

Club Stratified



Sim Pairs

Monday
9th March

Welcome to the Club Stratified Simultaneous Pairs. Thank you for playing. I hope you enjoy the event and also the commentary provided by a leading expert. The commentator for this set of hands is Paul Bowyer.

The results are stratified into four categories. It therefore means that each pair can compare their scores to those of players of a comparable ranking. The main strat 'A' is open to everyone but if either member of the pair is a Tournament Master or above you will be in the 'A' strat and can only get master points from the overall ranking. If both players are below the rank of Tournament Master they will be 'B' strat; both below Master in 'C' strat and both below District Master in 'D' strat. Blue points and local points will be awarded to the top third of the overall ranking list. In addition the top third of each strat will get blue points and local points. If you are entitled to overall points and points for your strat, you will only get the higher of the awards – you won't get two lots of points.

Provisional master points are shown but the event is not finalised until all results are in and score corrections have been made. This usually takes about three weeks. It really helps us if you can keep your scorecard for that period. Clubs should keep the travellers if still used. All players need to check that the correct score and **DECLARER** have been entered when using Bridgemates.

Jeremy Dhondy, Chairman EBU

<p>♠ AK2 ♥ A52 ♦ AJ107 ♣ KQ2</p> <p>♠ J954 ♠ Q10763 ♥ J876 ♥ KQ43 ♦ - ♦ K5 ♣ 98653 ♣ 104</p> <p>♠ 8 ♥ 109 ♦ Q986432 ♣ AJ7</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>2NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>3NT</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr></table> <p>Well, all right... we start with a very good slam available to North-South as 6 ♦ is cold. How might you reach it, though? Bidding systems are generally poor over an opening 2NT, especially when you are unable to bid 3 ♦ naturally. Would 4 ♦ be a slam try in your methods and – in any case – is that South hand worth a slam try, especially at pairs scoring where you risk going past 3NT? The hand is a perfect fit with all of North's cards working overtime. It will be interesting to see how many bid this to a slam (not many is my guess) and how many make oodles of tricks in 3NT. Sure, our old friend <i>Deep Finesse</i> (for those not in the know it's the grid below and to the right of the hand diagram) tells us that nine tricks is the limit in no-trumps but then that is only the case against a heart lead. Most (all?) Easts are going to fish out a low spade against the bidding of 2NT – 3NT and now North is going to wrap up three overtricks. Surely no one is going to bid and make 6NT – against that contract you'd think East would surely find the lethal lead of the ♥K...</p>		West	North	East	South		2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass				
West	North	East	South																
	2NT	Pass	3NT																
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass																
<p>♠ Q86 ♥ 542 ♦ 8 ♣ KQ5432</p> <p>♠ KJ4 ♠ 1092 ♥ KQ1073 ♥ AJ86 ♦ 9743 ♦ KQ105 ♣ A ♣ 96</p> <p>♠ A753 ♥ 9 ♦ AJ62 ♣ J1087</p>		<p>Board 2 : 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>1 ♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>3 ♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4 ♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr></table> <p>Many will bid this to 4 ♥ on the lines suggested above and almost all East-West pairs should record minus scores. In fact, even 3 ♥ can go down if South reads the opening diamond lead as a singleton (♦A, diamond ruff, ♠A, diamond ruff and North still has to come to the ♠Q). It's hard to fault anyone who bids in the way suggested – East has a textbook 3 ♥ raise and West has an easy advance to game with a better than minimum hand and decent trumps. Note that if you rearrange the North-South cards a little 4 ♥ would make. Meanwhile, if any intrepid pairs are bidding on the North-South hands they may score very well. It is not advised to do so (who do you think should bid?) but the ten-card club fit and well-placed ♠Q mean that North-South cannot be prevented from making 4 ♣ for a huge score of 130. My prediction is that there will be scores of 50 and 100 to North-South with very few positive scores for East-West. We shall see.</p>		West	North	East	South			Pass	Pass	1 ♥	Pass	3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
West	North	East	South																
		Pass	Pass																
1 ♥	Pass	3 ♥	Pass																
4 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass																

<p>♠ K103 ♥ K7532 ♦ 1087 ♣ 72</p> <p>♠ 7 ♠ AQJ54 ♥ AQJ1098 ♥ 6 ♦ AKQ ♦ J65 ♣ Q86 ♣ K1053</p> <p>♠ 9862 ♥ 4 ♦ 9432 ♣ AJ94</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>18</td><td>5</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>4</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		6	11	18	5	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	-	-		S	-	-	-	-	-		E	4	4	5	4	4		W	4	3	5	4	4		<p>Board 3 : 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>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr></table> <p>East-West have game contracts in two denominations here – hearts and no-trumps. Even the faintly absurd 4♠ can make. After the obvious 1♥ – 1♠ start to the auction West has a choice between the practical but slight overbid of 4♥, the underbid of 3♥ and the esoteric, pseudo-scientific effort of 3♦. After 3♥ East might bid 3NT, or he might (probably ought to) bid the more cultured 3♠. Whether West retreats to 4♥ or has a bash at 3NT is anybody's guess. Playing in 4♥ West has five hearts, three diamonds, the ♠A and a slow club so should make ten tricks easily enough. <i>Deep Finesse</i> (looking through the backs of the cards as always) claims that an overtrick is available – and so it is. However, that involves taking the spade finesse and that is a play that is fraught with danger as the ♠A Q might languish on the table should the finesse lose. I suspect that most in 4♥ will try to get their overtrick in clubs, and will fail to do so. 3NT will surely always make ten tricks and 630 will score well.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
HCP																																																																	
6	11																																																																
18	5																																																																
Makeable contracts																																																																	
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																												
N	-	-	-	-	-																																																												
S	-	-	-	-	-																																																												
E	4	4	5	4	4																																																												
W	4	3	5	4	4																																																												
West	North	East	South																																																														
			Pass																																																														
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass																																																														
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass																																																														
<p>♠ 84 ♥ AQ105 ♦ AQ532 ♣ QJ</p> <p>♠ AQ10 ♠ KJ9652 ♥ 943 ♥ J6 ♦ 109 ♦ J ♣ A8543 ♣ K1097</p> <p>♠ 73 ♥ K872 ♦ K8764 ♣ 62</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>15</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>10</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>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		15	9	10	6	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	3	3	-	-		S	-	3	3	-	-		E	4	-	-	4	-		W	4	-	-	4	-		<p>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♦</td><td>1♠</td><td>3♦</td></tr><tr><td>3♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr></table> <p>The outcome of this deal is not at all certain and it may well provide a wide variety of results. After North opens 1♦ (please don't tell me anyone tried opening a strong no-trump – UGH!) East may well overcall 1♠ or he may try 2♠. South now, in my opinion, does best to pre-empt in diamonds rather than double to show hearts. True, you may miss the heart fit if you follow this course but equally, if you do have a heart fit (as well as a diamond fit), then the opposition have a big fit in the black suits. Over 3♦ West has just about enough to try 3♠ and now everybody might pass with varying degrees of reluctance. 4♠ is not bad on the East-West cards and some may reach it (some may bid it if North-South misguidedly bid 4♥). Well, the hand boils down to not losing a club trick and that's easy enough if you draw trumps and then lead the ♣A – you can hardly go wrong now. Suppose, though, you draw trumps and cash the ♣K first...? Now, when North drops an honour you have a losing option of taking a finesse and that would be one down.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	1♦	1♠	3♦	3♠	Pass	Pass	Pass				
HCP																																																																	
15	9																																																																
10	6																																																																
Makeable contracts																																																																	
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																												
N	-	3	3	-	-																																																												
S	-	3	3	-	-																																																												
E	4	-	-	4	-																																																												
W	4	-	-	4	-																																																												
West	North	East	South																																																														
Pass	1♦	1♠	3♦																																																														
3♠	Pass	Pass	Pass																																																														
<p>♠ 63 ♥ Q9754 ♦ Q6 ♣ 8742</p> <p>♠ Q75 ♠ 942 ♥ KJ2 ♥ 10863 ♦ AJ82 ♦ 1043 ♣ KJ3 ♣ Q65</p> <p>♠ AKJ108 ♥ A ♦ K975 ♣ A109</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>15</td><td>19</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>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>1</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>	HCP		4	2	15	19	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	3	2	2	2	1		S	3	2	2	2	1		E	-	-	-	-	-		W	-	-	-	-	-		<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td></tr><tr><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Dble</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>It is quite possible that South opens 1♠ on this deal and plays there. If so, West will find it a difficult hand to defend and North-South may well make 110 or even 140. What should you bid on the West cards over 1♠ on your right? 1NT, with a poor spade stop and a tatty 15 points, is a dubious call but this is pairs and few players are going to pass. Double, on a 4-3-3-3 hand is not a good idea (East would be obliged to bid 2♥, South should double for take-out and North might pass that. Now there's a lovely spot!) Anyway, if 1NT comes round to South he should double for penalties and North has no reason to remove it. A spade lead will have West struggling for tricks and two down is very possible. There could be some juicy penalties on this one with a few 500s and 300s thrown into the mix.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	Pass	1♠	1NT	Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass	Pass	Pass	
HCP																																																																	
4	2																																																																
15	19																																																																
Makeable contracts																																																																	
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																												
N	3	2	2	2	1																																																												
S	3	2	2	2	1																																																												
E	-	-	-	-	-																																																												
W	-	-	-	-	-																																																												
West	North	East	South																																																														
	Pass	Pass	1♠																																																														
1NT	Pass	Pass	Dble																																																														
Pass	Pass	Pass																																																															

