

British Autumn Virtual Sim Pairs



**Wednesday
7th October 2020**

Welcome to the 2020 British Autumn Virtual Simultaneous Pairs.

Thank you for playing.

As the return of face to Face Bridge continues to be delayed, I hope that our Sims continue to provide an entertaining diversion. I also hope you enjoy the event and also the commentary provided by a leading expert. The commentator for this set of hands is Mike Pomfrey.

If you are playing this SIM at a virtual club other than your normal one encourage the committee at your main club to consider running a SIM or two.

You can find the full details and results at www.ebu.co.uk/sims/. You can earn Blue points in these Sim Pairs (in England) and they are awarded to the top third of the field. 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.

Ian Payn, Chairman EBU

<p>♠ K3 ♥ QJ10852 ♦ 942 ♣ 108</p> <p>♠ 965 ♠ AQ84 ♥ AK73 ♥ 64 ♦ AK8 ♦ Q5 ♣ KQ7 ♣ AJ432</p> <p>♠ J1072 ♥ 9 ♦ J10763 ♣ 965</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>6</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>19</td><td>2</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <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>6</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>6</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		6	13	19	2	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	6	4	3	5	6	W	6	4	3	5	6	<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>West</td> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Dbl</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>?</p> <p>This is quite an explosive start to the session. North has a routine (may I say impeccable) weak two and East a normal double. The shape is not perfect but double is still a stand out choice.</p> <p>I'm afraid I have no idea how West should approach matters. It rather depends on your partnership style. Is the East hand minimum or average for a double? For me it's perfectly middle-of-the-road, which makes West worth about a natural 4NT (if that's an option). Many will just blast 6NT.</p> <p>As we can see, 6NT is fine with the king of spades onside, not a big surprise as there's precious little for South to have. You would also succeed if North had ♠ J10 but not the king, by finessing the 8 first.</p>	West	North	East	South		2♥	Dbl	Pass								
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<p>♠ KJ2 ♥ 753 ♦ AKJ54 ♣ J8</p> <p>♠ AQ873 ♠ 10 ♥ Q ♥ K842 ♦ Q82 ♦ 10763 ♣ AK53 ♣ Q974</p> <p>♠ 9654 ♥ AJ1096 ♦ 9 ♣ 1062</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>13</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>17</td><td>5</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>2</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></tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		13	5	17	5	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	1	-	1	S	-	-	1	-	1	E	2	-	-	-	-	W	2	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>West</td> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♣</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Particularly at this vulnerability, North should not overcall, with far better defence than offence. Now East-West have some close decisions. First, should East respond? I think so; you may wish you hadn't if partner's next bid is, say, 3♠, but on balance 1NT is favourite to improve the contract. West now has the values for 2NT but 2♣ is a better choice, planning to bid 2NT next time (if there is a next time).</p> <p>There isn't, and 2♣ is the last making contract, though it might make an overtrick if North starts with a top diamond. That looks an obvious lead but it's surprising how often a trump is the best choice in these auctions.</p> <p>Either North or South might back in over 2♣ but it's fraught with danger. There's no guarantee of a fit and East figures to be short in spades, bad news for us.</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣	All pass		
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<p>♠ 32 ♥ Q106 ♦ J108 ♣ QJ654</p> <p>♠ J985 ♠ Q7 ♥ 874 ♥ A9532 ♦ AQ9 ♦ K63 ♣ K92 ♣ 873</p> <p>♠ AK1064 ♥ KJ ♦ 7542 ♣ A10</p>	<p>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">West</td> <td style="text-align: center;">North</td> <td style="text-align: center;">East</td> <td style="text-align: left;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: right;">?</td> </tr> </table> <p>Ostensibly this hand looks very similar to the last. This time, however, a lot of South's values are in the short suits, which tends to reduce the trick taking prospects in a suit contract.</p> <p>There's a good case for passing 1NT. With a decent hand you surely don't want to make those terrible diamonds trumps and the spade suit should produce as many tricks in no trumps as it does in spades.</p> <p>1NT is a touch-and-go affair. On a heart lead you can play the king, then ace and ten of clubs. It looks as if they are breaking, so overtake in dummy and play another, throwing a spade. On a heart return play the queen, which East can't duck, so that puts paid to the heart suit in defence. If you read it right you can get a third spade to go with four tricks in the other suits.</p>	West	North	East	South				1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	?
West	North	East	South										
			1♠										
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HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
6	N	2	1	-	-	1
10 9	S	2	1	-	-	1
	E	-	-	1	1	-
15	W	-	-	1	1	-

