



Commentary
for the
IBU Autumn Simultaneous Pairs
Tuesday 7th November 2023

Dear Bridge Player,

Thank you very much for playing in the IBU Simultaneous Pairs 2023, and for supporting the Irish Bridge Union (IBU).

As you probably know, the IBU is the confederation of the Contract Bridge Association of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Bridge Union, and has responsibility, on an all-Ireland basis, for sending teams to represent Ireland at World and European competitions. During the summer, one such team did battle on our behalf at the World Championships in Marrakech, finishing in a very creditable thirteenth place. The costs of such competitions, like most costs these days, are increasing significantly, so your support for this Simultaneous Pairs, and for the various live competitions run during the season by the IBU, is greatly appreciated.

We hope that you enjoyed the chance to pit your bridge wits against your fellow players across Ireland (and for those still playing online, maybe overseas as well). As always, the hands (which are randomly generated by computer with no manual intervention whatsoever) provided plenty of tricky problems. Many thanks to our expert commentators Randal Milne (Monday), Enda Glynn (Tuesday), Brian Senior (Wednesday), Peter Goodman (Thursday), and Gay Keaveney (Friday) for their guidance through the maze. I hope that you have picked up some useful tips from their advice. Don't forget to check your standing in the national results at www.ecatsbridge.com/sims.

Peter O'Meara

President, Irish Bridge Union

Our basic system is 5-card majors, 12-14 NT, and potentially short 1♣ opening

Board 1	♠ AKQ94	Dealer N	
	♥ K65	Vul: None	
	♦ 74		
	♣ A102		
♠ 63		♠ J72	
♥ AQ10972		♥ J3	
♦ J3		♦ KQ1052	
♣ J74		♣ 863	
	♠ 1085		
	♥ 84		
	♦ A986		
	♣ KQ95		
West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♠*
3♥	4♠	All Pass	

After a normal 1♠ opening South will raise to 2♠. I think the best way to play the 2♠ bid in this sequence is for the bid to show eight to

ten high card points. With a weaker hand and spade support one can go via a 1NT response and subsequently bid 2♠. (Of course, the later 2♠ bid could also show up to 10 points and 2 spades). West's 3♥ intervention is lead-directing and North with sixteen high card points (and with his heart king likely well placed) can confidently bid 4♠. If West does not intervene North can make a trial bid in clubs or hearts and South with a maximum and good fitting cards can raise to 4♠. With the favourable breaks in spades and clubs, declarer has an easy eleven tricks.

Tip: Over a 1♥ or 1♠ opening use the response of 2♥ or 2♠ to show 8 to 10 high card points.

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

Board 2

♠ AJ106	Dealer E
♥ 873	Vul: N-S
♦ AKQ65	
♣ 6	

♠ 8	♠ K92
♥ KQ94	♥ 10652
♦ 432	♦ 1087
♣ 98743	♣ Q52

♠ Q7543
♥ AJ
♦ J9
♣ AKJ10

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♣*	Pass	1♠
all pass		Pass	4♠

Over South's 1♠ opening North's bid of 3♣ shows a singleton club, 4-card spade support and interest in a slam if South can co-operate. South with lots of his points in clubs (not worth their full value in the context of a splinter bid) simply bids 4♠. A bid of 4♣ by North in this sequence is best used to show a club void, 4-card trump support, with game or possibly slam values. West will lead the heart King – an attacking lead rather than an innocuous club. South can make twelve tricks if he declines the trump finesse and discards his losing heart on dummy's diamond Queen. Optimistic bidders will need to decline the trump finesse to bring home the slam, assuming the opening lead establishes the defence's heart trick.

Tip: After partner opens a major, use the jump to the 3-level in a new suit as showing one card in that suit – guaranteeing 4-card trump support, forcing to game and possibly a slam. After a major suit opening a jump by partner to the 4-level in a new suit will show a void in that suit – guaranteeing 4-card trump support and with the right values for a slam to be investigated.