<p>♠ KJ107 ♥ AK9 ♦ Q87 ♣ 865</p> <p>♠ - ♠ A82 ♥ 53 ♥ Q1082 ♦ AK10932 ♦ J54 ♣ AJ1073 ♣ 942</p> <p>♠ Q96543 ♥ J764 ♦ 6 ♣ KQ</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>13</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td></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>3</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		13		12	7	8		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	3	-		S	-	-	-	3	-		E	3	3	-	-	-		W	3	3	-	-	-		<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW 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>1♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♥</td><td>1♠</td></tr><tr><td>2♣</td><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♠</td></tr><tr><td>3♣</td><td>3♠</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>This deal bears all the hallmarks of a potentially competitive auction. Many will bid onwards, upwards and overboard on this one and, if North fails to cash the ♥AK at tricks one and two, some will make 4♦ on the East-West cards. Some Souths will find it irresistible to open the bidding – with 2♠ perhaps or a multi 2♦, despite the four-card heart suit on the side and the moth-eaten trump suit. Whether that will propel North-South overboard into 4♠ is hard to say as much will depend on just how far West is prepared to bid on his two-suiter. The auction above is a relatively staid one. North passes at his first turn and then makes a game try with his 2♦ bid. South’s 2♠ says he doesn’t want to know, despite which North competes to the three-level. West decides to give up at the vulnerability as he fears that he may be doubled in 4♣ or 4♦ (he may well be right – many Norths would double 4♦ at pairs scoring).</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠	2♣	2♦	Pass	2♠	3♣	3♠	All Pass	
HCP																																																																							
13																																																																							
12	7																																																																						
8																																																																							
Makeable contracts																																																																							
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																		
N	-	-	-	3	-																																																																		
S	-	-	-	3	-																																																																		
E	3	3	-	-	-																																																																		
W	3	3	-	-	-																																																																		
West	North	East	South																																																																				
		Pass	Pass																																																																				
1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠																																																																				
2♣	2♦	Pass	2♠																																																																				
3♣	3♠	All Pass																																																																					
<p>♠ K9 ♥ AQ732 ♦ 5 ♣ KJ975</p> <p>♠ AQ85 ♠ J1076432 ♥ KJ95 ♥ 8 ♦ A7 ♦ J832 ♣ A103 ♣ 2</p> <p>♠ - ♥ 1064 ♦ KQ10964 ♣ Q864</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>13</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>18</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td></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>4</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		13		18	2	7		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	4	2	2	-	-		S	4	3	2	-	-		E	-	-	-	4	-		W	-	-	-	4	-		<p>Board 7 : Dealer South : All 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>2♦</td></tr><tr><td>Dble</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♠</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>Another impossible-to-guess deal. The auction above may take place where North-South are playing three weak-twos. Many do not, of course, and it is possible that West is allowed to open the bidding unmolested. If West were to open 1♥ he might just play there – North certainly wouldn’t bid and East has one of those hands where bidding may be kicking a hornets’ nest. South should keep schtum as well – after all, where are all the spades? Some (playing five-card majors) might open the West hand with 1♣ and that may be another free-for all. North may bid 1♥, East might Pass and now the outcome of proceedings is far from clear. East is likely to bid spades sometime, though, and East-West are favourite to play 4♠. Absolute par on this hand is for North-South to bid 5♣ and go one off doubled. Will that happen often? I wouldn’t bet on it!</p>	West	North	East	South				2♦	Dble	Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass				
HCP																																																																							
13																																																																							
18	2																																																																						
7																																																																							
Makeable contracts																																																																							
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																		
N	4	2	2	-	-																																																																		
S	4	3	2	-	-																																																																		
E	-	-	-	4	-																																																																		
W	-	-	-	4	-																																																																		
West	North	East	South																																																																				
			2♦																																																																				
Dble	Pass	2♠	Pass																																																																				
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass																																																																				
<p>♠ KQ8732 ♥ 10 ♦ J ♣ QJ987</p> <p>♠ AJ64 ♠ 9 ♥ AQ85 ♥ KJ742 ♦ 86 ♦ AQ52 ♣ K43 ♣ A105</p> <p>♠ 105 ♥ 963 ♦ K109743 ♣ 62</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>9</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>14</td><td>14</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td></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>2</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		9		14	14	3		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	-	-		S	-	-	-	-	-		E	2	3	5	1	4		W	2	3	5	1	4		<p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>1NT</td><td>2♠</td><td>3♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4♥</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>An easy 4♥ for East-West and surely everybody will reach it? After an overcall of 2♠ from North you have to have methods here and you have to know which bids are forcing and which are not. The auction above assumes that 3♥ is forcing – even if it weren’t West would probably try a raise to game. Right – how do you play this after the ♠10 lead? The contract is almost 100%, of course – you can draw trumps and ruff a diamond on the table. What about an overtrick? Well, you just have to be careful, that’s all. If you take the spade lead with the ♠A and take a diamond finesse (reasonable play) South does best to return a spade. Now you can ruff and must take a round of trumps. If you attempt to cash the ♦A you will hold yourself to ten tricks and a poor score. Note that it does South no good to give North a diamond ruff at trick three. With the ♦A still in hand declarer can manoeuvre to take a round of trumps, cash the ♦A, pitching a club, and ruff a club on table.</p>	West	North	East	South	1NT	2♠	3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass										
HCP																																																																							
9																																																																							
14	14																																																																						
3																																																																							
Makeable contracts																																																																							
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																		
N	-	-	-	-	-																																																																		
S	-	-	-	-	-																																																																		
E	2	3	5	1	4																																																																		
W	2	3	5	1	4																																																																		
West	North	East	South																																																																				
1NT	2♠	3♥	Pass																																																																				
4♥	All Pass																																																																						

