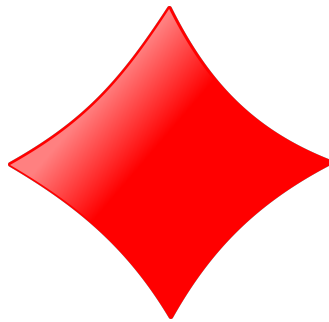
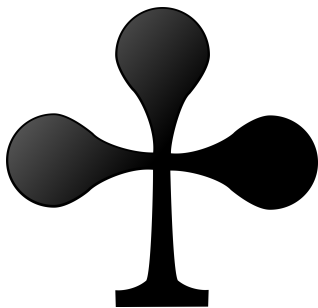
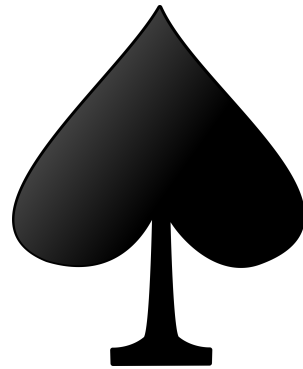


Club Stratified Sim Pairs



Thursday
10th March 2022

Welcome to the eleventh 'Club Stratified Simultaneous Pairs'. Our commentator today is Mike Pomfrey, experienced bridge teacher and writer.

How stratification works (and which stratum you should be in):

There are four strata.

1. Stratum 'A' is open to everyone but if either member of the pair is a Tournament Master or above you will be in this stratum and can only get master points from the overall ranking.
2. If both of you are below the rank of Tournament Master you will be 'B' stratum;
3. both below Master means you will be in 'C' stratum and
4. both below District Master will make you 'D' stratum.

Blue points and local points will be awarded to the top third of the overall ranking list. In addition the top third of each stratum will get blue points and local points. If you are entitled to overall points and points for your stratum, you will only get the higher of the awards – you won't get two lots of points! You will appreciate that Master Points cannot be allocated until after the event is finalised, which usually takes about three weeks. Please keep your scorecard for that period: if we find any unusual scores we may need to contact the club scorer and the players.

Full results may be found at www.ebu.co.uk/sims/

Whichever stratum you find yourself in, I hope you find this set of hands enjoyable and challenging.

Ian Payn, Chairman EBU

<p>♠ 987 ♥ 103 ♦ 9875 ♣ AJ96</p> <p>♠ KJ3 ♥ KQ8 ♦ Q642 ♣ Q84</p> <p>♠ AQ104 ♥ J97652 ♦ A3 ♣ 7</p> <p>♠ 652 ♥ A4 ♦ KJ10 ♣ K10532</p>		<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4♥</td><td>All pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>				West	North	East	South		Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥	All pass																						
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<p>A straightforward one to begin with. West hasn't much of a hand, lots of losers, but if you had opened 1NT and partner had an opening bid you'd be in game, for sure.</p> <p>There's nothing in the play, making ten tricks unless South leads an aggressive diamond, when you get eleven. Actually, it's not such a crazy choice, at least at teams, as it looks the most likely way to beat the contract.</p> <p>I wonder if anyone was tempted to bid on that South hand. Not 2♣, I hope, with a revolting suit, and a double looks wrong with a minimum and only three small spades.</p>																																									
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<div><div><div>♠52</div><div>♥K753</div><div>♦Q1083</div><div>♣J76</div></div><div><div>♠K108763</div><div>♥A2</div><div>♦97</div><div>♣542</div></div><div><div>♠Q</div><div>♥Q104</div><div>♦AK542</div><div>♣K1098</div></div><div><div>♠AJ94</div><div>♥J986</div><div>♦J6</div><div>♣AQ3</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th>HCP</th></tr><tr><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>714</td></tr><tr><td>13</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP	6	714	13	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	1	1	-	1		S	-	-	1	-	1		E	2	-	-	2	-		W	1	-	-	2	-		<div>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</div> <div><div>West</div><div>North</div><div>East</div><div>South</div></div> <div><div></div><div></div><div>1♦</div><div>Dbl</div></div> <div><div>2♠</div><div>?</div><div></div><div></div></div> <div><p>This time South is right to make a minimum double, with two four card majors. Now here’s a toy that has attracted a lot of interest in recent years. West’s 2♠ shows a moderate weak two, a six card suit and around 4-8 points. Although your right hand opponent is favourite to have the suit, it puts pressure on North. And North does have a problem. It goes against the grain to sell out to 2♠ but, if you bid, it looks likely to cost 200 points, the dreaded “kiss of death” on a part score deal.</p><p>The play in 2♠ could be interesting. Suppose North leads a passive club. South wins the queen and switches to hearts. Now you have three losers and have to time a trump reduction carefully to avoid another three in spades.</p></div>
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♠ J10

