British Autumn Sim Pairs

Thursday

14th October 2021

Welcome to the 2021 British Autumn Simultaneous Pairs.

Thank you for playing. I hope you enjoy the event and also the commentary provided by a leading expert. If you are making your first foray into Face to Face Bridge then I hope you find the experience rewarding. The commentator for this set of hands is John Williams. You can find the full details and results at www.ebu.co.uk/sims/. You can earn Blue Points in these Sim Pairs (in England) and they are awarded to the top third of the field. Provisional master points are shown but the event is not finalised until all results are in and score corrections have been made. This usually takes about three weeks.

Ian Payn,

Chairman EBU

	♠Q74 ♥K93 ♦98 ♣Q10543	
♠AJ83 ♥AJ104 ♦J543 ♣A		♠9652 ♥765 ♦Q106 ♣872
	♠K10 ♥Q82 ♦AK72 ♣KJ96	

HCP	
7	
15	2
16	

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

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
	Pass	Pass	1♣
Dbl	3♣	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	3♠	All Pass

Playing a weak NT, the question is – should South here open 1♣ or 1♦? There simply is no definitive answer: it's purely a matter of agreed partnership style. There is one possible reason for making 1♣ your preferred choice: it leaves room for partner to respond 1♦, which matters little initially as your intended rebid is 1NT anyway, but if the defence now bids spades, diamonds can be supported.

As the auction goes here, there is little alternative to defending a 3♠ contract. Both 4♣ and 3NT look to be out of reach (though it's true that 10 of spades makes a critical difference, allowing 3NT to sneak through with careful play when declared by South. However, despite the occasional +400, it seems that +110 or +50 are the most likely entries on the traveller.

♠K1073
♥9643
♦J98
♣64

♠5
♥AK7
♦A1032
♣KJ532

♠Q842
♥1082
♦Q54
♣1097

♠AJ96
♥QJ5
♦K76
♣AQ8

HCP	
4	
15	4
17	

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

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
		Pass	1♠
Dbl	2♠	All Pass	

2♠ is assuredly a weak raise in this auction and must be respected as such. West has no real choice but to pass and finds himself endplayed at trick 1. Best is probably to kick off with three rounds of hearts.
There's no telling how the play will go after this start but declarer is certainly favourite to scramble 8 tricks, providing he leaves trumps alone and relies on defenders to open up the other suits for him. Given the chance, running 8 of diamonds from dummy will assist his cause.
Good luck, everyone!

♠KJ8
♥KQ92
♦K106
♣K94

♠Q52
♥A3
♦8753
♣J1032

♠A764
♥J106
♦AQ4
♣765

♠1093
♥8754
♦J92
♣AQ8

HCP	
15	
7	11
7	

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

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
			Pass
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
All Pass			

Some red-blooded folk might be tempted to double 1♥ for take-out (they have four spades, after all) but the warning signs are there: they're vul against not, partner has already passed and the hand is flat and featureless. It may look a mite better in the protective position after a 2♥ raise but that's an illusion.
In practice, West has more than you deserve and 2♠ might escape for 1 down. Is it worth the risk? Some will say yes. For those of us with a more philosophical bent, it might seem more sensible to wait for more hopeful opportunities to shine. Patience is a virtue.
Whatever course is taken, EW have to be prepared to be found wrong, or pleased to be successful, whichever applies.

♠742
♥K96532
♦5
♣862

♠J103
♥Q104
♦J73
♣AK75

♠K8
♥A
♦A109864
♣Q943

♠AQ965
♥J87
♦KQ2
♣J10

HCP	
3	
11	13
13	

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

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

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

Should North open a weak 2♥? I think not, despite the small benefit of a singleton diamond. Regardless of success or failure, it might undermine partnership confidence in the future.
If the auction begins as shown above, West has an awkward bid at his second turn. He has the values for 2NT but only a half-stop in spades, so 1NT is a justifiable underbid – and may be superior to 2♦. As it happens, East comes to the rescue with a 2♦ rebid, in response to which West may choose a 3♦ catch-up raise. (Or not? - it doesn't matter here because partner will be content either way).
It's difficult to see beyond +110 or + 130 to EW – a critical difference obviously.