<p>♠ Q54 ♥ 108 ♦ K10953 ♣ 854</p> <p>♠ K1076 ♠ J92 ♥ 62 ♥ AQ97543 ♦ A76 ♦ 82 ♣ KJ103 ♣ 2</p> <p>♠ A83 ♥ KJ ♦ QJ4 ♣ AQ976</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>17</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>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		5	7	11	17	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	1	2	-	-	-		S	1	2	-	-	-		E	-	-	3	1	1		W	-	-	3	1	1		<p>Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>3♥</td><td>Dble</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>4♦</td><td>All Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr></table> <p>Should you open 3♥ with that East hand in second seat? Well, probably not, vulnerable, but I bet many will. Perhaps most will – it’s that magic word “pairs”. If East does, South will have a really awkward time of it – what do you think he should bid? Double works best, always provided that North bids 4♦ and everybody passes. There is a case, I suppose, for West to double 4♦ on the way out at match-point scoring but it’s mighty thin and could be very wrong. If North can generate eight tricks in 4♦ then he should score reasonably well as many East-West pairs will be making 140 on their cards. Not that 3♥ is a cake-walk it has to be said; East has to play the hand very accurately to emerge with nine tricks. Some Souths might gamble 3NT after a 3♥ opening bid. That could work well on other layouts but not here. A heart lead, ducked by East, will leave South very badly placed, with the game going at least three down.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	3♥	Dble	Pass	4♦	All Pass	Pass								
HCP																																																																					
5	7																																																																				
11	17																																																																				
Makeable contracts																																																																					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																
N	1	2	-	-	-																																																																
S	1	2	-	-	-																																																																
E	-	-	3	1	1																																																																
W	-	-	3	1	1																																																																
West	North	East	South																																																																		
	Pass	3♥	Dble																																																																		
Pass	4♦	All Pass	Pass																																																																		
<p>♠ - ♥ J10 ♦ AQ10974 ♣ QJ984</p> <p>♠ 53 ♠ AKQ1094 ♥ Q943 ♥ AK82 ♦ J5 ♦ 32 ♣ AK732 ♣ 6</p> <p>♠ J8762 ♥ 765 ♦ K86 ♣ 105</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>4</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>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		10	16	10	4	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	2	-	-	-		S	-	2	-	-	-		E	2	-	3	4	1		W	2	-	4	4	1		<p>Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</p> <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>2♣</td><td>2♦</td><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♥</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>East-West are likely to play in four of a major here and make it. 4♠ runs into a 5-0 trump break but East’s spade pips are strong enough to cope. It may look as though North-South might bid too high with North holding a 0-2-6-5 hand (players can get very frisky with such an attractive shape) but after the 1♠ – 2♣ start to the auction the wind will be taken out of North’s sails in a big way. Deep Finesse tells us that 4♥ can be beaten. Well, yes it can, but only if South hits on a spade lead at trick one. Now North collects two spade ruffs to go with the defenders’ ♦AK. Congratulations to anyone who finds that defence! It is possible that some will record 680 in hearts on this deal if, for instance, West responds 1NT to 1♠ or if East deems his hand worth a strong opening bid and North makes a two-suited overcall. In that case a club lead from South will allow East to discard a diamond on the top clubs, draw trumps and set up spades via a ruffing finesse against the ♠J.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♠	Pass	2♣	2♦	2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass				
HCP																																																																					
10	16																																																																				
10	4																																																																				
Makeable contracts																																																																					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																
N	-	2	-	-	-																																																																
S	-	2	-	-	-																																																																
E	2	-	3	4	1																																																																
W	2	-	4	4	1																																																																
West	North	East	South																																																																		
		1♠	Pass																																																																		
2♣	2♦	2♥	Pass																																																																		
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass																																																																		
<p>♠ AJ10872 ♥ Q53 ♦ 7 ♣ Q94</p> <p>♠ K43 ♠ 5 ♥ KJ4 ♥ A1087 ♦ K43 ♦ AQJ962 ♣ J652 ♣ K3</p> <p>♠ Q96 ♥ 962 ♦ 1085 ♣ A1087</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>14</td></tr><tr><td>11</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>2</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		9	14	11	6	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	2	-		S	-	-	-	2	-		E	-	4	4	-	-		W	-	4	4	-	-		<p>Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <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>2♠</td><td>Dble</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr></table> <p>A difficult hand this one with many outcomes possible. If North opens 2♠ (as many weak-two adherents will) East has a slightly awkward call with double being best. Under modern methods West can respond 3♣ to show some positive values (with a poor hand the reply would be a negative 2NT), allowing East to bid 3♦ and West to try 3NT. Now it’s all down to the opening lead. A spade lead (not unreasonable...) will allow West to rake in at least nine tricks. An unlikely club lead, on the other hand, would see South taking the ♣A to fire a spade through the exposed ♠K (note that even the ♠6 switch is good enough – South doesn’t have to lead a flashy ♠Q or ♠9) and 3NT will be three down. Of course, South might have raised to 3♠ in the auction (What should West do then? Double?), North might have opened 1♠ rather than 2♠... Anything is possible here.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	Pass	2♠	Dble	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
HCP																																																																					
9	14																																																																				
11	6																																																																				
Makeable contracts																																																																					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																
N	-	-	-	2	-																																																																
S	-	-	-	2	-																																																																
E	-	4	4	-	-																																																																
W	-	4	4	-	-																																																																
West	North	East	South																																																																		
			Pass																																																																		
Pass	2♠	Dble	Pass																																																																		
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass																																																																		
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass																																																																		

