

Kath Grimoldby Simultaneous Pairs

2018

1.

♠ A 6 2		Dealer : N
♥ K 6 2		Vul : None
♦ A 10 4 2		
♣ A Q 10		
♠ 9 5	N	♠ 10 7
♥ Q 9 8	W	♥ A J 10 7 3
♦ K 6	E	♦ Q J 8 7
♣ K 9 8 7 5 4	S	♣ 6 3
♠ K Q J 8 4 3		17
♥ 5 4		8 8
♦ 9 5 3		7
♣ J 2		

W	N	E	S
	1♦	1♥	1♠
2♥	3♠	pass	4♠
end			

Bidding :

The results of this board are almost entirely determined in the bidding. East's overall in some way makes life easier for North, who now knows of the spade fit immediately, as South's 1S bid now promises 5. The King of hearts isn't looking as good, but North is still good enough for an invite, and South, with a good 6 card suit, will gladly accept.

With a heart king to right-side, and no ruffing values, some Norths might find a way to land in 3NT, and be rewarded for it. (Perhaps by just bidding it over 2H. 1NT – 3NT ? ed.)

Play :

In 4S, a heart lead of the 8 should be read as from Q98, and so ducked round, followed by another heart, and another, ruffed. Declarer then has little to do other than draw trumps and hope the club finesse is onside to set up a diamond discard.

	N	S	E	W
NT	4	2		
♠	4	4		
♥			2	2
♦	2	2		
♣			1	1
opt	N		4N : 430	

2.

♠ K Q 10 7		Dealer : E
♥ 7 3		Vul : N/S
♦ A 3 2		
♣ A J 10 9		
♠ J 8 6	N	♠ A 4 3
♥ A Q 5 2	W	♥ J 8 6 4
♦ T 8 6 5	E	♦ Q J 7
♣ Q 7	S	♣ 6 5 3
♠ 9 5 2		14
♥ K 10 9		9 8
♦ K 9 4		9
♣ K 8 4 2		

W	N	E	S
		pass	pass
1♥	dbl	3♥	dbl
end			

Bidding :

At 3rd and favourable, this is prime time for a lead-directional light opening from West. For the same reasons, East will be keen to continue the pre-empt, with South making a values-showing double.

If West declines to open, North should upgrade and show 15-17 balanced (Aces, Kings, 10s and 9s!), and if opening a strong NT, will reach 3NT.

Play :

Against 3HX, a top spade lead should be ducked, West hoping that North will make the mistake of continuing and allowing them to score the Jack of spades. Not wanting to switch from an Ace, North might now just try a trump, with both dummy and South playing low.

Declarer shouldn't be able to make more than 3 hearts, a spade, and 2 diamonds, for -3, for a good score vs NS's 3NT, which unfortunately for EW, many might not find.

	N	S	E	W
NT	3	3		
♠	3	3		
♥	1	1		
♦	2	2		
♣	4	4		
opt	NS		3N :600	

3. Dealer : S
Vul : E/W

♠ 7 2			
♥ 6 5			
♦ Q J 5 2			
♣ J 10 6 5 4			
♠ A 9 8 6 5 4	N		♠ K J 3
♥ A K 4			♥ Q 2
♦ 9 3	W	E	♦ A K T 8 7 4
♣ 7 2			♣ 9 3
	S		
♠ Q 10			
♥ J 10 9 8 7 3			4
♦ 6			11 13
♣ A K Q 8			12

W	N	E	S
			1♥
1♠	pass	2♥	3♣
3♠	pass	4♠	end

Bidding :

Following East's UCB, South should bid 3C mainly to attract a better lead, as North is otherwise likely to lead a heart. West shows extras for their overcall, and East has an easy raise to 4S.

Play :

NS cash their 2 clubs, and then do best to switch to a heart and leave declarer to figure out the spades.

The bidding makes arguments both for and against playing South for the Queen of spades, (values vs distribution), and in such times, I tend to just play the normal line of hoping for spades 2-2, but some declarers might play South for a singleton and go wrong.

Note that those Souths who don't venture 3C will probably get a heart lead, and now declarer can draw trumps, ruff two rounds of diamonds and discard both clubs, using the J♠ and Q♥ for entries.

	N	S	E	W
NT			2	2
♠			5	5
♥	1	1		
♦			4	4
♣	2	2		
opt	EW		5S :-650	

4. Dealer : W
Vul : All

♠ 9 6			
♥ A 2			
♦ A Q J 10 7 6 4			
♣ 6 5			
♠ A K 10 5	N		♠ Q J 8 7
♥ K J 10 7 6 3			♥ 9 8 4
♦ 2	W	E	♦ 9 8 3
♣ A K			♣ T 9 2
	S		
♠ 4 3 2			
♥ Q 5			11
♦ K 5			18 3
♣ Q J 8 7 4 3			8

W	N	E	S
1♥	2♦	pass	pass
2♠	3♦	3♠	pass
4♠	end		

Bidding :

West has an excellent hand, and by starting at the 1 level has plenty of space to bid it out. By reopening with 2S, West is showing a hand with lots of playing strength (not giving the chance for partner to make a penalty pass of 2DX), and East, having denied a good hand by not bidding the first time, can now raise without the risk of partner thinking they've got many values.

Play :

Not wanting to lead a red suit, and fearing discards on hearts, North might try a club, hoping to set up something of partner's.

Declarer needs to draw trumps and take a heart finesse or two, but needs to be careful not to run out of trumps in hand and find out they can no longer ruff diamonds! After a spade to the Queen and a heart finesse, the defenders need to cash their A♦. If declarer won the first trick with the A♣, North might instead try a second club hoping partner has the King and can play a diamond through, and now 12 tricks are available.

