

For example, if South plays it then the 2♠ lead (a fair choice) gives declarer time to knock out the Ace of clubs and throw the diamond loser on the 5th club as West ruffs with his trump trick.

Alternatively a diamond lead from East will leave North with plenty of work to be done, but ten tricks seem to fall into place easily, with no defensive over-ruff available on the 4th club.

♠Q72
♥AJ87
♦A76
♣A63

♠K6 ♠A983
♥106532 ♥K94
♦1093 ♦Q42
♣J75 ♣K42

♠J1054
♥Q
♦KJ85
♣Q1098

HCP Makeable contracts

		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
15		N	3	3	1	3	3
4	12	S	3	3	1	3	3
		E	-	-	-	-	-
		W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

Those brave souls that open 1NT as East will be at the mercy of what methods NS are playing in terms of whether or not they go for a penalty.

Those NS pairs that are playing 1NT – P – 2♦ – X as showing diamonds will have to gnash their teeth in frustration and choose the second best bid, those that play it as penalty of 1NT will make it, and then double 2♥ (either South doubling for take out or North doubling for penalties).

Playing in hearts EW have 8 probable losers and will not enjoy the play, they are off 3 diamonds, 2 clubs and at least 2 hearts, which in practice will be 3.

Those East players that pass will probably defend a no trump contract (most South's will drive to game facing 15-17 balanced) which is likely to make 9 tricks, although some declarers will mis-guess clubs.

Those East that open 1♣ will surely defend 3NT making, the location of the high cards marked by the opening bid.

♠J82
♥K
♦KQ843
♣J865

♠A1076 ♠Q3
♥74 ♥AJ8652
♦652 ♦97
♣AQ107 ♣K92

♠K954
♥Q1093
♦AJ10
♣43

HCP Makeable contracts

		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
10		N	-	1	-	1	-
10	10	S	-	1	-	1	-
		E	1	-	2	-	-
		W	1	-	2	-	-

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

A perfect balance with all four players holding the average number of points to which they are entitled.

A passed out hand? Hardly, for starters some North players will bid diamonds 3rd in seat, a light 1♦ for some, and a dodgy 2♦ for others. This will elicit a heart overcall from East and after that it is hard to predict, those who are facing a 1♦ opening competing with a double or a 1♠ bid, those that face a 2♦ opening surely raising to 3♦.

If instead there are three passes then East has the chance to open 2♥ in 4th seat, which is generally played as 9-12 points, although the suit is patchy and the hand contains a dull 6322 shape.

A heart contract makes 7 or 8 tricks depending on the lead (on a spade lead North must be careful to play the 8 not the jack when declarer plays low from dummy) and a diamond contract only 7 on repeated trump leads.

One thing is sure, those with a plus score will have earned their match-points, and those that open in 4th and go minus will live to regret it.

♠10542
♥Q7
♦AK1094
♣92

♠K973 ♠-
♥KJ943 ♥82
♦- ♦Q87652
♣AQ108 ♣KJ765

♠AQJ86
♥A1065
♦J3
♣43

HCP Makeable contracts

		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
9		N	-	-	-	1	-
13	6	S	-	-	-	2	-
		E	4	1	2	-	-
		W	4	1	2	-	-

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

1♥ will be everyone's starting point, and East will surely dredge up a dustbin 1NT response, no doubt wondering where all the spades have gone.

South will probably bid 2♠ (that's where!) and West can't do much but pass, when North raises (or makes an UCB) East can try 2NT or 3NT for the minors, getting the big club fit into the game.

Where will the music stop? If NS come to rest in spades then anything can happen, from a double dummy point of view West can under-lead clubs twice and get two ruffs and wait for his trump trick (the heart winner will vanish sadly) holding South to 8 tricks. In practice West might lead hearts and now declarer has a chance at more.

If EW play in clubs then North should lead trumps, West may only have one loser but 11 tricks he does not have. 5♣ can't be made unless the defence err, and even then it must be fairly egregious.

Making a game always scores well but doubling your opponents and getting them down will work just as well on this hand!