<div><div><div>♠ A92</div><div>♥ 654</div><div>♦ K742</div><div>♣ K74</div></div><div><div>♠ Q</div><div>♥ AKQ1082</div><div>♦ J1096</div><div>♣ J9</div></div><div><div>♠ KJ3</div><div>♥ J97</div><div>♦ 83</div><div>♣ A8632</div></div><div><div>♠ 1087654</div><div>♥ 3</div><div>♦ AQ5</div><div>♣ Q105</div></div><div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>13</td><td>8</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr></table></div></div>	HCP		10	9	13	8	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	1	-	3	-	S	-	1	-	3	-	E	1	-	3	-	1	W	1	-	3	-	1	<div>Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</div> <div><table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table></div> <div><p>This is a marginal hand with many playing in highly sensible heart part-scores. East has an awkward response over 1♥ if playing four-card majors. The hand simply isn't good enough for 2♣ and the dustbin response of 1NT has too dampening effect on partner. I much prefer to raise to 2♥ on this type of hand – but you may have your own views. After a heart raise West has a close decision whether to bid on or not. There is a case for a conservative Pass, there is a case for a pre-emptive 3♥ (you fear North coming to life with 2♠), there is a case for a game try of 3♦. Doubtless some will play in the heart game here and some will make it. There are two defences that will beat 4♥, though. One is for North to lead a club at trick one, setting up four defensive tricks immediately. The other (more likely) defence is simply to lead trumps. This way West will be unable to ruff a diamond on table and can make no more than two spades, six hearts and the ♣A.</p></div>	West	North	East	South	1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass	Pass										
HCP																																																															
10	9																																																														
13	8																																																														
Makeable contracts																																																															
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																										
N	-	1	-	3	-																																																										
S	-	1	-	3	-																																																										
E	1	-	3	-	1																																																										
W	1	-	3	-	1																																																										
West	North	East	South																																																												
1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass																																																												
Pass	Pass																																																														
<div><div><div>♠ KJ108</div><div>♥ 9</div><div>♦ 1053</div><div>♣ KQ976</div></div><div><div>♠ Q3</div><div>♥ KJ1043</div><div>♦ J84</div><div>♣ J84</div></div><div><div>♠ A72</div><div>♥ A62</div><div>♦ 9762</div><div>♣ A103</div></div><div><div>♠ 9654</div><div>♥ Q875</div><div>♦ AKQ</div><div>♣ 52</div></div><div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>11</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr></table></div></div>	HCP		9	12	8	11	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	-	-	3	-	S	2	-	-	3	-	E	-	1	2	-	1	W	-	1	2	-	1	<div>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</div> <div><table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Dble</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td></td></tr></table></div> <div><p>A typical pairs hand in that the part-score will (or should be) hotly contested. Here, after West transfers 1NT to 2♥ and passes East's forced bid, North should not even think about passing it out. At this form of scoring, with a 4-1-3-5 shape it is mandatory to bid and double keeps all options open. South may not like bidding 2♠ but he will be delighted with the outcome as nine tricks are likely. Of course, you might be of the opinion that opening 1NT with three bare Aces and nothing else is repulsive – and I agree with you. If, though, East Passes in second seat (as I would) then the deal will surely be Passed out. Note, incidentally, that East will get a better result by Passing than bidding. Anyway, what am I supposed to write about a deal where the recommended auction is Pass – Pass – Pass – Pass?</p></div>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass	Pass	
HCP																																																															
9	12																																																														
8	11																																																														
Makeable contracts																																																															
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																										
N	2	-	-	3	-																																																										
S	2	-	-	3	-																																																										
E	-	1	2	-	1																																																										
W	-	1	2	-	1																																																										
West	North	East	South																																																												
	Pass	1NT	Pass																																																												
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass																																																												
Pass	Dble	Pass	2♠																																																												
Pass	Pass	Pass																																																													
<div><div><div>♠ KJ10732</div><div>♥ -</div><div>♦ KJ7</div><div>♣ KJ53</div></div><div><div>♠ 54</div><div>♥ J98743</div><div>♦ 953</div><div>♣ 94</div></div><div><div>♠ A9</div><div>♥ Q5</div><div>♦ A10642</div><div>♣ Q862</div></div><div><div>♠ Q86</div><div>♥ AK1062</div><div>♦ Q8</div><div>♣ A107</div></div><div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>15</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>E</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></tr></table></div></div>	HCP		12	12	1	15	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	4	3	2	5	5	S	4	3	2	5	5	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-	<div>Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all</div> <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>1♥</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>4♠</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table></div> <div><p>North-South should find their way to 4♠ easily enough on this deal, East's opening bid shouldn't affect things at all. In fact, in the auction given above South's gentle raise to 2♠ is something of an underbid – some will try 3♠, some may try the scientific 2♦. Whatever – all roads should lead to Rome. The play appears trivial, East has two Aces to take and nothing else; North doesn't need to guess the location of the ♣Q as the losing clubs can be parked on dummy's top hearts. However... suppose East leads a low club, run to the ♣J. Now if North sneaks a low diamond to the ♦Q he can park the remaining diamonds on the ♥A K, pick up four clubs and emerge with twelve tricks. 480 will be an enormous score. I expect string of 450s in the North-South column, however, although there will inevitably be a match-point punter or two recording 3NT + 2 for 460 and a near top...</p></div>	West	North	East	South			1♦	1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass					
HCP																																																															
12	12																																																														
1	15																																																														
Makeable contracts																																																															
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																										
N	4	3	2	5	5																																																										
S	4	3	2	5	5																																																										
E	-	-	-	-	-																																																										
W	-	-	-	-	-																																																										
West	North	East	South																																																												
		1♦	1♥																																																												
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠																																																												
Pass	4♠	All Pass																																																													

<p>♠ 3 ♥ K832 ♦ J109842 ♣ K3</p> <p>♠ 108652 ♠ AKJ9 ♥ 104 ♥ QJ6 ♦ 75 ♦ Q3 ♣ AJ72 ♣ 10985</p> <p>♠ Q74 ♥ A975 ♦ AK6 ♣ Q64</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>13</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>15</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr></table>	HCP		7	13	5	15	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	4	4	-	3	S	-	4	4	-	3	E	1	-	-	1	-	W	1	-	-	1	-	<p>Board 15 : Dealer South : NS 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>1♥</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♥</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>4♥ is no thing of beauty here but the favourable lie of the red suits makes it unbeatable. If South (playing four-card majors) opens 1♥ North can scarcely do less than raise to 3♥ and now South will probably carry on to game (although there is a strong case for Pass at the form of scoring). If South opens a strong no-trump it isn't clear what will happen next and whether North-South will manage to reach 4♥. Some East-West pairs will enter the auction somehow (I'm struggling to see how, but someone always finds a way). They may find their way to spade contracts at various levels – some may even play 4♠ doubled. That won't get them a great score (three down for 500 away) but it's better than -620 for 4♥ bid and made by North-South.</p>	West	North	East	South				1♥	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass									
HCP																																																																			
7	13																																																																		
5	15																																																																		
Makeable contracts																																																																			
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																														
N	-	4	4	-	3																																																														
S	-	4	4	-	3																																																														
E	1	-	-	1	-																																																														
W	1	-	-	1	-																																																														
West	North	East	South																																																																
			1♥																																																																
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥																																																																
Pass	Pass	Pass																																																																	
<p>♠ K53 ♥ 96 ♦ 8654 ♣ Q763</p> <p>♠ 9 ♠ Q86 ♥ A43 ♥ KJ10752 ♦ K73 ♦ AQ2 ♣ KJ9854 ♣ A</p> <p>♠ AJ10742 ♥ Q8 ♦ J109 ♣ 102</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>8</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</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></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>5</td><td>2</td><td>6</td><td>1</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>5</td><td>2</td><td>6</td><td>1</td><td>1</td></tr></table>	HCP		5	16	11	8	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	5	2	6	1	1	W	5	2	6	1	1	<p>Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>1♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>6♥</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>6♥ is a marginal contract on the East-West cards. It needs the hearts to play for no loser and that is just with the odds – 53% or so. (If I have that wrong don't bother to write in and tell me). The auction above is just about possible. The first point is whether you prefer to raise to 2♥ on the West cards rather than rebid 2♣. In my view emphatically yes, but you may have your own views. After that East makes what appears to be a game try (3♦) and then a clear slam try (4♣). After the sign-off of 4♥ West realises that the key to the deal is the spade control and he bids 4♠ to show he has that. East takes a flyer at a slam and rakes in 1430 for 80% of the match-points... Some players may be able to locate (via Roman Key-card whatsit) that the ♥Q is missing and hence will stay out of the slam. That is not unreasonable.</p>	West	North	East	South	1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠	Pass	6♥	All Pass
HCP																																																																			
5	16																																																																		
11	8																																																																		
Makeable contracts																																																																			
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																														
N	-	-	-	-	-																																																														
S	-	-	-	-	-																																																														
E	5	2	6	1	1																																																														
W	5	2	6	1	1																																																														
West	North	East	South																																																																
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass																																																																
2♥	Pass	3♦	Pass																																																																
3♥	Pass	4♣	Pass																																																																
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass																																																																
4♠	Pass	6♥	All Pass																																																																
<p>♠ 10963 ♥ KQ1072 ♦ 752 ♣ 8</p> <p>♠ KJ84 ♠ Q72 ♥ 9863 ♥ - ♦ A ♦ KJ10983 ♣ A1097 ♣ KQ64</p> <p>♠ A5 ♥ AJ54 ♦ Q64 ♣ J532</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>12</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>1</td></tr></table>	HCP		5	11	12	12	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	1	-	-	S	-	-	1	-	-	E	5	5	-	3	1	W	5	5	-	3	1	<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>Pass</td><td>1♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>5♣</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>This is an awkward hand (it's surprisingly difficult to bid these 4-4-4-1 hands, whether dealer or responder). After 1♦ – 1♥ – 2♣ West has a difficult call. Some will bid no-trumps (someone <i>always</i> bids no-trumps...) and may play in 3NT. This should get its just deserts whether North leads a heart or South switches to one later in the hand. If West dredges out a fourth-suit-forcing 2♠ it may not be possible to stop below game. 5♣ is a decent contract, in fact, although the 4-1 trump break makes it awkward to play, especially after heart leads. Perhaps West would do best to make a gentle raise in clubs? But how many? 3♣ would be an underbid, 4♣ risks bypassing 3NT. A tricky deal, and I expect a wide variation in the scores.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass	3♦	Pass	4♣	Pass	5♣	All Pass				
HCP																																																																			
5	11																																																																		
12	12																																																																		
Makeable contracts																																																																			
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																														
N	-	-	1	-	-																																																														
S	-	-	1	-	-																																																														
E	5	5	-	3	1																																																														
W	5	5	-	3	1																																																														
West	North	East	South																																																																
	Pass	1♦	Pass																																																																
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass																																																																
2♠	Pass	3♦	Pass																																																																
4♣	Pass	5♣	All Pass																																																																