	N	S	E	W
NT	1	1		
♠			5	5
♥			5	5
♦	2	2		
♣	1	1		
opt	EW		4H/S :-650	

5. Dealer : N
Vul : N/S

♠ J 6									
♥ 9									
♦ A K 6 3 2									
♣ Q 7 4 3 2									
♠ A K 10 7		N							♠ Q 9
♥ K T 8 6 4 3									♥ A Q 5
♦ 5 4		W		E					♦ Q 9
♣ 5									♣ A K J 10 9 8
			S						
♠ 8 5 4 3 2									
♥ J 7 2									10
♦ J 10 8 7									10 18
♣ 6									2

W	N	E	S
4♥	1♦ end	dbl	3♦

Bidding :

North starts with a light opening on their 5-5 shape, and immediately makes things a bit harder for East. They start with a double, intending to bid clubs at the next turn. But, over a pre-emptive raise from South, West is likely to just bid 4H. With AQx East isn't unhappy with this result, and can just pass.

Play :

North will begin by cashing AK♦, East mildly relieved that they didn't miss a slam. After that, it's simply a case of drawing trumps (starting with the Ace, in case of 4-0 break with South), and discarding a spade on the King of clubs.

I would expect this board to be very flat, as EW are still going to reach 4H with or without an opening from North. Maybe one or two over-optimistic 6H-1s?

	N	S	E	W
NT			3	3
♠			2	2
♥			5	5
♦	1	1		
♣			4	4
opt	EW		4H :-450	

6. Dealer : E
Vul : E/W

♠ Q 7 5 4 2									
♥ A K J 8									
♦ A 10 9 3									
♣ -									
♠ 9 6		N							♠ K 8 3
♥ 4 3									♥ 9 2
♦ K Q 7 5 2		W		E					♦ 8 6
♣ K 10 7 4									♣ Q J 9 5 3 2
			S						
♠ A J 10									
♥ Q 10 7 6 5									14
♦ J 4									8 6
♣ A 8 6									12

W	N	E	S
pass	2♣	pass	1NT
pass	4♣	pass	2♥
end		pass	4♥

Bidding :

Whether South opens 1H or 1NT, I think North should make a slam try, but South should end up declining - it's a minimum hand either way. It's worth checking with your partner what your methods on this auction are - is 4C a cue bid, or a splinter? If it's a splinter, how do you just make a normal slam try?

Play :

Declarer should start by working out how many entries to dummy they're likely to need - possibly two spade finesses, another to ruff out the King on a 4-1 break, and another to get back and cash the 5th.

An immediate spade finesse, and two rounds of trumps ending in dummy, and another spade finesse. When spades break 3-2 everything is easy. However, declarer would still have the entries to ruff out the King if spades were 4-1, discarding one diamond and ruffing two clubs.

	N	S	E	W
NT	6	6		
♠	6	6		
♥	7	7		
♦	3	3		
♣			1	1
opt	NS		7H : 1510	

7.

♠ A K 10 9 8 7 5 3 2		Dealer : S
♥ 2		Vul : All
♦ A K 2		
♣ -		
♠ -	N	♠ Q J 6 4
♥ Q 10 7 6	W	♥ K 9 8 3
♦ 6 4	E	♦ 5
♣ K J 10 9 6 5 3	S	♣ A 8 4 2
♠ -		
♥ A J 5 4		14
♦ Q J 10 9 8 7 3		6 10
♣ Q 7		10

W	N	E	S
3♣	3♠	5♣	1♦
pass	6♠	end	dbl

Bidding :

I imagine there will be a variety of auctions on this one! 7-4 shape results in both South opening, and West risking a weak jump overcall. (This wouldn't be a 3C opening, but the odds of missing 4H decrease when the opponents open). North bids their spades, and East tries 5C - it takes up valuable bidding room, and there are good chances of it being a good save.

South doubles, trying to put partner off bidding more, but I don't think any North looking at just their cards could resist spades as trumps, or playing below 6.

East should avoid doubling - you expect a slam one off to be a good score, and you'd hate for them to run to 7D, or maybe even 6NT, if it turns out that partner didn't have the King of clubs!

Play :

Even with the spade void, North is still hopeful, only needing a 3-1 spade break. Unlucky.

	N	S	E	W
NT				
♠	5	5		
♥			2	2
♦	7	7		
♣			5	5
opt	EW		7Hx : 1400	

8.

♠ 10 6 2		Dealer : W
♥ K 8 7 6 3		Vul : None
♦ J 5 3		
♣ Q 9		
♠ K J 9 4	N	♠ Q 8 7 5
♥ A 10 9 2	W	♥ 4
♦ 10 2	E	♦ A K Q 7
♣ A J 7	S	♣ 10 4 3 2
♠ A 3		
♥ Q J 5		6
♦ 9 8 6 4		13 11
♣ K 8 6 5		10

W	N	E	S
1NT	pass	2♣	pass
2♥	pass	2♠	pass
4♠	end		

Bidding :

I often wouldn't invite on just an 11 count, but if a spade fit exists then the singleton heart will be very strong, and AKQ of diamonds is a nice holding.

East shows an invite with 4 spades, and West, with a nice 13 count (10s, 9s), gladly accepts.

Play :

Stuck for an appealing lead, North might just try a trump. South wins, and returns another to cut down on heart ruffs.

West can see 3 trump tricks, 1 heart, 3 diamonds, and 1 club. 2 hearts can then be ruffed, as long as this is done before drawing the 3rd trump. Win the second trump in dummy, heart to the Ace, ruff a heart, club to the Ace, ruff another heart. West now needs to get back to hand to draw the trump - AKQ of diamonds and then a diamond ruffed, draw the last trump and concede the last two tricks. (This would fail if diamonds were 5-2, but 4-3 is significantly more likely, particularly as North might have led a doubleton diamond.)

