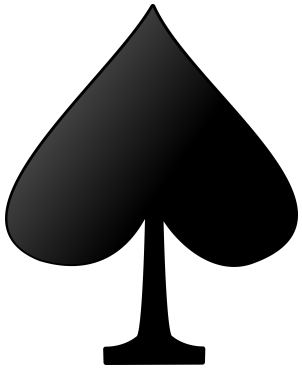
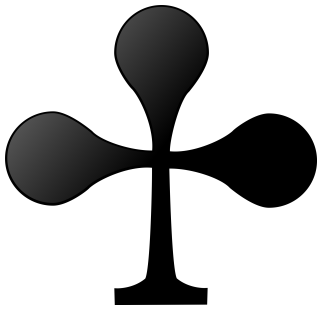
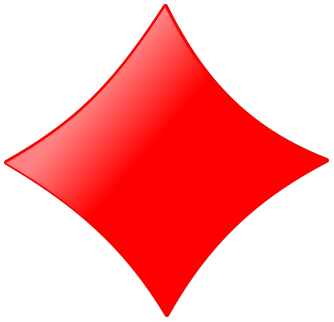
Club Stratified Sim Pairs

Wednesday

9th March 2022

Welcome to the eleventh 'Club Stratified Simultaneous Pairs'. Our commentator today is Paul Bowyer, 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

	♠Q62 ♥KQ754 ♦J42 ♣63	
♠None ♥1032 ♦9863 ♣KQJ974		♠J105 ♥J98 ♦AQ107 ♣1085
	♠AK98743 ♥A6 ♦K5 ♣A2	

HCP	
8	
6	8
18	

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

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

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

We start off with a very good slam available to North-South but with no clear route to get there. I've been racking my brains for a convincing sequence to arrive at 6♠ and can't find one, especially if West sticks his oar in with 3♣.
It is possible (indeed, likely) that many open that South hand with 2♣, Benjamin style. Quite how that helps isn't clear, though, as West may intervene with 3♣ and that may float back to South. 3♠ will be raised to 4♠ and there the matter will rest.
After the ♣K lead it is possible to make all thirteen tricks in Spades, but best play is actually to rely on a likely 4-2 heart split to ensure twelve tricks (test the trumps by cashing the ♠A, cash the ♥A, ♥K, ruff a heart and draw trumps ending in dummy). Lots of 480s, a few 510s and a smattering of 980s? We shall see.

	♠KQ5 ♥Q53 ♦K87 ♣K987	
♠10764 ♥J82 ♦QJ2 ♣J104		♠AJ93 ♥A107 ♦10965 ♣62
	♠82 ♥K964 ♦A43 ♣AQ53	

HCP		
	13	
5		9
	13	

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

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

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

By contrast with Hand 1, this deal is likely to be far easier to bid. Playing a weak no-trump the auction should be over in two bids. Playing a strong no-trump, South will open 1♣ and North has a choice of routes now; he may even jump to 3NT again, playing the hand from his side of the table.
The bidding may be routine and rapid, but the play may take more time. Despite the possession of 26 points, game is no cakewalk and our old friend *Deep Finesse* tells us that it should be defeated. It doesn't appear to matter who plays the hand or whether the defenders attack spades or diamonds, declarer simply doesn't have nine tricks and the defenders can always set up enough winners to beat the hand.
A series of scores of 100 to East-West?

	♠Q432 ♥K4 ♦Q ♣AJ9432	
♠AKJ7 ♥J983 ♦AK ♣K105		♠10985 ♥Q75 ♦J8765 ♣8
	♠6 ♥A1062 ♦109432 ♣Q76	

HCP		
	12	
19		3
	6	

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

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

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

A part-score deal where North-South may do well if they steal the deal in 3♣. That contract cannot be beaten; if the defence leads trumps, declarer can make six trump tricks, two hearts and a spade ruff. If they lead something else declarer can get at least two spade ruffs on table.
What about the auction? Well, those playing four-card majors may bid as indicated above. West has to let 3♣ go as he cannot justify a further bid. Variations may occur where West (playing five-card majors) opens 1♣. He may play there for a horrible score of -200 or -300. Then there are some who think it right to open 2NT with 19 points. Maybe this deal will convince them of the error of their ways as that seems destined for another large minus score.