♥ QJ

♦ AKQ8

♣ KQ932

♠ K7432

♥ A

♦ 763

♣ AJ54

♠ 985

♥ K9852

♦ J104

♣ 87

♠ AQ6

♥ 107643

♦ 952

♣ 106

HCP

18

12

4

6

Makeable contracts

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

♠ J873

♥ K6

♦ KJ95

♣ KJ3

♠ Q1096

♥ J73

♦ Q86

♣ AQ4

♠ A52

♥ Q9852

♦ 742

♣ 72

♠ K4

♥ A104

♦ A103

♣ 109865

HCP

12

11

6

11

Makeable contracts

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

♠ A10853

♥ KQ

♦ J85

♣ J53

♠ KQ762

♥ A62

♦ A32

♣ 107

♠ -

♥ J108753

♦ 97

♣ AQ982

♠ J94

♥ 94

♦ KQ1064

♣ K64

HCP

11

13

7

9

Makeable contracts

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

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♥
1♠	2♦	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	2NT
Pass	?		

Another fiercely competitive auction. I don't think much of West's overcall but, if you are going to get involved, it has to be now. North has a sound reverse and East a very feeble raise. It comes back to North who makes the obvious double. Now here's a problem. Different partnerships have different perceptions of how far a reverse is forcing and what mechanisms they have to call a halt. So, is 2NT natural (you want it to be) or might it be interpreted as some sort of escape bid?

It's possible for South to make a fragile 3NT; West can safely lead one round of spades but comes under increasing pressure when in on the ace of hearts.

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2/3NT		

Yes, I do think South has an opening bid. That five card suit and three tens make it a lot better than some twelve counts. North has a marginal raise to game but I expect most will do it, even at match points.

Played by South, the favourable club position makes 3NT easy. West has a nasty lead problem; you know that North has at least one major and leading either could prove disastrous. Funnily enough, falling back on a diamond is even worse.

I wouldn't be surprised to see a lot of Souths make ten tricks for an excellent score.

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	All pass

It looks a straightforward game for East-West, even on a diamond lead. Win in dummy and lead a top spade, covered and ruffed. Now cross to the ace of hearts, discard your losing diamond on a spade and take a club finesse. It loses, but both hearts and clubs behave for eleven tricks. QED.

But there are a number of marginal decisions to get you there. Some will dislike opening 1♠, preferring 1NT to ease your rebid issues. It's just too good for me, with a seven loser hand and no tenaces to make you desperate to be declarer.

Next problem – should East respond at the two level? Strong two over one players can't and may find themselves in an inelegant 1NT contract. If you do stretch to 2♥ the auction has a certain inevitability.