	N	S	E	W
NT			3	3
♠			4	4
♥			1	1
♦			3	3
♣			3	3
opt	EW		4S : -420	

9. Dealer : N
Vul : E/W

♠ 10 6 3 2				
♥ A 9 6 4				
♦ 4				
♣ J 10 4 3				
♠ 9 4	N			♠ A K
♥ K 8 5 3				♥ Q J 10 7 2
♦ Q 10 7	W	E		♦ A J 5
♣ A 9 5 2				♣ 8 7 6
♠ Q J 8 7 5				
♥ -			5	
♦ K 9 8 6 3 2			9 15	
♣ K Q			11	

W	N	E	S
	pass	1♥	2♥
2♠	3♠	4♥	4♠
dbl	end		

Bidding :

After a Michaels cue bid from South, West can bid 2S (the known suit) as an unassuming cue bid, to show values and support for hearts. With 4 card support North will raise spades, and with 15 opposite 9+ East will bid 4H. South, looking at 6-5 shape and favourable vulnerability will hope 4S is a cheap sacrifice, and with no extras and a doubleton spade, West doubles to discourage partner from bidding 5H.

Play :

On a heart lead, declarer wins the Ace, pitching a diamond, and taking their one chance to play a diamond towards hand. East flies the Ace, and might well try to prevent ruffs by playing AK of spades. The only danger now is dummy's clubs going away on the diamonds, so East should switch to a club, and diamonds can be ruffed good for -1.

	N	S	E	W
NT			2	2
♠	3	3		
♥			3	3
♦	1	1		
♣			2	1
opt	NS		3S: 140	

10. Dealer : E
Vul : All

♠ Q 5 4				
♥ J 7 2				
♦ 7 5 3 2				
♣ J 6 2				
♠ A 9 8 6 3	N			♠ K J T 7
♥ 10 9 8				♥ Q 3
♦ A	W	E		♦ Q 9 8 6 4
♣ Q 9 8 3				♣ 7 5
♠ 2				
♥ A K 6 5 4			4	
♦ K J 10			10 8	
♣ A K 10 4			18	

W	N	E	S
		pass	1♥
1♠	pass	3♠	dbl
end			

Bidding :

Some aggressive overcalling and raising makes life quite uncomfortable for both North and South. North would much rather not have 3 hearts for passing the double, but it seems unlikely that you can make game, so pass and cross your fingers...

Play :

A heart lead looks reasonable, which South wins. Fearing being endplayed in diamonds, South cashes their 4 winners and exits with a heart, which dummy ruffs.

Declarer still has a club loser to deal with, and a spade to guess. The Queen of diamonds (covered) to the Ace, and a club ruff, and at this point South has shown up with 17 points. Knowing that North has 3 hearts and still passed the double suggests that they might also have the Queen of spades, so declarer might now get spades right. Additionally, if South had the Queen of spades and Jack of diamonds, they'd have a 20 count, and they might have opened 2NT/a strong 2.

	N	S	E	W
NT	1	1		
♠			3	3
♥	3	3		
♦	1	1		
♣	2	2		
opt	EW		3S: -140	

11. Dealer : S
Vul : None

♠ T 3				♠ Q 2
♥ 3				♥ 6 2
♦ A 10 9 8				♦ Q J 7 6 2
♣ A Q J 10 3 2				♣ K 7 6 4
♠ K 8 5 4	N			
♥ A K J 10 9 7	W	E		
♦ K 5				
♣ 5		S		
♠ A J 9 7 6				
♥ Q 8 5 4			11	
♦ 4 3			14	8
♣ 9 8			7	

W	N	E	S
1♥	3♣	pass	pass
dbl	end		

Bidding :

Opposite a passed partner, as North I'd rather make a preemptive jump overcall and use up some more bidding space, than just bid 2C. East would like to show partner some points but really can't bid anything, and West now has a tough decision between 3H and double - we have less defence than we'd like (6-4!), but partner could have a trump stack, and we're unlikely to have a spade fit, as partner might have found a double of 3C.

Play :

West wins a heart lead and plays a trump, suspecting declarer will want to ruff some diamonds. North wins the Ace (the finesse is likely offside), and Ace of diamonds and a diamond, and West is forced to win and doesn't have a second trump to play! The only hope for entry is if partner's heart was singleton, so West plays Ace of hearts, ruffed by declarer, and a diamond ruffed.

(Curiously, leading towards the AT98 will catch the doubleton K so it's always likely to be -1. Ed.)

Declarer makes 5 clubs, Ace of diamonds, Ace of spades and a diamond ruff, for -1, and a good score vs 3H.

	N	S	E	W
NT				
♠			1	1
♥			3	3
♦			1	1
♣	2	2		
opt	EW		3H : -140	

12. Dealer : W
Vul : N/S

♠ 8 3				♠ 10 9 7 2
♥ Q 7 4				♥ 9 5 3
♦ Q J 7 6 4 3				♦ 10 9 5
♣ T 7				♣ A K 8
♠ Q J	N			
♥ K J 10 8 6	W	E		
♦ 8				
♣ Q J 6 5 3		S		
♠ A K 6 5 4				
♥ A 2			5	
♦ A K 2			10	7
♣ 9 4 2			18	

W	N	E	S
1♥	pass	1♠	1NT
2♣	2♦	2♥	3♦
pass	pass	3♥	dbl
end			

Bidding :

1st in at favourable, West can justify a light opening of 1H, and South finds themselves making a sandwich-seat 1NT overcall. West's 2C must be based on distribution (a strong hand would double), and East will realise the double-fit and keep competing. South is far from guaranteed 5 tricks, but it seems worth risking a double at pairs, as making 4D also looks unlikely.