Makeable Contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	3	6	2	6	5
S	3	6	2	6	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 3

♠ AKQJ943	Dealer S
♥ A	Vul: E-W
♦ Q85	
♣ 53	

♠ 2	♠ 87
♥ 109642	♥ Q873
♦ K764	♦ 102
♣ 976	♣ KQJ84

♠ 1065
♥ KJ5
♦ AJ93
♣ A102

West	North	East	South
Pass	4♥*	Pass	4♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♠	all pass	

The 4♥ bid is a transfer to spades. 4NT is Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB) and North settles for a small slam. If North transferred at the 2-level the bid of 4NT would be quantitative not RKCB. There is little to the play and declarer loses just one diamond trick. Even if a club lead is found declarer can discard his potential club loser on the heart King in the early play. North should realise that South's hand is limited after the weak notrump opening and that a grand slam bid would be over optimistic. Unless you can count thirteen sure tricks a grand slam contract should be avoided.

Tip: After partner transfers at a high level and follows with a bid of 4NT, that is RKCB. A low-level transfer followed by 4NT is a quantitative bid, not an ace-asking bid. In the second situation with a maximum (for your 1NT opening) you can advance to 6NT (or 6 of the major if holding three or more cards in the agreed major).

Pass of 4NT is recommended with a minimum opening after the quantitative bid. With a minimum hand and holding three or more cards in the transferred suit a simple bid at

the 5-level in that suit is recommended. Partner should follow this bid with a pass.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	5	-	6	6
S	1	5	-	6	6
E	-	-	1	-	-
W	-	-	1	-	-

=====

Board 4 Dealer W Vul: Both

♠ J75	♠ AK42
♥ K942	♥ AQ108
♦ 62	♦ K10
♣ KQJ3	♣ 975

♠ Q98	♠ 1063
♥ 75	♥ J63
♦ J8543	♦ AQ97
♣ 864	♣ A102

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♦	Pass	INT	All Pass

South lacks the right shape for a takeout double. West may be tempted to bid 1♦ over partner's potentially short 1♣, even with this paltry collection. He has a five-card suit and the bid will work out well with this hand. East will rebid INT and that should end the auction. In the play East can play the diamond King early and follow later with the diamond 10. East will make four spades, two hearts and one diamond. The spade Queen can be used as an entry for the established diamond. The defence can only take four clubs and two diamonds. If West passes the opening bid of 1♣, North should also pass as his best suit is clubs. If North bids, East/West may get to a better spot.

Tip: Use judgement in balancing position as to which is best – pass or make a bid. If opponents are vulnerable and you have good values in their suit pass is usually the better option.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	-	1	-	-
S	1	-	1	-	-
E	-	1	-	1	-
W	-	1	-	1	-

=====

Board 5 Dealer N Vul: N-S

♠ Q852	♠ J76
♥ K8	♥ Q97
♦ QJ95	♦ A76
♣ AK4	♣ Q976

♠ K43	♠ A109
♥ A10652	♥ J43
♦ K4	♦ 10832
♣ J108	♣ 532

West	North	East	South
1♥	1♦	Pass	Pass
	1♠	2♥	All Pass

Vulnerable against Non-Vulnerable, with a flat five count South does best to pass throughout the auction. He may be tempted to bid 3♦ on the second round of bidding. East with good defensive values may apply the axe to 3♦ and minus 200 is rarely a good score. Eight tricks are the limit for East/West in a heart contract. In a competitive auction with only eight trumps between the two hands it is best not to advance beyond the 2-level.

