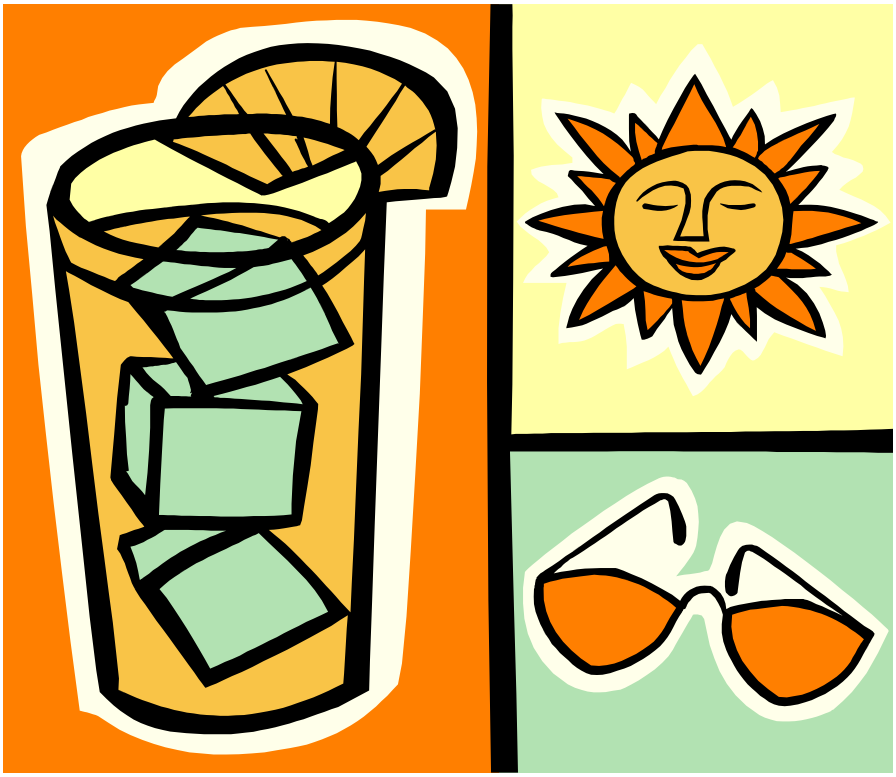
British Summer Sim Pairs



Monday

28th July 2014

Welcome to the British Summer 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 Alan Shillitoe from Bedfordshire.

We now have a revised prize structure with cash prizes both for leading players and also for clubs who run heats. There will be a draw for major prizes at the AGM in November. You can find all the full details and results at **www.ebu.co.uk/sims/**

You can earn Blue Points in these Sim Pairs and they are awarded to the top third of the field. Master points won't be allocated until after the event is finalised, usually about three weeks. Please keep your scorecard for that period. When checking the frequencies we do find quite a few suspicious scores. If we find any unusual scores we may need to a contact the club scorer and also the players.

Jeremy Dhondy

Chairman EBU

♠ A108
♥ 642
♦ K532
♣ AJ7

♠ Q4 ♠ K963
♥ AKJ3 ♥ Q95
♦ QJ64 ♦ 1098
♣ K94 ♣ Q52

♠ J752
♥ 1087
♦ A7
♣ 10863

HCP	
12	
16	7
5	

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

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

A tight battle to kick things off and one which may be influenced by N/S opening NT range.

A weak NT will get passed around to a penalty double. Assuming N/S attempt to scramble to safety, they will alight in a seven-card black fit. Careful play will get them out for one off. Even if doubled, that is only -100.

Were West able to get the 1NT in (possibly after a 1-minor opening), then they should be able to make eight tricks on similarly careful play. That is worth +120 to them.

A board that demonstrates how stealing part scores when non-vulnerable can be a winning match-point tactic.

♠ 8
♥ J873
♦ KJ32
♣ 9832

♠ 43 ♠ J1065
♥ 105 ♥ A6
♦ A10 ♦ Q9854
♣ AKQJ754 ♣ 106

♠ AKQ972
♥ KQ942
♦ 76
♣ -

HCP	
5	
14	7
14	

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

Board 2 : Dealer East : N/S vulnerable

After South opens with 1♠, the technically correct action by West is to bid 3♠. A jump cue-bid should suggest a running suit and request partner bid 3NT with a stop in opener's suit. East obliges and then South does what?