<p>♠ 642 ♥ Q94 ♦ AK102 ♣ Q95</p> <p>♠ 10853 ♠ AK7 ♥ A63 ♥ KJ87 ♦ J5 ♦ 763 ♣ AJ83 ♣ 1076</p> <p>♠ QJ9 ♥ 1052 ♦ Q984 ♣ K42</p>	<p>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">West</td> <td style="text-align: center;">North</td> <td style="text-align: center;">East</td> <td style="text-align: left;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>Maybe the authorities could reconsider including this one!</p> <p>Neither West nor North has an opening bid, unless your methods allow you to start proceedings with a flat 11 count. It's a possible choice to open 1♥ third in hand, planning to pass any response, as indeed I would. That would be fine this time, with everything breaking, but it sometimes works out very badly, especially vulnerable.</p> <p>I don't think you can criticise the great majority of players who pass out the hand, and they will feel aggrieved at not getting their money's worth.</p>	West	North	East	South	All pass			
West	North	East	South						
All pass									

HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
11	N	-	-	-	-	-
10 11	S	-	-	-	-	-
	E	2	1	2	2	2
8	W	2	1	2	2	2

<p>♠ 10765 ♥ 9532 ♦ J2 ♣ KJ4</p> <p>♠ Q3 ♠ AK842 ♥ A6 ♥ Q7 ♦ AQ853 ♦ 764 ♣ AQ83 ♣ 762</p> <p>♠ J9 ♥ KJ1084 ♦ K109 ♣ 1095</p>	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">West</td> <td style="text-align: center;">North</td> <td style="text-align: center;">East</td> <td style="text-align: left;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dbl</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3♠</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3NT</td> <td colspan="3" style="text-align: center;">All pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>Funny how these decisions seem to come in pairs today. But this time South has a far better suit. Even vulnerable against not it's not daft to open a weak two, which gives West a horrible headache. With only two spades, a double is far from ideal, your hearts aren't good for 2NT either and the hand as a whole is a bit strong.</p> <p>Let's say West starts with a double. North might raise hearts but if you are outgunned you don't want to tell opponents about the fit. Now, if East's 3♠ is invitational, can West find a pass? Surely you try 3NT, and a heart lead from North is curtains. 3NT makes from East, but how do East-West get this one right? I've got it! East responds 2NT, Lebensohl, to the double. West obediently says 3♣ and East bids 3♠, invitational. Now 3NT is played the right way round.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	Pass	2♥	Dbl	Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT	All pass		
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5	N	-	-	1	-	-
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	E	3	3	-	3	3
8	W	3	3	-	3	2

<p>♠ K108653 ♥ 97 ♦ Q2 ♣ Q53</p> <p>♠ Q4 ♠ J9 ♥ Q108 ♥ AKJ42 ♦ KJ10743 ♦ A965 ♣ A9 ♣ J2</p> <p>♠ A72 ♥ 653 ♦ 8 ♣ K108764</p>	<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♥</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>This is what happens if East-West get a clear run. You chalk up eleven tricks, twelve unless South finds an unlikely spade lead. North fills in the score sheet, or Bridgemate, and recoils in horror. What? How have we got a bottom? More enterprising Souths have made a somewhat dodgy weak jump overcall of 3♣, and more enterprising Norths have competed with 3♠, inviting partner to consider saving over the enemy game. And partner sure does! 4♠ is only one down, a great result. It would be a brave view for East-West to decline to take an inadequate penalty and risk bidding one more. And even if they do, so can North-South and still show a big profit against those who didn't bid at all.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	3♦	Pass	4♥	All pass																																		
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<p>♠ 102 ♥ AJ96 ♦ A104 ♣ KQ83</p> <p>♠ K963 ♠ AQJ ♥ 873 ♥ 542 ♦ K8732 ♦ 65 ♣ 4 ♣ A9762</p> <p>♠ 8754 ♥ KQ10 ♦ QJ9 ♣ J105</p>	<p>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>I often consider upgrading a really good 14 count and this is certainly one. Third in hand, however, with a doubleton spade, the case for opening 1NT is stronger. It's not so likely you would miss a game and it's good to make it harder for opponents to bid spades. Actually, you might open 1NT whether you play it weak or strong! Although the defence appear to have five tricks against a no trump contract, it's not at all easy to take them. Say East leads a club; North wins in hand and plays a second club. The only defence to 3NT is to take the ace at once and play spades from the top. West's nine is just good enough. Note that it's a good idea to lead the second club from the North hand. You don't want to give West a chance to signal before East plays.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	Pass	1NT	All pass																																					
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<p>♠ KQJ10963 ♥ Q10 ♦ K103 ♣ 6</p> <p>♠ 8 ♠ - ♥ J9874 ♥ K532 ♦ A5 ♦ QJ982 ♣ AK987 ♣ Q1032</p> <p>♠ A7542 ♥ A6 ♦ 764 ♣ J54</p>	<p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1♥</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5♣</td> <td>?</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>With 5-5 West obviously opens the major, despite the disparity in the suits. North is content with 1♠ for the moment. Although it's a pretty good hand, those red honours, especially the hearts, are less use in offence than defence; it would be silly to jump to game and find no-one can make anything. East has no such qualms and neither, of course, has South. Now West is in a quandary. Who can make what? It seems highly likely that game is on for someone, so you should bid on. 5♣ may sound like a slam try, which you're clearly not worth with such poor trumps, but you desperately want to get the right lead should opponents not give up at the five level. It's hard for both North and South to know they've done their bit. Sometimes, however, with very big fits for both sides the Law of Total Tricks goes awry.</p>	West	North	East	South	1♥	1♠	3♠	4♠	5♣	?																																						
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<p>♠ K85 ♥ 72 ♦ 9643 ♣ Q1063</p> <p>♠ J43 ♠ A10976 ♥ J10953 ♥ Q6 ♦ A75 ♦ K102 ♣ J7 ♣ A54</p> <p>♠ Q2 ♥ AK84 ♦ QJ8 ♣ K982</p>	<p>Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </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>All pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>Despite the five card major, that looks like a weak no trump. Now, is South worth a double? Not in my book, with no obvious lead. But if South passes it's easy for East-West to play 2♥ the right way round. South can't lead diamonds to advantage and a loser eventually goes away on the spades.</p> <p>If South does scrape up a double there are two possible upsides. West may become declarer in 2♥, which gives the defence a slim chance and maybe, just maybe, North-South can get together in clubs.</p> <p>Should East open 1♠, South doubles and West raises to 2♠. That contract is impregnable but it's a little more likely North-South will compete to their advantage.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥	All pass
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15	E -	-	2	2	1	
	W -	-	1	2	1	