♠K8

♥86

♦1065

♣A109742

♠A642

♥5

♦AKJ987

♣86

♠Q9753

♥AKQ7

♦432

♣5

♠J10

♥J109432

♦Q

♣KQJ3

HCP	
7	11
12	10

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

♠QJ10763

♥Q104

♦A10

♣A6

♠8

♥AK982

♦Q98763

♣9

♠K95

♥J75

♦5

♣KQJ843

♠A42

♥63

♦KJ42

♣10752

HCP	
13	10
9	8

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

♠QJ7

♥AQ3

♦KJ5

♣10842

♠A10

♥K2

♦AQ32

♣AK973

♠942

♥8754

♦109864

♣Q

♠K8653

♥J1096

♦7

♣J65

HCP	
13	2
20	5

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

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All pass

At last an obvious auction and an obvious overtrick. Those Wests who play “mini-splinters” can bid 3♥ on the second round, showing a raise to 3♠ with short hearts. That excites East not a lot.

Or is it all obvious? North-South can save in 5♣ at a cost of 300. How can they get into the bidding? It doesn’t look right for North to overcall – far too many potential losers. South will be reluctant, too, as you don’t want partner to lead your long suit if you finish up defending. You would hope to be on lead yourself, of course, and opponents might misjudge, thinking they can hope with a heart lead. But it doesn’t get you to 5♣. East-West can make 5♠, but they may not take the push. It takes someone to be super-aggressive in the bidding to set East-West a problem.

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♠	2♣	2♠

?

West really wants to get involved on this one, but how? A double might cover a multitude of hands, including the two unbid suits, so that’s a possibility. Unfortunately, your shape is so extreme that you expect East to rebid clubs, and then where do you go? You may finish up at an uncomfortable level in hearts.

Fortunately, North is likely to get you off the hook by continuing to 3♠. It’s possible to make ten tricks in a spade part score. Win the club lead and play the queen of spades. East probably covers the next spade so you win and play a heart. Should West play low smoothly you do very well to try the queen and emerge with a breathless 170. Feeling rather pleased with yourself, you open the scoresheet, or Bridgемate, only to find that some East-Wests have conceded 200 or more!

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass

2NT All pass

Yuck. West’s shape is slightly off-centre, but 2NT looks a natural choice. It plays really horribly, though, especially if North kicks off with a spade. This is quite a safe lead as East won’t have a top honour on the bidding. Declarer crosses to the queen of clubs, finesses in diamonds – and the roof falls in. The defence may take as many as nine tricks.

If East-West were playing simple four card Stayman you might try a 3♣ response, passing any rebid, just as you would over a 1NT opening on a very weak hand. That gets you to a much nicer contract of 3♦. Unfortunately, some form of five card Stayman is almost universal these days, so you are stuck.