Double is definitely wrong. With so much playing strength it is right to bid on (with 4♥) and show the shape. Furthermore, E/W have told you that the spades aren't cashing in one go, so you may well not be beating 3NT – as in this case.
It now becomes a case of judgement. Who is making what? Who is saving? I don't think it is clear to anyone. E/W have no idea how many clubs, aces and spades are cashing. Equally, when South bids 4♥ and North passes, they have no idea if this is just preference or genuine support and West has to pass before they know which strain N/S actually want to play in. I think you take one 'save' on the West hand as insurance at the favourable vulnerability, but this deal feels like guesswork for all concerned.
Par on this deal is 6♣x-3 by E/W, but I get the feeling there will be a large variety of results.

♠ Q54
♥ 1064
♦ J962
♣ 1053

♠ AK863 ♠ 10972
♥ 73 ♥ KQJ52
♦ K107 ♦ A3
♣ A64 ♣ J9

♠ J
♥ A98
♦ Q854
♣ KQ872

HCP		
	3	
14		11
	12	

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

Board 3 : Dealer South : E/W vulnerable

All routes appear to lead to 4♠ on this deal. The major point of interest appears to be whether N/S can avoid conceding the overtrick. It will require leading a club at trick one as otherwise E/W have a critical tempo to establish the heart suit for club discards. Most Souths will open 1♣, so that should lead to a rapid +420 when North dutifully leads their suit.

Unless E/W somehow contrive to miss game – possibly by East not showing the full value of their hand – or N/S get green vulnerability fever and attempt an ill-judged sacrifice, there won't be too much excitement on this hand.

♠ 8
♥ AQJ9753
♦ 754
♣ 53

♠ QJ107654 ♠ A9
♥ 104 ♥ 82
♦ 2 ♦ AJ93
♣ A98 ♣ KJ762

♠ K32
♥ K6
♦ KQ1086
♣ Q104

HCP		
	7	
7		13
	13	

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

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West has a routine 3♠ pre-empt to kick this deal off, but from there paths will diverge as some Norths might gamble out 4♥. While there isn't the high card strength, there is some expectation of finding a degree of support opposite, perhaps enabling partner to save or defend as indicated. East would be unlikely to try 4♠ uncontested, but might gamble that the cards are lying well if North bid.

As it turns out, 3♠ is the limit of the deal. East doesn't have enough horsepower to double 4♥ and will do well to get two diamond ruffs in partner's hand, although only one is required to get the magic +200.

Provisionally, pushing E/W into 4♠ doesn't look a disaster, but look more closely. Unless clubs are led twice from North, there is a squeeze on South in the minors when the spades get run.

So it seems that that on this particular deal, North's silence is indeed a virtue!

♠ 5432
♥ J10984
♦ A62
♣ 2

♠ KQ9 ♠ J876
♥ 76 ♥ Q32
♦ Q10 ♦ KJ95
♣ KQJ753 ♣ A4

♠ A10
♥ AK5
♦ 8743
♣ 10986

HCP		
	5	
13		11
	11	

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

Board 5 : Dealer North : N/S vulnerable

E/W are likely to have an uncontested run at this auction. In practice this will likely result in reaching a 3NT contract that isn't makeable without help from the defence, possibly with an auction along the lines of 1♣-1♠-2♣-2N-3N.

Nothing wrong with that, but this deal shows the power of having controls when playing or defending 3NT – not that it is possible for either East or West to tell this for certain.

South's best lead is a top heart – and it is indicated by the auction. North should signal positively for attitude and with N/S controlling the side suits, E/W would be held to just seven tricks.

Should E/W manage to stop in a club partial, they will no doubt score very highly.

♠ 3
♥ 1054
♦ K54
♣ QJ10872

♠ Q875
♥ A7
♦ Q9732
♣ K5

♠ AK1042
♥ KJ863
♦ A106
♣ -

♠ J96
♥ Q92
♦ J8
♣ A9643

HCP	
6	
11	15
8	

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

Board 6 : Dealer East : E/W vulnerable

A possible E/W slam here – it depends on bringing the diamonds in for one loser, but any sensible line in the suit will succeed. Is there a way to bid it with any degree of confidence?

After a 1♠ opening, West is too good for a limit raise and should establish a force. Most partnerships have a 2NT response available for that purpose now. Continuations now will depend on the precise response scheme the pair has, but East may show their shortage and West will cue-bid hearts – pairs should be able to cue-bid below game without promising extras if their hand has some suitability. East may now consider looking slamwards knowing that West would have signed off with total wastage and nothing suitable fitting in the red suits.

♠ 7432
♥ 764
♦ A82
♣ Q103

♠ KQ106
♥ KQJ8532
♦ 5
♣ K

♠ AJ
♥ A
♦ J9764
♣ J9654

♠ 985
♥ 109
♦ KQ103
♣ A872

HCP	
6	
14	11
9	

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

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West will open the bidding in hearts and drive to game after partner responds. It is difficult to construct intelligent auctions that finish in anything other than 4♥ (or possibly 5♥).