Play :

On a diamond lead, NS might well try cashing 2 diamonds and West can ruff. A club to table to play hearts to hand, losing the finesse to North. There shouldn't be any risk of spades going away (East doesn't have enough trumps), so North can return a club and hope to get a club ruff. South wins the heart, cashes King (for count) then Ace of spades, and another club.

EW get 2 spades, 1 diamond, 2 hearts and a ruff for -2 and a top for NS. West does better with a heart to the King and another, but that seems unlikely.

	N	S	E	W
NT	2	2		
♠	2	2		
♥			2	2
♦	4	4		
♣			1	1
opt	NS		4D : 130	

13. Dealer : N
Vul : All

♠ 6 5 2			
♥ 3 2			
♦ K J 7			
♣ Q J 7 6 4			
♠ 10	N		♠ K Q J
♥ A Q 6 4			♥ K 10 9 8 5
♦ A 8 6	W	E	♦ 4 3 2
♣ A K 8 3 2			♣ 10 5
	S		
♠ A 9 8 7 4 3			
♥ J 7			7
♦ Q 10 9 5			17 9
♣ 9			7

W	N	E	S
	pass	pass	2♠
dbl	pass	3♥	pass
4♥	end		

Bidding :

South would like a better suit, but with 6-4 shape and in 3rd seat, can manage a 2S opening, and we get to test EW's methods. East makes a values-showing 3H bid (if playing lebensohl), and West might quite like to make a slam try, but doesn't have many good bids with which to do so. In practice, settling for 4H seems reasonable.

Play :

South tries leading a singleton club, and after drawing two rounds of trumps, the Ace of spades can be forced out and 2 diamonds discarded on the QJ♠. A diamond lead does best, but in practice 12 tricks will be made most of the time.

	N	S	E	W
NT			3	3
♠	1	1		
♥			4	4
♦			1	1
♣			2	2
opt	EW		4H : -620	

14. Dealer : E
Vul : None

♠ K J 2			
♥ J 9 6			
♦ A K J 7 4			
♣ 9 3			
♠ 8 6 3	N		♠ Q 5 4
♥ Q 7 2			♥ K 10 5 4 3
♦ Q 6	W	E	♦ 10 5 3
♣ A K Q 10 7			♣ 4 2
	S		
♠ A 10 9 7			
♥ A 8			13
♦ 9 8 2			13 5
♣ J 8 6 5			9

W	N	E	S
		pass	pass
1NT	pass	2♦	pass
2♥	pass	pass	dbl
3♣	3♦	pass	pass
pass			

Bidding :

South protects with a double, and West does better to bid now, if at all. Without much defence to 2S, West can try 3C, which helps with the lead if the opponents go on to bid over this. 3C should also promise 3 hearts, so East can correct. North however, without much defence in hearts or clubs, will compete with 3D, which ends the auction.

Play :

East dutifully leads a club, and West can play 3 rounds, hoping to give partner a trump promotion. North ruffs with the 7, over-ruffed, and is a little stuck for a switch. Hoping partner's values are in hearts (for wanting to compete), East tries a heart. Declarer wins (not wanting to allow West in to play another club), draws two rounds of trumps, and can count 13-14 points in West's hand - AKQ clubs, Q diamonds, and K or Q of hearts. This marks East with the Queen of spades, so declarer gets the finesse right, losing 2 clubs, a ruff, and a heart.

	N	S	E	W
NT	2	4		
♠	4	4		
♥				
♦	3	4		
♣		1		
opt	S		3N : 430	

15. Dealer : S
Vul : N/S

♠ A 9 7 6 3		♠ Q 8
♥ Q 9 3		♥ K 10 8 7 4
♦ 9 8 2		♦ K 7 6 4
♣ K Q		♣ 6 2
♠ K 5	N	♠ J 10 4 2
♥ 6 2	W	♥ A J 5
♦ A Q J 5	E	♦ 10 3
♣ J 9 8 7 4	S	♣ A 10 5 3
		11
		11 8
		10

W	N	E	S
pass			pass
pass	1♠	2♥	3♥
pass	3♠	end	

Bidding :

I normally open 1NT even with a 5-card major, but as I only really want to 'win' the bidding when partner has spades, I'll open 1S. East takes their chance to overcall hearts, and South shows a good raise. This tips West off to partner's light overcall, and they can avoid trying to double anything...

Play :

Not keen on leading away from Kings, East leads a club. Declarer wins, cashes A♠ and a spade - losing only 1 trick whenever they're 2-2 or singleton honour. West wins and, knowing that declarer can always play diamonds themselves if they want to, can cash 2 diamonds. Declarer can ruff the third, unblock the club, take a heart finesse, and discard a heart on the Ace of clubs.

	N	S	E	W
NT	2	2		
♠	4	4		
♥			1	1
♦			2	2
♣	1	1		
opt	EW		5Dx : 500	

16. Dealer : W
Vul : E/W

♠ 10		♠ K 9 8 5 4
♥ A 8 7 5		♥ 9 3
♦ Q 6 4 3		♦ A J 9 7
♣ K 8 7 2		♣ 9 4
♠ J 7 2	N	♠ A Q 6 3
♥ 10 6 4	W	♥ K Q J 2
♦ 10 8 2	E	♦ K 5
♣ Q J 6 5	S	♣ A 10 3
		9
		4 8
		19

W	N	E	S
pass	pass	pass	1♥
pass	3♠	pass	4♥
end			

Bidding :

North's hand suddenly looks very good after a heart opening, and is just about worth a splinter. (4441 isn't nice, but splinter bids are also very descriptive.) South then needs to think which cards they need for slam - probably AAK, or AAQJ. The first is an opening bid, and the second a bit hopeful, so South can just sign off in 4H. If South's Queen of spades had been the Queen of clubs, they would have just found a very good 6H contract.