<p>♠ K5 ♥ 42 ♦ 10962 ♣ J8763</p> <p>♠ 103 ♠ AQJ86 ♥ QJ7 ♥ AK109853 ♦ KQJ8753 ♦ 4 ♣ 10 ♣ -</p> <p>♠ 9742 ♥ 6 ♦ A ♣ AKQ9542</p>	<p>Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♦</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♥</td> <td>All pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>This is a bit more exciting than arguing over whether someone can make 2♥! East has near enough a game hand but you must start by trying to show your suits as soon as you can. South might opt for 3♥, asking partner to bid 3NT with a heart stop, but the hand as a whole is very powerful so you also give yourself a little room. West competes naturally (anyone for a fit jump of 3♦ if playing five card majors?). Now how many clubs should North bid? Four? Five? None at all? I don't like 5♣; it's far too likely to force opponents to bid a slam, which you don't want at all. East won't be denied and goes for it anyway. 7♣ would be cheap(ish) but neither North nor South can be sure 6♥ will make. In any case, a slam sacrifice often scores badly when others in the field stay in game.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♥	2♣	2♦	4♣	4♠	Pass	5♥	Pass	6♥	All pass
West	North	East	South														
		1♥	2♣														
2♦	4♣	4♠	Pass														
5♥	Pass	6♥	All pass														

HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
4	N 4	-	-	-	-	
9 14	S 4	-	-	-	-	
13	E -	5	6	5	-	
	W -	5	6	5	-	

<p>♠ 10853 ♥ 982 ♦ 853 ♣ Q93</p> <p>♠ AQJ4 ♠ K762 ♥ Q4 ♥ 763 ♦ KJ76 ♦ A1042 ♣ A54 ♣ K7</p> <p>♠ 9 ♥ AKJ105 ♦ Q9 ♣ J10862</p>	<p>Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dbl</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>All pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>How good is the East hand opposite a double? You have good top cards and three hearts opposite presumed shortage, so it's a little strong for 2♠. A possible compromise is an unassuming cue bid of 2♥, which should get you to game.</p> <p>The defenders lead three rounds of hearts, West ruffing low. The 4-1 trump break is momentarily disconcerting but you should still pick up the queen of diamonds for eleven tricks.</p> <p>How about North lying on the second round of hearts and implying a doubleton? You can see your four trumps and, if you can persuade declarer to ruff high, you get an extra trick and a lot more match points.</p>	West	North	East	South				1♥	Dbl	Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All pass		
West	North	East	South																		
			1♥																		
Dbl	Pass	2♥	Pass																		
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass																		
4♠	All pass																				

HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
2	N 1	-	-	-	-	
17 10	S 1	-	-	-	-	
11	E -	5	-	5	2	
	W -	5	-	5	2	

<p>♠ Q8762 ♥ K94 ♦ 95 ♣ 852</p> <p>♠ 4 ♥ Q10853 ♦ Q732 ♣ 974</p> <p>♠ 953 ♥ AJ7 ♦ AKJ6 ♣ QJ6</p> <p>♠ AKJ10 ♥ 62 ♦ 1084 ♣ AK103</p>	<p>Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>West</td> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♦</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>I'm really not a fan of overcalling on a four card suit, though it's de rigeur among the younger generation. I'm prepared to make an exception this time with a good suit and no other suitable positive bid. I could live with pass but it'll be difficult to catch up thereafter.</p> <p>West's 3♦ is pre-emptive. You shouldn't bother to show the hearts with such a weak hand. If partner has hearts then surely they can outbid you in spades. North of course competes and South shouldn't be tempted to bid game. You've achieved your objective when you bid 1♠ and partner doesn't promise much. Even 3♠ relies on a fortunate lie of the clubs.</p> <p>The par contract is for East-West to compete to the four level in either red suit, doubled and one down, but that won't happen often.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠	3♦	3♠	All pass	
West	North	East	South										
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠										
3♦	3♠	All pass											

