



Sim Pairs

Commentary by Michael Byrne

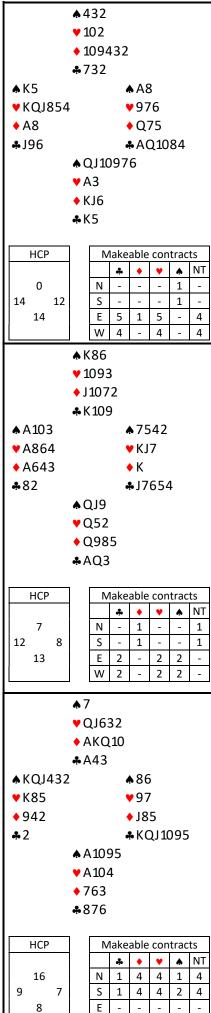
Monday 8th May 2023

Welcome to the English Bridge Education & Development (EBED) Simultaneous Pairs. The proceeds raised by this event will go to EBED, the national charity for the promotion and development of duplicate bridge. EBED have responded to the challenges of the past two years by continuing to improve and develop the infrastructure for bridge teaching in England. This has been achieved, by providing focussed training for bridge teachers (members of EBTA, our English Bridge Teaching Association) to support them with the new skills needed for online teaching and adapting methods used in classroom-based learning. We continue to provide a gentle introduction for new players, to online duplicate bridge through our weekly EBED relaxed games. EBED additionally supplies "Bridge for All" teaching materials, organises teacher and director training courses, administers the Junior Award Scheme, organises the Schools Cup, Inter-Schools League and Youth Grand Prix, and runs the Junior Summer Camp. We continue to support county organisations and individual volunteers at the local level to run youth events. You can read more about EBED's activities in the current issue of English Bridge and at www.ebedcio.org.uk. If you wish to arrange a donation in favour of the charity, please do so at www.ebedcio.org.uk/donate. Do please encourage your friends to come to play in these events which are open to all and raise vital funds for our work. We sincerely thank you for your support.

Giorgio Provenza

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all ▲J108 ♥A103 1064 A gentle and traditional game to start with, with EW having a 10-card major *****8532 suit fit and plenty of points to bid game. ▲AK752 ▲Q9643 East will open 1 and South might well try 2 , although facing a passed hand **∀**K875 **∀**J4 perhaps 3♣ is better. Regardless, West will power to 4♠ (a 4♣ splinter or good ♦Q52 AKJ8 raise via a cue bid looks best) and after some exploration that is where EW *****10 ♣KJ shall play. - 🛦 What should South lead? A traditional 4th best heart sets a trap for North, as ♥Q962 if he sticks in the ten (after dummy ducks) then declarer can draw trumps and ♦973 AQ9764 throw the club away on the 4th diamond for no fewer than 12 tricks. A passive diamond gives 11 tricks, only the A and then a non-heart switch HCP Makeable contracts holds it to ten - very hard to find. NT * ٠ ۷ ٨ 2 5 Ν -It's strange, the best lead is the Ace from AQ, knowing that you will set up 12 15 S 2 a trick for declarer's king – bridge really is a fascinating game! 8 Е 3 1 4 -W 3 4

Chief Executive English Bridge Education & Development, Registered Charity No: 1153543



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Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

Three players at the table have nice opening bids, and the 4th player has nothing at all – will their partner get the message in time?

East will start with 1NT (1 \clubsuit for some) and South will overcall in spades. With the \bigstar K that looks keen to be led around to, West will leap to 4 \heartsuit and await the dummy with interest.

It is a good idea to have a transfer to hearts available, even after an overcall. Putting the weak hand on lead is normally a bad plan: they can lead their doubleton through dummy's KJx to partners AQ for example. Here it doesn't matter which hand plays 4♥, as on a spade lead declarer will win and draw trumps then run the ♣J and claim 11 when it loses.

South can lead nothing useful, but actually if North hits upon a diamond lead, then the King is set up before the club stopper is dislodged.

Did I say it makes no difference who plays this hand? 11 tricks by East, but were you one of the genius Norths that found a diamond to hold it to ten?

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

The first "cricket hand" now, as the points are split equally to both sides. (In fact, you might say they are "twenty20" – see what I did there?)