It would appear that the only chance of a twelfth trick is if declarer leads a club back towards hand and South is caught napping. If West had made a slam try (perhaps via Keycard) and discovered two missing cashers, then South should be alert to this possibility and fly up with the ace pronto. On more murky auctions it may not be quite so clear as to West's intentions.

♠ AKQJ3
♥ A
♦ K87
♣ K752

♠ 4
♥ Q985432
♦ AJ5
♣ 86

♠ 9752
♥ KJ76
♦ Q102
♣ J10

♠ 1086
♥ 10
♦ 9643
♣ AQ943

HCP	
20	
7	7
6	

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

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

Another deal where slam is theoretically makeable, but in practice I doubt will be reached too often. Many Wests will take advantage of the position and vulnerability (First, NV it is normally right to be a little more aggressive) and open 3♥. North will double, and East should barrage with 4♥ holding precious four-card support. This will come back round to North, who is now stuck with bidding 4♠. I don't think it is realistically possible for South to guess to make a move.
Besides, on many days the diamond ace will be offside and slam will be unmakeable.

Were N/S to get a free run, is it possible to get anywhere near?
After 1♠ – 2♠ (best to raise with three card support and a bit of shape), twelve tricks do look a long way off and North should just subside in game.

Whichever way you look at it, +480 to N/S seems the most likely outcome.

♠ -
♥ AK108
♦ A754
♣ KQ1092

♠ 82
♥ J543
♦ J9
♣ A8653

♠ AKJ943
♥ 62
♦ K1062
♣ 4

♠ Q10765
♥ Q97
♦ Q83
♣ J7

HCP		
	16	
6		11
	7	

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : E/W vulnerable

1♣ from North, 1♠ from East. All easy so far and all eyes on South – to play for a penalty or not? In my opinion no, and this hand explains why. You really need five good trumps or some clear source of defensive tricks to consider penalty passing at the one-level. Here North has a really good opening bid, yet E/W can actually make 1♠ if they guess everything right.

So 1NT is a better option on this hand. From there, North might be able to stretch to the good game. After all, the club and heart suits do have some great intermediates that greatly add to the trick taking potential of the hand.

Of course, should any Easts push too high, then the odds change dramatically. Given a free swing at 200 (or more), South should gladly oblige.

I think that any pairs who do score up 3NT on the N/S cards will score well above average and even defending spades for 200 will be pretty good.

♠ Q
♥ KQ104
♦ K972
♣ AQJ10

♠ K6
♥ 832
♦ A10865
♣ 952

♠ A754
♥ AJ76
♦ 3
♣ K764

♠ J109832
♥ 95
♦ QJ4
♣ 83

HCP		
	17	
7		12
	4	

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

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

The old 4-4-4-1 question – which suit to open? The suit below the singleton is the textbook answer and works best here. The 'Strong and Five' brigade are duty bound to open 1♣, perhaps intending to rebid 1NT over 1♦ or raise the major suit response otherwise. For the 'Weak and Fours', a 1♦ response might be trickiest as any suit rebid might promise 5-4 in opener's two suits. Continuing with 1♥ up the line is the best option available. Opening 1♥ would cause total mayhem if partner responded 2♦. Most auctions should end with E/W getting to 1NT through one route or another.
Regardless of what E/W choose to do, North is going to be pretty much silenced. They won't be able to make a takeout double without a holding in the spade suit and to overcall 1NT in the sandwich position (after both East and West have bid) normally suggests a slightly stronger hand. Doing so would only invite South to show a weak hand with spades and that is the last thing North wants to happen.

As it happens, going quietly and defending has its rewards. Assuming E/W do get to 1NT, careful defence will yield a plus score which I suspect will score well.

♠ 1053
♥ 10874
♦ Q
♣ Q10864

♠ AQ9
♥ K532
♦ KJ74
♣ J3

♠ K84
♥ QJ9
♦ 98653
♣ 72

♠ J762
♥ A6
♦ A102
♣ AK95

HCP		
	4	
14		6
	16	

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

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

No Trump range will have an effect on the outcome here. The strong brigade will probably buy the pot there and then. Careful defence does hold it to seven tricks, but there is potential for letting a vital overtrick through by cashing the spades too early or leading a diamond from the wrong hand.

That +120 will be massive as those who play weak NT openers may open a club and now West has an easy takeout double. This may allow E/W to get their diamond fit into the picture, where best defence yields an unlikely +100 against 3♦ (after two rounds of hearts, rise with the trump ace, now underlead clubs twice for two heart ruffs) or a more likely +50 unless someone can find a match-point double. Even if N/S are allowed to play in 3♣, that still only scores +110.