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
5	N 1	-	-	3	-
4 16	S 1	-	-	3	-
15	E -	3	3	-	-
	W -	3	3	-	-

<p>♠ KJ982 ♥ 106 ♦ K1094 ♣ A2</p> <p>♠ 654 ♥ QJ54 ♦ J62 ♣ Q54</p> <p>♠ Q3 ♥ AK93 ♦ Q87 ♣ K1097</p> <p>♠ A107 ♥ 872 ♦ A53 ♣ J863</p>	<p>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>West</td> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Dbl</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> </table> <p>All pass</p> <p>East's is a pretty rotten double, but you just have to. What happens next will depend on how frisky West feels. West hasn't got a lot but, with nothing in spades, you might boldly go where others fear to tread.</p> <p>A 3♥ contract, perhaps reached via Lebensohl, should be two down, vulnerable, a lousy score even if no-one doubles. An advertisement for caution, then?</p> <p>Not necessarily; it's more than possible that North won't be able to resist bidding a third spade and now you are really in the game. Will declarer play the doubler, who has advertised shortness in spades, for the queen? A plus score for East-West would be huge. Sometimes you have to speculate to accumulate.</p>	West	North	East	South		1♠	Dbl	2♠
West	North	East	South						
	1♠	Dbl	2♠						

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
11	N 1	3	-	3	2
6 14	S 1	3	-	3	2
9	E -	-	1	-	-
	W -	-	1	-	-

<p>♠ K7653 ♥ AK6 ♦ 1052 ♣ 92</p> <p>♠ 982 ♥ J7 ♦ KQJ4 ♣ QJ105</p> <p>♠ AJ104 ♥ 1092 ♦ A93 ♣ A84</p> <p>♠ Q ♥ Q8543 ♦ 876 ♣ K763</p>	<p>Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>West</td> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♥</td> <td>Dbl</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>All pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>This is a really horrible Aspro overcall, but don't let that put you off; at least it prevents the opposition from playing in 1NT. West was looking forward to 1NT but you have to make the best of a bad job. West's 2♥ is equivalent to a takeout double; although you only have three spades, it's a sensible bid. Partner duly bids spades and North, for one, is happy.</p> <p>Curiously, 2♠ may actually make. Say South leads a heart. North wins and switches to spades, ducked by declarer. Another heart and another spade, declarer finessing, is followed by a heart ruff and three top diamonds, the ace of clubs and two more spades at the end.</p> <p>I think it takes the lead of the queen of spades to defeat 2♠. It looks risky but it's likely partner has at least four trumps, so cut out the ruffs.</p>	West	North	East	South			1NT	2♣	2♥	Dbl	2♠	All pass
West	North	East	South										
		1NT	2♣										
2♥	Dbl	2♠	All pass										

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
10	N -	-	1	-	-
10 13	S -	-	1	-	-
7	E 2	3	-	1	1
	W 2	3	-	1	1

<p>♠AQ643 ♥J102 ♦K83 ♣Q6</p> <p>♠1097 ♠82 ♥AK9 ♥7543 ♦J7642 ♦AQ9 ♣102 ♣AK97</p> <p>♠KJ5 ♥Q86 ♦105 ♣J8543</p>	<p>Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Dbl</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♦</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Yes, in most circumstances the North hand is a weak no trump, but not in third seat, especially vulnerable. It's just too dangerous and, moreover, you want to help partner when you are highly likely to end up defending. It looks pretty normal for East-West to reach 3♦ which will make on the nose. If you are allowed to ruff a spade you can't pick up all the trumps so you exchange one loser for another. North-South have to give in gracefully. But once again sensible tactics don't always get their reward. If North were to open 1NT and play there, best defence gets nine tricks. Heart to the king, jack of diamonds and declarer is sunk. But a lot of the time North will get away with six tricks which just beats conceding 110 in 3♦. Maybe faint heart ne'er won fair match point.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	Pass	1♠	Dbl	2♠	3♦	All pass		
West	North	East	South														
			Pass														
Pass	1♠	Dbl	2♠														
3♦	All pass																

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
12	N	-	-	1	-
8 13	S	-	-	1	-
7	E	1	3	3	- 2
	W	1	3	3	- 2

<p>♠QJ864 ♥J974 ♦62 ♣82</p> <p>♠K532 ♠97 ♥Q1063 ♥52 ♦95 ♦AKQ107 ♣1093 ♣KJ75</p> <p>♠A10 ♥AK8 ♦J843 ♣AQ64</p>	<p>Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>With modest diamonds, South's hand is not a textbook 1NT overcall, and it's a point over by some people's standards, but what else can you bid? North Staymans her way to a spade part score, which is right on the money. It looks like some work is needed to draw trumps and set up a third heart trick but, with the threat of the jack of diamonds in dummy, the defenders rather run out of options. I would expect 2♠ plus one to be fairly common, but no doubt people will find many other results.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	Pass	1♦	1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠	All pass	
West	North	East	South														
Pass	Pass	1♦	1NT														
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦														
Pass	2♠	All pass															