<div><div><div>♠AQJ1042</div><div>♥3</div><div>♦K965</div><div>♣A6</div></div><div><div>♠K9876</div><div>♥J64</div><div>♦43</div><div>♣KQ2</div></div><div><div>♠53</div><div>♥AQ97</div><div>♦QJ87</div><div>♣754</div></div><div><div>♠-</div><div>♥K10852</div><div>♦A102</div><div>♣J10983</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>14</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>8</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		14	9	9	8	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	3	3	3	3	2		S	3	3	2	3	2		E	-	-	-	-	-		W	-	-	-	-	-		<div>Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3♠</td><td>All pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>Yet another hand on which there will be many different auctions. Those partnerships who play one of the weak two suited two level openings will certainly wheel it out here as South. If it's OK in the system, North would like to bid a non-forcing 2♠ and play there.</p> <p>When South passes and North opens 1♠, some Souths might hazard 2♥; it's not so different from the East hand on board 7. It works badly on this misfit as you will surely play in game. However, it's not all over yet, as they say on a certain daytime quiz show. East may lead a disastrous top diamond, which North wins and plays the heart. Should East panic and switch to clubs 4♠ would actually make.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	3♠	All pass	
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Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT																																																														
Pass	3♠	All pass																																																															
<div><div><div>♠A9</div><div>♥4</div><div>♦KJ863</div><div>♣QJ753</div></div><div><div>♠76432</div><div>♥109765</div><div>♦4</div><div>♣K8</div></div><div><div>♠108</div><div>♥A832</div><div>♦109</div><div>♣A10962</div></div><div><div>♠KQJ5</div><div>♥KQJ</div><div>♦AQ752</div><div>♣4</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>18</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		11	8	3	18	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	1	5	-	3	4		S	1	5	-	3	4		E	-	-	1	-	-		W	-	-	1	-	-		<div>Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr></table> <p>Wow! Did you really open 1♦ partner? Depending on your system and temperament, you might try any of several approaches. An old-fashioned 2♠ response, aiming to support diamonds next time? A Jacoby 2NT, which may preclude you playing in a possible spade contract? An inverted raise to 2♦, or perhaps a gentle 1♠ response, hoping to clarify matters later? Some may simply bash 4NT at once, which is what will happen eventually with all the more sophisticated auctions. Disappointingly, North doesn't have enough aces and you have to subside in 5♦.</p> <p>Can anyone find the higher scoring no trump game? Not many, I'll bet.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	1♦	Pass	?								
HCP																																																																	
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3	18																																																																
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<div><div><div>♠J1085</div><div>♥876</div><div>♦Q763</div><div>♣Q9</div></div><div><div>♠632</div><div>♥95</div><div>♦KJ2</div><div>♣A10532</div></div><div><div>♠AK74</div><div>♥AJ10</div><div>♦A94</div><div>♣K74</div></div><div><div>♠Q9</div><div>♥KQ432</div><div>♦1085</div><div>♣J86</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>19</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>8</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		5	19	8	8	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	-	-		S	-	-	-	-	-		E	5	3	2	3	5		W	4	2	2	3	4		<div>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>3NT</td><td>All pass</td></tr></table> <p>Board 13 is usually exciting, but this time all roads will lead to 3NT. The destination of the matchpoints will depend on how many tricks declarer makes.</p> <p>It looks normal for South to lead a low heart; trying to be ultra-passive doesn't work anyway. Declarer wins and ducks a club. On a heart return you can duck, win the return and run the clubs. North is squeezed in spades and diamonds; if you read the situation there are eleven tricks. Actually, the squeeze works even if you take the second heart. In order to keep guards in both suits North has to relinquish the link with partner's hand, so can be endplayed. But it's harder to read a squeeze "without the count".</p> <p>Should West be declarer, the defence have an easier time on a heart lead.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass	3NT	All pass				
HCP																																																																	
5	19																																																																
8	8																																																																
Makeable contracts																																																																	
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S	-	-	-	-	-																																																												
E	5	3	2	3	5																																																												
W	4	2	2	3	4																																																												
West	North	East	South																																																														
	Pass	1♠	Pass																																																														
2♠	Pass	3NT	All pass																																																														

♠Q

♥KQ9432

♦AK106

♣74

♠AK532

♥7

♦987

♣AJ93

♠J6

♥AJ5

♦QJ543

♣K62

♠109874

♥1086

♦2

♣Q1085

HCP

14

12

2

Makeable contracts

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

♠A98

♥10854

♦J873

♣J4

♠KJ762

♥92

♦Q96

♣A97

♠4

♥KQJ7

♦A5

♣Q108652

♠Q1053

♥A63

♦K1042

♣K3

HCP

6

10

12

Makeable contracts

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

♠J10875

♥532

♦1042

♣KJ

♠93

♥1064

♦KQJ3

♣AQ83

♠KQ2

♥AKQJ7

♦96

♣1096

♠A64

♥98

♦A875

♣7542

HCP

5

12

8

Makeable contracts

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

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

West	North	East	South
		1NT	Pass
2♥	3♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	?	

The bidding here will often be repeated up to West’s second decision. Double looks the most flexible option, as partner may well be hoping to defend 3♥ doubled.

But partner is not at all sure whether to defend. North can in fact make eight tricks as East-West can’t cut down diamond ruffs without sacrificing a trump trick.