A deal where N/S are likely to make a small plus from whatever contract they play would be considered dull at IMPs. At match-points, the difference between +50 and +120 will be considerably more significant.

♠ J10872
♥ KJ105
♦ -
♣ KJ97

♠ - ♠ AQ9654
♥ 9 ♥ A732
♦ 1098762 ♦ 3
♣ AQ10642 ♣ 85

♠ K3
♥ Q864
♦ AKQJ54
♣ 3

HCP	
9	
6	10
15	

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : N/S vulnerable

Plenty of distribution on offer here, but mostly of the misfit variety. Holding 6-6 in the minors, West's best strategy is to pass and hope they can make an 'unusual' style bid later in the auction to show both of their suits at once. Opening a pre-empt simply won't give partner any idea of the true nature of the hand.

East can open 1♠, South will overcall 2♦ and now the 6-6 hand may be silenced for good! North too may find it difficult to respond and instead just hope to go plus. 4♥ is playable for N/S, but only 3NT is makeable.

If North dredges up a light/panicky/aggressive* 2NT response then game will be reached. With every card in the slot, making 3NT will not prove unduly challenging.

(*delete as appropriate)

♠ AJ8
♥ 10962
♦ 73
♣ A952

♠ K73 ♠ Q52
♥ 5 ♥ AQJ743
♦ K1042 ♦ AJ9
♣ QJ1084 ♣ 6

♠ 10964
♥ K8
♦ Q865
♣ K73

HCP	
9	
9	14
8	

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

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

I'd expect most tables to recreate the same uncontested auction for E/W 1♥-1NT-2♥. The East hand isn't quite good enough to jump rebid 3♥, although if the spade queen was in the diamond suit, the extra playing strength would tip the balance for me.

South has a standout (passive) spade lead and from there declarer will twist and turn and probably end up with eight tricks unless the defence slips. Although the diamond suit is a two-way guess, the queen is located on the natural side to attempt four tricks in the suit. While the heart suit could be brought in for one loser, in practice declarer will use their one entry to dummy to take the trump finesse. Should declarer attempt ace and another, they will see the 8 drop on the first round, but it looks far too big a position to play to drop Kx.

♠ K87532
♥ Q9762
♦ J8
♣ -

♠ QJ6 ♠ 1094
♥ AK108 ♥ 3
♦ 1062 ♦ KQ9
♣ 832 ♣ AKJ954

♠ A
♥ J54
♦ A7543
♣ Q1076

HCP	
6	
10	13
11	

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

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

This is the kind of deal where a good pair will evaluate well on the E/W cards, get to the good game and… go down on the bad club break. All the conditions are there – good source of primary tricks and fast tricks outside. It may be possible for them to stop low if the extent of North's distribution comes to light. Then the likely bad offside club break becomes a real possibility.

In practice though, after 1♣, South will bid 1♦ – always a good idea to test opponents negative double agreements by overcalling one minor suit with the other. 1♥ from West, 1♠ by North and now East has a rebid issue. Although only 13 points, their cards are well-suited and it is close to a 3♣ upgrade.

Should they do so, then game will be reached. Otherwise after a 2♣ rebid West has a minimal game try and at match-points may well just subside. However, if game is reached, South is in an ideal position to maximise their gains with a sharp double. A 300 penalty will be the reward.

♠ 4
♥ 98752
♦ K853
♣ KJ8

♠ AK97653
♥ A6
♦ 42
♣ 53

♠ J2
♥ Q1043
♦ AQJ9
♣ A109

♠ Q108
♥ KJ
♦ 1076
♣ Q7642

HCP		
	7	
11		14
	8	

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

Board 15 : Dealer South : N/S vulnerable

Superficially this seems like a routine 4♠ hand without much to get excited about, but the choice of lead could make the difference between 11 or 12 tricks and it could go wrong from either side.

North's choice should be a passive heart. Now declarer draws trumps, discovers they have a spade loser and finesses the diamond to discard one of their side suit losers and a seemingly routine 11 tricks. However, a spade lead may allow them the chance to pick trumps for no loser – an opening leader should always be aware when there is a danger of picking up a combination in partner's hand – and that will be the vital twelfth.

If East declares, South will lead a minor suit. Should it be the diamond, North has to not go in with the king at trick one (this may be helped or hindered by which card the partnership lead from 10xx – do you know what you do?) or declarer will have two discards on the diamonds for that precious second overtrick.