♠A9874
♥1085
♦J1082
♣10

♠KJ1062 ♠Q
♥A63 ♥Q72
♦4 ♦AK63
♣K873 ♣AQJ54

♠53
♥KJ94
♦Q975
♣962

HCP		
	5	
11		18
	6	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	6	1	2	3	5
W	5	1	2	3	4

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	6♣	All Pass

A 2NT rebid after a one-level response is usually played as 18-19 HCPs these days, because a 1NT rebid is usually played as 15-17. East's alternative to 2NT is a 2♦ reverse, which has the upside of promising 5+ clubs, but the singleton Spade Queen makes the former preferable (at least in my view).
The critical feature of the auction is that East is declarer in a club contract, which luckily guards against a heart lead from South. Slam is now a sure thing. The alternative final contract is obviously 3NT by East (again with hearts protected). The difference is that in NTs there is no diamond ruff to make up 12 tricks, so on a non-heart lead declarer has only 3 spades, a heart, two diamonds and 5 clubs. Good hand!

♠72
♥AK72
♦AJ1075
♣K4

♠A10 ♠QJ543
♥109654 ♥-
♦982 ♦KQ6
♣AQ2 ♣98765

♠K986
♥QJ83
♦43
♣J103

HCP		
	15	
10		8
	7	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	1	2	-	-
S	-	1	2	-	-
E	4	-	-	2	-
W	4	-	-	2	-

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	3♥	All Pass	

Declarer will feel OK about this until West leads a trump at trick 1 and East shows out! Now 8 tricks is the likely limit of the hand, though it will take blood, sweat and tears for the defenders to come out on top. It's hopelessly difficult to predict how the play will go, though.
There is an alternative scenario altogether, though, if EW happen to be playing Lucas Twos, where 2♥ or 2♠ promise 6-10 HCPs with 5 cards in the bid major and 4+ in either minor. The convention is becoming increasingly popular – and for good reason, many would argue. Here it would buy the contract in 2♠, most likely, and despite the 4-2 trump break it's likely to succeed, with careful play. NS have no good contract to aim for at the three level.

♠Q94
♥AJ942
♦8
♣9874

♠J108 ♠A765
♥Q1075 ♥3
♦AK764 ♦109532
♣K ♣Q105

♠K32
♥K86
♦QJ
♣AJ632

HCP		
	7	
13		6
	14	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	-	3	-	-
S	3	-	3	-	-
E	-	4	-	1	-
W	-	4	-	1	-

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
			1NT
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
All Pass			

West is somewhat stuck after a 1NT opening. A natural 2♦ would be OK, if available (more than OK, given partner's holding in the suit!). However, it's a tad risky, being vulnerable, and many will prefer a cautious pass. The downside of the latter is there's really no way back into the auction once NS identify their heart fit.
The computer predicts that EW will make 10 tricks in diamonds and that's easy to verify: only a spade, a heart and a club will be lost. The fate of 2♥ is less certain. 8 tricks look to be secure but the ninth depends on how clubs are handled. This figures to be a potential windfall for EW – flattish otherwise. Famous last words!

♠AK102
♥A632
♦AQ42
♣J

♠87 ♠Q65
♥9875 ♥Q
♦87653 ♦KJ109
♣52 ♣KQ874

♠J943
♥KJ104
♦-
♣A10963

HCP		
	18	
0		13
	9	

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

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

1♦ is the safest opening bid for North, whether playing 5-card majors or not. He can raise either major or rebid in NT over a 2♣ response. The problem is the level; at which to raise in either case. After a 1♥ or 1♠ response a splinter bid in clubs looks about right, though this is sure to dampen partner's aspirations. However, if North persists with a further try for slam, it's hard to picture partner failing to co-operate. The majority will possibly settle for game in a major.
Which plays best? Well, spades, obviously, because losing diamonds can be ruffed in dummy without weakening the overall trump fit. In hearts the same isn't so – and there is the small danger of losing a trump to singleton Queen. It's difficult to picture a host of 980s in spades but there should be plenty of 480s beating 450s in hearts. And sadly, there will be a few minus scores too.

♠J109653
♥AK43
♦9
♣52

♠4 ♠AK72
♥QJ52 ♥1087
♦J764 ♦Q853
♣K864 ♣A7

♠Q8
♥96
♦AK102
♣QJ1093

HCP		
	8	
7		13
	12	

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
	Pass	1NT	Pass
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

There is a general taboo regarding opening a weak two in one major when holding 4 (good) cards in the other. North should not be afraid to pass here. Then, when he comes in at his next turn with his 6-card suit, it should be apparent to partner that he holds this kind of hand. This approach is a bit better than showing both majors: when a bit light on points, it's as well to have a long suit.
If the defence start with three rounds of clubs it's probably best to throw a heart on the third one. This keeps trump control nicely. Ruffing with a top spade makes things very messy when trumps turn out to be 4-1.
+110 should score well for NS.