Where South starts with 1NT that will normally buy the hand and West will choose a red ace to lead from. If South opens 1+ then North might well respond 1NT and play there.

Only if South opens $1 \ge 1$ might West venture a double. This might lead to East competing to $2 \ge 1$ over the inevitable 1NT from NS.

Playing in no trumps, NS have seven easy tricks (2 spades, 2 diamonds, 3 clubs) and it doesn't matter if EW attack hearts (giving a potential 8th winner) providing they cash the 13th heart at some point. (Only if EW lead two rounds of hearts, then switch, are eight tricks now possible).

Playing in spades, NS have an impossible defensive task: if they lead trumps and stop the club ruff then East just gives up 3 club tricks and 2 spades to make 8 tricks. Instead, if NS attack in diamonds, then East ruffs the 3rd club and 2 diamonds, and exits in trumps to force an extra heart trick - very nice!

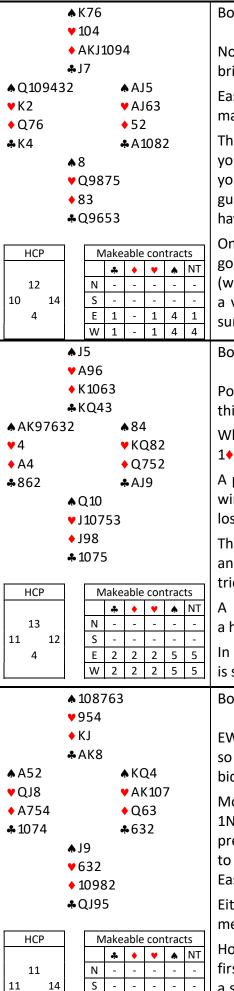
Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West has a solid weak two to start with, but partner's support (and their hand in general) is a disappointment and the question will be what game do NS end in?

North's best bid after a weak two looks to be double, as overcalling 3♥ risks getting NS into the wrong suit, and missing the chance to defend when South has a bigger spade stack.

South should consider a penalty pass although double dummy defence is needed to extract 800 (North must switch to a trump, zoom in with the A and play a heart to South's Ace, who exits with the 10, awaiting carefully his 2nd trump trick with his A-5 a tenace over Wests's K-4!)

More likely South will bid something (God knows what) and then raise North's 3Ψ to 4Ψ , and this proves an easy 620. The same ten tricks are available to anyone that plays in no trumps, so well done if you chalked up 630, which will be most of the matchpoints, but not all – those 800s are not as rare as they might be!



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Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

North has a nice hand and a great suit and will no doubt start the auction brightly before being disappointed with the final result.

East will surely double $1 \blacklozenge$ and South will bid $1 \clubsuit$, and the only question is how many spades will West bid?

The only thing I can say about a hand like this is that if you didn't bid 4 then you need to make sure you do next time. You have a powerful 6-card suit, you are bidding one of the other majors, the suits where partner has guaranteed support, and you have a full ten points, enough that partner must have a normal take out double rather than some strong hand in clubs or hearts.

Onto the play! It seems like there are 11 easy tricks, but the 3rd diamond is going to be a nuisance – if you ruff it then you end up losing a trump trick (whether you ruff with the ace or the jack) – so ten tricks are the limit. In fact a very careless declarer might actually go down if they ruff with the 5, but surely that was none of you, was it?....

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

Points aren't everything as the power of a long suit is once more shown with this deal, where an even break and top cards come in very handy.

Whether East opens 1NT or one of the other suits (there will be votes for $1 \clubsuit$, $1 \blacklozenge$ or $1 \heartsuit$) West will quickly arrive in $4 \clubsuit$ and NS must hold them to their contract.

A popular choice of lead will be the AK – no good I'm afraid since West will win the Ace, pull trumps and lead a heart up, establishing a discard for their losing diamond.

The ♥A lead is equally bad, as West will now make 11 tricks (throwing a club and a diamond and then leading a club up – North must split to avoid 12 tricks being made).

A diamond is the worst lead as declarer can put the queen up and lead a heart up for 12 tricks if the ace is taken, or a different 12 if it is ducked.

In the real world a 4th best club might hold it to ten tricks, but low from KQxx is scarcely attractive....and certainly not recommended!