♠ QJ54
♥ KQ10
♦ K862
♣ J4

♠ K9
♥ 87532
♦ Q3
♣ KQ73

♠ 876
♥ J64
♦ A54
♣ 9865

♠ A1032
♥ A9
♦ J1097
♣ A102

HCP		
	12	
10		5
	13	

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

Board 16 : Dealer West : E/W vulnerable

Another deal where normal play may lead to a lack of interest. Regardless of methods, N/S will easily uncover their 4-4 spade fit and game values and invariably alight in 4♠. Without any obvious discarding opportunities, there is a club, spade and a diamond to lose. The diamond position isn't a guess as rising with the king only gains when there is stiff queen offside.

Perhaps it will be left to the match-point hunters who gamble out 3NT to enliven proceedings. This will most often be from the North hand (having either opened or rebid 1NT) and will give East a chance to beat the contract if they can fish out a club – a likely shot with it being the most passive option available from East's perspective. Any other effort gives a tempo away and will probably result in -430 and a massive goal for N/S.

♠ 653
♥ KQ76
♦ AKQ53
♣ 8

♠ 872
♥ 2
♦ 1092
♣ AJ7542

♠ KQJ109
♥ 1095
♦ J87
♣ KQ

♠ A4
♥ AJ843
♦ 64
♣ 10963

HCP		
	14	
5		12
	9	

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

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

A very good low-count slam for N/S here because the perfect conditions exist – solid trumps, great side suit and working shortages. However, these can be difficult to diagnose. After 1♦ – 1♠ – 2♥ – 2♠ back to North, they are clearly worth game and are close to a 4♣ splinter on the way. That may convince South that the lack of wasted club values and prime controls are enough to move past game, but it is still a big position to take.

With +480 routine for any N/S pair playing in hearts, the other interest on the deal is if E/W try to save. With a clear view of dummy, it should be straightforward for N/S to cash four red suit winners and get their club ruff. That will be an ugly 500 penalty and a very poor score.

♠ 94
♥ A1087654
♦ Q2
♣ 106

♠ AQJ83 ♠ 65
♥ KQ2 ♥ 9
♦ J6 ♦ A108543
♣ KQ8 ♣ J754

♠ K1072
♥ J3
♦ K97
♣ A932

HCP		
	6	
18		5
	11	

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : N/S vulnerable

Should E/W have a weak two in diamonds available, then it is clear to open it first in hand non-vulnerable. In this case though it would only cause partner problems. Such is life. If this weapon is not at their disposal, then life isn't much easier. After 1♠-1NT, West has to rebid something and upgrading to 3NT isn't unreasonable with a chunky five-card suit.

The play is the thing here though, and there are opportunities for thrust and counter thrust. On a likely heart lead, West must duck the first round to sever the N/S communications. Then if West leads the diamond jack out of hand, North must cover with their doubleton honour. This then kills the entry to the diamond suit and establishes a double stop in the South hand. Both of these are common types of play that good players should spot as a matter of course. No doubt some people will be allowed to sneak through in 3NT though, just as some others may go screaming three or four off!

♠ A
♥ A653
♦ AQ1094
♣ 1094

♠ 10986 ♠ K52
♥ J10 ♥ 9742
♦ K72 ♦ J86
♣ AQ86 ♣ K73

♠ QJ743
♥ KQ8
♦ 53
♣ J52

HCP		
	14	
10		7
	9	

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

Board 19 : Dealer South : E/W vulnerable

A misfitting part score deal . It is difficult to see beyond an uncontested 1♦-1♠-2♦ auction for N/S. This appears to have a trump, three clubs and a major suit loser in the wash for the required eight tricks.

It is difficult to see many opportunities for any other result unless players get careless. East needs to appreciate the value of their fourth heart and not discard unwisely, but there is a scenario where the poor discarding may be forced. Should declarer be able to clear the trumps for one loser with a heart entry to South remaining, then E/W have to be careful not to just play lots of clubs back at declarer. For now they can ruff, unblock the spade ace (Vienna Coup) and cash the last trump to effect a major suit squeeze on East. Instead, removing the heart entries to South early stops the necessary communication between the hands.

An unlikely scenario, but sharp declarers pounce on opportunities like these!