Tip: With an eight-card fit compete just to the 2-level and not beyond. With a nine-card fit a 3-level contract is in order in a competitive auction. See the Law of Total Tricks for more detail.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 6 ♠ 964 Dealer E
 ♥ 62 Vul: E-W
 ♦ J974
 ♣ AQ65

♠ 732 ♠ Aj8
 ♥ QJ7 ♥ K109853
 ♦ Q52 ♦ 103
 ♣ K932 ♣ 108

 ♠ KQ105
 ♥ A4
 ♦ AK86
 ♣ J74

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT*	2♥	Db1
All Pass		Pass	3♣

The 2NT bid by North is artificial (Lebensohl) over partner's takeout double of a weak 2♠. It shows less than eight points. South in this instance bids 3♣ intending to pass any bid by partner if he bids again. An immediate bid of 3♣/3♦/3♥ by North will show nine plus points and be constructive. On the surface it appears that a diamond contract is better for North/South. Careful play by declarer limits his losers to one in each suit. The club spots are significant. On this occasion it would be unwise of West to raise his partner's bid to the 3-level, even holding three trumps. The vulnerability should be the main deterrent. It is difficult for North/South to get the optimum result of 2♥ doubled minus 2, for plus 500.

Tip: Use the Lebensohl bid of 2NT over partner's double of a weak 2 bid holding less than eight points. Partner is obliged in principle to bid 3♣ in response but with a strong hand can make a forward move. Lebensohl allows the partnership to distinguish between a forced bid and a constructive one in response to partner's takeout double of a weak 2 opening.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 7 ♠ J5 Dealer S
 ♥ K863 Vul: Both
 ♦ J1072
 ♣ Q108

♠ AQ3 ♠ 10984
 ♥ J104 ♥ A972
 ♦ K943 ♦ Q5
 ♣ J93 ♣ K64

 ♠ K762
 ♥ Q5
 ♦ A86
 ♣ A752

West	North	East	South
All Pass			INT

South's opening bid of INT wins the auction. East is not good enough to balance with a bid showing both majors. The spotlight is now on West to find a good opening lead. The diamond spots are no great shakes and if West chooses the heart Jack, he will strike gold. It is a crisper lead. Declarer will do best to play a club to the 10 at trick two. East will win and switch to spade 10. West will win and continue with heart 10. The defence will score a diamond trick in the later play. If you find the heart Jack lead, well done. As Paul Scannell says "the money is in the defence".

Tip: Try a crisp attacking opening lead rather than leading a poor suit.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	1	-	-	-
S	1	1	-	-	-
E	-	-	1	1	1
W	-	-	1	1	1

Board 8 ♠ Q642 Dealer W
 ♥ AK8 Vul: None
 ♦ J542
 ♣ J9

♠ 53 ♠ K108
 ♥ 106532 ♥ 94
 ♦ 86 ♦ AKQ97
 ♣ Q654 ♣ K108

 ♠ Aj97
 ♥ QJ7
 ♦ 103
 ♣ A732

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♦	Dbl
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

South has just about enough for a takeout double of East's 1♦ opening. North has eleven points but his two minor suit jacks are almost worthless. A simple jump to 2♠ is recommended – that should show eight to nine high card points. On this occasion even if he jumps to 3♠, South will pass and the most likely outcome is nine tricks for declarer. The best defence is two top diamonds followed by a small one. Declarer will ruff this with spade 7 or 9. Declarer will lose a spade and a club in subsequent play after a further diamond force from East.

Tip: Downgrade a hand with unsupported Jacks.

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

Board 9		♠ AJ1097	Dealer N
		♥ A65	Vul: E-W
		♦ 5	
		♣ Q742	
♠ KQ3			♠ 86
♥ 108			♥ KJ97
♦ AK964			♦ Q1083
♣ AK9			♣ 653
		♠ 542	
		♥ Q432	
		♦ J72	
		♣ J108	

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	all pass

After North's 1♠ opening followed by two passes West does best to make a takeout double. East will probably favour 2♥ and West will now bid 2NT. That bid should show 18 to 20 high card points with stoppers in spades. East will raise to 3NT. The opening lead of the spade Jack will test declarer's mettle. He counts his tricks – five diamonds, two clubs, and one spade, so another trick is required to

bring home the contract. After cashing the diamonds declarer should simply play a heart up to the King – a quick trick is needed in that suit to make the contract, and North/South's bidding (or lack of it) indicates that North is odds-on to hold the Ace. Any declarer who runs the heart 10 early or late will meet his Waterloo. North who opened the bidding is favourite to hold the heart Ace and if the heart 10 is led he should follow low smoothly. As Michael McDonagh often said "When I see nine tricks I take them".