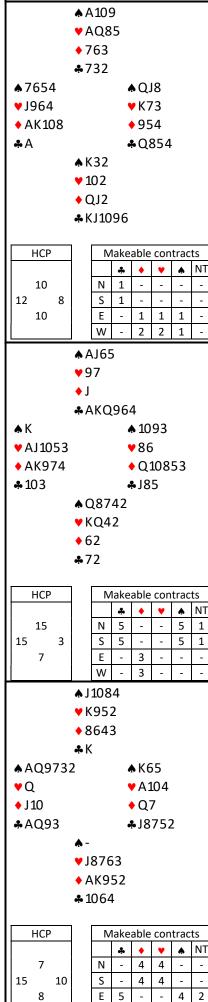
Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

EW have two balanced hands, no major suit fit and 25 points between them, so the final resting place is surely inevitable. If NS remain silent then EW will bid P-1NT-2NT-3NT or similar and South will lead the Q., more on that later.

More likely West will pass and North will try 1 in 3rd seat. East might overcall 1NT (very dirty) or double for take-out (my choice – your extra values will prevent it going too badly), West might respond 2NT which will be raised to 3. If East passes 1 is then West can protect with 1NT (raised to game by East) if South passes.

Either way, if West declarers no trumps then North has a choice between the mediocre 5-card suit and the club sequence.

How did everyone do? Those leading clubs beat it immediately: they take the first four and sit back and wait for their diamond trick. If instead North leads a spade, then they will have to zoom in with the *****K and switch to a club post haste - or lose 600!



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Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

Another cricket hand (see hand 3) and neither side can make very much, but that won't stop people bidding as if they can!

West has the perennial problem, and one modern solution is to open 1NT. This will win the auction and no doubt get a 4th best heart lead from North. Alternatively West might open 1♥ and East will probably respond 1NT, West will briskly pass and South will surely lead the ♣J. The same fate awaits West if they open 1♦, so what will be the outcome of the bidding decisions?

Playing in 1NT by West a heart lead travels round to the Jack, and West does best to lead a spade to the queen. South can win and switch to the \clubsuit J but this isn't an obvious defence and if the defence try anything else then West can scramble home with two spades, two hearts, two diamonds and the \bigstar A.

Played by East on the \clubsuit J lead there isn't much hope; the defence have the contract off in top tricks.

Did you sneak home? Well done if so, but be sure to thank your opponents.

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

Whatever high hopes West has when they pick up their hand must be stifled as NS own the boss suit and will soon be steamrolling the opponents into submission.

After $1 \ge -P - 1 \ge$, West has a choice between 2NT and double – with two good 5-card suits 2NT seems clear – and North will probably just shut their eyes and bash $4 \ge$.

At another vulnerability East might save in 5. This would not be a good idea here as there are four inevitable losers and -500 is too much at pairs.

After a top diamond lead West might get foolish notions such as forcing dummy. This will worry South, but when the A is cashed the king comes tumbling down and declarer will find themselves with 12 tricks.

It looks like West must cash the ♥A at trick two – is that obvious? It doesn't seem to be to me, but the traveller shall reward those that do!

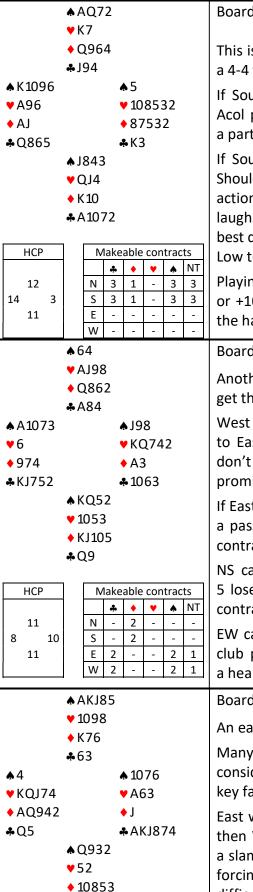
Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

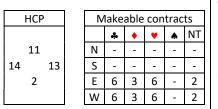
EW may have the balance of power, but NS can make nearly as many tricks as they can, so it will be interesting to see if both sides are as active in the bidding as each other.