♠AJ64
♥AQ
♦AJ8632
♣J

♠1097532 ♠KQ
♥96 ♥K875
♦- ♦K1097
♣A9876 ♣Q52

♠8
♥J10432
♦Q54
♣K1043

HCP Makeable contracts

		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
17		N	-	4	3	-	1
4	13	S	-	4	3	-	1
		E	1	-	-	2	-
		W	1	-	-	2	-

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

A 1♦ opening by North will be how everyone starts and East will have to grumpily pass (the strength is fine for a double but the doubleton spade is not!). South will respond 1♥ and West has to bid some spades, 2 will be a mainstream choice although some brave souls will bid 3 no doubt.

After that the auction is impossible to predict and all sorts of things might happen. North might rebid diamonds and make plenty of tricks (ten is possible losing two trumps and the A♣, the heart loser going on the K♣) perhaps even doubled by East, or he might rebid 3NT and go several down.

Alternatively, East might be the one to bid on and raise spades, (8 tricks are the limit and North will be doubling no doubt) or perhaps try no trumps himself!

Once again the traveller will be littered with scores on both sides, but I predict more people will go down in a contract than make one, so plus scores will score well.

♠Q5
♥AK6
♦A97542
♣J4

♠9864 ♠KJ103
♥J43 ♥Q1087
♦3 ♦KQJ10
♣K7652 ♣10

♠A72
♥952
♦86
♣AQ983

HCP Makeable contracts

		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
14		N	2	2	-	-	2
4	12	S	2	1	-	-	-
		E	-	-	1	2	-
		W	-	-	1	2	-

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

East has the dreaded 4441 shape, but at least he is loaded with intermediate cards, and (not to be old fashioned) the hand does contain 12 points.

Those that open 1♦ will see South pass (no, I wouldn't bid 2♣) and West should respond 1♠ but most will pass.

If 1♦ is passed round to North he should pass and take a few hundreds in under-tricks, though beating it by 2 doesn't look that easy on the likely heart lead.

After 1♦ – P – 1♠ North will pass and East raise to 2♠. This should make as the diamond shortage and Q♠ are in the right place.

If instead East passes as dealer then North will open 1♦ and probably rebid 2♦ over the 2♣ response, 8 tricks seem easy as the defence will struggle to see that West needs to switch to spades upon winning the K♣.

Anyone scoring 200 will scoop all the match-points, and bidding and making a part-score will be huge for EW and fair for NS.

♠K965
♥10
♦K4
♣AK10984

♠AQ4 ♠J10732
♥732 ♥KJ
♦QJ1093 ♦A872
♣76 ♣Q2

♠8
♥AQ98654
♦65
♣J53

HCP Makeable contracts

		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
13		N	4	-	4	-	1
9	11	S	4	-	4	-	1
		E	-	2	-	1	-
		W	-	2	-	1	-

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

South has a traditional pre-empt to start with and most will open 3♥. (Some cautious souls will open a weak two and some braver souls will open 4♥).

Over a 3♥ opening North will no doubt pass, fearing club shortage in his partner's hand, alas today it is a double fit (well, just about) and game is playable. If 3♥ is passed around to them then East should pass, but some will bid 3♠ and get raised to game – North will be waiting for them with a sharp double!

The play in hearts seems fairly straight forward, the defence will take 2 diamond tricks and no doubt zoom in with the A♠, but that is the end of the road for them. It will be safe to cross to a club and take the heart finesse, and then there is no reason to get clubs wrong (especially when East is the one with the heart shortage).

A good board for aggressive NS pairs, +620 will score very well, though the best score will be those that defend a spade contract doubled, on a club lead and heart switch 800 is there for the taking!

♠KJ4
♥J98
♦10964
♣Q63

♠2 ♠AQ853
♥KQ10632 ♥-
♦A3 ♦KJ752
♣AKJ10 ♣874

♠10976
♥A754
♦Q8
♣952

HCP: 7, 17, 10, 6

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

What a strange hand – EW can make game in every strain, but slam in none of them! The East hand represents a classic rule of 19 opening bid, despite the suits lacking intermediate cards and the economy of suits being hard to show. Those Easts that do open 1♠ will have to slow the train down to avoid exciting West, 1♠ – 2♥ – 2♠ – 3♣ – 3NT should do it, West realising his hand goes down in value with every bid his partner makes. Those West players that do press on with 4♥ will be disappointed with the trump support in dummy, but all is not lost. On the 10♦ lead there are lots of routes home, either by taking ruffs in hand or by drawing trumps (King from hand then queen and another). +420 will not beat those that get all of their tricks in 3NT though, however since this involves setting up the hearts in the same fashion maybe 420 will not score so badly. With some people getting too high (and no doubt some too low) any game making a sensible amount of tricks will score well.