♠ AK32
♥ 102
♦ A1074
♣ K82

♠ QJ9 ♠ 874
♥ K875 ♥ 6
♦ J5 ♦ Q963
♣ AJ94 ♣ Q10753

♠ 1065
♥ AQJ943
♦ K82
♣ 6

HCP		
	14	
12		4
	10	

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

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

N/S have a routine 4♥ here, but much will depend how much West's opening puts a spanner in the works. A 1♣ opener leaves North with an uncomfortable (and maximum) pass as the best option. A weak 1NT opener has the same effect. Some Easts may even have the ability to show a very weak hand with clubs and further obstruct progress. South will overcall with some number of hearts and now North has to find the best constructive move. After a 1♥ overcall (over 1♣), North might try a value 2NT – unless this is used by the partnership as a heart raise – and South can now pick their spot. Over a 2♥ overcall (over 1NT), North will force to game, probably with 3NT. South now has to judge that 4H is the right spot as 3NT is easily beaten on a club lead from East.

The interest in 4♥ revolves around the defence not allowing a precious extra overtrick through. So how might things go? With West on lead, an opening spade lead is won and now the heart finesse taken. West wins eventually and does best to switch to a diamond – the spade suit is frozen and cashing the club allows a spade to be discarded on the club, then the spades can be ruffed out for a diamond discard. This is run round to the king, trumps drawn and a club played up. Now West must rise and continue diamonds. South has a discard on the club, but crucially cannot establish spades as the entries have been removed to enjoy the extra trick.

♠ 632
♥ 532
♦ A1092
♣ K107

♠ K104 ♠ Q7
♥ J109 ♥ KQ4
♦ 874 ♦ Q65
♣ 9542 ♣ AQJ63

♠ AJ985
♥ A876
♦ KJ3
♣ 8

HCP		
	7	
4		16
	13	

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

Board 21 : Dealer North : N/S vulnerable

After 1♣ by East, 1♠ is best by South – you may get a chance to double later and show your three suited nature. It also allows you to find the 5-3 fit, as here. When North raises, East will probably double for takeout and come to rest in 3♣. This requires careful defence by N/S to ensure that declarer only gets one entry to dummy to finesse in trumps, and so generate a trump loser. Unless N/S can find an unlikely match-point double, +100 may not be great.

Should East open a strong NT, this may work out better for N/S as after South shows the majors and N/S scramble to their eight-card spade fit, East may be disinclined to compete the hand further. The diamond guess should be straightforward and with hearts 3-3, making at least eight tricks for a useful +110 should not be a problem.

♠ K3
♥ K642
♦ A84
♣ KJ82

♠ 862 ♠ J5
♥ AJ7 ♥ Q10985
♦ K95 ♦ J763
♣ A1073 ♣ Q6

♠ AQ10974
♥ 3
♦ Q102
♣ 954

HCP		
	14	
12		6
	8	

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : E/W vulnerable

After a normal weak 2♠ opening bid by South, North has a decision to make whether to advance to game or not. They are definitely worth a 2NT enquiry and the response received may make a difference. An Ogust good suit/points will get game, whereas a 3♦ feature still leaves declarer guessing. I suspect most Norths will advance knowing that partner is non-minimum and just hope for a good mesh.

Game is makeable with good guesswork although in practice it looks likely that there will be a heart, a diamond and two clubs to lose. Some will be allowed to make, particularly if the defence gets too active and opens up the diamond suit. In practice though, I'd think that those who stay out of game and pick up +110 or +140 will score above average.

♠ 96
♥ K1065
♦ QJ
♣ KJ832

♠ J1042 ♠ KQ873
♥ Q32 ♥ J874
♦ A4 ♦ 10985
♣ Q975 ♣ -

♠ A5
♥ A9
♦ K7632
♣ A1064

HCP		
	10	
9		6
	15	

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

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

N/S have game values here but need to locate the winning 5♣ rather than the failing 3NT. This will all depend on a partnership's system structure and how South treats their hand – as a strong NT or bidding out their suits. Should N/S be able to diagnose their spade weakness through an auction like 1♦ – 1♥ – 2♣ – 3♣ (although South may just gamble out 3NT here) they might alight in the right game.

Treating the South hand as a strong NT opener might give 1N – 2♣ – 2♦ – 3♣ (natural and forcing) and again give a chance to hit the right spot.

However, this is match-points and the call of 3NT will no doubt prove too much temptation. Both East and West have a natural spade lead so declarer will be under the cosh immediately. My guess is that most will try and get a diamond trick early. However, if the hand with five clubs is in dummy, West can count 5♣, 1♠ and likely 2♥ plus the possible diamond. It shouldn't therefore be too difficult to rise and cash the setting tricks.

