



Commentary
for the
IBU Autumn Simultaneous Pairs
Thursday 9th 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

Board 1	♠ 982 ♥ void ♦ 86542 ♣ KJ754	Dealer N Vul: None
♠ J54 ♥ KJ10854 ♦ void ♣ Q1096	♠ AK7 ♥ A92 ♦ AJ1073 ♣ A2	
	♠ Q1063 ♥ Q763 ♦ KQ9 ♣ 83	

I would expect E/W to arrive in 4♥ and South will lead the ♦K. With ten tricks on top you can easily set up a second diamond trick by running the ♦J, forcing South to part with his ♦Q.

Below is the three-card ending we aim for when we plan: either diamonds break 4-4 or the ♠QT drops in two rounds. North will do well to hide his discard distress and Declarer is

entitled to take advantage of this to work out if he can exit with the ♦7 to endplay North to lead away from his ♣KJ.

♠ J	♦ 8
♣ Q10	♣ KJ
♠ Q	♦ 7
♣ 83	♣ A2

Possible Auction

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	2NT	Pass
4♦*	Pass	4♥	Pass

*Usually, to Passlay in 4♥ This may also be followed by 4NT Blackwood.

If West transferred to 3♥ and then raises to 4♥, it is best to play that as invitational to consider 6♥ as a possibility.

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

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Board 2	♠ A10953	Dealer E
	♥ Q93	Vul: N-S
	♦ AQ92	
	♣ 9	
♠ KQ	♠ 762	
♥ A108654	♥ K72	
♦ 53	♦ 74	
♣ K107	♣ AQJ53	
	♠ J84	
	♥ J	
	♦ KJ1086	
	♣ 8642	

This will be a competitive part-score with West probably buying the contract in 3♥, even though N/S can make 3♠ or 4♠ when East leads ♥2. The hand shows the power of a “double fit” for N/S who have a spade and diamond fit.

Any E/W who concede -140 or -170 will feel very unlucky.

Possible Auction

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♥	1♠	2♠*	Pass
3♥	Pass		

* 3♥ and 10-11 pts by a passed hand, can be more if non-passed.

South has almost got a 3♠ bid but it only works because North has good cards in diamonds and no wastage values in clubs.

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

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Board 3	♠ Q9	Dealer S
	♥ AK109	Vul: E-W
	♦ A10876	
	♣ 65	
♠ AJ87	♠ 10632	
♥ 86	♥ Q7	
♦ K9542	♦ QJ3	
♣ AQ	♣ KJ108	
	♠ K54	
	♥ J5432	
	♦	
	♣ 97432	

West will open 1♦ and North has a problem. Double is a poor option with only two spades. I prefer 1♥ to a pass with the North cards, notwithstanding the 4-card suit.

East will often double and South should only raise to 3♥, as Kxx spades is a defensive holding. In general, you want your points in your long suits for offensive bidding. You have the right shape for 4♥ but points in your short suits is not so good.

3♠ can go two off so those who buy the contract in 2♠ will score well.

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♥*	Dbf	3♥
Pass			

* Be very careful with 4-card overcalls as you need a very good suit and a good reason to risk it. I would be tempted to bid 3♠ with the West cards.

It is only the bad diamond break that creates the problems in 3♠ +140 will score very well for N/S.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 4

♠ 10	Dealer W
♥ 9762	Vul: Both
♦ K107543	
♣ 103	
♠ AK7543	♠ QJ62
♥ AQ4	♥ 1053
♦ Q	♦ 8
♣ J96	♣ AKQ52
♠ 98	
♥ KJ8	
♦ AJ962	
♣ 874	

Not an easy slam to bid. West will open 1♠ and East does best to bid 2♣ rather than a Jacoby 2NT and is far too good for a direct 4♦ splinter.

West's spade suit quality is not suitable for a 3♠ rebid so she will make a waiting bid of 2♠, assuming 2♣ was game-forcing. When East now bids 3♠, West should drive on to 6♠ via Blackwood.

Choosing between Jacoby and a suit bid when you have 4-card support is often key and it often boils down to the quality of your side suit and what you want to show in the other two suits.

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣*	Pass
6♠			

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	2	-	-	-
S	-	2	-	-	-
E	6	-	2	6	1
W	6	-	2	6	1

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Board 5

♠ J852	Dealer N
♥ K86	Vul: N-S
♦ 54	
♣ AJ106	
♠ Q74	♠ A
♥ Q95	♥ A743
♦ J7632	♦ KQ108
♣ K4	♣ Q985
	♠ K10963
	♥ J102
	♦ A9
	♣ 732

Stopping below game is the key here.

I don't object to considering opening INT with the East hand. However, I advise you deduct a point when you have a singleton Ace or King and are considering INT. These hands rarely play well; hence you need the top end 16 or 17 points to open INT.