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
4	N	-	-	2	3
5 13	S	-	-	2	3
18	E	1	1	-	- 1
	W	1	-	-	- 1

<p>♠97 ♥Q1063 ♦1096 ♣AK53</p> <p>♠K8642 ♠AQJ10 ♥97 ♥AKJ85 ♦Q3 ♦82 ♣J942 ♣Q6</p> <p>♠53 ♥42 ♦AKJ754 ♣1087</p>	<p>Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dbl</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>All pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>It may look odd to advocate an unsuccessful auction but life can be hard at times. A normal opening bid, a normal (if thin) overcall and you can't blame West for competing. A double, showing four spades is, of course, quite enough on this hand. North has no qualms about raising what should be a six card suit and the spotlight falls on East. 3♠ would sound simply competitive and surely partner can produce something useful other than the king of spades. Sadly not, and it shouldn't be hard for the defenders to take their two ace-kings. Should South decline to overcall, West responds 1♠ and East will probably settle for a raise to three. Were South to choose a weak jump overcall I guess West will pass; East reopens with a double and again the bidding probably subsides in 3♠.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1♥	2♦	Dbl	3♦	4♠	All pass
West	North	East	South										
	Pass	1♥	2♦										
Dbl	3♦	4♠	All pass										

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
9	N	-	2	-	-
6 17	S	-	1	-	-
8	E	1	-	2	3
	W	1	-	2	3

♠ KQJ542
♥ 9
♦ 97
♣ J953

♠ A3 ♠ 1087
♥ 854 ♥ QJ3
♦ K1042 ♦ QJ85
♣ Q864 ♣ AK7

♠ 96
♥ AK10762
♦ A63
♣ 102

HCP	
7	
9	13
11	

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1NT	2♥
Pass	?		

This is really annoying. South has plenty for a simple overcall, West has nothing to say, but what about North? There's every chance that 2♠ will play at least as well as 2♥ but to take out partner's two level overcall must surely be constructive, showing a better hand than you have. Unfortunately, you can't make 2♥, so long as the defenders take one round of trumps and duck the first spade, while 2♠ is easy. Indeed, it looks as if very precise defence is needed to guarantee holding a spade contract to eight tricks. Try a diamond lead, forcing declarer to take a quick discard on the hearts. Then, whether or not declarer tries to ruff a club, we duck a round of trumps, take the next and finish up by ruffing the last club ourselves.

♠ Q1053
♥ K5
♦ J842
♣ 1073

♠ J84 ♠ A62
♥ Q6 ♥ AJ872
♦ 976 ♦ A105
♣ A8542 ♣ KJ

♠ K97
♥ 10943
♦ KQ3
♣ Q96

HCP	
6	
7	17
10	

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

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT			

The first three bids look about right and you couldn't blame West for bidding one more, with the queen of partner's suit and five clubs to the ace. But it's far too high; the defence can set up either spades or diamonds in one blow, you can't get to the club suit and the hearts don't break either. You can't even make 1NT!

OK, you are a bit unlucky, but you need an awful lot going for you to make game. What's gone wrong? I think the answer is that East's hand is nowhere near as good as it looks. An awkward doubleton in your short suit and widely spaced honours in the red suits are unpromising. At pairs pass 1NT and hope to take your plus.

♠ AJ1096
♥ A63
♦ A9
♣ A98

♠ Q8 ♠ K54
♥ Q8752 ♥ KJ104
♦ Q1085 ♦ J63
♣ 74 ♣ Q105

♠ 732
♥ 9
♦ K742
♣ KJ632

HCP	
17	
6	10
7	

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

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	All pass	

Here's a far better balanced 17 count, with a really good suit and aces everywhere. You would be justified in raising a 1NT response but, of course, that's not what partner bids. Now it's obvious to bid the spade game. With both black suits perfectly placed it should be a simple matter to make twelve tricks. On a heart lead take one ruff, back to the ace of diamonds, ruff another heart and play dummy's last trump, finessing. There's nothing East-West can do; on a different line of defence the clubs come in for plenty of discards.

<p>♠ Q2 ♥ Q1075 ♦ Q976 ♣ A72</p> <p>♠ K53 ♠ J109 ♥ 863 ♥ KJ94 ♦ AKJ2 ♦ 105 ♣ Q105 ♣ J986</p> <p>♠ A8764 ♥ A2 ♦ 843 ♣ K43</p>	<p>Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>I'm afraid this is how the auction would go if I were South. Even vulnerable against not, I believe it's usually winning policy to get your oar in first. And when partner bids one of your three card holdings, surely you'll call it a day rather than insist on spades.</p> <p>A pity, because 2♠ makes and 2♦ doesn't. At least, that's if we're all computers. In spades the trumps are very fortunately placed and the defence can't stop us making the queen of diamonds without setting up a vital discard. They'll need to be sharp to defeat 2♦, though. A club lead looks best; in fact, so long as they don't play hearts from the wrong side or help you set up the spades, it'll be a struggle.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦	All pass	
West	North	East	South										
	Pass	Pass	1♠										
Pass	2♦	All pass											