	♠J1062 ♥108 ♦Q54 ♣KQ82	
♠Q5 ♥97652 ♦97 ♣AJ93		♠943 ♥AKQJ43 ♦862 ♣10
	♠AK87 ♥None ♦AKJ103 ♣7654	

HCP		
	8	
7		10
	15	

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

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

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

An interesting deal, this one both in the bidding and the play. After two Passes what should East open? 1♥, 2♥, 3♥? All would have their adherents. After a calm 1♥ opening, South has an easy take-out double and West a pre-emptive raise to 3♥. North might double that for take-out or might bid try 3♠, according to taste, and South has an easy 4♠ bid.
Most, then, should end in 4♠ by North-South but there will be a considerable number who play the East-West cards in hearts. Indeed, 5♥ is a good sacrifice as there are always nine tricks available for their side.
What of the play in 4♠? After a heart lead there is a good case to ruff and play a club. When (if) the queen holds, declarer might cash two top trumps, intending to play on diamonds, thus making eleven tricks.

♠Q64
♥742
♦AK83
♣Q108

♠K7
♥K85
♦654
♣K9542

♠832
♥AQ
♦QJ102
♣A763

♠AJ1095
♥J10963
♦97
♣J

HCP		
	11	
9		13
	7	

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

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

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

An interesting, competitive part-score deal with much depending on system and style. If East were to open a weak no-trump, South may well have some sort of conventional weapon to unleash. Here, in the auction above, 2♣ shows both majors and 2♦ by North shows no preference. South bids his lower five-card suit and now West has to decide whether to allow North-South to steal the deal or to compete with his five-card suit. 3♣ is dangerous, but this is match-point pairs and the opponents should not be allowed to take liberties. 3♣ may well push North overboard and at least East-West will go plus.
Where East opens something other than 1NT the auction is hard to predict. South may well make some sort of two-suited noise and North-South may well play in three of a major failing by a trick.

♠5
♥J742
♦J987
♣KJ103

♠KQJ108
♥A1085
♦K4
♣A2

♠9762
♥KQ963
♦32
♣98

♠A43
♥None
♦AQ1065
♣Q7654

HCP		
	6	
17		5
	12	

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

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
		Pass	1♦
Dble	3♦	3♥	5♦
Dble?	All Pass		

Wow. This hand may well produce some interesting scores. South has a clear-cut opening bid of 1♦ and after that it's something of a free-for all. West probably does best to double and North may well make a pre-emptive raise to 3♦. East is fully entitled to try 3♥ now and South may as well cut out a round of bidding by "sacrificing" in 5♦. West is sure to double that and, to everyone's surprise, there is no way to defeat it.
The best that East-West can do is to bid 5♥ and go off in that. Sure, *Deep Finesse* says that North-South can defeat that by two tricks, but it is not easy to find the spade ruffs that are required to achieve that result.
I'm sure that some East-West pairs will be allowed to play in major-suit games and make them, so we may well see game recorded in both directions on this one.

♠4
♥AK10954
♦875
♣876

♠K1052
♥Q8
♦KJ64
♣Q53

♠963
♥72
♦A1092
♣J1042

♠AQJ87
♥J63
♦Q3
♣AK9

HCP		
	7	
11		5
	17	

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

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

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

4♥ is the rightful contract here and, with hearts 2-2, eleven tricks are makeable, losing just two diamond tricks. Declarer has to get spades right, however, taking the ruffing spade finesse rather than playing a spade to the queen. By this method he has a way of disposing of a club loser.
Reaching 4♥ may not be that straightforward. After South opens 1♠ North has little option but to respond with an uneasy call of 1NT. South has enough to raise to 2NT and now North can show the true nature of his hand with a leap to the heart game.
Some Souths may open with a strong no-trump. Here, North has enough for a direct shot at game. He might try 4♥ immediately or, more likely, transfer the declaration into his partner's hand before jumping to game.

♠K64
♥872
♦QJ874
♣J8

♠J75
♥AKJ104
♦9
♣A974

♠A83
♥63
♦6532
♣Q1053

♠Q1092
♥Q95
♦AK10
♣K62

HCP	
7	
13	6
14	

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

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

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

A part-score deal with East-West able to make the highest contract in clubs. Having said that, hearts plays well for their side and 140 is available with the fortunate disposition of the trump suit.
The auction may well end in 2♣ at many tables (after East-West bid 1♥–1NT–2♣ and that gets Passed out). However, some enterprising Souths may reopen the auction with a take-out double, allowing North to bid 2♦. Nonetheless, East has a clear-cut raise to 3♣ and that's where matters should rest.
Many will make nine tricks in clubs although ten are available if declarer takes the heart finesse.