♠543
♥J73
♦K2
♣KQ873

♠AK9 ♠J62
♥A1096 ♥K52
♦Q1076 ♦985
♣109 ♣A654

♠Q1087
♥Q84
♦AJ43
♣J2

HCP		
	9	
13		8
	10	

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

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

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

Not an exciting hand!
1NT looks like an absolutely normal contract and 7 tricks look equally normal. North will agonise over which club to lead but, unusually, the pips are such that it matters not at all. Whenever he wins declarer will probably run 9 of diamonds, which goes to the King.
North can cash his clubs but then will probably switch to a spade to the 10 and King. 10 of hearts then runs to the Queen, ensuring that declarer then nets in all two spades, three hearts, a diamond and a club.
The play will follow various possible routes. The most regular end result will be +90 to EW, with a trick over or under either way to provide some excitement.

♠J96
♥KQ5
♦KJ1095
♣J3

♠Q752
♥3
♦A874
♣10974

♠843
♥A98764
♦Q6
♣K2

♠AK10
♥J102
♦32
♣AQ865

HCP	
11	
6	9
14	

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

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

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

The purists like to have a combined 26 HCPs for 3NT. But we're not all purists – in fact only a few of us are these days – so North will likely survey his 11-count with a good 5- card suit and decide that it's sufficient to try for game. An old-fashioned 2NT raise would suffice for some but, otherwise, a popular convention is to use 2♠ as a range enquiry bid, partner signing off in 2NT with minimum values and showing his best suit with better: so here South would be delighted to bid 3♣ and North would convert to 3NT, feeling virtuous. Until the contract fails, of course, which it's sure to do against text-book defence (no silly spade lead, for example). Which brings us back to convinced traditionalists, who will pass 1NT in the first place. If they do, East will surely come to life with 2♥ and we're back on the merry-go-round, with all manner of results possible.
Anyone for tennis?

♠94
♥J1086
♦104
♣KJ732

♠AQ83
♥AQ52
♦KJ2
♣54

♠KJ65
♥74
♦8763
♣AQ6

♠1072
♥K93
♦AQ95
♣1098

HCP	
5	
16	10
9	

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

What a silly game this is! No one seems likely to advance beyond 4♠ here but just look at the lay-out! Trumps are 3-2, every card that matters is onside, so it's just a matter of cashing tricks.
There are 5 trumps tricks by taking a ruff in either hand, 2 hearts on the finesse, 2 diamonds on additional finesses and 2 clubs by the same means. Just to add insult to injury, two losing hearts can be ruffed in hand, via 5 and Jack, which brings the total to 12. Ridiculous!
First observation: no one will bid a slam. Second observation: relatively few declarers will make 12 tricks. Why? That's just how life is...

♠J5
♥86
♦654
♣1065432

♠AQ106
♥1094
♦AKJ10
♣Q7

♠K87
♥AKJ75
♦Q9832
♣-

♠9432
♥Q32
♦7
♣AKJ98

HCP	
1	
16	13
10	

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

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♦	Pass	6♦	All Pass

Slam should be within the reach of most if not all of us. All it takes is common-sense bidding, aided by the fourth-suit forcing convention. Use of it renders the 4♦ bid forcing.
The possible variations (apart from missing slam altogether) are (1) hearts or diamonds (2) small or grand.
(1) There is a possibility that West, knowing that 2♦ promises 5+hearts, will opt for the higher-scoring strain. There is a small danger here: diamond lead, losing trump finesse, diamond ruff. Unlikely, but still a risk nonetheless.
(2) The grand poses a much greater risk, as there is no way of checking on the Queen of hearts. All in all, I suspect that 6D will be more prevalent than 6♥. Who knows?

♠A1054
♥43
♦AQ1095
♣A3

♠- ♠QJ96
♥Q1075 ♥AK82
♦K83 ♦J72
♣KQJ764 ♣95

♠K8732
♥J96
♦64
♣1082

HCP	
14	
11	11
4	

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

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
		Pass	Pass
1♣	1♦	Dbl	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

We must accept that after East's T.O double of 1♦, West's 2♥ bid is NOT a reverse bid showing extra values: effectively it assumes that partner has bid hearts and is therefore giving a minimum raise. East might merely invite game then with 3♥ but is more likely to go straight to game.
The most important feature of the auction is that it makes West declarer. The other way round and a diamond lead from South would make life extremely awkward. He could still ruff the third round high and draw trumps with the aid of a finesse of the 10. But if North switches to a spade at trick 2 he's in real trouble. By contrast, 4♥ by West is trouble- free.
Several results are possible on this fascinating hand.