Tip: Try and figure out from the bidding where the keycards are located before deciding on a line of play.

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

Board 10		♠ J86	Dealer E
		♥ AQ98	Vul: Both
		♦ 10987	
		♣ Q7	
♠ 94			♠ KQ102
♥ 52			♥ J1043
♦ KJ54			♦ A6
♣ K9643			♣ J82
		♠ A753	
		♥ K76	
		♦ Q32	
		♣ A105	

West	North	East	South
		Pass	INT
All Pass			

East in the pass out position should resist a bid showing both majors and elect to defend. After a likely club lead declarer may try and develop a diamond trick to make the contract. If West leads the spade 9 declarer must rise with the Jack as his spade spots are good enough to develop a second trick in the suit. It will be a tight race as to which side will score the seventh trick.

Tip: When a card from a short suit is led through dummy it is frequently correct to cover that card in dummy to develop a

second trick in the suit, so watch the spot cards carefully.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-				
S	-				
E	2	-	-	-	-
W	2	-	-	-	-

Board 11

	♠ 63	Dealer S
	♥ AJ106	Vul: None
	♦ 86	
	♣ 97542	
♠ K954		♠ QJ87
♥ 8543		♥ KQ7
♦ 95		♦ AKQ107
♣ J108		♣ 6
	♠ A102	
	♥ 92	
	♦ J432	
	♣ AKQ3	

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	2♦*	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	All Pass

The Meckwell convention is a useful tool for competing against INT openings. After years of competitive bridge Eric Rodwell and Jeff Meckstroth devised the Meckwell convention as the best way to compete against opening bids of INT. The bid of a minor over a INT opening shows that suit and a major. If over the minor a 2♠ bid is made by the overcaller's partner, the overcaller passes (even if his suits are hearts and a minor). In this hand West will bid 2♥ over his partner's 2♦ bid. Overcaller will now bid 2♠ and that will probably end the auction. There is a club contract on for North/South but it is not easy to get there. Defending 2♠ South will be tested to find the best defence. He will have to switch to a heart and partner will need to duck so that a heart ruff can be negotiated. That is not an easy defence to find and many East/West pairs will score well for making ten tricks in a spade contract.

Tip: Use the Meckwell convention to compete over opponents INT opening. A bid of a minor shows that suit and a major. There are many defences to the opponents' INT

opening, but after years of experience multiple world champions Meckstroth and Rodwell concluded this was the best weapon to compete.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 12

	♠ K985	Dealer W
	♥ K854	Vul: N-S
	♦ KJ10	
	♣ 108	
♠ AQJ103		♠ 7
♥ J93		♥ A762
♦ 8		♦ 976542
♣ J743		♣ K5
	♠ 642	
	♥ Q10	
	♦ AQ3	
	♣ AQ962	

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	INT
All Pass			

West at favourable vulnerability may be tempted to enter the fray over South's INT opening to show spades and a minor. North will double showing good values and South with good defensive cards will pass. The double of 2♠ must be penalty-orientated, as a bid of 2NT is available to North (via another element of the Lebensohl convention) should he wish to compete. As recommended here many times unsupported Jacks are generally worthless. That is why West should pass rather than compete. Wandering into the auction on these type of hands after partner has passed is unwise. West will be minus 500 with only a part-score on for North/South.

Tip: With unsupported Jacks, be wary of entering the auction, especially opposite a passed partner.

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

Board 13	♠ J1053	Dealer N
	♥ Q8742	Vul: Both
	♦ QJ6	
	♣ 2	
♠ 976		♠ 2
♥		♥ AJ1065
♦ A987432		♦ K5
♣ 873		♣ J10654
	♠ AKQ84	
	♥ K93	
	♦ 10	
	♣ AKQ9	

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

North has a difficult bid to make after partner opens 1♠. As outlined earlier a 2♠ raise should show 8 to 10 points. 4♠ is an overbid. A 1NT response is recommended. Partner will now bid 3♣ and responder has a normal raise to 4♠. South will know that North's hand is limited because of the 1NT response. Bidding 2♠, 3♠, or 4♠ on the first response may well lead to South getting too high with his excellent values. Best defence can hold declarer to ten tricks.