Play :

West doesn't have any stand-out leads, so might try a trump in case declarer tries a cross-ruff. Declarer has losers in both minors that aren't going anywhere, and there aren't the entries to ruff 3 spades, so they try the spade finesse. When this holds, a spade can be ruffed, heart back, spade ruffed high, the last trump drawn, and now we can play for a miracle position/misdefence in the minors - a diamond to the Queen. If West had and flew the Ace, or if clubs are QJ doubleton, then we can avoid a club loser.

	N	S	E	W
NT	3	3		
♠	2	2		
♥	5	5		
♦	3	3		
♣	5	5		
opt	NS		4H : 450	

17. Dealer : N
Vul : None

♠ 8 7 5 4 2			
♥ Q 7 3			
♦ Q J 10 5			
♣ 5			
♠ Q J 10 9 6	N	♠ A	
♥ 6 4		♥ K J 10 9 8 5	
♦ 4	W	♦ 9 3 2	E
♣ 10 8 7 6 2		♣ K J 9	
	S		
♠ K 3			5
♥ A 2			3 12
♦ A K 8 7 6			20
♣ A Q 4 3			

W	N	E	S
	pass	1♥	dbl
pass	1♠	pass	1NT
pass	2♣	pass	2♦
pass	3NT	end	

Bidding :

South shows a hand too strong to overcall 1NT, by doubling then bidding 1NT. North can check for a 5-3 spade with checkback/Crowhurst before bidding 3NT.

Play :

West might be tempted to lead a spade rather than a heart, but with no outside entries and knowing partner has a singleton spade, this seems a little pointless. A heart lead, small, 8 and Ace. There isn't much to do other than hope East has all of the relevant high cards - a diamond to table, and a club to the Queen. Diamond back, spade towards hand, won by East. East tries a club, won by declarer.

Declarer can now cash the King of spades, and 3 more diamonds. East needs to foresee the endplay and discard the Jack of clubs. If not, when declarer exits a club, they will be left on lead playing into dummy's Qx of hearts.

Double-dummy declarer could exit a club before giving East a chance to discard, but double-dummy East could have played a club honour on the first club.

	N	S	E	W
NT	3	3		
♠	2	2		
♥	1	1		
♦	5	5		
♣				
opt	NS		5D, 3N : 400	

18. Dealer : E
Vul : N/S

♠ K 6 3			
♥ K 10 5			
♦ A K 8			
♣ J 8 6 5			
♠ A 7 4 2	N	♠ Q 9 8	
♥ A J 9 6 2		♥ Q 8 7 4	
♦ 5 3 2	W	♦ Q 9	E
♣ 10		♣ A K 4 3	
	S		
♠ J 10 5			14
♥ 3			9 13
♦ J 10 7 6 4			4
♣ Q 9 7 2			

W	N	E	S
		1NT	pass
2♣	pass	2♥	end

Bidding :

West bids Stayman, intending to bid 2H if partner bids 2D. They are mildly annoyed when partner actually has hearts, as anybody making a simple transfer finds the best contract as well!

Play :

A diamond lead looks reasonable, so the defence cash 2 diamonds, the 3rd ruffed. A trump finesse loses, and North can exit a club. Declarer cashes Ace and King, (discarding a spade), and can now draw trumps, play Ace of spades and one to the Queen, making 9 tricks.

If declarer hadn't cashed the second club early, they may find that on a 4-2 spade break they end up losing a 4th spade.

West is further frustrated when 9 tricks are made, as any East players who would have super-accepted a transfer and landed in 3H are still making as well!

	N	S	E	W
NT				
♠			2	2
♥			3	3
♦	1	1		
♣	1	1		
opt	EW		3H : -140	

19. Dealer : S
Vul : E/W

♠ A J 9 3			
♥ 10 9 8 4			
♦ Q 8 4 2			
♣ A			
♠ 5 4	N		♠ K 8 7 6 2
♥ A 3			♥ Q J 5 2
♦ K 10 9 3	W	E	♦ 5
♣ J 9 7 4 3			♣ Q 6 5
	S		
♠ Q 10			11
♥ K 7 6			8 8
♦ A J 7 6			13
♣ K 10 8 2			

W	N	E	S
			1NT
pass	2♣	pass	2♦
pass	2NT	pass	3NT
end			

Bidding :

It often isn't right to bother inviting on 11 counts, but the advantage on this hand is that it allows a major fit to be found if there is one, and the intermediates make this hand a bit better.

Play :

West's lead of a club puts declarer in dummy at trick 1, and East encourages clubs (a handy carding agreement - if dummy wins with Ace or King, show attitude). A diamond to the Jack loses, and a club to the Q returned. Declarer wins this, and takes a losing spade finesse. When a club comes back through, declarer is 2 off.

Ducking the second club works better on the layout, but covering works better when either East has the 9, or West has the King of spades.

	N	S	E	W
NT	2	2		
♠	1	1		
♥	2	2		
♦	2	2		
♣			1	1
opt	NS		1N : 120	

20. Dealer : W
Vul : All

♠ A 7 4			
♥ A 9 7			
♦ K Q J 5			
♣ Q 6 4			
♠ J 6 3	N		♠ 10 9 8 5 2
♥ K J 8 5 4 2			♥ -
♦ 8 2	W	E	♦ 10 9 3
♣ J 3			♣ A K 10 8 7
	S		
♠ K Q			16
♥ Q 10 6 3			6 7
♦ A 7 6 4			11
♣ 9 5 2			

W	N	E	S
2♥	2NT	pass	3NT
end			

Bidding :

West can just about manage a weak 2H, but all roads should lead to 3NT by North.