♠K109874
♥75
♦AKJ6
♣5

♠- ♠QJ53
♥KJ103 ♥A62
♦Q10742 ♦53
♣K764 ♣QJ93

♠A62
♥Q984
♦98
♣A1082

HCP	
11	
9	10
10	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	4	1
S	-	-	-	4	1
E	2	1	1	-	-
W	2	1	1	-	-

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
			Pass
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Dbl	2♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

West will be itching to get into the action against vulnerable opponents but realistically, he has to wait until his second turn. The T.O double is enterprising in one respect, assuming partner has a fit for either red suit. But it is unwise otherwise, because it signals his spade shortage and allows declarer the luxury of a safety approach to the trump suit, running the 10 at his first opportunity (ie following the initial attack in hearts). He has two heart losers and a certain trump loser, so needs to finesse Jack of diamonds and ruff his fourth diamond in dummy, relying on the information West has so kindly given him.
The moral: silence is indeed golden!...

♠J43
♥A98532
♦K52
♣K

♠1095 ♠KQ2
♥J106 ♥7
♦987 ♦AJ103
♣A764 ♣Q8532

♠A876
♥KQ4
♦Q64
♣J109

HCP	
11	
5	12
12	

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

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
Pass	1♥	Dbl	Redbl
Pass	2♥	All Pass	

East's T.O. double is questionable, vulnerable, opposite a passed partner, and lacking a fourth spade. The alternative is to pass, as 2♣ could be ruinous. South's re-double is just as off-centre: all it does is show good values and a primarily defensive hand. But purists will shudder! A natural 2NT would easily fit the bill, if available (but probably not).
The re-double has one good feature: it allows partner to sign off in 2♥ with his grotty 11-count and 6-card suit – and that should end the auction. I think we all know that redbl requires partner to pass at his next turn, unless he needs to issue a weather warning, as here.
3NT is the only offensive chance for NS to shine. However, a club lead puts paid to that.
+110 or +140 in hearts will score very well for NS.

♠KQ5
♥Q10
♦AJ10876
♣J5

♠8 ♠A732
♥8753 ♥K642
♦93 ♦Q5
♣AK10762 ♣983

♠J10964
♥AJ9
♦K42
♣Q4

HCP		
	13	
7		9
	11	

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

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
	1♦	Pass	1♠
3♣	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Unless 3♣ has some special meaning for EW it's a fair bet here (better to leave hearts as a possible bolster, given there's no chance of game anywhere. In fact 3♣ makes life extremely difficult for the opponents: those who like to ride in the middle of the road will rebid 3♦, the optimists will try 3♠ and the timid will pass. 3♠ is the only bid which opens the way to a making game for NS. It won't always be found.
The play in 4♠ is straightforward, despite the 4-1 trump break. The winning heart finesse and the 2-2 diamond break make 10 tricks easy enough. But there will be sighs of relief, no doubt.
A good competitive bidding hand, if West makes it so.

♠A1092
♥J9532
♦A
♣Q94

♠QJ7 ♠K643
♥AQ84 ♥K7
♦Q1052 ♦KJ643
♣A5 ♣103

♠85
♥106
♦987
♣KJ8762

HCP		
	11	
15		10
	4	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	-	-	-	-
S	3	-	-	-	-
E	-	4	1	3	-
W	-	4	1	3	-

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

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

This hand is something of a death-trap for EW. East is short of the values for a 2♦ response followed by 2♠. Equally, West has the wrong shape for a 2♦ rebid so has to resort to a 15-17 NT rebid. So the diamond suit seems likely to wither on the vine, using natural methods. A pity, when 10 tricks are there for the taking!
North doesn't have the most obvious club lead available – but what's the alternative? Assuming he finds it, declarer is doomed to go three down for -150.
This will be a bottom score for sure – though shared a time or two at least.
Time to grin and bear it!