West will be left to open $1 \triangleq$ in 3^{rd} seat and East will respond $2 \triangleq$ whatever system is played, whether it is Acol ($2 \triangleq$ is natural) or 5-card majors ($2 \triangleq$ is Drury). South might come in now, perhaps double or 2NT to show both suits, and West will raise clubs (facing a natural $2 \triangleq$ bid) or jump to $4 \triangleq$ (facing a Drury bid).

I can't imagine any brave souls will find the paying save as NS (5 of either red suit is just one off thanks to the miracle lie) so most EW players will be left to negotiate a spade contract.

Despite the bad break ten tricks are easy – but only if you drop the club. In order to do this, you will need to fish around for the AK and work out that South might have opened the bidding holding the AK, but that is pretty hard in the real world – well done if you chalked up 620!





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Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

This is another challenging deal, as the likely resting spot for NS sees them in a 4-4 fit breaking badly, will it spoil their chance of a plus score?

If South opens the bidding (becoming more common these days even for Acol players) then North will bid Stayman and raise spades, at pairs (facing a partner that opens with 11 points) $3 \div$ is plenty.

If South passes then West will open 1NT and East will transfer to hearts. Should North step in with a take-out double? Probably not, but it is the winning action today, as otherwise NS will defend 2♥. This doesn't look like a barrel of laughs for West but only 50s are at stake and there are only 5 top losers. (The best defence looks like leading trumps, but did you note the diamond position? Low to the jack results in only two diamond losers, the queen and the 9).

Playing in spades many NS pairs will go minus at the 3 level, so perhaps +50 or +100 won't be too bad, but the real winners will be those pairs that buy the hand in $2\frac{1}{2}$ and make a simple +110.

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

Another nip and tuck part-score hand, although some will pass it out and not get the full value of the evening!

West will pass, and in 2^{nd} chair (at red) most Norths will do so as well. It falls to East to conjure up something, and bold players will opt for 1. (Please don't be shocked, bridge is a bidders' game, and a 3^{rd} seat opening at green promises nothing but good thoughts.)

If East does open, then West can respond 1 and East should pass that (when a passed hand changes the suit it is no longer forcing) and that is a simple contract for EW to go plus in.

NS can actually make as many as 8 tricks in diamonds, as there are only 5 losers even with both heart honours offside, but this will not be an easy contract to reach in the days where no-one bids minor suits!

EW can make 8 tricks in spades. If the defence draw trumps, then the lucky club position saves the day; otherwise EW do some cross-ruffing and lead a heart towards dummy.

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

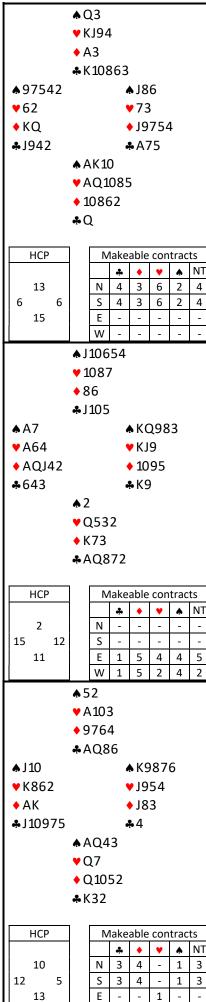
An easy slam for EW now - easy to make that is, not so easy to bid!

Many North players will open $1 \pm$, a decision I heartily agree with. When considering whether or not to open light, the strength of the suit must be the key factor, and an outside king is far more attractive than a queen and a jack.

East will overcall $2 \ge and$ South should dredge up a spade raise – if they pass then West can bid $2 \lor$ and East splinter with $4 \diamond$, and now West will drive to a slam. If instead the auction starts $1 \ge -2 \ge -2 \diamond$ it is much harder – is $3 \lor$ even forcing? Either way East will just raise to $4 \lor$ and with everyone bidding it is difficult for West to envisage a slam, easy to assume game is the limit.

Alternatively, those bean counters ("I only had eleven points partner") might pass as North, and now EW will start $1 \div P - 1 \checkmark$, North can bid $1 \div$ and East will bid $2 \div$. When West introduces diamonds, East can jump to $4 \checkmark$ and now West might bid on.