♠KQ986
♥A6
♦Q3
♣AJ103

♠AJ3
♥K73
♦A842
♣972

♠10742
♥QJ104
♦K5
♣Q84

♠5
♥9852
♦J10976
♣K65

HCP	
16	
12	8
4	

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

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

Another part-score deal with a variety of possible outcomes. Some Norths may be left high and dry in 1♠; at other tables West may protect with 1NT or even a take-out double. The auction above seems reasonable to me, although North-South do best to defend 1NT and lead the ♣J. (To be completely accurate, North has to avoid leading spades to defeat 1NT).
2♣ by North should quietly expire after East leads the ♥Q but these things have been known to slip through under the radar. Did anybody manage to reach 2♦ by South? A score of 90 should be decent, beaten only by the scores of 100 for East-West going off in something or other.

♠J1097642
♥K10
♦A
♣753

♠AQ85
♥None
♦QJ109
♣AQ984

♠K3
♥AQ954
♦76532
♣K

♠None
♥J87632
♦K84
♣J1062

HCP	
8	
15	12
5	

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

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

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

An interesting deal with a variety of possible outcomes. The only making game for East-West is 3NT (5♦ is beaten by a spade ruff) but some might not play there.
North may bid spades and suffer a penalty (you'll note that – according to *Deep Finesse* – it is East-West who can make eight tricks in spades). However, it may not be possible to extract a penalty as most low-level doubles are for take-out and the auction is unlikely to proceed in such a manner that East doubles 2♠ and West Passes it.
In the auction above, West prefers the natural 2♣ response to 1♠ and is awkwardly placed after North's 2♠ is Passed round to him. Double is for take-out in this auction, so East will show his diamonds and a frustrated West may take refuge in no-trumps.

♠AK105
♥1043
♦10864
♣106

♠94
♥Q987
♦732
♣J984

♠QJ2
♥K
♦AK95
♣AK753

♠8763
♥AJ652
♦QJ
♣Q2

HCP		
	7	
3		20
	10	

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

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

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

Another awkward deal, this one. *Deep Finesse* tells us that 3NT makes for East-West, but it's a filthy contract, relying on clubs splitting nicely and spades being 4-4. Remarkably, even the double-dummy lead of the ♥A doesn't crack 3NT as the hearts are blocked and South has no entry to his long suit.
Anyway, to the bidding. East does best to open 1♣ in fourth seat, although an off-centre 2NT will have its adherents. After that, South may well overcall 1♥ and North dredge up a raise. East should double for take-out and West should retreat to 3♣, ending the auction. 3♣ may make on the nose or make an overtrick. Those who open 2NT may play there, recording 120 or 150. I'm going to predict scores of 110, 120, 130 and 150 to East-West on this one.

♠109
♥KJ86
♦A105
♣Q985

♠753
♥Q42
♦KQ76
♣AK7

♠QJ642
♥75
♦943
♣643

♠AK8
♥A1093
♦J82
♣J102

HCP		
	10	
14		3
	13	

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

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

This deal belongs to North-South in a heart or no-trump part-score. Yes, *Deep Finesse* says that they can make 3NT and 4♥ but this only because of a fortunate layout of the cards and, in any case, requires the right view in hearts. In fact, they may well not get into the auction if West opens the bidding with a weak no-trump. North cannot bid over that and South is stymied after East transfers to spades.
2♠ plays like a dog for East-West and, after a club lead, should go three down. Quite how good or bad a score of -150 will be for East-West is moot; where North-South do get into the auction they may well play in hearts. If so, they may record 140 or 170 depending on the view they take in trumps.

♠732
♥J762
♦KQ86
♣87

♠1054
♥K4
♦AJ72
♣KQ95

♠A96
♥AQ93
♦1095
♣J102

♠KQJ8
♥1085
♦43
♣A643

HCP		
	6	
13		11
	10	

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

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

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

A marginal hand this, with some players reaching a thin 3NT and some declining the game invitation. After West opens with a weak no-trump, East's intermediate cards justify a raise to 2NT. Whether East should employ Stayman *en route* with a stubby 4·3·3·3 shape is moot.
3NT, as *Deep Finesse* smugly informs us, is destined to fail. True, but not if North leads a diamond, high or low. A spade lead is best, but North may struggle to find that, especially if East has wheeled out Stayman. A heart lead might still defeat 3NT, but the defence has to be sharp after that.
Many will make nine tricks in no-trumps on this one, recording scores of either 150 or 600 depending on whether they are in a part-score or in a game.