However, plus 100 against 3♥ doubled may be the best East-West can achieve and it could be a very good matchpoint score. Only by making three spade tricks and taking a very unlikely view in clubs can they scramble home in 3NT. An unlikely contract of 4♦ is even more difficult to manage.

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

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

Despite the favourable vulnerability, West hasn’t got an overcall but, playing Aspro, East has. A relay sequence gets East to an excellent contract, which will make ten tricks if you get the spades right. So how will 130 fare on the scoresheet?

Fairly well, I should think, though 1NT would have been a struggle for South, even on a helpful spade lead. I can see there being quite a few minus 200’s around the country.

While you should strain not to let opponents play in a weak no trump, we’re told to be more wary when vulnerable. It can also backfire if they are vulnerable, even more so than if you are.

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♥	All pass		

The computer seems to have got stuck in a rut, with all these weak no trump openings, the last two vulnerable. But nothing untoward happens this time, the only question being whether to play in hearts or no trumps.

With a weak doubleton spade, West will surely go for hearts. Quite right too, as a top spade lead will hold 3NT to nine tricks. You’ll play on diamonds, of course, rather than clubs. But, should you be in no trumps, if you successfully build a couple of diamond tricks, might you risk a club finesse to beat the other pairs in hearts? Not tonight, Josephine, or you lose even those match points you’re entitled to. In any case, if the finesse works, those in hearts would make eleven.

<p>♠ Q2 ♥ Q63 ♦ KQ10 ♣ AK432</p> <p>♠ K6543 ♠ A9 ♥ 9 ♥ J1075 ♦ AJ7632 ♦ 98 ♣ 10 ♣ Q9875</p> <p>♠ J1087 ♥ AK842 ♦ 54 ♣ J6</p>	<p>Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♥</td></tr><tr><td>2♥</td><td>Dbl</td><td>2♠</td><td>?</td></tr></table> <p>Here's a pretty kettle of fish. It all starts normally, but West decides to get busy with a Michaels overcall. It's not unreasonable with that shape, even though the spades are poor. North's double is "support", showing three hearts, though if that's not part of your system you'd make the same bid just to show a decent hand.</p> <p>East strongly suspects partner's other suit is diamonds, so tries to play at as low a level as possible, though as it happens the extra trump makes diamonds a better spot. South may well double 2♠, especially if partner's double was merely "values" rather than support.</p> <p>2♠ should go a couple off, a forcing game working better than cutting down dummy's ruffs. That'll be good for North-South as few will make game on their cards. If you do try a game 3NT has a better chance than hearts.</p>	West	North	East	South		1♣	Pass	1♥	2♥	Dbl	2♠	?								
West	North	East	South																		
	1♣	Pass	1♥																		
2♥	Dbl	2♠	?																		
<p>♠ KJ9 ♥ KQ62 ♦ 6 ♣ KQJ107</p> <p>♠ A10875 ♠ Q43 ♥ 93 ♥ 1075 ♦ KQ9 ♦ J743 ♣ 982 ♣ A53</p> <p>♠ 62 ♥ AJ84 ♦ A10852 ♣ 64</p>	<p>Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♦</td></tr><tr><td>1♠</td><td>1NT</td><td>2♠</td><td>Dbl</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>?</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>People do get aggressive at pairs, don't they? West doesn't have an opening bid (though some might, third in hand), but isn't done yet. North isn't quite good enough for a reverse, so falls back on a slightly off-centre 1NT.</p> <p>Now it's East's innocent raise that does the damage. Given a free run, North-South would have found their heart fit, but it's not easy now. They may end up taking an inadequate penalty, or possibly trying 3NT, which needs good card reading to succeed.</p> <p>Those who play five card majors may have an easier run, as South ignores the diamonds and just shows the hearts.</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass	1♦	1♠	1NT	2♠	Dbl	Pass	?		
West	North	East	South																		
		Pass	Pass																		
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♦																		
1♠	1NT	2♠	Dbl																		
Pass	?																				
<p>♠ K108753 ♥ Q ♦ AJ8 ♣ Q72</p> <p>♠ 642 ♠ 9 ♥ 8763 ♥ AJ952 ♦ 107532 ♦ KQ ♣ A ♣ J10963</p> <p>♠ AQJ ♥ K104 ♦ 964 ♣ K854</p>	<p>Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1NT</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>2♥</td><td>Dbl</td><td>2♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>4♠</td><td>All pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>Shame about the vulnerability. After a normal start East doubles the transfer bid to show that suit and South completes the transfer to show three spades.</p> <p>West would love to get involved as it looks clear that opponents can make 4♠ and you might have a good save in hearts but, sadly, not at unfavourable.</p> <p>So the only interest is in how to defend 4♠. The attacking play of the ♣A followed by a heart doesn't work. An opening heart lead is better, leaving declarer wondering how to play the clubs, and a diamond is even better still. I can see one or two declarers failing in 4♠.</p>	West	North	East	South				1NT	Pass	2♥	Dbl	2♠	Pass	4♠	All pass					
West	North	East	South																		
			1NT																		
Pass	2♥	Dbl	2♠																		
Pass	4♠	All pass																			