After 1♦ from East South can stretch to bid 1♠, West is a bit good to pass so can try INT or 3♦ North should not rush to bid 3♠ at this vulnerability and should be content with 2♠ if available. West will compete to 3♦ and E/W will score well.

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠
INT	2♠	Db1*	Pass
3♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 6 ♠ K642 Dealer E
 ♥ 98 Vul: E-W
 ♦ J8765
 ♣ J2

♠ 3 ♠ AQ75
 ♥ A10742 ♥ J
 ♦ K9 ♦ AQ104
 ♣ AK843 ♣ 10765

♠ J1098
 ♥ KQ653
 ♦ 32
 ♣ Q9

Board 7 ♠ AQ9543 Dealer S
 ♥ J Vul: Both
 ♦ Q43
 ♣ Q84

♠ 7 ♠ J2
 ♥ KQ732 ♥ 864
 ♦ AJ106 ♦ K972
 ♣ AK2 ♣ J1065

♠ K1086
 ♥ A1095
 ♦ 85
 ♣ 973

7♣ is a very lucky contract. Even 6♣ is not easy if the trumps break 3-1. 3NT making ten or eleven tricks will be common.

It is best to choose between 3NT and 6♣, but West has to take a good view to get us to 6♣

3NT+2 or +3 will score well, and that is where I would probably play in pairs. Sometimes making twelve tricks by pinning 98 doubleton heart.

In 3NT there are 11 on top with the spade finesse, and careful defence will hold you to tricks most of the time.

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

*Checkback

** Partner is marked with a singleton ♥ but 5♣ won't score well in pairs.

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

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Another good hand for pairs judgement. West will open 1♥ and North will try 1♠ East should pass as unsupported Jacks are so overvalued.

South is close between 2♠ and 3♠ but North will be forced up to 3♠ at some stage, I suspect.

I see a lot of N/Ss going negative in 4♠ by overvaluing the North hand which has too many unsupported Queens for my liking.

West	North	East	South
1♥	1♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	3♥	2♠*
Pass	3♠	Pass	Pass

* I like to have a 5-card suit or a singleton to bid 3♠ with the South hand, at this vulnerability. Pairs bidding when you are RED has to be a little bit more considered than when you are green.

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

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Board 8 ♠ A108432 Dealer W
 ♥ A62 Vul: None
 ♦ Q7
 ♣ 106

♠ 6 ♠ J7
 ♥ KJ7 ♥ Q109843
 ♦ J98654 ♦ AK3
 ♣ Q43 ♣ K7

♠ KQ95
 ♥ 5
 ♦ 102
 ♣ AJ9852

A good competitive hand where N/S should reach 4♠ and E/W do very well to save in 5♥ I can see some pairs trying a 2♦ opening with the West hand which may create problems for N/S.

West will do very well to double the 4♥ splinter which may encourage East to save in 5♥ for a cheap one off.

West	North	East	South
Pass*	1♠	2♥	4♥**
Dbl	4♠	?	

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 9 ♠ 864 Dealer N
 ♥ 103 Vul: E-W
 ♦ A874
 ♣ K864

♠ Q73 ♠ AK
 ♥ 986 ♥ QJ54
 ♦ J1092 ♦ Q653
 ♣ A72 ♣ Q53

♠ J10952
 ♥ AK72
 ♦ K
 ♣ J109

The key here is to respect the vulnerability and the lack of shape with the E/W hands. South should also devalue his ♦K as an offensive card if E/W over-stretch to 3♦. This is because the play in 2♠ is very tough unless you guess the clubs right early and make two heart tricks, two diamonds, one club, and three spades via a cross-ruff.

On the ♦J lead, E/W will score well to get +50 rather than minus -100 or even -200 in 3♦.

If South defends a weak NT he will likely score badly. It's better to get into the bidding with 5/4 in the majors.

West	North	East	South
-	Pass	1♦	1♠
2♦	2♠	Pass	Pass

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 10 ♠ 108763 Dealer E
 ♥ 76 Vul: Both
 ♦ Q53
 ♣ 542

♠ AQJ54 ♠ K92
 ♥ A105 ♥ K982
 ♦ A97 ♦ J104
 ♣ 107 ♣ 963

♠
 ♥ QJ43
 ♦ K862
 ♣ AKQJ8

West has a genuine problem if N/S compete to 3♣ as she has extra points but poor shape. However, East has raised to 2♠ vulnerable, and it is a big call to try and double 3♣ You have already redoubled, and East could not bid 3♠.

It is time for West to use the green card to avoid -100 or even worse Or is it? After three rounds of clubs, West can ruff, draw

four rounds of trumps, and cash two hearts ending in Dummy, so seven tricks. She then runs $\heartsuit J$ and North is on lead in this position:

	\spadesuit 10	
	\heartsuit 53	
\heartsuit 10		\heartsuit 98
\heartsuit A9		\heartsuit 104
	\heartsuit Q	
	\heartsuit K8	

There is no-way to get to South's winning $\heartsuit Q$ and North is once again endplayed. +140 will score extremely well for E/W.