Tip: With a limited hand even with good support for partner, caution is recommended. If appropriate you will get another chance to show a little extra.

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

Board 14	♠ Q54	Dealer E
	♥ Q10	Vul: None
	♦ KJ1084	
	♣ A43	
♠ AKJ		♠ 1072
♥ J652		♥ AK73
♦ AQ2		♦ 75
♣ 1097		♣ KJ62
	♠ 9863	
	♥ 984	
	♦ 963	
	♣ Q85	

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♣	1♦	1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

It is best for West not to be jumping around on the second round of bidding with his fifteen high card points. Leave the decision to partner, who can bid again if appropriate. Here, over 2♥ with good support in clubs, East is worth a raise to the heart game. A spade lead will defeat the contract but a diamond lead is more likely. Declarer is fortunate that the heart queen is doubleton. After drawing trumps clubs can be tested. Declarer will lose two club tricks but the long club will take care of the losing spade. Any North/South pair who defeat the heart game will score well.

Tip: With flat 15 or 16 high card points and a fit for partner a simple raise to the 2-level is recommended. Avoid jumping on your rebid.

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

Board 15 ♠ J94 Dealer S
 ♥ A9832 Vul: N-S
 ♦ 865
 ♣ 109

♠ AK62 ♠ Q105
 ♥ 106 ♥ KQJ
 ♦ AKQ4 ♦ 92
 ♣ AQ8 ♣ K7632

♠ 873
 ♥ 754
 ♦ J1073
 ♣ J54

West	North	East	South
			Pass
2NT	Pass	4♣*	Pass
4NT*	Pass	6NT	All Pass

The 4♣ bid is Gerber and the 4NT response shows three Aces. East bids a confident 6NT safe in the knowledge there is only one Ace missing. If North leads a low heart declarer will score all thirteen tricks. Also, if he declines to take the first heart declarer will also make all the tricks. Bidding an immediate 6NT over the 2NT opening is not recommended. Gerber should be used to protect against two missing Aces. Twenty points plus eleven means that it is certainly possible to be missing two Aces. Gerber is often maligned, but immediately over a preceding NT bid, as here, it can be very useful.

Tip: When opponents bid confidently to a small slam take your ace when given the opportunity.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	6	5	4	6	6
W	6	5	4	6	6

=====

Board 16 ♠ J97532 Dealer W
 ♥ K8 Vul: E-W
 ♦ Q1043
 ♣ J

♠ A4 ♠ KQ6
 ♥ 764 ♥ AQ953
 ♦ 8 ♦ AK72
 ♣ Q987653 ♣ 4

♠ 108
 ♥ J102
 ♦ J965
 ♣ AK102

West	North	East	South
3♣	Pass	3♥*	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

It is important to agree with your partner that the bid of a new suit after a pre-empt is forcing for one round. East has only one club and his hand is unsuitable for a notrump contract. If West had no support for hearts he would simply have to repeat his own suit and hope for the best. In a heart contract there are only two losers. A notrump contract can be held o nine tricks.

The best policy with a good hand after partner pre-empts and you do not have primary support for partner's suit is to bid your longest suit. This policy will usually lead you to the optimum contract.