<p>♠ K5 ♥ AJ7 ♦ A843 ♣ Q1043</p> <p>♠ Q106 ♠ A742 ♥ 952 ♥ KQ83 ♦ Q105 ♦ 762 ♣ AK86 ♣ 52</p> <p>♠ J983 ♥ 1064 ♦ KJ9 ♣ J97</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>14</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>11</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>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		14	9	11	6	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	-	-		S	-	-	-	-	-		E	1	1	2	2	1		W	1	1	2	2	1		<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>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>A dull board in the bidding although the fight for tricks in 1NT is always a bear garden. You'll note that <i>Deep Finesse</i> says that East-West are the only side who can make a contract (amusingly, in any strain) but neither has an opening bid. (No, that 4-3-3-3. West muck is not an opening bid). Anyway, that suggests that North would be best off throwing the hand in – I bet that doesn't happen often! <i>Deep Finesse</i> also bases its analysis on the quaint idea that all players are playing with the best opening leads and optimal dummy play – and I know that doesn't happen often... The defence against 1NT often goes sour and East has an awkward lead. What do you suggest? A low heart? A low spade? Best may be to start off passively with a minor-suit lead and let West push hearts through declarer. The outcome of 1NT, in short, is not clear and there could be any number of scores here. With plus scores on both sides of the traveller it is best not to go minus.</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass											
HCP																																																																									
14	9																																																																								
11	6																																																																								
Makeable contracts																																																																									
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																				
N	-	-	-	-	-																																																																				
S	-	-	-	-	-																																																																				
E	1	1	2	2	1																																																																				
W	1	1	2	2	1																																																																				
West	North	East	South																																																																						
		Pass	Pass																																																																						
Pass	1NT	Pass	Pass																																																																						
Pass																																																																									
<p>♠ 103 ♥ J95 ♦ J10 ♣ AKQ986</p> <p>♠ 92 ♠ QJ85 ♥ 3 ♥ 1076 ♦ Q98542 ♦ K63 ♣ J1032 ♣ 754</p> <p>♠ AK764 ♥ AKQ842 ♦ A7 ♣ -</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>20</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>5</td><td>1</td><td>7</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>5</td><td>2</td><td>7</td><td>5</td><td>6</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>	HCP		11	6	3	20	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	5	1	7	5	6		S	5	2	7	5	6		E	-	-	-	-	-		W	-	-	-	-	-		<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>2♣</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♥</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>4♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>5♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>5♦</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>6♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>7♥</td></tr></table> <p>North-South can make a grand slam in hearts here, although 7♥ is not exactly laydown. You appear to have thirteen tricks (two spades, six hearts, one diamond, three clubs and a spade ruff) but you can't easily get at them without relying on favourable breaks. If hearts were 2-2 you could draw trumps and claim. As they are 3-1 you must cash the ♥A K, cash the ♠A K and ruff a spade on table. With spades splitting 4-2 you must cash three top clubs, praying that the suit is 4-3, and pitch your losers. Now you can claim the rest. What about the bidding? Well, 2♣ seems reasonable on the South cards and North has enough to respond with a positive 3♣. After that it's a matter of settling on a trump suit and cue-bidding. North's 6♣ (an obvious grand slam try) might encourage South to take a punt on making the lot.</p>	West	North	East	South				2♣	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠	Pass	5♣	Pass	5♦	Pass	6♣	Pass	7♥
HCP																																																																									
11	6																																																																								
3	20																																																																								
Makeable contracts																																																																									
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																				
N	5	1	7	5	6																																																																				
S	5	2	7	5	6																																																																				
E	-	-	-	-	-																																																																				
W	-	-	-	-	-																																																																				
West	North	East	South																																																																						
			2♣																																																																						
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥																																																																						
Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠																																																																						
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♦																																																																						
Pass	6♣	Pass	7♥																																																																						
<p>♠ - ♥ AKQ109865 ♦ K6 ♣ 853</p> <p>♠ K1082 ♠ AQJ943 ♥ 7432 ♥ - ♦ 72 ♦ J10843 ♣ AJ6 ♣ 107</p> <p>♠ 765 ♥ J ♦ AQ95 ♣ KQ942</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>12</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>4</td><td>-</td><td>6</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>6</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		12	8	8	12	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	4	-	6	-	-		S	4	-	6	-	-		E	-	-	-	4	-		W	-	1	-	4	-		<p>Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♥</td><td>2♠</td><td>Dble</td></tr><tr><td>4♠</td><td>5♥</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>No, I have no idea how this deal will actually pan out in practice. Some Norths will open with 4♥ (will that provoke East into trying 4♠?) although the hand is a little unsuitable for that. Some might be tempted to try a strong 2♥, although this would have the originators of the ACOL system spinning in their graves. It would also fall foul of the EBU's 'Extended Rule of 25' so it would not be allowed as a Benjamin 2♣ bid and even as a natural 2♥ bid would need more explanation than just strong. If North opens 1♥ East may choose to bid 1♠, he might bid 2♠, he might bid 3♠ (West is a passed hand, remember, so East has licence to muck about). A two-suited overcall is not recommended with the suit disparity but some will doubtless try it. What will the outcomes be? Who knows? Many will play 5♥ on the North-South cards for 680 (East-West being reluctant to bid 5♠ in case it pushes North-South to 6♥). Some East-West will do well by playing in spades – 6♠ doubled costs a mere 500. Scores all over the place?</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	1♥	2♠	Dble	4♠	5♥	All Pass													
HCP																																																																									
12	8																																																																								
8	12																																																																								
Makeable contracts																																																																									
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																				
N	4	-	6	-	-																																																																				
S	4	-	6	-	-																																																																				
E	-	-	-	4	-																																																																				
W	-	1	-	4	-																																																																				
West	North	East	South																																																																						
Pass	1♥	2♠	Dble																																																																						
4♠	5♥	All Pass																																																																							