With 12 tricks cold I would think 680 will score around 35-40% and 1430 around 90-95%.



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Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

NS can get their revenge by bidding and making the excellent 6♥ that is available.

This time NS should have a free run (any West players that overcall 1♠ should be sent to my office for extra homework) and will start 1♥-P-2NT, with 2NT being used as Jacoby, a game forcing raise with 4 card support.

This is a vital piece of kit, as it means NS can immediately start off on the right foot, and South will show club shortage. This doesn't make the North hand enormous (the \clubsuit K is wasted) but the good trumps and two doubletons augur well, so North is worth a cue bid and South might get excited.

It's very hard to bid this slam scientifically, as all the minor honours are working – even the singleton $\mathbf{A}Q$ pulls its weight, turning the king into a trick.

Again, I would expect +480 to be below average (will some sneak a club to the queen to make all 13?) and +980 to be huge.

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

Once again, the pendulum swings back to EW since they now have 27 between them ("27 high" as the cousins would say) and a NT contract beckons.

With ten easy tricks on the diamond finesse South will have to avoid leading a club to give 11. Actually, the play is far more interesting than that: East will win the \clubsuit K and take the marked diamond finesse (South did open the bidding after all) and cash five rounds. South can throw one club and one heart, but on 3 rounds of spades the screw is turning. The defence comes under too much pressure (if North throws their hearts then East can pin the ten, and South might get thrown in if they throw too many tricks) and 12 tricks should be the result.

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

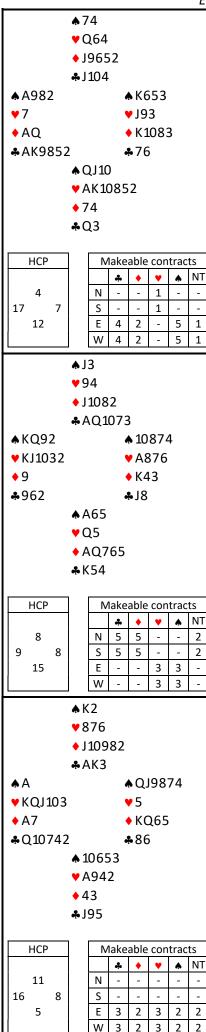
A return to earth with a gentle part-score for NS – or will EW steal it before they get in?

West should treat their hand as 12-14 balanced and open 1NT (or 1♣ followed by 1NT if they play strong) and East can bid weak stayman, leaving South frozen out. West will bid 2♥ and East can happily pass.

If South comes to life with a protective take-out double (not hugely tempting but the vul is in favour) then North should bid a scrambling 2NT (nothing to do with eggs – this essentially asks South to choose between the minors) and NS play 3. So, how did everyone do?

2♥ by West has only 5 obvious losers (two spades, two hearts and the ♣A), but shutting out the ♥10 is too big a hill to climb and 7 tricks are the limit.

3• doesn't look the most robust of contracts, but the favourable trump position as well as the working spade finesse means that 10 tricks can't be stopped. Did anyone collect 200 from a spade contract? That will be a great score for NS, and beats those that made 130 in diamonds on careful play.



Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

The 4-4 major suit fit is the only making game for EW. Will they be able to navigate the road to $4\frac{1}{2}$ safely?

Once again one of the opponents will open in front of them as South is dealt an easy 1^{\heartsuit} opener in 3^{rd} seat. West is a little strong for 2^{\bigstar} , the powerful 6-4 shape giving the hand extra bite, so should start with a double. East should prioritise bidding spades (whether or not North raises) and EW have found their fit. If East has made a free bid ($1^{\heartsuit}-X-2^{\heartsuit}-2^{\bigstar}$) then West has an easy raise to game; if North passes and East responds a humble 1^{\bigstar} then West must content themselves with 3^{\bigstar} , showing a hand that would have bid game if East had responded to a 1 bid. Nevertheless, East is well worth 4^{\bigstar} and game will be reached that way.

There doesn't look to be much to the play: East can cash the top spades and ruff out the clubs, an easy 11 tricks.

Any smart alec leading the queen of trumps will soon regret it as the heart loser is discarded on the \mathbf{K} , but that will be few and far between!