♠K763
♥J52
♦J42
♣AQ4

♠QJ10 ♠A842
♥KQ104 ♥96
♦K10975 ♦863
♣6 ♣KJ75

♠95
♥A873
♦AQ
♣109832

HCP		
	11	
11		8
	10	

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

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
			Pass
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

Most will surely open the bidding with the West cards, even vulnerable. And when partner responds 1♠, what else is there but a 2♠ raise?
The most fruitful spot for EW, as the cards lie, is a part-score in NTs. However, it's difficult to see how they get there. They might prefer to play in diamonds, of course, which is a more comfortable spot, but you can't have everything and at least 2♠ scores the same, if it can be negotiated safely.
As it happens, no opening lead puts 2♠ in jeopardy. Declarer does best to play on clubs, then hearts, and when both suits lie kindly he's on easy street. There will be some variety in the results on this one but +110 to EW looks to be favourite.

♠64
♥K8764
♦87
♣K1054

♠1052 ♠AQ9
♥A32 ♥1095
♦AKQ1094 ♦J52
♣Q ♣A876

♠KJ873
♥QJ
♦63
♣J932

HCP	
6	
15	11
8	

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

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
1♦	Pass	2♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

East may persuade himself to try 3♠ at his second turn, leaving partner to bid 3NT with a heart stop. Acceptable, but West figures to have a stop anyway, so it's probably better to belt game with fingers crossed and thus avoid any possibly unwelcome developments.
An upside to playing 3NT by East is the possibility of attracting a spade lead. And this is reasonably likely. South may well prefer a spade with that promising holding, to a club on only Jack to four. A diamond is discounted so the only other choice is a heart – very speculative!
Only two results seem likely – plus 600 or plus 630.. Good luck!

♠KJ9642
♥A
♦AQJ6
♣Q9

♠Q1075 ♠A83
♥J108753 ♥Q9
♦32 ♦10875
♣5 ♣J1032

♠-
♥K642
♦K94
♣AK8764

HCP	
17	
3	7
13	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	6	5	2	3	5
S	6	5	2	3	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

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

North can offer a quiet 2♦ after partner's bid because change of suit is forcing after a 2- level response. I guess we all know that. 2♥ by South is then 4th suit forcing, after which 3♠ shows a 6-card suit and good values. 3NT by South finally seals the deal.
Hats off to anyone who finds 6♣ here. It would have been easier to reach had North held a third club instead of one of the spades.
There's nothing much to the play in either contract. In 6♣ declarer can ruff the third heart and doesn't mind being over-ruffed. In 3NT – the popular contract – there are 11 easy tricks however it goes.

♠Q
♥K2
♦A98765
♣J985

♠75 ♠A98632
♥AQJ94 ♥86
♦KJ43 ♦2
♣Q2 ♣A1073

♠KJ104
♥10753
♦Q10
♣K64

HCP	
10	
13	8
9	

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
		2♠	Pass
Pass	3♦	Pass	Pass
Dbl	All Pass		

Is this just wishful thinking? East's opening bid should be decent, first in hand and vulnerable, and West may feel he's due some excitement. 2♠ is likely to be OK for his side (though 3♠ is obviously uncertain) and defending 3D non-vulnerable and undoubled is therefore unlikely to be fruitful.
If 3♦ doubled does indeed become the final contract there will be some nerves on display but stout hearts will prevail. After the likely 8 of hearts lead West can easily diagnose that partner holds the two black Aces and must trust him for club 10 as well. The Queen of clubs through (and ducked) at the first opportunity will yield a priceless 300. Perhaps this is all unnecessary, as any plus will be good. Thanks to the unkind trump break, 2♠ stands no chance on a heart lead!

♠J1093
♥A982
♦A74
♣108

♠Q87
♥QJ64
♦QJ8
♣QJ3

♠AK64
♥10
♦K3
♣AK9642

♠52
♥K753
♦109652
♣75

HCP		
	9	
11		17
	3	

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

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

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

The auction will be pretty standard so it's all about the play. The defenders have three top tricks but will they take them in time? It looks easy enough seeing all four hands but at the table it's a different story! Jack of spades looks to be a better opening lead than a small heart on the bidding, so there's only one chance to shine when North comes in with Ace of diamonds. North should reason that any club trick won't run away, so a heart switch becomes the only sensible action, possibly. It's not clear-cut though, is it?
11 tricks will be chalked up several times. If that happens, NS must stay strong and not indulge in blame games. North says, sorry partner. South says, hard luck. That's how it should be. However, let's hope South can say, well done partner!