<p>♠ A10754 ♥ Q63 ♦ K63 ♣ 95</p> <p>♠ J832 ♠ K9 ♥ 1097 ♥ AK842 ♦ A4 ♥ QJ52 ♣ J1084 ♣ K3</p> <p>♠ Q6 ♥ J5 ♦ 10987 ♣ AQ762</p> <table><tr><th colspan="3">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>9</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>16</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td></td><td></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>1</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP			9			6	16		9			Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	1	-		S	-	-	-	1	-		E	1	-	2	-	1		W	1	-	2	-	1		<p>Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</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>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr></table> <p>After the Lord Mayor’s show... Hand 20 was exciting and Hand 21 is just dull. 2♥ is the limit of the hand on the East-West cards and might be reached in two bids if East-West are playing five-card majors. The auction above looks to be completely normal – East should have little temptation to bid on over 2♥ as he could be facing only a doubleton heart and West has announced a poor hand. After the ♦10 lead (even though East has bid diamonds it’s hard to think of a better opening shot) East has five more or less inescapable losers – two clubs, one spade, one diamond and a trump. So 110 to East-West will be a universal score on the traveller? All bets are off. Many will overbid the East cards and will go minus. Also, some will find a way to bid on the North-South cards and suffer a vulnerable penalty.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
HCP																																																																							
9																																																																							
6	16																																																																						
9																																																																							
Makeable contracts																																																																							
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																		
N	-	-	-	1	-																																																																		
S	-	-	-	1	-																																																																		
E	1	-	2	-	1																																																																		
W	1	-	2	-	1																																																																		
West	North	East	South																																																																				
	Pass	1♥	Pass																																																																				
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass																																																																				
2♥	Pass	Pass	Pass																																																																				
<p>♠ Q108 ♥ J976 ♦ 105 ♣ J753</p> <p>♠ 732 ♠ A965 ♥ KQ85 ♥ 1032 ♦ Q9 ♥ KJ63 ♣ Q842 ♣ AK</p> <p>♠ KJ4 ♥ A4 ♦ A8742 ♣ 1096</p> <table><tr><th colspan="3">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>4</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>15</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td></td><td></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>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP			4			9	15		12			Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	-	-		S	-	-	-	-	-		E	1	1	2	2	2		W	1	1	2	2	2		<p>Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <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>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr></table> <p>Another part-score deal with East-West best off at a low level. It is moot whether 2♠ or 1NT is the best response to 1♠ but with honours outside spades and poor trumps I think 1NT best, especially at pairs. East isn’t going anywhere over any simple response (or raise) so all pairs should languish in a part-score. I fervently hope that no one contemplated an overcall of 2♦ on the South cards. Ugh! If you did then it is entirely possible that West doubled for take-out and East passed for penalties. That would be one way of earning a zero – and no one could argue that it was fully merited. 500 is par for the course for this sort of indisciplined overcall. We’d normally expect 120 to be a middle of the road score on this type of hand although doubtless some will play in 3NT and some of them may register the requisite nine tricks.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass				
HCP																																																																							
4																																																																							
9	15																																																																						
12																																																																							
Makeable contracts																																																																							
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																		
N	-	-	-	-	-																																																																		
S	-	-	-	-	-																																																																		
E	1	1	2	2	2																																																																		
W	1	1	2	2	2																																																																		
West	North	East	South																																																																				
		1♠	Pass																																																																				
1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass																																																																				
<p>♠ KQJ ♥ KQ93 ♦ A83 ♣ Q98</p> <p>♠ A10864 ♠ 753 ♥ 54 ♥ 872 ♦ J ♥ KQ10765 ♣ KJ1042 ♣ 5</p> <p>♠ 92 ♥ AJ106 ♦ 942 ♣ A763</p> <table><tr><th colspan="3">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>17</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td></td><td></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>2</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>3</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>	HCP			17			9	5		9			Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	2	-	4	-	3		S	2	1	4	1	3		E	-	-	-	-	-		W	-	-	-	-	-		<p>Board 23 : Dealer South : All 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>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♥</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>4♥</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>4♥ seems normal enough on this deal, whether reached via the route suggested above or via other means. Although <i>Deep Finesse</i> smugly tells us that 4♥ should make, many will be defeated. If East leads a club North has to play the ♣A from dummy at trick one – and many may fail to do so. Now the ♣K, two club ruffs and the ♠A will spell rapid defeat. (In fact, declarer will be two down as there is still a diamond loser). There are good reasons to go up with the ♣A, mind you. Apart from the dangers of this lead being a singleton you are in danger of a potentially damaging diamond switch so the right play is probably to grab the ♣A, draw trumps and play the ♠K. Eventually you pitch a diamond loser from table and are able to lead to the ♣Q. This would be the wrong play if East has led from the ♣K but you have to judge these things at the table.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass	
HCP																																																																							
17																																																																							
9	5																																																																						
9																																																																							
Makeable contracts																																																																							
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																		
N	2	-	4	-	3																																																																		
S	2	1	4	1	3																																																																		
E	-	-	-	-	-																																																																		
W	-	-	-	-	-																																																																		
West	North	East	South																																																																				
			Pass																																																																				
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♥																																																																				
Pass	4♥	All Pass																																																																					