Tip: With a strong hand after partner makes a pre-emptive bid, the best policy is to bid your longest suit. This will usually allow enable you to arrive at the best contract.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	1	5	2	3
W	4	1	4	2	3

=====

Board 17 ♠ 109754 Dealer N
 ♥ KJ2 Vul: None
 ♦ 872
 ♣ A3

♠ AKQ ♠ J863
 ♥ Q105 ♥ 87
 ♦ Q109 ♦ K6543
 ♣ 10764 ♣ Q9

♠ 2
 ♥ A9643
 ♦ AJ
 ♣ KJ852

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♥
Dbl	2♥*	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Rory Timlin, an international of yesteryear, recommended bidding game after a major fit has been determined whenever you hold an outside 5-card suit. The above hand is a textbook example of the theory in practice, and once the fit has been established South should make a forward move of 3♣. Even though South has a minimum hand for his opening, and even though North/South have only a combined total twenty-one points, there are eleven tricks available in a heart contract. North co-operates after the trial bid as all his values are in the right place. The second spade can be ruffed and a successful heart finesse will follow. The trump King can be cashed and declarer can turn his attention to clubs. The third club can be ruffed with dummy's last trump and the only losers are a spade and a diamond.

Tip: Once a fit is established in a major suit bid game if holding another 5-card suit.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 18 ♠ 102 Dealer E
 ♥ J8532 Vul: N-S
 ♦ 8
 ♣ KJ873

♠ QJ85 ♠ AK64
 ♥ A4 ♥ Q
 ♦ AKJ109 ♦ 753
 ♣ 42 ♣ AQ1065

♠ 973
 ♥ K10976
 ♦ Q642
 ♣ 9

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥*	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♠*	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	pass	5♦*	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♠	All Pass

The bidding is natural up to West's bid of 2♥ which is 4th suit forcing to game. He is too strong to bid a simple 4♠ at this stage. East will show secondary support for diamonds with 3♦ bid. West will now bid 3♠ setting the trump suit. He will follow partner's 4♠ bid with RKC B 4NT. East will show three keycards. West can now follow with a bid of 5NT, guaranteeing all the keycards and the trump queen – a grand slam try. With a singleton on the first suit bid by partner and some honours missing in the club suit, East will settle for 6♠.

North should make an attacking lead - the club 8 is suggested. West may think this is a singleton and in some instances decline the finesse, rising with the club Ace and placing his hopes for twelve tricks on the diamonds coming home for no loser. The club play will determine whether declarer makes twelve or thirteen ticks.

Tip: Make an attacking lead against a suit slam – in the above hand apply the pressure early.

	Makeable Contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	2	-	-
S	-	-	2	-	-
E	5	7	-	7	7
W	5	7	-	7	7

Board 19

♠ K98	Dealer S
♥ 32	Vul: E-W
♦ K83	
♣ A8643	

♠ A1032	♠ QJ
♥ KQJ1064	♥ 75
♦ AJ	♦ Q106542
♣ 7	♣ 952

♠ 7654
♥ A98
♦ 97
♣ KQJ10

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♥	Pass	Pass	Dbf
2♥	3♣	3♥	All Pass

South will make a takeout double in the protective position. North/South may get as far as 4♣ but East with some values will raise West's bid of 2♥ to 3♥. If NS get to 4♣ West, looking at a likely three tricks, will double for penalties hoping his partner can supply one further trick in defence. 4♣ doubled down one is a great save at favourable vulnerability.

Tip: You can afford to push the boat out at favourable vulnerability

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

Board 20

♠ A632	Dealer W
♥ QJ109743	Vul: Both
♦ K5	
♣	

♠ 7	♠ 854
♥ K	♥ 62
♦ AJ9872	♦ Q10
♣ A9863	♣ KQJ1054

♠ KQJ109
♥ A85
♦ 643
♣ 72

West	North	East	South
1♦	4♥	Pass	Pass
4NT*	Pass	5♣	5♥
6♣	Pass	Pass	?

This is a lethal hand and East/West must be careful not to push opponents into 6♥ which can make if declarer divines the heart position. South has a difficult bid over 6♣. He will either double or bid 6♥. His good spade suit might tempt him to bid on as he has no values in the minors. East's lead of the club King in all probability shows the queen of that suit as well. West has bid strongly in the minors so declarer may well guess the heart position correctly and bring home the slam. With good 7/4 shape an initial bid of 4♥ by North is recommended.