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

NS have the very rare hand type now, two flat hands and no shortage, yet 5 of a minor is the only making game. Can anyone achieve the impossible?

East will pass and some South players will open 1 \diamond , the rest 1NT. A diamond opening will hit the fit immediately, but EW will put up a barrage in hearts, perhaps 1 \diamond (1 \heartsuit) 3 \diamond (3 \heartsuit) 5 \diamond might work, although that is slightly contrived. Another possibility is a fit jump, with North bidding 3 \clubsuit to show 5+ clubs and 4 card support for opener's diamonds.

After a 1NT opener West will show the majors and North can double (to show values or clubs, take your pick) then East will again choose hearts. It's not so easy for NS to find the diamond fit now and I would be surprised if many got to game.

A 5-level contract does need the diamond finesse and clubs coming in, so it's not a bargain, and those that stop in part-score can consider themselves unlucky if +150 is a poor score. EW make 140 in a major, and anyone letting them play there will deservedly get close to a zero.

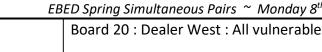
Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

EW nearly have a game contract on, but the huge misfit prevents them making game in several strains.

West will open 1♥ and East respond 1♠ and now West has an easy 2♣ bid (a jump to 3♣ showing enough for game) giving East little choice but to rebid their spades. West might be tempted now but the honours are in the wrong places, and a disciplined pass is best.

South will probably try a diamond lead and East does best to win the Ace and lead the $\mathbf{\Psi}$ K. Should it be obvious for South to play a club? Hopefully NS play attitude on the diamond lead and North has discouraged, allowing South to switch to a club. This will hold it to ten tricks when North cashes two rounds and plays a second diamond, since a 3rd diamond when in with the $\mathbf{\Phi}$ K will promote the $\mathbf{\Phi}$ 10 (although in practice East will lead the $\mathbf{\Phi}$ Q on the second round and the ten will be a boss in its own right).

If South leads a diamond and plays a second round when in with the ♥A then I'm afraid both clubs vanish and it will be ten tricks for EW – and a top.



EW have a 10-card fit, a singleton and plenty of aces as well as the preponderance of points and good intermediates, so they must be disappointed that a part-score is the limit!

West will open 1♥ and North should pass (3♦, even if weak, is not this hand) East will do whatever they have to in order to show a limit raise, and surely West will go on to game?

There are various lines of play to keep the defence on their toes, West might try drawing trumps and ruffing the diamonds out, then exiting with a spade. Alas South can overtake the $\bigstar K$ with the Ace and play 4 rounds, and now West has to open clubs for themselves and must go down. If instead a spade is led from the table, then it is natural for South to climb up with the Ace (it might be West that has singleton king) and now the play goes the same way. If instead West tries exiting with the 3rd round of clubs, then North will play the K♠ and South must overtake, or South win the ♣J and Cash the ♠A. Again all rounds lead to one down. Well done if you made it!

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

Game is cold for NS in two denominations, and in a pleasing display of symmetry game is cold for EW in the other two denominations.

North will open 1⁺ and East should overcall in diamonds. Although the hand falls into the right category for the unusual no trump, the diamonds are much stronger, and it feels more natural to start with 2. Having said that, the West hand comes alive facing both minors, with every single high card working.

If the auction does start 1. -2NT-Pass, then West should bid 5. straight away, knowing that NS have a huge double fit in the majors. Facing a 2♦ overcall instead, they should bid 2^(*), and now if North bids hearts and East bids clubs the sky is the limit!

NS can make ten tricks in hearts very easily; ten tricks in spades will require finessing the trumps, while EW can make 11 tricks in either without breaking sweat.

The power of the double fit – did you manage to buy the contract?

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

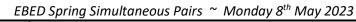
NS have a potential slam – will they reach it, and if so in which strain?

East will pass (the vulnerability alone is enough to keep anyone quiet) and South will open 1NT (1♣ or even 1♥ for some). North will immediately be thinking of slam, and has a choice between transferring or responding 3* strong, if that is available.

If North transfers then South should break the transfer, and again North should drive a slam, the powerful aces and kings outside giving the hand a bit of bite.