♠AKJ109532
♥73
♦K
♣AQ

♠6 ♠Q7
♥J65 ♥Q92
♦QJ1054 ♦863
♣KJ108 ♣76532

♠84
♥AK1084
♦A972
♣94

HCP: 17, 8, 11

Makeable contracts		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	2	6	7	7	7
S	1	2	6	7	7	7
E	-	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-	-

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

Well we might have had to wait nearly twenty boards but at last we have a slam, and a grand slam at that! Many players should get there since the South hand is a clear opening bid and North can visualise a lot of tricks if the spades run. A good acol sequence might be 1♥ – 2♠ – 3♦ – 3♠ – 4♠ – 4NT – 5♥ – 5NT – 6♦ – 7NT, with North taking a chance on the spades running. Actually that's not very convincing, how about South cue bids 4♦ over 3♠? That might convince North that his partner really does some spade support, or it might confuse him as to what trumps are (South could be 5-5 and bidding out his shape?) Maybe it will work better if South rebids 3♥, then 4♦ is certainly a cue bid. Ah, I have it, South should rebid 2NT and then bid 4♦ over 3♠, grand should be reached. Alternatively, if NS are playing Weak jump shifts then 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♦ – 3♠ – 4♦... should lead to 7 similarly. Playing in 7NT will be worth more than 7♠ but given how much trouble I had constructing an auction I think any grand will be good.

♠Q8
♥AK987
♦1085
♣Q106

♠K942 ♠J765
♥J632 ♥Q104
♦962 ♦K7
♣KJ ♣A984

♠A103
♥5
♦AQJ43
♣7532

HCP: 11, 8, 10, 11

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

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

A return to earth now, with the points being evenly split – what's this, NS can make 3NT? Those that play a strong no trump might actually bid it, 1♥ – 2♦ – 2NT – 3NT carrying them there on momentum, even if the auction isn't that convincing. Those playing Acol will have the choice of opening 1NT as North (reasonable with two possible tenace holdings) or opening 1♥ and rebidding 2♥ over the 2♦ response. Those that open 1NT will probably reach game (that South hand has some useful bits and pieces) those that open 1♥ will reach 2NT, when South bids it over a 2♥ rebid. Today game depends on the diamond finesse (and an even break, and an extra trick in the black suits), which is far too pushy for duplicate pairs, but those players that have rolled in +600 (and all the bushels of match-points that accompany it) will doubtless not be troubled by that at all.

♠A1082
♥KQ10652
♦A6
♣10

♠K743 ♠Q
♥7 ♥AJ843
♦J8742 ♦K3
♣AQ2 ♣J9843

♠J965
♥9
♦Q1095
♣K765

HCP: 13, 10, 11, 6

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

North has a 1♥ opening in everyone's book and South will respond 1♠. After West passes (a 2♦ overcalls is thin based on the scattered values and weak suit) North will have to choose how many spades to bid. The shape and honour structure is fantastic but North would be advised to show caution, partner frequently has a singleton heart when the opponent remain silent. (If South had one more heart he would have one fewer minor suit card, and the opponents might be bidding) With the cards lying as they are 7 tricks are the limit in spades, and many declarers will get in a mess when the hand starts to fall apart. Stopping low is a big winner today, any managing a plus score will score very well indeed for their caution – or should that be cowardice?....

♠A
♥J1098654
♦Q63
♣93

♠10953 ♠KQ72
♥KQ72 ♥A3
♦2 ♦KJ874
♣Q1065 ♣A4

♠J864
♥-
♦A1095
♣KJ872

HCP: 7, 7, 17, 9

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

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

This time EW have a 4-4 spade fit and (close to) game values, but again game can't be made due to the bad breaks. A popular auction might be 1♦ – P – 1♥ – P – 1♠ – P – 2♠ – P..? and now East will bid again. 4♠ is a bit much (bad diamond suit facing probable shortage) perhaps 2NT or an old fashioned 3♠ will get the job done, West should reject a game try due to his lack of working points. On a club lead declarer can win and lead a diamond to the jack, winning the club return he can then ruff diamonds and lead a trump. North can win and give a heart ruff, and now the K♣ exit will shorten East. All very exciting and 9 or 10 tricks will be the result. The best lead for South looks to be a trump, although that is hard to find. The top score will be those that are allowed to make 620 but plenty of people will go minus so if you stopped in part-score and made it you will still keep your heads above water.