Tip: Be careful bidding on without requisite values. You may push your opponents to a higher destination which will be to your detriment.

	Makeable Contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	6	6	-
S	-	-	6	6	-
E	4	3	-	-	-
W	4	3	-	-	-

Board 21 ♠ 96 Dealer N
 ♥ J2 Vul: N-S
 ♦ 98653
 ♣ K765

♠ AQJ872 ♠ 3
 ♥ AQ4 ♥ K10873
 ♦ 42 ♦ AKQ
 ♣ 109 ♣ AQ42

 ♠ K1054
 ♥ 965
 ♦ J107
 ♣ J83

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦*	Pass	3NT	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

East will make a rebid of 3♣ and West is too strong to bid a simple 4♥. He bids the 4th suit (always forcing to game when bid at the 2-level up). East shows a stopper in diamonds and West's bid of 6♥ closes the auction. South will probably lead the diamond Jack. There are many roads to twelve tricks. One line is a spade finesse at trick two, followed by the Ace and a ruff. Then a heart to the queen followed by another spade ruff. Trumps drawn now ending in dummy and declarer will make all thirteen tricks. Finessing a club and ruffing two clubs in dummy will also succeed as the trump Jack is doubleton.

Tip: When you see dummy take your time and try to plan your best line of play.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	5	4	7	6	6
W	5	4	7	6	6

=====

Board 22 ♠ 1092 Dealer E
 ♥ J Vul: E-W
 ♦ Q976
 ♣ AJ987

♠ 8765 ♠ Q
 ♥ 10532 ♥ AK8764
 ♦ K8 ♦ J432
 ♣ 632 ♣ Q4

 ♠ AKJ43
 ♥ Q9
 ♦ A105
 ♣ K105

West	North	East	South
		1♥	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠

The doubleton heart Queen lessens the power of South's hand and a simple overcall of 1♠ is recommended. Remember an overcall can be as much as seventeen points. Once North raises to 2♠, South has an easy 4♠ bid. The defence will start with a heart, and East may switch to a low diamond. Declarer will have to be on his toes to make twelve tricks. He will have to rise with the diamond Ace, cash one trump and will see the trump Queen fall. He can follow with a heart ruff and play the spade 10 from dummy. Next, he holds his breath and plays a club to the 10. He can then draw trumps and discard his losing diamonds on the established clubs. If South finds all those plays North should buy him a good drink.

Tip: An overcall at the 1-level can be up the seventeen points. Put a good suit in the picture immediately. If your partner can't bid, where are you going?

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 23 ♠ AJ642 Dealer S
 ♥ KQ74 Vul: Both
 ♦ 86
 ♣ K7

♠ K1087
 ♥ 85
 ♦ J1054
 ♣ Q82

♠ Q953
 ♥ J96
 ♦ Q32
 ♣ 1096

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♣	1♠	INT	2♠
Dbl	All Pass		

The double by West shows a strong hand and is takeout. East, with good values in spades, may elect to pass and convert the double to penalties. East starts with the heart 8. West realises that his partner is unlikely to bid INT with a singleton (especially in the West of Ireland!!) so he ducks the first heart. Declarer does best to play Ace and another spade. The defence now have six tricks – plus 200 is usually a good matchpoint score.

Tip: Defending doubled part-score hands the defence needs to be sharp and accurate.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	1	-
S	-	-	-	1	-
E	4	4	1	-	2
W	5	4	1	-	2

Board 24 ♠ J632 Dealer W
 ♥ A862 Vul: None
 ♦ 97
 ♣ QJ8

♠ 7
 ♥ K743
 ♦ J108542
 ♣ 109

♠ KQ985
 ♥ QJ1095
 ♦ 6
 ♣ AK

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♦	2NT*
4♦	4♥	5♦	All Pass

South's bid of 2NT shows at least five cards in each of the unbid suits. West with good distribution raises to the 4-level and his partner has an easy 5♦ bid. If North/South decide to bid on it will not be successful as two ruffs can be arranged and minus 500 at equal vulnerability is rarely good. After repeated heart leads East can establish the clubs and make eleven tricks.