Either way should lead to slam and the play is completely trivial. Trumps are drawn and South has to lose a diamond. (Incidentally the only way to avoid a diamond loser is to play for singleton king, although the threats in the black suits mean that starting with the queen and then running a load of trumps is a viable alternative).

This time at least half the field will bid a slam, so +480 will be a very poor score indeed.



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HCP Makeable contracts NT * ٠ ۷ ٨ 2 4 Ν 6 2 6 16 4 5 6 S 1 6 2 6 14 Е -w

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♣K109

HCP

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♦J532

•Q109

AKQ5

HCP

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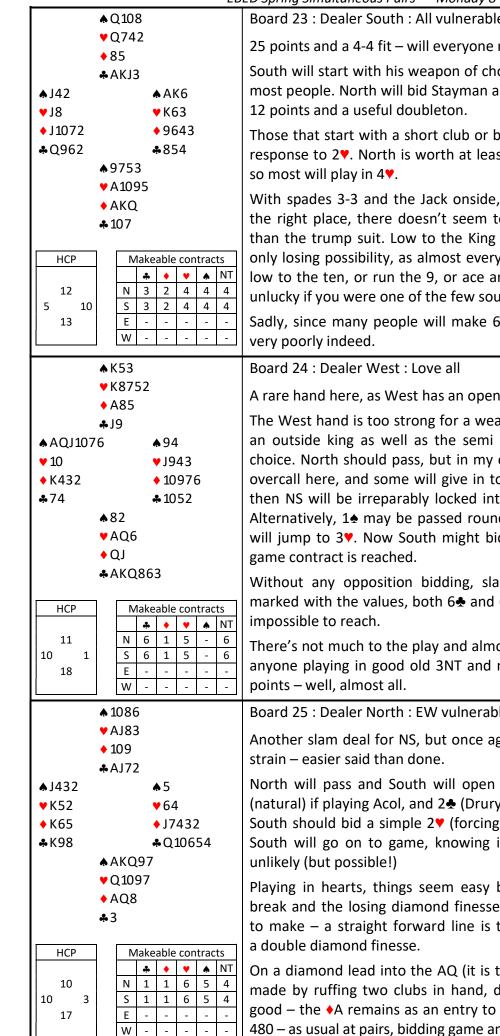
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Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

25 points and a 4-4 fit – will everyone make it to 4♥ here?

South will start with his weapon of choice, which will be a weak no trump for most people. North will bid Stayman and raise the 2 response to 4, holding

Those that start with a short club or better minor will see South raise the 1♥ response to 2^v. North is worth at least a try for game and South will accept,

With spades 3-3 and the Jack onside, in addition to the club queen lying in the right place, there doesn't seem to be any problems on this hand other than the trump suit. Low to the King and low back to the ten looks like the only losing possibility, as almost every other way works (run the queen then low to the ten, or run the 9, or ace and another). So you can count yourself unlucky if you were one of the few souls to go off.

Sadly, since many people will make 620, anyone that does go off will score

A rare hand here, as West has an opening bid but NS are cold for a slam!

The West hand is too strong for a weak two (holding powerful 6-4 shape and an outside king as well as the semi solid suit) and 1♠ will be the popular choice. North should pass, but in my experience far too many people like to overcall here, and some will give in to temptation and bid 2. If they do so, then NS will be irreparably locked into hearts where 11 tricks are the limit. Alternatively, 1^e may be passed round to South who will double, and North will jump to 3♥. Now South might bid 3♠ and North bid 3NT, and the right

Without any opposition bidding, slam is pretty dreadful. But with West marked with the values, both 64 and 6NT are good contracts, though almost

There's not much to the play and almost no-one will get to a making slam, so anyone playing in good old 3NT and making 490 will scoop all of the match