♠ KQ4
♥ 962
♦ KQJ107
♣ 104

♠ 87
♥ A
♦ A8432
♣ KJ873

♠ AJ9532
♥ KQ854
♦ -
♣ 52

♠ 106
♥ J1073
♦ 965
♣ AQ96

HCP		
	11	
12		10
	7	

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

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

West will open 1♦ and silence North in the process, thus allowing E/W an uninterrupted path to their final resting place. The question will be how the partnership shows the 6-5 shape in the majors after a 1♦-1♠-2♣ start. Some pairs may play a jump to 3♥ as that hand, although the modern style is for that to be a splinter. Others will have to bid 2♥ Fourth Suit Forcing and then bid 3♥ over the 3♣ response. West will then complete their pattern with 3♠ and East will opt for the 4♠ game.

On any lead declarer can establish the heart suit with a ruff. The key point seems to be whether they can divine the trump position and hold their losers in the suit to just the one. Any trump leads may give the lie away, whereas leaving declarer to their own devices (assuming North doesn't split prematurely) will probably see them put the nine in and lose to the doubleton ten. Scoring the full +450 will do very well for E/W.

♠ A653
♥ 5
♦ KJ9764
♣ Q3

♠ Q8742
♥ 87
♦ Q83
♣ 986

♠ J109
♥ 1032
♦ 1052
♣ AK75

♠ K
♥ AKQJ964
♦ A
♣ J1042

HCP		
	10	
4		8
	18	

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

Board 25 : Dealer North : E/W vulnerable

A routine game for N/S, so the key will be for the defence to hold it to ten tricks. Declarer may have difficulty untangling their pointed suit winners without generating an extra trick for the defence, so provided East does not release the ♣AK prematurely, declarer might find it hard to make eleven tricks.

The interest may therefore lie on the choice between 3NT and 4♥. The former makes the same number of tricks, so will scoop more vital match-points. Is there any reason for N/S to decide to play there?

After 1♦ – 2♥ (Strong) – 2♠ – 3♥ it is difficult for North to gamble out 3NT without the club stop and knowing that the hearts are absolutely solid. Should North pass initially, the auction may proceed 1♥-2♦-3♥ and now 3NT is more likely.

♠ 42
♥ 7432
♦ A2
♣ KQ854

♠ QJ1093
♥ 9
♦ K9753
♣ 97

♠ AK5
♥ K106
♦ QJ
♣ A10632

♠ 876
♥ AQJ85
♦ 10864
♣ J

HCP		
	9	
6		17
	8	

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

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

The test here is for E/W to reach game and the right one at that. After 1♣ and a 1♥ overcall (minimal but you have to get those good suits in), those who have the agreement that 1♠ guarantees five cards will be well placed. If 1♠ could only be four, then when North puts the pressure on with a raise (to 3♥ is best), East might elect to try 3NT if unsure about an eight card fit. Those in the Strong and Five brigade will play in spades, probably at a level determined by the extent of bidding by N/S.

The play in 4♠ does require a little care though. The diamonds have to be established before trumps are drawn or a second loser in the suit will be created. However, with the trump pips being so secure, there should be no major alarms for declarer.

N/S are essentially passengers on this deal and will only get a good score if E/W fall from grace and don't collect their game.

♠ A54
♥ AKQ3
♦ 95
♣ J1097

♠ K972 ♠ 1086
♥ - ♥ 1097652
♦ A2 ♦ KQ73
♣ KQ65432 ♣ -

♠ QJ3
♥ J84
♦ J10864
♣ A8

HCP	
14	
12	5
9	

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

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

While N/S have the balance of values, without an unusual intervention they may find it difficult to compete this deal. After West opens 1♣, North has to choose either an off-centre takeout double or a four-card overcall in hearts. In this case the heart overcall would attract a raise and East would have a lot of fun defending with their six-card stack! The double wouldn't fare much better as South bids their diamonds and now N/S are booked for a minus score in that strain too.

Should N/S go quietly, E/W will probably play in 2♣. This requires West to play their trump suit for two losers. With the layout as here, this means ducking twice to cater for the doubleton (or singleton) Ace. However, the percentage play is to play the top honours.

A tricky deal where going plus may likely be the key to a good score.

♠ K3
♥ AK8543
♦ J
♣ Q532

♠ A42 ♠ QJ1097
♥ 1097 ♥ 6
♦ AKQ7 ♦ 109832
♣ J64 ♣ A8

♠ 865
♥ QJ2
♦ 654
♣ K1097

HCP	
13	
14	7
6	

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

Board 28 : Dealer West : N/S vulnerable

Like a few other deals in this set, opening no-trump range could have an effect. After a 12-14 NT from West and 2♥ from North, East will bid a non-forcing 2♠. Following a heart raise from South, West might not compete, so when North raises to game, East may not bid on. After a 1♦ opening, a 1♥ overcall and a 1♠ bid, West will have an easy 2♠ raise. Now when East is faced with the decision to compete against N/S, they will be aware of the double fit in the pointed suits. It is now clear to push on.