Tip: Be wary of sacrificing at equal vulnerability.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	2	2	-
S	-	-	2	3	-
E	2	5	-	-	1
W	2	5	-	-	1

Board 25 ♠ K652 Dealer N
 ♥ 9764 Vul: E-W
 ♦ 10854
 ♣ 7

♠ Q94 ♠ J108
 ♥ 32 ♥ KQJ108
 ♦ AKJ9 ♦ Q763
 ♣ QJ98 ♣ A

♠ A73
 ♥ A5
 ♦ 2
 ♣ K1065432

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♥	3♣
3NT	All Pass		

This will be a simple straightforward auction to 3NT unless South is brave enough to up the ante with a bid of 4♣ at favourable vulnerability. 4♥ is destined to go one down as South can organise a diamond ruff. Declarer can scramble seven tricks in a club contract which is a good save against the vulnerable NT game. I am sure there will be a number of hardy souls who will rise to the occasion and introduce clubs at the 4-level.

Tip: Good judgement is required whether to defend or sacrifice at favourable vulnerability.

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

Board 26

♠ K107653	Dealer E
♥	Vul: Both
♦ QJ3	
♣ 10852	

♠ J9	♠ A2
♥ AJ85	♥ 1073
♦ A1074	♦ K62
♣ AQ6	♣ KJ743

♠ Q84
♥ KQ9642
♦ 985
♣ 9

West	North	East	South
2NT	Pass	Pass	2♥
		3NT	all pass

After South opens a weak two bid in hearts, it is not easy for North/South to find the spade sacrifice against the making 3NT game. A number of intrepid North players will enter the fray over 2NT and strike gold as 4♠ doubled is only two light for minus 500. The King of hearts lead will sink 5♣ if East declares in that suit. There are only nine tricks in NT so the contract of 4NT will end in failure. North players who introduce their spade suit with a void in partner's suit will be congratulated for their ingenuity. They obviously are disciples of Terence Reese's maxim "Never hide a good 6-card suit".

Tip: Sometimes fortune favours the brave.

	Makeable Contracts				NT
	♣	♦	♥	♠	
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	2	-
S	-	-	-	2	-
E	4	4	2	-	3
W	5	4	2	-	3

Board 27

♠ J8743	Dealer S
♥ J	Vul: None
♦ J10743	
♣ 98	

♠ KQ9	♠ A10
♥ A98	♥ 6532
♦ AK85	♦ 962
♣ A52	♣ 10743

♠ 652
♥ KQ1074
♦ Q
♣ KQJ6

West	North	East	South
Dbl	Pass	2♣	1♥
2NT	All Pass		Pass

West has forced East to bid so the 2NT rebid should show 18 to 20 points. North will obediently lead partner's suit. South will overtake, and now there is no escape for declarer. Despite a combined total of twenty-four points there are only seven tricks available for declarer. It would be a mistake for East to raise to 3NT as apart from the spade Ace he has no source of tricks.

Tip: With a strong hand after forcing partner to bid and hearing a weak response, do not get too excited.

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

Board 28 ♠ 43 Dealer W
 ♥ 10964 Vul: N-S
 ♦ AKJ2
 ♣ 962

♠ 72 ♠ AKQ5
 ♥ Q5 ♥ J8
 ♦ 64 ♦ Q753
 ♣ AQJ8543 ♣ K107

♠ J10986
 ♥ AK732
 ♦ 1098
 ♣

West North East South
 3♣ Pass 5♣ Dbl
 All Pass

With only two hearts East does not leave the door open and rises to the occasion with a bid of 5♣. South is in a quandary. He has only eight points but has two 5-card major suits. If South doubles the spotlight is on North. He has a reasonable hand but his two probable defensive tricks suggest a pass is the best option. Full marks to the East players who put the pressure on with a bid of 5♣ which is an excellent save against a vulnerable 4♥.

Tip: With a good fit for partner and some values pile the pressure on and do not leave the gate open.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====