Play :

East is likely to try leading a small club on any auction, which unfortunately gives declarer their 9th trick – they can now simply cash 3 spades, 1 heart, and 4 diamonds. A more passive defence would have worked better, but it's hard to blame East for hoping to establish their suit.

	N	S	E	W
NT	2	2		
♠				
♥	2	1		
♦	2	2		
♣			1	1
opt	NS		1N : 120	

21. Dealer : N
Vul : N/S

♠ 10 9 7 4 2			
♥ K 7			
♦ 10 9 6 3			
♣ K 7			
♠ K Q 3	N		♠ A J 8 6 5
♥ J 8 4			♥ Q 10 9
♦ 7 5	W	E	♦ A 4 2
♣ 10 8 6 5 4			♣ Q 2
♠ -			
♥ A 6 5 3 2			6
♦ K Q J 8			6 13
♣ A J 9 3			15

W	N	E	S
	pass	1NT	2♥
pass	pass	2♠	dbl
end			

Bidding :

East opens 1NT, and South makes a heart-showing overcall – perhaps 2H showing hearts and a minor. East can now come back in with their spades, and South doubles again for takeout, showing a good hand. With 5 trumps and no guarantee of a fit, North will pass.

Play :

South leads the King of diamonds, and there isn't much else to be done – NS are going to come to 1 spade, 2 hearts, 1 diamond and 2 clubs to beat this by one. (North will get 1 spade by either ruffing, or as a natural trump trick.) +100 will not score well for NS though, as they're scoring more in either hearts or diamonds.

	N	S	E	W
NT	2	2		
♠			1	1
♥	3	3		
♦	5	5		
♣	2	2		
opt	NS		5D : 600	

22. Dealer : E
Vul : E/W

♠ A Q 8			
♥ 7			
♦ A K 4			
♣ A K 9 8 4 3			
♠ K J 4	N		♠ 6
♥ A K J 8 2			♥ Q 10 6 5 4 3
♦ 9 7 5 3	W	E	♦ J 10 8 2
♣ 5			♣ J 7
♠ 10 9 7 5 3 2			
♥ 9			20
♦ Q 6			12 4
♣ Q 10 6 2			4

W	N	E	S
		2♥	pass
4♥	dbl	pass	4♠
pass	4NT	pass	5♣/♦
pass	5♠	end	

Bidding :

It's far from an ideal suit to open vulnerable, but with 6-4 shape I think East can be forgiven. West raises to 4H, which puts North in an uncomfortable spot. South would rather have more values to bid over the double, but 6-4 shape suggests playing.

North can see slam having decent play even if partner has only Kxxxx spades, so might well make a slam try – bidding Keycard seems as reasonable as anything else, but either way should stop short.

Play : West can start by cashing a top heart, and then switching to a singleton club. This might panic South into to a safety play, as losing a spade finesse to East would result in a ruff. So, South might cash the A♠, come to hand with Q♦, then play a spade to the Queen. They'll emerge one trick worse off than anybody who just took the double spade finesse, and also worse than anybody who just passed the double and defended correctly.

Some EWs will escape for -1 in 4HX, by playing diamonds towards hand twice – North might easily misdefend by flying in with both Ace and King, crashing partner's Queen.

	N	S	E	W
NT	1	1		
♠	6	6		
♥			2	2
♦			1	1
♣	6	6		
opt	NS		6S : 980	

23. Dealer : S
Vul : All

♠ K 6					
♥ K Q 10 8 4					
♦ 5 4 2					
♣ Q J 7					
♠ 10 9 7 4 2	N			♠ J 8 3	
♥ 9 7 2				♥ J 6 5	
♦ 10 6 3	W		E	♦ K 8 7	
♣ 10 9		S		♣ A 6 5 4	
♠ A Q 5					
♥ A 3					11
♦ A Q J 9					0 9
♣ K 8 3 2					20

W	N	E	S
pass			2NT
pass	3♦	pass	3♥
pass	4NT	end	

Bidding :

The bidding sequence above should show a quantitative invite with 5 hearts, rather than RKCB. However, this does leave you with needing an alternative way of just making a slam try in hearts.

Play :

Declarer might try winning the spade lead in dummy, and taking a diamond finesse. Now AKQ of hearts (this is better than a finesse, as it gains against Jx in East), 2 more hearts (discarding a diamond and a club), repeating the diamond finesse, and then forcing out the Ace of clubs.

With all of the defenders' cards placed, nicely, 12 tricks should be made one way or another.

	N	S	E	W
NT	6	6		
♠	4	4		
♥	6	6		
♦	6	6		
♣	6	6		
opt	NS	6N : 1440		

24. Dealer : W
Vul : None

♠ 7 6 5					
♥ -					
♦ 7 6 5 4					
♣ K 10 7 6 3 2					
♠ Q 8 2	N			♠ 9	
♥ K 10 9 4 3				♥ A Q 7 6	
♦ J 2	W		E	♦ A Q 10 9 8 3	
♣ A 5 4		S		♣ 9 8	
♠ A K J 10 4 3					
♥ J 8 5 2					3
♦ K					10 12
♣ Q J					15

W	N	E	S
pass	pass	1♦	1♠
2♥	2♠	4♥	end

Bidding :

East can be hopeful of excellent play in 4H, despite having just 12 points. South might consider bidding 4S, but with Jxxx trumps it seems reasonable to hope that the bad break spells doom for their contract.

Play :

A♠ lead, and North can play a low one as suit preference for a club (South knows the position from the bidding, and North knows that). South switches to the Q♣, which declarer should duck, winning the second club.