♠9732

♥AJ87

♦KJ10

♣94

♠AK10

♥1043

♦A43

♣KJ86

♠QJ54

♥KQ

♦85

♣A10532

♠86

♥9652

♦Q9762

♣Q7

HCP

9

15

4

12

Makeable contracts

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

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West

North

East

South

1♣

Pass

1♠

Pass

1NT

Pass

3NT

All pass

Not a lot in this one. Surely everyone will be in 3NT, rather than 5♣, and there's no reason to find a way of losing a club trick. So it's all down to the lead. An unlikely diamond holds the contract to ten tricks, anything else and it's eleven. Funny how that ultra-aggressive choice from KJ10 is a success here and a disaster on board 1.

Next board please!

♠AK65

♥AJ103

♦J

♣K943

♠J1084

♥6

♦A6542

♣AQ5

♠Q972

♥K752

♦Q87

♣82

♠3

♥Q984

♦K1093

♣J1076

HCP

16

11

6

7

Makeable contracts

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

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West

North

East

South

1♣

Pass

1♦

Pass

1♥

Pass

2♥

All pass

I think it's automatic for South to raise hearts in this auction, and clear for North to call it a day. But some will attempt game. Although the clubs lie favourably, the hearts don't, and I can't see any hope of ten tricks. Just as a matter of interest, does everyone think 1♣ is the best opening bid? I've a sneaking feeling that 1♥ is better. If partner raises, bids 1♠ or 1NT, that's fine. If partner bids 2♦ you rebid 2NT. Only a 2♣ response makes things at all murky.

As an aside, check your system understanding. If you start with 1♣ and the auction were to continue 1♦-1♥, is 1♠ natural or fourth suit forcing? You may find partner plays it the other way!

♠2

♥K84

♦Q1095

♣Q9763

♠KJ97654

♥AJ62

♦6

♣2

♠A3

♥Q1093

♦AKJ7

♣1084

♠Q108

♥75

♦8432

♣AKJ5

HCP

7

9

10

14

Makeable contracts

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West

North

East

South

4♠

All pass

1NT

Pass

All right, it's just possible this hand plays better in hearts, or with partner as declarer, but I'm not messing around with a seven card suit, especially when North might be able to be a nuisance at favourable vulnerability. As it happens, you being declarer gives you a bonus in that South would have an obvious club lead. In fact, three rounds of clubs make 4♥ quite awkward. Results merchant? Moi?

If you do bid as above I can't think of an obvious reason to get the spades right for a top.