♠AQ762
♥9
♦982
♣AJ74

♠K108 ♠94
♥K543 ♥QJ8762
♦753 ♦104
♣K109 ♣853

♠J53
♥A10
♦AKQJ6
♣Q62

HCP: 11, 9, 17, 3

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

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

A proper slam here, and some will bid it as well. Those that start with a 15-17 no trump (slightly pessimistic with that diamond suit and the 10♥ shining brightly) will surely not bid a slam, North transferring and bidding clubs, then signing off if South bids 3♠. Those that open 1♦ and jump to 2NT over a 1♠ response (18-19) surely have a better chance as now North will cue bid after finding the spade fit and South can show some signs of life. Slam in spades appears to need a miracle in the trump suit or the club finesse and a reasonable spade break, so it is playable without being amazing. Slam in diamonds is a lot better however, since you can ruff a heart and play on spades, if West has Kx you'll make 13 and if the spades are 3-2 you'll make 12 tricks in straight forward fashion. (This pre-supposes that West doesn't find a club lead on the days when East has the King).

♠K975
♥76
♦Q43
♣A983

♠AQ64 ♠2
♥43 ♥A10852
♦108762 ♦AKJ
♣Q5 ♣K1076

♠J1083
♥KQJ9
♦95
♣J42

HCP: 9, 8, 15, 8

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
9		N	-	-	-	-
8	15	S	-	-	-	-
		E	1	4	2	1
		W	1	4	2	1

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

East is the only one with a semblance of an opening bid and most will be left to open 1♥3rd in seat. It doesn't look like either of NS have a bid so EW should have a free run, and the most likely resting place is 2♥, reached after 1♥-1♠-2♣-2♥. There will be variations of course, but this will be the main spot, and the issue (as usual on part-score deals) will be the number of tricks made. South will lead either the K♥ (my personal choice) or the J♠ (works well today), and then it will be up to East. On the J♠ lead he will rise with the ace (the Jack from KJ10x is not an attractive choice) and have to choose between leading the queen of clubs to try and build a ruff in dummy, or taking the diamond finesse, clubs seems the better play given that a successful diamond finesse will run into a ruff some of the time anyway. Here it looks like East might make as many as 9 tricks (knock out the A♣ and ruff out the jack) but if the defence stop the club ruff then even 8 are in danger. Anyone making a miraculous +140 will scoop the pot, but even +110 will be above average, with plenty of people losing 3 club tricks.

♠653
♥32
♦KJ976
♣A93

♠AKJ ♠Q1084
♥AQ ♥K987
♦Q10432 ♦A8
♣1062 ♣J54

♠972
♥J10654
♦5
♣KQ87

HCP: 8, 16, 10, 6

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
8		N	-	-	-	-
16	10	S	-	-	-	-
		E	1	1	2	2
		W	1	1	2	2

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

Once again three passes will give a free kick to the only player with an opening bid, and from there a predictable path will follow to 3NT. The obvious auction is 1♦-1♥-1NT-3NT, or perhaps a check-back auction if EW are playing 5 card majors. Alternatively if EW play a strong no trump then 1NT-2♣-2♦-3NT will be the choice. On a diamond lead there are 9 easy tricks, on any other lead there are only 8, so it does seem this will be a random board, your score as NS depending on what NT range your opponents are playing. Possibly some Souths might double Stayman (although that normally suggest at least 5 cards) which will work well today, or even open with a Lucas style 2♥ which will put North onto the passive heart lead. On a neutral major suit lead North must be careful not to get end-played later on, if he comes down to say KJ9 of diamonds and A9 of clubs then South must not dash in with a club honour or it is curtains for the defence!