<p>♠ A83 ♥ AJ864 ♦ 1076 ♣ 53</p> <p>♠ K64 ♥ Q7 ♦ K532 ♣ KJ106</p> <p>♠ 1097 ♥ K93 ♦ AJ9 ♣ AQ82</p> <p>♠ QJ52 ♥ 1052 ♦ Q84 ♣ 974</p> <table><tr><th colspan="3">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>9</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>14</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td></td><td></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>4</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP			9			12	14		5			Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	-	-		S	-	-	-	-	-		E	4	4	1	2	3		W	4	4	1	2	3		<p>Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>3NT</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>A dull auction to an easy contract. After a heart lead West may have some anxious moments but he can hardly go wrong. Winning the ♥Q he can play a diamond to the ♦J and South does best to play back a heart (ducked). Now the 3-3 diamond break provides declarer with four clubs, three diamonds and two hearts. North holds on to winning hearts and the ♠A so there are no overtricks. Not leading a heart does North no good as West can always make nine tricks in one way or another. Besides, who would not lead a heart from that North hand? If East plays 3NT he could be in trouble. A likely low spade lead will set up three spade tricks for the defence. Now if East tries the diamond finesse North-South have three spades, a diamond and a heart to cash. Of course. East could succeed by running the ♦J (and, if covered, finessing the ♦9 on the way back) but who would play like that?</p>	West	North	East	South	1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass						
HCP																																																																							
9																																																																							
12	14																																																																						
5																																																																							
Makeable contracts																																																																							
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																		
N	-	-	-	-	-																																																																		
S	-	-	-	-	-																																																																		
E	4	4	1	2	3																																																																		
W	4	4	1	2	3																																																																		
West	North	East	South																																																																				
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass																																																																				
Pass	Pass																																																																						
<p>♠ AK73 ♥ Q3 ♦ 743 ♣ J1095</p> <p>♠ 1042 ♥ 954 ♦ J1065 ♣ 843</p> <p>♠ QJ96 ♥ KJ10872 ♦ 2 ♣ K6</p> <p>♠ 85 ♥ A6 ♦ AKQ98 ♣ AQ72</p> <table><tr><th colspan="3">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>10</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>10</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>19</td><td></td><td></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>6</td><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>6</td><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>4</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>	HCP			10			1	10		19			Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	6	5	1	5	5		S	6	5	1	3	4		E	-	-	-	-	-		W	-	-	-	-	-		<p>Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</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>Dble</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>3NT</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>A difficult hand, this one. North-South can make a thin slam (actually, it's a decent contract if East has opened the bidding as the club finesse is odds on to succeed). Is it biddable? Maybe if East passes at his first turn but many (most?) won't do that. Some Easts might open 2♥ although the hand is unsuitable for that with four spades on the side and 10 points. With decent hearts many will prefer 1♥. That gives South a really awkward call now. What do you suggest? Double is the only realistic option with 19 points. North, holding 10 points and four good spades can only bid 2♠ (1♠ is a bid that verges on the ridiculous – you'd bid that with nothing). Now South can only clarify matters with a jump to 3NT. This auction plays 3NT the wrong way up – it is best played by North. As diamonds are 4-1 there are only ten tricks available to South in 3NT after a heart lead although North could always make an extra one with the ♥Q protected from the opening lead. An interesting deal.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1♥	Dble	Pass	2♠	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass	
HCP																																																																							
10																																																																							
1	10																																																																						
19																																																																							
Makeable contracts																																																																							
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																		
N	6	5	1	5	5																																																																		
S	6	5	1	3	4																																																																		
E	-	-	-	-	-																																																																		
W	-	-	-	-	-																																																																		
West	North	East	South																																																																				
	Pass	1♥	Dble																																																																				
Pass	2♠	Pass	3NT																																																																				
Pass	Pass	Pass																																																																					
<p>♠ 10953 ♥ 96 ♦ K87 ♣ KJ54</p> <p>♠ KQ82 ♥ Q54 ♦ 64 ♣ AQ96</p> <p>♠ J764 ♥ K10 ♦ AQJ95 ♣ 82</p> <p>♠ A ♥ AJ8732 ♦ 1032 ♣ 1073</p> <table><tr><th colspan="3">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>7</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>13</td><td>11</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td></td><td></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>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP			7			13	11		9			Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	1	-	-		S	-	-	1	-	-		E	1	3	-	4	3		W	1	3	-	4	1		<p>Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1♦</td><td>1♥</td></tr><tr><td>Dble</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr></table> <p>It doesn't look too difficult for East-West to bid to 4♠ on this deal with a 4-4 fit and 24 points between them. If East opens the bidding (marginal but the diamonds are good) then bidding game is inevitable. South does best to lead a club and now East has to be careful to overcome the 4-1 trump break. By way of compensation for the bad spade split diamonds are 3-3 with the finesse working so it should all turn out all right in the end. East just has to make sure that he plays a low spade towards the table rather than leads a spade to the ♠J or leads the ♠J itself. After he clears that hurdle he should find that the hand is relatively easy.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♦	1♥	Dble	Pass	1♠	Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
HCP																																																																							
7																																																																							
13	11																																																																						
9																																																																							
Makeable contracts																																																																							
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																		
N	-	-	1	-	-																																																																		
S	-	-	1	-	-																																																																		
E	1	3	-	4	3																																																																		
W	1	3	-	4	1																																																																		
West	North	East	South																																																																				
		1♦	1♥																																																																				
Dble	Pass	1♠	Pass																																																																				
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass																																																																				

<p>♠ 42 ♥ 852 ♦ AKQ103 ♣ K102</p> <p>♠ J1075 ♠ AQ ♥ AQJ97 ♥ 64 ♦ 94 ♦ J862 ♣ A9 ♣ QJ753</p> <p>♠ K9863 ♥ K103 ♦ 75 ♣ 864</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>12</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>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		12	10	12	6	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	-	-		S	-	-	-	-	-		E	2	1	2	1	2		W	2	1	2	1	2		<p>Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <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>1♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr></table> <p>A part-score deal with East-West able to make 2♥, maybe with an overtrick. The most interesting feature of the deal is whether North should overcall 2♦ or not. Well not is my view. Why? Well, the diamond suit is good, for sure, but these 5-3-3-2 hands are not worth much (they contain too many losers), South is a passed hand (so you are not likely to be able to contest the auction effectively) and you have three low cards in hearts. This last feature is underappreciated but is important. If you buy the hand in diamonds the opponents will have a good opening lead – look at the effect here of a heart lead through dummy’s ♥K. If you do overcall 2♦ you may play there doubled (East will pass and may pass when West reopens with a take-out double). Now you will concede 300 or so on a part-score deal – and that is with both black Aces well placed. Food for thought?</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
HCP																																																																	
12	10																																																																
12	6																																																																
Makeable contracts																																																																	
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																												
N	-	-	-	-	-																																																												
S	-	-	-	-	-																																																												
E	2	1	2	1	2																																																												
W	2	1	2	1	2																																																												
West	North	East	South																																																														
			Pass																																																														
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass																																																														
2♥	Pass	Pass	Pass																																																														
<p>♠ AKQJ103 ♥ J863 ♦ 3 ♣ A2</p> <p>♠ 9764 ♠ 8 ♥ 9 ♥ KQ742 ♦ A7 ♦ K862 ♣ KJ10954 ♣ 873</p> <p>♠ 52 ♥ A105 ♦ QJ10954 ♣ Q6</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>15</td><td>8</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>2</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		15	8	8	9	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	2	1	4	2		S	-	2	2	4	2		E	2	-	-	-	-		W	2	-	-	-	-		<p>Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <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>1NT</td></tr><tr><td>2♣</td><td>3♠</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>A deal with some awkward bidding decisions and difficult play problems. After the 1♠ – 1NT start (South really doesn’t have enough to respond 2♦) West might enter the fray at the vulnerability with 2♣ (he might even try 3♣). This gives North an awkward decision; some might try 2♥, some 2♠, some 3♠, some might blast a game. 3NT would work well if West were to lead a club – nine top tricks. A heart lead would also set up the ninth trick in that suit. Best defence is the obvious one of leading a low diamond to East’s ♦K and receiving a club return (!!) Yeah, right. If that happens at your table I suggest you find some easier opponents to play against... In practice, many will play in spades on this hand. <i>Deep Finesse</i> tells us that game in spades can make but you need to play with great perspicacity to succeed. Basically, the heart pips are such that you have to lead the ♥J from hand on the first round of the suit to pick the suit up for sufficient winners. Well done if you did that...</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT	2♣	3♠	All Pass					
HCP																																																																	
15	8																																																																
8	9																																																																
Makeable contracts																																																																	
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																												
N	-	2	1	4	2																																																												
S	-	2	2	4	2																																																												
E	2	-	-	-	-																																																												
W	2	-	-	-	-																																																												
West	North	East	South																																																														
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT																																																														
2♣	3♠	All Pass																																																															
<p>♠ J109754 ♥ K109 ♦ K6 ♣ Q6</p> <p>♠ 3 ♠ Q862 ♥ 752 ♥ J63 ♦ Q53 ♦ AJ1084 ♣ AJ10932 ♣ 5</p> <p>♠ AK ♥ AQ84 ♦ 972 ♣ K874</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>16</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>2</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		9	8	7	16	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	2	3	1		S	-	-	2	2	1		E	1	2	-	-	-		W	1	2	-	-	-		<p>Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>2NT</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>Well, you have 25 points as North-South and a 6-2 major fit – how can you stop short of game? You can’t, of course, and 4♠ is likely to be bid and almost certain to fail. That 2♠ opening bid is far from classic but the solidity of the spade suit makes it less repulsive than some efforts. South’s 2NT is forcing and 3♥ shows values there. After the ♣A and a club ruff the ♦A and a patient trump trick leads to one down. Some may play 4♠ by South (if North Passes and South opens a strong no-trump for instance). Now East-West have the chance of a great score on a diamond lead. East can cash two diamonds before getting a club and a club ruff. Two down. Can 3NT make? It shouldn’t, even if West were to lead a club.</p>	West	North	East	South		2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass	
HCP																																																																	
9	8																																																																
7	16																																																																
Makeable contracts																																																																	
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																												
N	-	-	2	3	1																																																												
S	-	-	2	2	1																																																												
E	1	2	-	-	-																																																												
W	1	2	-	-	-																																																												
West	North	East	South																																																														
	2♠	Pass	2NT																																																														
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♠																																																														
Pass	Pass	Pass																																																															