♠Q32
♥J74
♦10872
♣AKQ

♠AK6
♥Q62
♦KQ94
♣1093

♠109854
♥AK83
♦6
♣J82

♠J7
♥1095
♦AJ53
♣7654

HCP		
	12	
14		8
	6	

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

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

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

Oh dear! The auction looks pre-ordained, as does the result.
2♠ is the top spot for EW and 8 tricks, losing three clubs, a diamond and a spade, seem equally inevitable.
Can anything happen to disturb this equilibrium? Only one thing. It's easy to suppose that everyone plays transfers these days but where they don't, East might find himself declarer in 2♠: then South is likely to lead 10 or 9 of hearts, according to style, which declarer can win to switch to diamonds: now South has to win and find a club switch. Not easy!
It just goes to show: nothing can be taken for granted….

♠J93
♥10653
♦3
♣A7542

♠KQ2
♥AJ2
♦QJ54
♣K108

♠865
♥Q8
♦AK10872
♣J3

♠A1074
♥K974
♦96
♣Q96

HCP		
	5	
16		10
	9	

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

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

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

If you happen play the Baron 2NT convention, this is the perfect time to use it – a strong balanced hand of 16+ HCPs. There is another way to treat 2NT in this sequence, which some may be aware of (if not, it's worth considering): just play a raise of 1 of a minor to 3 to show a standard 10-12 points, then use 2NT to show a hand either too weak or too strong for that. Here the bidding would go as shown but because 3♦ can be passed with a weak hand, 3NT again shows a strong one. This treatment can be effective with weak raises: with strong ones, as here, it makes for a simple auction with West's major-suit holdings suitably protected. Just a thought….
Here, it happens that a heart lead from North is the best scenario from the defenders' point of view, limiting declarer to 10 tricks. East has 11 tricks on any lead.

♠974
♥J10754
♦K62
♣K6

♠62
♥A93
♦Q53
♣QJ875

♠AK1085
♥-
♦AJ9
♣A10432

♠QJ3
♥KQ862
♦10874
♣9

HCP	
7	
9	16
8	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	7	3	2	5	5
W	7	3	2	5	5

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
		1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	6♣	All Pass

East would like to be a mite stronger for a game-forcing 3♣ rebid so there is an element of crossed fingers here. But West, who has a maximum NT response, can be very excited. A 4♥ bid now can't possibly be natural in the context of the auction, so is either a splinter or just a control, with clubs agreed. Partner can't really ask for more and will surely go straight to the slam. 5♦ would be a grand slam try but it's not clear that the Queen is good enough and, in any case, trumps are not guaranteed to be solid.
The auction shown suggests certainty but realistically, combined assets are known to be limited and it takes the kindly 3-3 spade break and the trump finesse to ensure an overtrick. Anyone bidding 6♣ can feel proud.

♠A653
♥K652
♦104
♣1082

♠QJ
♥7
♦QJ832
♣J9654

♠K10984
♥84
♦97
♣AQ73

♠72
♥AQJ1093
♦AK65
♣K

HCP	
7	
7	9
17	

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

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
			1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

South is clearly entitled to a modest slam try here. If that's agreed, which suit should he try in? Clubs or diamonds? It's all a matter of style and partnership agreement.
Diamonds is fine, of course, but - you never know – clubs may confuse the opponents into trying a diamond.
As it happens, nothing makes any difference. Even the failure to set up a spade trick. There are two losers, both of them black.
The only danger to NS lies in North over-stretching: a spade cue-bid may feel attractive but, in reality, he lacks sufficient clout to make a slam try unless partner can do so first.
This really should be flat in +450. Famous last words!

♠J106
♥6
♦A85
♣KJ9863

♠Q543
♥K972
♦K102
♣105

♠AK9
♥QJ1043
♦J3
♣A72

♠872
♥A85
♦Q9764
♣Q4

HCP	
9	
8	15
8	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	1	-	-	-
S	1	1	-	-	-
E	-	-	4	3	-
W	-	-	4	3	-

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♥	All Pass		

We've had a little belated excitement in this set but we finish with a bog-standard will-we won't-we hand. EW's first two bids are pretty automatic so it's down to East to decide to stick or twist. On the one hand his values are encouraging apart from the diamonds. On the other hand, partner needs quite a lot for game.
I would definitely stick, particularly at pairs. If the world thinks otherwise he'll venture three of a minor (probably diamonds) by way of trial bid, which may be enough to persuade partner to jump in the deep end – but even that isn't certain.
It all comes down to the position of Queen of diamonds, to decide whether it's the men or the mice who prevail. No one should be embarrassed to score +170 – and those who do should have at least a 40% score. Wrong again?

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