♠AK8
♥8762
♦874
♣1052

♠3 ♠J109752
♥K1053 ♥AQJ
♦QJ1032 ♦A96
♣AK7 ♣J

♠Q64
♥94
♦K5
♣Q98643

HCP: 7, 13, 7

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
7		N	1	-	-	-
13	13	S	1	-	-	-
		E	-	5	4	3
		W	-	5	4	3

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

East will start the ball rolling with 1♠ and after that it will be to EW to bid a game in either diamonds or no trumps. This shouldn't be too hard, a common sequence might be 1♠-2♦-2♠-3NT, or something similar if EW are playing trendy two-over-one game forcing. On a club lead to the Jack, Queen and Ace, West will surely win and take a diamond finesse, now South will be in the hot seat. Those that return a club will concede ten tricks and a poor score, those that find a miracle spade switch will hold the contract to 9 tricks and get applause from all sides. Who am I kidding - it seems very improbable that a South player is going to switch from Q64 into dummy's 6 card suit, the only NS pairs that hold it to 9 tricks will be those that lead a top spade and then switch, now South might cotton on as to what the game is. Those that play in 4♠ should go down, as North has plenty of time to find a diamond switch when in with the top spades, although if East runs the club lead to his bare jack then he will make it legitimately - and South will hold his cards up for the next board!

♠Q6
♥K10752
♦Q10
♣AQ76

♠7 ♠AJ10854
♥Q64 ♥-
♦AK9732 ♦J865
♣K84 ♣1053

♠K932
♥AJ983
♦4
♣J92

HCP: 13, 12, 9, 6

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
13		N	2	-	3	-
12	6	S	1	-	3	-
		E	-	4	-	2
		W	-	4	-	2

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

We're back again to the cut and thrust of competitive bidding, with both sides getting good value for their table money. South will pass (does anyone play this opening 2♦ for the majors convention anymore?) and West will open 1♦, North will overcall 1♥ and East introduce his spades. South should probably blast 4♥ (ten card fit and all that) and this will run round to East. If I was East I would bid 4♠ like a shot, but South's double might give me pause for thought, and anyone that runs from 4♠ (-300) to 5♦ (-100) will have done well. Not as well as anyone that passes out 4♥ mind you, since on a diamond lead and spade switch EW get a ruff and to hold it to 9 tricks. The long and the short of it is that with both sides having a big fit and lots of shape no-one can make anything, and even bidding and making a part-score will score well for whichever side goes plus.

♠6542
♥Q964
♦A96
♣J9

♠K1087 ♠A3
♥J ♥K875
♦K10432 ♦QJ
♣A102 ♣87643

♠QJ9
♥A1032
♦875
♣KQ5

HCP: 7, 11, 12, 10

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

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

EW just have the balance and will buy the hand at most tables, with NS lacking the shape to compete. 1♦-1♥-1♠-1NT might be a sensible stop, East choosing caution given that he doesn't actually have a club stop. EW have a lot of potential winners (4 diamonds, 3 clubs, 2 spades) but if NS are on the ball 7 tricks are the limit. Best for the defence is to attack clubs then switch to the Q♥ and take 3 tricks there, but that won't be obvious with the 10 and 9 hearts being split. Certainly if East wins a top club lead with the ace and knocks out the A♦ North must resist the urge to play a club back. If instead EW play in diamonds then 9 tricks are likely (it seems a spade lead from North is needed to hold it to 8 tricks) for +110, so the difference between +90 and +120 will be crucial.

♠Q7
♥AJ96
♦83
♣AKJ96

♠64 ♠AKJ532
♥Q10543 ♥K
♦AKJ7 ♦95
♣84 ♣7532

♠1098
♥872
♦Q10642
♣Q10

HCP: 15, 10, 4, 11

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

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

Once again the points are evenly balanced but (finally!) the spade suit rules supreme, and EW should stop at a level where they can go plus. Those Norths that open 1♣ (most I imagine) will see East overcall 1♠ and South pass. West will have to do something, probably 2♥ and East will rebid 2♠ whatever 2♥ meant. No-one will have anything to say and a sensible spot is reached. Alternatively, if North opens a strong no trump East will overcall 2♠ (or 2♦ if that shows one major) and West should show caution, hearts surely being partner's short suit. Onto the play! East appears to have 6 spade winners, 3 diamonds and a heart, so how is 8 tricks the limit of the hand? Best defence is a club lead then 3 rounds allows South to score the 8♠ ahead of dummy. Then a heart back to the ace and another club holds it to 8. This is rather fanciful and I am inclined to think in practice many declarers will make 9 or even 10 tricks. Anyone that does find this great defence will be disappointed that it only stops the overtricks, but pleased with their match-point score!