♠K8
♥96
♦A543
♣AKJ74

♠A102
♥Q104
♦KJ109
♣Q109

♠J965
♥AKJ873
♦2
♣63

♠Q743
♥52
♦Q876
♣852

HCP		
	15	
12		9
	4	

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

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

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

This part-score deal belongs to East-West in hearts, with their side able to make nine tricks in that strain. East only has to lose one spade, one diamond and two clubs, the ♠J109 all playing important roles.
Many will open 2♥ on those East cards although that does rub up against textbook advice of not pre-empting with a four-card major on the side. If East makes a disciplined Pass in first seat, there should be three Passes to North who will open 1♣. Now East can jump to 2♥ and that may steal the deal. If North bids again (as he might) he may regret it; in any case, West should support his partner to the three level. Lots of scores of 140 to East-West in the contract of 3♥ making?

♠AK
♥None
♦AKJ9852
♣K765

♠62
♥AK983
♦6
♣AJ1098

♠QJ9874
♥62
♦Q103
♣Q2

♠1053
♥QJ10754
♦74
♣43

HCP		
	18	
12		7
	3	

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

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

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

North has a powerful hand here but his partner has a fistful of rubbish, so 3♦ is the limit of the hand. North needs to lead clubs from hand early to make 3♦ as a club ruff on table is necessary to make up the requisite nine tricks; sure, East can ruff high in front of South but then North would make seven diamonds and two spades.
The auction? Well, who knows? Many will get carried away by the power of those North cards and some unlikely contracts may be declared. 3NT isn't *that* terrible as it would make most of the time when diamonds split – not today, though.
I suspect many North-Souths will go overboard in diamonds on this one. If East leads a club then ten tricks can make, but not otherwise.

♠1093
♥109865
♦AK9
♣Q5

♠J54
♥Q432
♦Q54
♣K97

♠K762
♥KJ7
♦1087
♣A82

♠AQ8
♥A
♦J632
♣J10643

HCP		
	9	
8		11
	12	

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

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

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

A dull part-score deal with 2♣ as good a contract as any.
Those pairs who play a weak no-trump are virtually obliged to bid as above, landing in a reasonable spot. No one has any reason to bid over 2♣, unless East fancies reopening the bidding with a dubious take-out double, leading heaven knows where.
Some may open that East muck in third seat with something or other. If so, they may secure the contract but that is unlikely to be their side's advantage and playing the hand could well result in a nasty penalty of -200 or more.
Strong no-trumpers may be able to rebid 1NT on the South cards after 1♣–1♥ and play there. Making eight tricks (as *Deep Finesse* informs us is possible) will score well as 120 to North-South will beat all the 110s recorded in clubs.

♠82
♥7542
♦Q72
♣KJ107

♠976
♥QJ108
♦AJ964
♣A

♠K1043
♥963
♦853
♣986

♠AQJ5
♥AK
♦K10
♣Q5432

HCP	
6	
12	3
19	

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

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

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

After a run of part-score deals we have ourselves a game. North-South can make 3NT or 5♣ for the same score of 400 points. (The reason that 3NT makes from the South hand and not by North, by the way, is that a diamond lead from East is fatal).

The auction above is not unreasonable. After South opens 1♣ in third seat, West has a choice of overcalling 1♦ or making a take-out double. If he takes the latter path, North may make a pre-emptive raise to 3♣ and South may try his luck in 3NT.

With two aces to lose, 5♣ definitely needs the spade finesse to succeed; 3NT may make without it if West leads a low diamond (declarer can make one spade, two hearts, two diamonds and four clubs). The ♥Q lead, though, has declarer sweating a little.

♠92
♥KQ1073
♦K863
♣J6

♠AK8654
♥8
♦AJ10
♣752

♠103
♥J54
♦Q9754
♣KQ4

♠QJ7
♥A962
♦2
♣A10983

HCP	
9	
12	8
11	

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

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

Back to competitive part-score deals. North-South can make the highest contract here as 3♥ is easy-peasy, but it would pay East-West to bid 3♠ over that. One down is cheap, even if doubled.

The auction above is reasonable if not clear-cut. After a marginal 1♣ opening bid from South and a 1♠ overcall, North probably does best to make a take-out double as he lacks the values to bid 2♥. After South bids 2♥ and West bids 2♠ it is obvious to compete to 3♥ with the North cards. Now it's up to East. With scattered values and partner known to have six spades, it's not ridiculous to try his luck with 3♠ – the winning action on the deal.