<div><div><div>♠65</div><div>♥1042</div><div>♦AK543</div><div>♣632</div></div><div><div>♠J82</div><div>♥A</div><div>♦109872</div><div>♣Q1095</div></div><div><div>♠AKQ4</div><div>♥QJ75</div><div>♦6</div><div>♣AKJ7</div></div><div><div>♠10973</div><div>♥K9863</div><div>♦QJ</div><div>♣84</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>6</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>6</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>6</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		7	20	7	6	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	-	-		S	-	-	-	-	-		E	6	2	2	5	3		W	6	2	2	5	3		<div>Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>This 20-count definitely isn't suitable for a bent 2NT opening and you have to start with 1♣ to maximise your chances of finding a fit. This time you find one straight away, partner making a semi pre-emptive raise. Now what? I have no idea how to get to a playable, but far from cold 6♣. The practical bid is surely 3NT. OK, you haven't got a diamond stop, but a) partner won't have majors so is likely to have something in diamonds and b) opponents tend to lead a major on this auction anyway. Winning the opening lead, declarer might build a heart trick as quickly as possible, hoping to sneak a tenth trick before the defenders realise they have diamonds as well. You could go down if they get wise and were able to cash four diamonds but, hey, it's pairs.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♣	Pass	3♣	Pass	?					
HCP																																																																	
7	20																																																																
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<div><div><div>♠9752</div><div>♥63</div><div>♦AJ863</div><div>♣A10</div></div><div><div>♠4</div><div>♥AQ754</div><div>♦10954</div><div>♣Q96</div></div><div><div>♠A63</div><div>♥K10982</div><div>♦K2</div><div>♣KJ8</div></div><div><div>♠KQJ108</div><div>♥J</div><div>♦Q7</div><div>♣75432</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>14</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>9</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		9	14	8	9	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	1	-	3	-		S	-	1	-	3	-		E	-	-	5	-	1		W	-	-	5	-	1		<div>Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>2NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♠</td></tr></table> <p>All pass</p> <p>I would certainly open as South; it really pays to get your retaliation in first. I like to play 2NT as a raise to three or better than a raise to four, but those who play Jacoby as game forcing will bid 3♠ (nearly worth 4♠). East has a good hand but nothing to say and 3♠ will probably buy the contract. East-West can make 5♥ but it's more than likely they will be shut out. Unless, of course, West is brave enough to balance with a double. The par contract is 5♠ doubled, but wouldn't you rather steal a better score than par?</p>	West	North	East	South				1♠	Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠				
HCP																																																																	
9	14																																																																
8	9																																																																
Makeable contracts																																																																	
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																												
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			1♠																																																														
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠																																																														
<div><div><div>♠A1073</div><div>♥A6</div><div>♦AJ4</div><div>♣K1074</div></div><div><div>♠2</div><div>♥Q10743</div><div>♦KQ10953</div><div>♣3</div></div><div><div>♠K84</div><div>♥82</div><div>♦876</div><div>♣AJ862</div></div><div><div>♠QJ965</div><div>♥KJ95</div><div>♦2</div><div>♣Q95</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>16</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>9</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		16	8	7	9	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	3	-	1	4	4		S	3	-	1	4	4		E	-	1	-	-	-		W	-	2	-	-	-		<div>Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♠</td></tr><tr><td>4NT</td><td>Dbl</td><td>5♣</td><td>Dbl</td></tr><tr><td>5♦</td><td>Dbl</td><td>All pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>As this vulnerability there's a certain inevitability about the auction. South isn't quite worth a Splinter bid and West is bound to try for a sacrifice. East may expect the minors but 5♦ clarifies the nature of West's hand (redouble would suggest equal or better hearts). So how many tricks will 5♦ doubled make? A club lead looks best for the defence. Declarer wins and plays a heart, covering South's card. North wins and continues clubs; now declarer ruffs and plays the spade. Whatever happens next, the defenders just makes the AJ of diamonds and a second heart for 500. Played by East, a trump lead gives the defence a better chance of 800, though there will be plenty of twists and turns.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	1♠	Pass	4♠	4NT	Dbl	5♣	Dbl	5♦	Dbl	All pass	
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