<p>♠ 65 ♥ 64 ♦ AK3 ♣ AQJ942</p> <p>♠ KQ8743 ♠ 2 ♥ 93 ♥ J10875 ♦ 64 ♦ QJ9 ♣ 876 ♣ K1053</p> <p>♠ AJ109 ♥ AKQ2 ♦ 108752 ♣ -</p> <table><tr><th colspan="3">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>14</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>7</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>14</td><td></td><td></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>4</td><td>6</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>4</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>	HCP			14			5	7		14			Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	4	6	4	3	4		S	4	6	4	3	4		E	-	-	-	-	-		W	-	-	-	-	-		<p>Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all</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>1 ♦</td></tr><tr><td>2 ♠</td><td>3 ♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>3 ♦</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3 ♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>3NT</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>After Pass from East, South has an unpleasant opening bid – nice hand, rotten suit and an awkward rebid problem. It would get worse if West were to bid a frisky weak 2 ♠ and North to bid 3 ♣. You probably have to bid 3 ♦ now (3 ♥ would be a strength showing reverse – besides, North’s failure to double 2 ♠ suggests he hasn’t got hearts). North might well try 3 ♠ now as a stopper-ask and South should try 3NT. A low spade lead (any spade lead) would make this easy but the defenders have no obvious alternative lead. The entries are awkward (declarer has to keep the top diamonds on table until the clubs are set up) but ten tricks should arrive in one way or another.</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	1 ♦	2 ♠	3 ♣	Pass	3 ♦	Pass	3 ♠	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass	
HCP																																																																											
14																																																																											
5	7																																																																										
14																																																																											
Makeable contracts																																																																											
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																						
N	4	6	4	3	4																																																																						
S	4	6	4	3	4																																																																						
E	-	-	-	-	-																																																																						
W	-	-	-	-	-																																																																						
West	North	East	South																																																																								
		Pass	1 ♦																																																																								
2 ♠	3 ♣	Pass	3 ♦																																																																								
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	3NT																																																																								
Pass	Pass	Pass																																																																									
<p>♠ Q982 ♥ A10 ♦ Q985 ♣ J92</p> <p>♠ AJ76 ♠ K10 ♥ 8543 ♥ QJ92 ♦ 32 ♦ AK1076 ♣ AK4 ♣ 53</p> <p>♠ 543 ♥ K76 ♦ J4 ♣ Q10876</p> <table><tr><th colspan="3">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>9</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>13</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td></td><td></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>1</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP			9			12	13		6			Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	-	-		S	-	-	-	-	-		E	1	3	5	3	2		W	1	3	5	3	2		<p>Board 31 : Dealer South : NS 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>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>2 ♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2 ♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>4 ♥</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>In terms of bidding this is an easy, textbook Stayman hand. West opens a weak no-trump and East reaches 4 ♥ having located the all-important 4-4 fit. If the bidding is easy the play might not be. No one should go off in 4 ♥ – the key is the fight for eleven tricks. North has a horrible choice of leads and may solve the problem by leading a spade. After a club lead (say) West has a harder time. If he wins and plays hearts the defenders may play three rounds of trumps. Now there are two spades, two hearts, two diamonds and two clubs. With only one trump in the West hand the diamonds cannot be set up and the spade finesse will only gain one trick. Yes, <i>Deep Finesse</i> says eleven tricks are always there but I think ten will be more common.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	1NT	Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	All Pass				
HCP																																																																											
9																																																																											
12	13																																																																										
6																																																																											
Makeable contracts																																																																											
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																						
N	-	-	-	-	-																																																																						
S	-	-	-	-	-																																																																						
E	1	3	5	3	2																																																																						
W	1	3	5	3	2																																																																						
West	North	East	South																																																																								
			Pass																																																																								
1NT	Pass	2 ♣	Pass																																																																								
2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	All Pass																																																																								
<p>♠ K10 ♥ QJ ♦ A876 ♣ KQ942</p> <p>♠ 2 ♠ 9743 ♥ A10964 ♥ 75 ♦ QJ ♦ 109532 ♣ A10873 ♣ J6</p> <p>♠ AQJ865 ♥ K832 ♦ K4 ♣ 5</p> <table><tr><th colspan="3">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>15</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>13</td><td></td><td></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>2</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>5</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>	HCP			15			11	1		13			Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	2	2	3	5	5		S	2	2	3	5	5		E	-	-	-	-	-		W	-	-	-	-	-		<p>Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>1 ♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>2 ♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>4 ♠</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>I have nightmares about the holding of QJ doubleton. You never know whether it is worthless or whether it fills in partner’s suit and contributes mightily. Here there are two QJ doubleton holdings on the same deal. Ugh! West might scrape up an opening bid (it’s thin) and North as no real bid (2 ♣ is pretty rotten on a five-card suit and a 5-4-2-2 hand. Not my idea of an overcall), East has nothing to say and now it’s South’s turn to bid. 1 ♠ would be bid on any hand with 13 cards and a few spades in these protective positions so you have to bid 2 ♠ when you aren’t just being courteous. That gives North an easy raise to game. There is little to the play – South has to lose two aces and that is that – when declarer leads a club toward the ♣K Q on table West is stuck. Even if he ducks, by the way, declarer only has eleven tricks.</p>	West	North	East	South	1 ♥	Pass	Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All Pass									
HCP																																																																											
15																																																																											
11	1																																																																										
13																																																																											
Makeable contracts																																																																											
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																																						
N	2	2	3	5	5																																																																						
S	2	2	3	5	5																																																																						
E	-	-	-	-	-																																																																						
W	-	-	-	-	-																																																																						
West	North	East	South																																																																								
1 ♥	Pass	Pass	2 ♠																																																																								
Pass	4 ♠	All Pass																																																																									