Declarer will draw a trump, and will need to re-think when hearts are 4-0. Drawing all of them would leave them with no trumps to ruff a third club. Declarer needs to be careful. Assuming they started with the Ace, a small one to the 10 now. They take a losing diamond finesse, and when NS try a black suit, ruff high, and take another trump finesse. This leaves us in dummy to draw the 4th trump with the King, and then claim.

If declarer casually ruffs low, they won't be able to get to dummy to draw the last trump, and South will get to ruff a diamond.

	N	S	E	W
NT			5	5
♠	3	3		
♥			6	6
♦			4	5
♣	1	1		
opt	NS	6S : -500		

25. Dealer : N
Vul : E/W

♠ 5 4 3				♠ AK92
♥ 5				♥ Q107
♦ J10842				♦ K53
♣ J1084				♣ K76
♠ Q876	N			
♥ AJ984		W	E	
♦ Q				
♣ AQ9			S	
				♠ J10
				♥ K632
				♦ A976
				♣ 532
				2
				15 15
				8

	W	N	E	S
		pass	1♠	pass
2NT		pass	4♠	pass
end				

Bidding :

West starts with a Jacoby raise, and with 4333 I think East should show a minimum. This puts West off looking for a slam, and they should end in 4S.

Play :

South might try a passive club, and now declarer gets to 12 tricks quite easily – draw trumps and finesse hearts. (Declarer should always get trumps right as well, starting with Ace, then Queen – if they were 4-1, we'd find out about it before taking the finesse.)

East might start to regret showing a minimum, but it really wasn't a great slam. The heart finesse was needed, as well a reasonable trump break.

	N	S	E	W
NT			6	6
♠			6	6
♥			6	6
♦			1	1
♣			4	4
opt	EW		6NT : -1440	

26. Dealer : E
Vul : All

♠ Q76				♠ A103
♥ QJ97				♥ 43
♦ Q8				♦ A97432
♣ AQ85				♣ 92
♠ KJ92	N			
♥ AK102		W	E	
♦ K				
♣ J1063			S	
				♠ 854
				♥ 865
				♦ J1065
				♣ K74
				13
				15 8
				4

	W	N	E	S
			pass	pass
1♣		pass	1♦	pass
1♥		pass	INT	end

Bidding :

With 4414, West opens 1C, so they don't end up having to pretend to have a 5 card major. East might consider bidding 2D over 1H, but NTs score so much better than a minor at pairs that they're generally worth bidding if you can.

Play :

Without a standout lead, South leads the unbid suit. Unfortunately, this now resolves declarer's two-way finesse. North makes life slightly trickier by ducking, East winning the 10. There are no appealing suits to play on – diamonds are the longest, but lacking quality and entries (thanks to the spade lead).

So, a heart to the 10 and North's Jack, and North might try attacking diamonds, with small to dummy's King. There isn't really much for declarer to do, and will probably end up playing a spade to the Ace, and can now work out what South's lead was, cash the A♦, and then drop the now stiff Q♠ with North, for 8 tricks.

	N	S	E	W
NT			2	2
♠			3	3
♥			2	2
♦			3	3
♣			3	3
opt	EW		1S : -140	

27. Dealer : S
Vul : None

♠ 6 2			
♥ A K 5			
♦ Q 10 9			
♣ A 7 6 3 2			
♠ A K J 8 3	N		♠ Q 10 9 7 5
♥ J 6 4			♥ Q 10 9 8 2
♦ A 8	W	E	♦ J 4
♣ 10 9 8			♣ Q
♠ 4			
♥ 7 3			13
♦ K 7 6 5 3 2			13 7
♣ K J 5 4			7

W	N	E	S
			pass
1NT	pass	2♣	pass
2♠	pass	pass	3♦
3♠	4♦	end	

Bidding :

West continues with the theme of opening 1NT with a 5 card major, and East uses Stayman to try to find the best fit. South can protect with 3D, and with 8 cards in the majors West bids on, and now North might find a good bid of 4D – suspecting that they also have a double fit.

Play :

West leads K♠ for count, cashing one round. Realising that they are unlikely to set up a heart in time even if partner does have the Queen, they can now try switching to a club, in case partner happens to be singleton.

Declarer wins in hand (mildly relieved that the Q♣ has been found, mildly concerned about a ruff), then plays a diamond towards dummy. West rises with the Ace, and gives partner their ruff.

The good defence will reclaim some MPs against others playing in diamonds, but NS should score well regardless, with some 3S= and 4S-1 out there.

	N	S	E	W
NT	1	1		
♠			3	3
♥			2	2
♦	4	4		
♣	5	5		
opt	EW		5SX : 300	

28. Dealer : W
Vul : N/S

♠ J 9 8 6 3 2			
♥ Q 9 5			
♦ 3			
♣ K 6 4			
♠ -	N		♠ A Q 7 5
♥ A 8 3			♥ K 4 2
♦ 7 5 4 2	W	E	♦ K Q J 8 6
♣ A Q J 10 7 2			♣ 8
♠ K 10 4			
♥ J 10 7 6			6
♦ A 10 9			11 15
♣ 9 5 3			8

W	N	E	S
			pass
1♣	pass	1♦	pass
2♦	pass	3NT	end

Bidding :

With a game-forcing hand, East can start with 1D, but can pretty much rule out a spade fit when partner raises. (For certain if you open 1D with 4144.)

Play :

South leads a heart, which East wins in hand, to preserve a certain entry to dummy's clubs. Declarer doesn't want to lose to the long hand after hearts are established. We might not have to lose a club to South (Kx), so it's better to play on diamonds first. South wins, plays another heart, ducked by declarer, and the third won. When the club finesse loses to North, they can't play a heart through, and declarer makes +1.

North would have done better to switch to a spade rather than play a third heart, but that would have been wrong if partner held the Ace of spades rather than the King, as then they would have an entry to the established heart.