♠973
♥AK95
♦AK10
♣J74

♠QJ1054
♥J3
♦J6
♣10652

♠A6
♥Q864
♦Q7532
♣A3

♠K82
♥1072
♦984
♣KQ98

HCP	
15	
5	12
8	

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

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

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

Another part-score deal with North-South doing best to play the deal in a quiet 1NT. Strong no-trumpers might reach 2NT if North opens 1NT and South makes an ambitious game try, but those playing a weak no-trump should bid as above.

Deep Finesse claims that 3NT can make from the North hand. Yeah, right. After a low diamond lead, declarer has to play with a sight of all four hands to make nine tricks.

You rarely have to reach poor games like this to score well in a pairs contest; making 150 in 1NT + 2 will rake in most of the match-points.

♠842
♥AK52
♦AJ7
♣QJ4

♠10963
♥Q8
♦64
♣108753

♠J
♥J964
♦Q1082
♣AK62

♠AKQ75
♥1073
♦K953
♣9

HCP	
15	
2	11
12	

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

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

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

North-South have a combined 27 points and will surely reach a game, 4♠ being much better than 3NT. The no-trump game is beaten out of sight by club leads, 4♠ is the more normal contract.
The bidding above is normal enough for weak no-trumpers; 1NT shows 15-16 and 2♣ is checkback, looking for the 5-3 spade fit.
Now, *Deep Finesse* tells us that 4♠ should fail, but West has to lead a diamond for this to be true. On any other lead 4♠ can be made, but there are many twists and turns possible in the play. Some will play 4♠ from North after a strong no-trump and a transfer. Here, the inevitable ♣A lead will give North an important helping hand.

♠Q52
♥AJ65
♦A6
♣Q742

♠876
♥K87
♦J543
♣853

♠A1094
♥Q1042
♦1098
♣A9

♠KJ3
♥93
♦KQ72
♣KJ106

HCP	
13	
4	10
13	

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

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

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

An uninteresting deal, this one. The world, his wife and the family dog are going to play this one in 3NT where there are nine easy tricks (two spades, one heart, three diamonds and three clubs). East-West can do little about it and should concede 600 points with good grace.
Any deviation from the plethora of scores of 600 in the North-South column will come if declarer somehow manages an overtrick. That will come only if there is a defensive howler, though.

♠Q43
♥732
♦K107
♣KQ87

♠K965
♥Q954
♦J82
♣95

♠J82
♥AJ106
♦Q5
♣A632

♠A107
♥K8
♦A9643
♣J104

HCP	
10	
6	12
12	

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

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

After the world's dullest board (Hand 21) we revert to a potentially competitive part-score deal. Those paying a weak no-trump may steal the deal as East-West as in the auction above. Some bright sparks as West may apply Stayman and strike gold when the 4-4 heart fit comes to light; 2♥ plays much better than 1NT.
1NT looks like it should be defeated by two tricks after the obvious diamond lead for a horrible match-point score of -200 – East should be held to one diamond, three hearts and one club trick. If East somehow manages to sneak a spade trick through, he will get out for one off and a decent match-point score.
Strong no-trumpers may open 1♣ on the East cards. That allows South to overcall 1♦ and for North to compete in diamonds. Anyone who scores +110 as North-South is going to beat all the penalties of 100 but will lose out to the penalties of 200.

♠AKJ95
♥None
♦Q1096
♣Q842

♠107
♥9542
♦K54
♣KJ75

♠Q863
♥A763
♦AJ2
♣93

♠42
♥KQJ108
♦873
♣A106

HCP	
12	
7	11
10	

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

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

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

Another part-score deal of little interest. It is, however, amusing to note that South can make a one-level contract in all denominations and North is virtually in the same position, except the unlikely contract of 2♦ is available there.
Many will bid as in the auction above and will subside in 2♠. Those whose methods don't allow then to respond at the two-level on the South cards will probably also reach the same contract, possibly after bidding 1♠–1NT–2♣–2♥–2♠.
Against 2♠, East is likely to lead the ♣9 and that should scupper the contract. The defenders can always manoeuvre to take a trump, three diamonds, a club and a club ruff.