N/S do have a paying save in 5♥ (or a making game in 4♥ if you prefer), but this is relies upon locating the club jack. Depending on how the defence plays, if may be possible to discern most of the distribution and high card location, but unless the E/W carding gives it away, the minor suit distribution will remain ambiguous and the location of the club jack may end up as a coin toss.

♠ Q10652
♥ A9
♦ A9865
♣ 4

♠ 74 ♠ AK
♥ K843 ♥ QJ5
♦ KQ7 ♦ 1032
♣ AK76 ♣ 109852

♠ J983
♥ 10762
♦ J4
♣ QJ3

HCP	
10	
15	10
5	

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

Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

While ten tricks are makeable double dummy in 3NT, in practice declarer won't get the club suit right. On the normal spade lead, this will leave them a tempo behind in setting up their tricks and lead them to going a number off.

However, it isn't clear that E/W will necessarily alight in 3NT. After a 1♠ opening, South has a clear raise (some pairs will have methods that will get them to 3♠) and West will make a takeout double. It is conceivable that some Norths may look at their shape and look to obstruct even further. Should East get a free swing at responding to the double of 2♠, then those who play Lebensohl style in this position will be able to untangle their range and get to game. Otherwise, in this constricted position, the East hand is too good for just a simple response and not quite good enough to commit to game with confidence.

Given the lie of the opposition cards though, going plus in a part score may well yield a fortuitous good score.

♠ KQ8
♥ 632
♦ K3
♣ AK742

♠ J764
♥ QJ1094
♦ 95
♣ 105

♠ 1053
♥ A875
♦ A1042
♣ J6

♠ A92
♥ K
♦ QJ876
♣ Q983

HCP		
	15	
4		9
	12	

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

Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all

After a likely (uncontested) start of 1♦-2♣-3♣ from N/S, North should bid 3♠ to show their feature and allow South to bid the better 5♣ game. Of course, being match-points, many N/S pairs will blast 3NT and hope for the best.

Played by South, this is doomed on the natural HQ lead. With North at the helm, East has to fish out a top heart - unless they have lead a passive black card in which case N/S cash their eight on top and then the position is clear for the defence. Underleading a red ace will provide a grateful declarer with their ninth trick.

This board is a reward for those of a more scientific bent as a safe +600 for 5♣ scores as well as anything the punters will be lucky enough to achieve.

♠ 97
♥ K85
♦ A105
♣ AKQ75

♠ K863
♥ Q1074
♦ Q83
♣ J6

♠ AQJ10
♥ AJ9
♦ J964
♣ 32

♠ 542
♥ 632
♦ K72
♣ 10984

HCP		
	16	
8		13
	3	

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

Board 31 : Dealer South : N/S vulnerable

No trump range will have a decisive effect on this deal. Those Norths who open 15-17 will probably steal the pot and now precise defence (West switching to a high heart when winning their spade trick) is required to beat the contract.

After a 1♣ opener, East can readily compete with a takeout double and now E/W will get to a major suit contract – although it will require care to play in spades rather than hearts. If South raises clubs, West can make a responsive double to get to the right spot. If South passes the takeout double, West probably does best (as a passed hand) to cue bid clubs and get East to bid their major. In this way West avoids the 50-50 guess of which suit to play in.

Playing in spades yields an easy +140 and an excellent score on the board for E/W.

♠ 3
♥ AKJ943
♦ 7
♣ AQ1073

♠ K9
♥ 865
♦ KQJ1093
♣ J8

♠ QJ10852
♥ Q1072
♦ -
♣ 652

♠ A764
♥ -
♦ A86542
♣ K94

HCP		
	14	
10		5
	11	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	7	2	5	2	3
S	6	1	5	1	3
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 32 : Dealer West : E/W vulnerable

An exciting conclusion to the set, sadly probably missed by most. West may well open 3♦ with this great suit at the prevailing vulnerability. North now has a tricky bidding decision. With short spades, double feels wrong as we can't handle a 4♠ bid from partner. In the absence of anything conventional and convenient to describe this hand, two natural options present themselves. The simple one is a 'practical' jump to 4♥, which survives on this deal, despite the void opposite. The alternative is to bid only 3♥, hoping that either South or East have enough cards to keep the auction alive, intending to show the clubs on the next round.

In this case, the latter option scores the goal. South has an easy 3NT bid and now after 4♣ has a pretty enormous hand. A 4♦ cue-bid should now provide the juice to drive the auction slamwards. Any pairs who do get to the club slam will richly deserve their large quota of match-points.