	N	S	E	W
NT			3	3
♠			1	1
♥			3	3
♦			6	6
♣			4	4
opt	EW		6D : -920	

29. Dealer : N
Vul : All

♠ A 10 6 5 2			
♥ 5 4			
♦ 10 5			
♣ A K 8 5			
♠ J 8 4	N		♠ Q 9 3
♥ Q 9 8 7 2			♥ A J
♦ K 8 7	W	E	♦ Q 6 4
♣ 7 6			♣ J 10 4 3 2
♠ K 7			
♥ K 10 6 3			11
♦ A J 9 3 2			6 10
♣ Q 9			13

W	N	E	S
	1♠	pass	2♦
pass	2♠	pass	3♥
pass	3NT	end	

Bidding :

AAK is worth an opening bid, and over 2S South tries 3H – not in the hope of finding a fit, but to avoid NTs if partner has nothing in clubs.

Play :

East doesn't have an attractive lead, but probably just leads a small club, which appears to give declarer a cheap trick with the 9. Declarer wants to play on spades, take diamond finesses, and unblock clubs - but entries are awkward.

A reasonable line might be to abandon thoughts of setting up spades. Spade to the Ace, run the 10♦. This loses, and we might get put on dummy with the spade King. Overtake the Q♣, cash another club, and repeat the diamond finesse. With diamonds 3-3 and split honours, this gives us 2 spades, 4 diamonds, and 3 clubs, to just make.

	N	S	E	W
NT	3	3		
♠	4	4		
♥	2	2		
♦	4	4		
♣	3	3		
opt	NS		4S : 620	

30. Dealer : E
Vul : None

♠ Q 10 8 5 3 2			
♥ 3			
♦ A 9 7			
♣ J 7 5			
♠ 4	N		♠ K 9 6
♥ A Q 9 8 7 2			♥ K 10 5 4
♦ K 5 4	W	E	♦ 3 2
♣ K Q 9			♣ A 8 6 4
♠ A J 7			
♥ J 6			7
♦ Q J 10 8 6			14 10
♣ 10 3 2			9

W	N	E	S
		pass	pass
1♥	2♠	2NT*	3♠
4♥	end		

Bidding :

Over a weak jump overcall, it's very useful to play 2NT as a good raise, as otherwise you can't make an unassuming cue bid that doesn't commit you to the 4 level. On this hand it doesn't matter, as partner is bidding game anyway!

South should consider 4S – but if we're expecting 6 spade tricks and maybe a ruff or a diamond, then that isn't going to good enough.

Play :

A spade lead to the Jack, and a diamond switch takes the first 3 tricks, and then declarer has no problem making the rest – ruff or win whatever is played back, draw trumps and the 3rd diamond can be ruffed or discarded on the 13th club (as they are 3-3).

As it happens, 4SX would have been a good sacrifice – the Ace of diamonds being an incredibly useful card. If the defenders had it, they could take 2 diamonds and a ruff, rather than no diamonds and no ruffs!

	N	S	E	W
NT				
♠	3	3		
♥			4	4
♦	2	2		
♣			4	4
opt	NS		4SX : -100	

31. Dealer : S
Vul : N/S

♠ A 9 6 4					
♥ Q 3					
♦ 10 7 6 5 3					
♣ A 6					
♠ J 10 7 3		N		♠ K Q 2	
♥ K 8 6 5 2				♥ A J 10 4	
♦ K 8		W	E	♦ Q 9 4	
♣ 10 9				♣ Q 4 3	
			S		
♠ 8 5					
♥ 9 7					10
♦ A J 2					7 14
♣ K J 8 7 5 2					9

W	N	E	S
pass			pass
pass	pass	1NT	pass
2♣	pass	2♥	end

Bidding :

While normally keen on light openings in 3rd seat, at adverse vulnerability and not wanting to attract a diamond lead, I'd be inclined to pass. West uses garbage Stayman to find the best major fit, and as North knows West has spades, chooses not to make a protective double.

Play :

South doesn't have an appealing lead, so might just try a trump. Declarer would have got the hearts right anyway, so nothing lost there. Declarer quite simply has 1 spade loser, 1 diamond and 2 clubs, which the defenders shouldn't be too hard-pressed to take.

Had South risked a club lead, declarer would have had to have ruffed the 3rd club high and taken a heart finesse, but that works as well!

	N	S	E	W
NT	2	2		
♠			1	1
♥			3	3
♦	2	2		
♣	3	3		
opt	EW		3H : -140	

32. Dealer : W
Vul : E/W

♠ 10 4 2					
♥ Q J 10					
♦ 3					
♣ A Q 10 4 3 2					
♠ Q 9 7 5 3		N		♠ K J 8	
♥ A 6				♥ K 7 5 4 3	
♦ A 8 7 6		W	E	♦ J 9 5	
♣ J 9				♣ 8 6	
			S		
♠ A 6					
♥ 9 8 2					9
♦ K Q 10 4 2					11 8
♣ K 7 5					12

W	N	E	S
pass	pass	pass	1NT
2♠	3♣	end	

Bidding :

There are many possible auctions here – West might fancy a light 1S opening, and North a 3C opening, given the vulnerability. 3C seems a likely final contract.

Play :

East leads a spade, which declarer can win, draw trumps, and play a diamond towards dummy. West wins the A♦, cashes a spade, and then switches to hearts, in case one can be discarded on a diamond. Declarer of course doesn't need to, holding QJ10, and so 3C makes, losing just 1 spade, 2 hearts and a diamond.

	N	S	E	W
NT	1	1		
♠			2	2
♥			1	1
♦	1	1		
♣	2	2		
opt	NS		2NTX, 3CX : -100	

With thanks to Alan Hayward for producing the commentaries.