♠983
♥AQ
♦985
♣76542

♠A1054
♥J742
♦K7
♣KJ10

♠KQ2
♥K93
♦106432
♣93

♠J76
♥10865
♦AQJ
♣AQ8

HCP	
6	
12	8
14	

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

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

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

These deals tonight, regrettably, contain many hands where the auctions are likely to be brief and uninteresting. Here is a case in point with West's opening bid of 1NT being Passed out. Strong no-trumpers may open 1♣ on the West cards and see East respond 1♦ but that hardly allows South a sniff of the action even with 14 points.
East-West are still likely to play 1NT after a 1♣–1♦ start whether West rebids 1NT or 1♥, the only difference being that East may declare the contract rather than West.
Somewhat preposterously, East-West can make nine tricks in no-trumps. Well, that's because the ♦A lies right, the ♣Q lies right, the spades break and the hearts lie in a miracle position. In any case, after a club lead from North and club return, declarer has to remove North's heart entry early. Anyone bidding and making 3NT can't complain about bad luck for at least a year. There will be a few scores of 150 to East-West and plenty of 120s.

♠AKQ74
♥K973
♦7
♣QJ9

♠9632
♥A52
♦KQ86
♣62

♠J108
♥Q106
♦J953
♣1085

♠5
♥J84
♦A1042
♣AK743

HCP	
15	
9	4
12	

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

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

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

This deal has some interest in that the North-South cards can make a slam contract. 6♣ is available but is no one's idea of a good contract as it requires the ♥A to lie on the right side and then some.
Many will bid as above and reach the ubiquitous match-point contract of 3NT. Ten tricks are available, but declarer has to read the cards well to rake them in. After a diamond lead, won by the ♦A, declarer can run five rounds of clubs and put West under loads of pressure. If declarer has the bottle to play a heart next he will score a tenth trick, if he merely cashes the top spades he will hold himself to nine.

♠KJ5
♥Q10
♦9732
♣AK73

♠1062
♥AKJ4
♦KJ10
♣QJ2

♠4
♥8732
♦AQ64
♣10984

♠AQ9873
♥965
♦85
♣65

HCP		
	13	
15		6
	6	

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

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
		Pass	2♠
Dble	3♠	All Pass	

East-West hold the balance of the cards (just) but it is North-South who hold the top ranking suit and who will surely secure the contract in spades.
Most will open 2♠ as South, although some will have a multi 2♦ as an option. Over 2♠ some Wests may Pass with that horribly stubby 4·3·3·3 hand, but most will wade into the fray with 15 points and no wasted spade values. North does best to raise to 3♠ immediately rather than wait for East to respond and for East-West to find their heart fit.
3♠ can be beaten (as *Deep Finesse* informs us) but it takes repeated trump leads to do so. If West kicks off with a top heart, then declarer can make six spades, two clubs and a heart ruff on table.

♠J10754
♥QJ8
♦KJ
♣1096

♠None
♥AK1092
♦10952
♣Q754

♠AKQ983
♥754
♦Q
♣KJ8

♠62
♥63
♦A87643
♣A32

HCP		
	8	
9		15
	8	

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

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

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

A slightly tricky bidding problem for East-West on this deal. East has an obvious opening bid of 1♠ but after that it's all a little murky. Does West have enough for a 2♥ response? If not, then the bidding may well go 1♠–1NT–2♠–Pass, probably making nine tricks.
If West does respond 2♥ what should East rebid? 3♠ looks right, despite the wasted values of the singleton ♦Q. West has to bid again, of course, and East should show his feeble heart support. 4♥ is makeable but it does take some care and attention.

♠J95
♥AQ93
♦7643
♣107

♠76
♥K852
♦Q52
♣J982

♠AK8
♥J107
♦AJ
♣AKQ54

♠Q10432
♥64
♦K1098
♣63

HCP		
	7	
6		22
	5	

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

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

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

East-West finally have an easy game contract to play. The bidding is routine – East opens 2NT in third seat and then gets raised to game after an unsuccesful Stayman sequence.
Nine tricks are easy enough after a spade lead; declarer can win and simply play off the ♦A J, setting up the ♦Q as the ninth trick. However, if declarer gets greedy and plays on hearts he may defeat himself. He can still survive after running the ♥J at trick two but not if he subsequently takes the diamond finesse.

The Bridge Warehouse

The first and only choice for Bridge Players

Quality bridge supplies at competitive prices

Everything a Bridge Player or Club needs and more

Buddies and Boxes

Bridge Books

Boards

Gift Ideas

Playing Cards

Bridge Tables

We will always match prices where possible – email for details

Any surplus from sales in The Bridge Warehouse is reinvested by the EBU in activities and services for its members and affiliated clubs.

Support bridge in England - shop at The Bridge Warehouse

Order online via our website only
www.bridge-warehouse.co.uk

Orders are dispatched weekly

Please email with queries: bridge.warehouse@ebu.co.uk