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

Another slam deal for NS, but once again the key issue is to play in the right

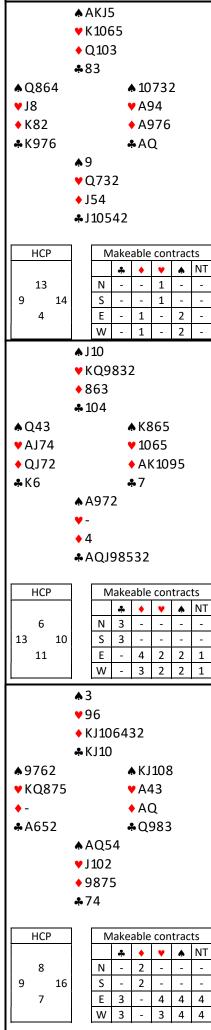
North will pass and South will open 1 in 3rd seat. North will respond 2 (natural) if playing Acol, and 2. (Drury) if playing 5 card majors. In both cases South should bid a simple 2 (forcing for one round) and North raise to 3. South will go on to game, knowing in the back of their mind that slam is

Playing in hearts, things seem easy but the combination of the 4-1 spade break and the losing diamond finesse means that 12 tricks are very difficult to make – a straight forward line is to ruff the spades good and then take

On a diamond lead into the AQ (it is the unbid suit after all) 13 tricks can be made by ruffing two clubs in hand, drawing trumps and ruffing the spades good – the A remains as an entry to the fifth spade. Well done if you made 480 – as usual at pairs, bidding game and playing it well is where the money is.

EBED Spring Simultaneous Pairs ~ Monday 8th May 2023

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable



A return to earth here as EW have the majority of the points and a 4-4 spade fit, so the question will be how many tricks they can make.

Many East players will start and end the auction with one bid -1NT. South will lead a club and with diamonds 3-3 this looks to be making 7 tricks. (A heart lead sets up 6 major suit winners for NS and they can get to their diamond trick before EW can get to their spade trick).

Alternatively, if North protects with 2♣ for the majors (pretty wild but some people do try things like this) then NS will play in hearts and have 5 losers. Only 5? Actually, the defence can bring the ♥9 into the game by leading clubs, but this requires very precise timing and many will scramble home.

Alternatively, EW might reach the spade fit, NS can lead 4 rounds of trumps, but again with diamonds 3-3 they can make 8 tricks. A more prosaic club lead might see East be the architect of their own downfall, as 4-1 trump breaks often get in the way, but +110 should be recorded with careful play.

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

Just another day at the office as West has a 3442 hand, and South is 8-4!

South is dealer and has a choice between $1 \ge 1 \ge 1 \ge 1 \ge 1 \ge 1$ and a bold pre-empt of $5 \ge 1 \ge 1 \ge 1 \ge 1 \ge 1 \ge 1 \ge 1$ which will lead to very different auctions.

Where South opens 5 \clubsuit then this will scoop the pot (neither East nor West have enough strength for a double), and West will probably lead the \diamond Q. East does best to overtake and switch to a trump, and now South can be held to 7 club tricks and two spades for down two. In practice South will often get two rounds of diamonds which they can ruff, but they have nowhere to go. If they lead a spade to dummy then West must duck and East will win the King; if they play a trump though then South can make ten tricks by rising and ruffing out the \bigstar Q.

If South opens 1th then West can double, North will bid hearts and East will bid diamonds and then spades. If EW do buy the hand in diamonds, then ten tricks can be made by endplaying North with their J-10 doubleton, that looks to be very hard, and anyone making 130 will have earned their good score!

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

A humble game contract to end with, and yet again the challenge is to play in the right strain and make as many tricks as you can.

If West passes (most will) and North opens 3, then East might bid 3NT, double or (facing a passed hand) pass. 3NT might end the auction (the textbooks do not tell us what to do with the West cards, but it does look worth a bid of something) or EW may end in hearts or spades.

A double of 3♦ will see West probably bid 4♥ (they should bid 4♦) and a pass of 3♦ by East will still see West protect and East bid game.

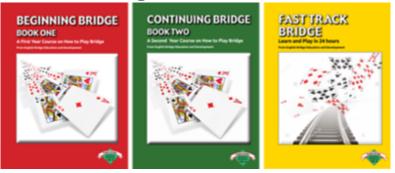
4♥ by West looks doomed to failure as the singleton spade lead jumps out, and three rounds put paid to any hopes West had.

4♥ by East will make, but the best contract is 3NT: a diamond lead gives 8 easy tricks and playing on clubs brings in two more. Having said that, East might take the spade finesse and go down, as diamonds are cleared before the spades come in.

What a fascinating deal and a great way to end the session - I hope you did well!



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