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
10		N	-	1	-	2	-
13	6	S	-	1	-	2	-
		E	1	-	1	-	-
		W	1	-	1	-	-

<p>♠ 8742 ♥ Q7543 ♦ A43 ♣ 9</p> <p>♠ J93 ♠ K10 ♥ AJ82 ♥ 10 ♦ K1095 ♦ QJ72 ♣ 104 ♣ KQ8732</p> <p>♠ AQ65 ♥ K96 ♦ 86 ♣ AJ65</p>	<p>Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>All pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>South has an awkward hand on the first round. It's not quite good enough for 1NT, unsuitable for a double and this is not the time for a four card overcall. There may be some raised eyebrows about East's jump raise to 3♦. An aceless 11 count? But there's method in that madness. 3♦ is simply a reflection of your losing trick count, and there aren't many of those.</p> <p>And we noticed South's dithering on the first round. So we're not making it easy to back in next time.</p> <p>3♦ doesn't make, but is only one off. If the defenders take a club ruff the suit is easily set up and, if not, you can play on clubs anyway or ruff plenty of hearts. Minus 100 should be OK against a major suit part score at other tables.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass	3♦	All pass
West	North	East	South										
		1♣	Pass										
1♦	Pass	3♦	All pass										

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
6		N	-	-	2	3	1
9	11	S	-	-	2	3	1
		E	1	2	-	-	-
		W	1	2	-	-	-

<p>♠ AK3 ♥ AK1032 ♦ 105 ♣ 753</p> <p>♠ 104 ♠ J976 ♥ J986 ♥ 5 ♦ AKQ84 ♦ J932 ♣ KJ ♣ Q1084</p> <p>♠ Q852 ♥ Q74 ♦ 76 ♣ A962</p>	<p>Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♦</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>Dbf</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>All pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>Yes, I know East has done a lot of bidding on a four count. But all the signs are good for us. Partner may have four hearts, but that means five diamonds as well so the total trick count is reasonably high.</p> <p>Should North have bid on? That's a big hand for a simple overcall but it's also better defensively than offensively. Maybe there's a case for a double on the second round, so long as partner reads it as competitive, not hands off, and does the right thing. It's a hand where good players might engineer a disaster by striving for the best possible result.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	1♦	1♥	Dbf	2♥	Pass	Pass	3♦	All pass
West	North	East	South														
			Pass														
1♦	1♥	Dbf	2♥														
Pass	Pass	3♦	All pass														

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
14		N	2	-	3	1	2
14	4	S	2	-	3	1	2
		E	-	3	-	-	-
		W	-	3	-	-	-

<p>♠ 43 ♥ 63 ♦ K6 ♣ KJ98764</p> <p>♠ 652 ♠ KJ10987 ♥ AQ9 ♥ K1054 ♦ 109742 ♦ 85 ♣ 52 ♣ A</p> <p>♠ AQ ♥ J872 ♦ AQJ3 ♣ Q103</p>	<p>Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♣</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">?</td> </tr> </table> <p>What an interesting situation! Both 3♣ and 3♠ look routine (there's too much disparity in East's suits to keep hearts in the picture). A pre-empt in second seat shouldn't be rubbish so, with our cards well placed, South has no hesitation in having a bash at game.</p> <p>Now what should East-West do? As we see, 3NT played by South is laydown, so somebody needs to sacrifice. But who? West has some potentially useful cards but can't tell whether 3NT is making. East has a better idea that it is, but will 4♠ be cheap enough?</p> <p>As we can see, very much so. Now South had better be sure to take the money, meagre though it is, rather than hazard a speculative 5♣. There's a better chance of 4NT sneaking through, not an unreasonable choice.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	3♣	3♠	3NT	?			
West	North	East	South										
Pass	3♣	3♠	3NT										
?													

HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
7	N	4	-	-	-	2
6 11	S	4	-	-	-	3
16	E	-	-	1	3	-
	W	-	-	1	3	-

<p>♠ KQ1094 ♥ 643 ♦ J ♣ J976</p> <p>♠ A7 ♠ J653 ♥ AK87 ♥ QJ9 ♦ AK9753 ♦ 64 ♣ 4 ♣ A1085</p> <p>♠ 82 ♥ 1052 ♦ Q1082 ♣ KQ32</p>	<p>Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♦</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3NT</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>This is very unfair! How can we not make 3NT after partner's bid? But, on a spade or club lead, East has to lose two diamonds and at least three black tricks. Maybe West should have been more scientific with a reverse of 3♥. But partner won't have four hearts, so where are we going? The computer can make 5♥, but that takes some doing. Win the lead and play ace and a small diamond. Now you can ruff the diamonds good and take advantage of the 3-3 heart break. Whatever.</p> <p>5♦ makes as well, but on an even more unlikely sequence of plays. On a club lead you win, ruff a club and cash one top trump. Now use dummy's hearts to ruff two more clubs, cash a top heart and exit with ace and another spade. With only spades left North can't prevent you making the nine of trumps. More whatever.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠	1NT	Pass	3NT	All pass		
West	North	East	South														
	Pass	Pass	Pass														
1♦	1♠	1NT	Pass														
3NT	All pass																

HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
7	N	-	-	-	-	-
18 8	S	-	-	-	-	-
7	E	1	5	5	2	2
	W	1	5	5	2	2

<p>♠ 97 ♥ KQJ1043 ♦ K72 ♣ 32</p> <p>♠ KJ105 ♠ A642 ♥ A7 ♥ 962 ♦ J943 ♦ 1085 ♣ A65 ♣ Q94</p> <p>♠ Q83 ♥ 85 ♦ AQ6 ♣ KJ1087</p>	<p>Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>How good is the North hand opposite a weak no trump? The auction I've given is invitational and, perhaps, slightly pushy. South has a reasonable minimum but with very poor trumps will decline the invitation.</p> <p>Whatever West leads, the success or failure of the contract comes down to a club guess. Once West turns up with plenty outside it's a guess you may well get wrong.</p> <p>Why do you force me into these tough decisions, partner?</p> <p>On reflection, maybe that North hand is just about worth a game try at teams, but not at pairs.</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥	All pass	
West	North	East	South														
		Pass	1NT														
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥														
Pass	3♥	All pass															

HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
9	N	2	-	3	-	1
13 6	S	2	-	3	-	1
12	E	-	-	-	1	-
	W	-	-	-	1	-

<p>♠ AJ109 ♥ 9754 ♦ Q9 ♣ J86</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ 108 ♦ K108643 ♣ K1053</p> <p>♠ Q7632 ♥ K6 ♦ 752 ♣ Q94</p> <p>♠ K84 ♥ AQJ32 ♦ AJ ♣ A72</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>8</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19</td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	8		N	1	-	4	2	4	6	7	S	-	-	4	2	4			E	-	2	-	-	-	19		W	-	2	-	-	-	<p>Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>South is a point light for a 2NT opening but justifies it on the grounds of a) a good five card suit, b) I play the cards better than you, partner, so I'm not going to risk you being declarer. Most of us use some form of five card Stayman but in this case it doesn't matter how many hearts South has shown.</p> <p>West has an interesting choice of leads. A spade gives East an insuperable problem; if you duck, declarer is in dummy for a heart finesse, if you cover you give the whole suit away. A trump is a nothing lead and gets you nowhere, a diamond is a disaster, as it happens, but a club is really nasty for declarer. Sooner or later, East can get in to play a diamond, which declarer hates. It looks as though the only winning line is: spade to the ace, heart finesse, ace of hearts, back to dummy with a trump, spade finesse through East. Very unlikely indeed.</p>	West	North	East	South				2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	All pass	
HCP		Makeable contracts																																																													
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																									
8		N	1	-	4	2	4																																																								
6	7	S	-	-	4	2	4																																																								
		E	-	2	-	-	-																																																								
19		W	-	2	-	-	-																																																								
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Pass	4♥	All pass																																																													
<p>♠ Q9432 ♥ Q10 ♦ J532 ♣ A6</p> <p>♠ KJ7 ♥ K9754 ♦ 7 ♣ J742</p> <p>♠ A1085 ♥ J62 ♦ Q94 ♣ KQ9</p> <p>♠ 6 ♥ A83 ♦ AK1086 ♣ 10853</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>9</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>12</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	9		N	-	3	-	-	1	8	12	S	-	3	-	-	1			E	1	-	3	1	-	11		W	1	-	3	1	-	<p>Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>3♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This all hinges on how brave South is. You can't bid over 1NT but should you back in next time? If so, should you bid diamonds or 2NT, keeping clubs in the picture? Either is a big gamble; you are vulnerable, West can still have close to an opening bid and you have no guarantee of a fit. At teams you wouldn't make this bid in a month of Sundays; at pairs it's a possibility.</p> <p>3♦ is a make as you should get the trumps right. East-West can make 3♥ but may not be brave enough to bid it. In 3♥ you'd like to maximise your chances in the trump suit by starting with a low one from dummy. On a spade lead, threatening a defensive ruff, you have to burn your boats and play a trump towards the dummy. But 3♦ has a good chance to win the contract; East-West know they have eight hearts but can't tell the opposing diamond fit is so good.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥	3♦	All pass			
HCP		Makeable contracts																																																													
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																									
9		N	-	3	-	-	1																																																								
8	12	S	-	3	-	-	1																																																								
		E	1	-	3	1	-																																																								
11		W	1	-	3	1	-																																																								
West	North	East	South																																																												
Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass																																																												
2♦	Pass	2♥	3♦																																																												
All pass																																																															
<p>♠ 62 ♥ K97 ♦ AKJ8 ♣ J964</p> <p>♠ KJ853 ♥ QJ62 ♦ 952 ♣ K</p> <p>♠ AQ109 ♥ A53 ♦ Q73 ♣ 1052</p> <p>♠ 74 ♥ 1084 ♦ 1064 ♣ AQ873</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>12</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td> <td>12</td> <td>S</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	12		N	2	2	-	-	-	10	12	S	2	2	-	-	-			E	-	-	2	3	-	6		W	-	-	2	3	-	<p>Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>After an Aspro auction, anchoring to the weaker major, East-West alight in a contract with nine easy tricks. A Landy 2♣ gets to the same spot. However, this time it might have been better to defend 1NT. It's not at all obvious what to lead but, not being blessed with second sight, declarer is likely to finesse in clubs, and then the roof falls in.</p> <p>I can't imagine passing the West hand at any vulnerability or form of scoring. But the hand does illustrate that your willingness to compete against 1NT should be governed at least as much by their vulnerability as by yours. If you can get 200 by defending you can't beat that by bidding.</p>	West	North	East	South		1NT	Pass	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠	All pass		
HCP		Makeable contracts																																																													
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																									
12		N	2	2	-	-	-																																																								
10	12	S	2	2	-	-	-																																																								
		E	-	-	2	3	-																																																								
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2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass																																																												
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<p>♠ AJ10 ♥ 65 ♦ 10543 ♣ KJ65</p> <p>♠ Q6 ♠ K87 ♥ J97 ♥ AK843 ♦ AQ972 ♦ J6 ♣ 982 ♣ AQ3</p> <p>♠ 95432 ♥ Q102 ♦ K8 ♣ 1074</p>	<p>Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>All pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>East has a close decision here. It's not a nailed on raise to game; some might prefer a trial bid. However, there are two downsides; a trial bid sometimes helps the defenders in their lead and thereafter, and it's not clear in which suit to make the try. If pressed I would choose spades but I prefer the direct approach.</p> <p>The cards lie reasonably kindly; both minor finesses work though the diamonds don't break and the trump queen doesn't fall in two rounds.</p> <p>Most of us would be happy with ten tricks but there is a route to eleven. Say South leads a spade, headed by the queen and ace. North may return a trump or a club; it matters not. ♦ J is covered by the king and ace, you cash the queen, noting the fall of the 8, and play the 9, discarding a club if it's not covered. The losing club goes away while South has to ruff with a winning trump.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥	All pass
West	North	East	South										
		1♥	Pass										
2♥	Pass	4♥	All pass										

HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
9	-	-	-	-	-	
9 17	N	-	-	-	-	-
5	S	-	-	-	-	-
	E	3	3	5	1	3
	W	2	3	5	1	3

<p>♠ AQJ987 ♥ KJ94 ♦ 96 ♣ K</p> <p>♠ 105 ♠ K642 ♥ A852 ♥ Q6 ♦ K73 ♦ QJ52 ♣ Q853 ♣ AJ9</p> <p>♠ 3 ♥ 1073 ♦ A1084 ♣ 107642</p>	<p>Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dbl</td> <td>?</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>It's good policy to respond with minimum values, but South's hand would perhaps be a bridge too far. West hasn't got much of a reopening double but it's another example of why you must bid at pairs. East-West can make two of either minor, amid a few alarms, but North will probably compete to 2♥ or 2♠. Both go down, the former more so as you quickly run out of trumps.</p> <p>East must not punish partner for enterprise; settle for defending at the two level. Though you have plenty of values they are not working as hard in offence as defence; the only action I would consider is a tight match point double. And the biggest downside of pushing too much is that you discourage partner from competing in future.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl	?		
West	North	East	South														
			Pass														
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass														
Dbl	?																

HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
14	-	-	-	1	-	
9 13	N	-	-	-	-	-
4	S	-	-	-	-	-
	E	2	2	-	-	2
	W	2	2	-	-	2

<p>♠ J1074 ♥ J64 ♦ 86 ♣ KQ75</p> <p>♠ KQ3 ♠ A92 ♥ 1085 ♥ AQ2 ♦ KQ102 ♦ J943 ♣ 1062 ♣ A93</p> <p>♠ 865 ♥ K973 ♦ A75 ♣ J84</p>	<p>Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>?</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Unfashionably, I might downgrade this one to a weak no trump with its sterile shape and poor four card suit. That would be the end of the story, whereas if you treat it as a 15 count you will be in 3NT. The question is: will you make nine tricks?</p> <p>A heart lead gives you nine tricks at once, so let's say South chooses something neutral, like a spade. Double dummy, I can think of a way to nine tricks but it's very obscure. You have to eliminate South's black cards, so start by ducking a club. If they don't co-operate and continue spades then duck another club. Only now can you knock out the ace of diamonds, trusting that South has it and no more black cards.</p> <p>Now cash the diamonds, ending in dummy. In order to keep three hearts, North has to discard both potential black winners or it's easy. Finally play a heart from dummy – the 8 works best to avoid guesswork – and duck it to South, who is endplayed. What a lot of effort to tie those pairs who were given it at trick one!</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	Pass	?	
West	North	East	South						
Pass	Pass	?							

HCP	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
7	-	-	-	-	-	
10 15	N	-	-	-	-	-
8	S	-	-	-	-	-
	E	1	3	1	2	3
	W	1	3	1	2	3