West	North	East	South
-	-	Pass	1 \clubsuit
1 \spadesuit	Pass	2 \spadesuit	x
Rdbl	3 \clubsuit	Pass	Pass
?			

Makeable Contracts

	\clubsuit	\heartsuit	\spadesuit	NT
N	1	-	-	-
S	1	-	-	-
E	-	-	2	3
W	-	-	2	3

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Board 11	\spadesuit K104 \heartsuit J52 \heartsuit 109 \clubsuit 109864	Dealer S Vul: None	
	\spadesuit J7 \heartsuit K9743 \heartsuit AQ83 \clubsuit KQ		\spadesuit A82 \heartsuit A10 \heartsuit K7542 \clubsuit A72
	\spadesuit Q9653 \heartsuit Q86 \heartsuit J6 \clubsuit J53		

I don't see many getting to 6 \heartsuit on this hand, but it is a great spot. East should realise he has great cards in good places and make one further attempt over 3NT to encourage West.

I foresee many in 3NT and making the boring 11 tricks on a spade lead for a 40% score.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	Pass
1 \heartsuit	Pass	2 \heartsuit	Pass
3 \heartsuit	Pass	3 \spadesuit^*	Pass
3N	Pass	4 \heartsuit	Pass
4 \heartsuit	Pass	4N*	Pass
5 \clubsuit^*	Pass	6 \heartsuit	

6 \heartsuit will score 70% so to risk 7 \heartsuit -1 for an extra 20-30% is unlikely to generate a good return in the long run.

Makeable Contracts

	\clubsuit	\heartsuit	\spadesuit	NT
N	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-
E	3	7	6	3
W	3	7	6	3

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Board 12	\spadesuit KQ543 \heartsuit K62 \heartsuit 653 \clubsuit AQ	Dealer W Vul: N-S	
	\spadesuit 107 \heartsuit QJ94 \heartsuit Q10974 \clubsuit K4		\spadesuit J8 \heartsuit A8 \heartsuit K \clubsuit 109876532
	\spadesuit A962 \heartsuit 10753 \heartsuit AJ82 \clubsuit J		

This is my favourite double dummy hand of the night.

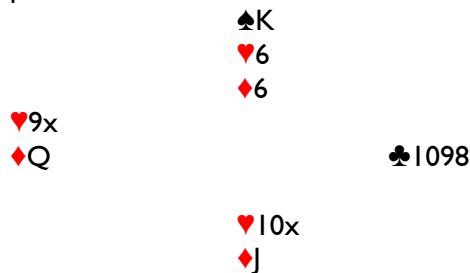
It is likely N/S will arrive in 4 \spadesuit by some route and West will lead $\heartsuit Q$. South should score ok if he manages to go one off. Although the line to make 4 \spadesuit is against the odds, it is likely some of Ireland's top card players will "fall into" this winning line, simply by following good technique.

Let me take you into the mind-set of some of the world's top declarers ...

Ducking the $\heartsuit Q$ lead is normal and if West continues with $\heartsuit J$, you will make by covering and drawing only one trump before playing a diamond towards $AJxx$, hoping East has both K and Q. When the K appears, you must duck, then negotiate your club ruff, draw the second

trump, and play another diamond towards your AJ8. Sadly, East shows out so you rise with the A♦, coming down to the 3-card ending below.

You then play the K♠ throwing your J♦ which squeezes West in the red suits. The timing of the trump play is critical as entries are not plentiful.



If West continues with a small heart at trick two, it is best to again play East to have ♦KQ and west to have ♥QJxx. This time after you concede 2♥ and 1♦ and draw trumps you will likely come down to a 4-card ending :



Having lost two hearts and a diamond already, when you play the K♠ and throw your J♦, West is caught in a criss-cross squeeze. You have the entries to make two tricks in whichever suit West throws.

If you found these lines, you deserve your close to 100% score for making 4♠.

West	North	East	South
	-	-	Pass
Pass	1♠	4♣*	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 13	♠ K762	Dealer N
	♥ K107	Vul: Both
	♦ K943	
	♣ Q8	
♠ J953		♠ 1084
♥ AQ9653		♥ 42
♦ 5		♦ A1087
♣ J4		♣ A963
	♠ AQ	
	♥ J8	
	♦ QJ62	
	♣ K10752	

A lot depends on who opens, if North opens, North/South will play in 3NT, which probably won't make.

I strongly advise E/W not to show their spade count, or a good declarer might be able to read West for 4-6-1-2 shape and guarantee the contract when she knows East is 4-4 in the minors, when our friend Mister Squeeze will come into play against East who controls both minors.

+110 will be a good enough result for N/S.

West	North	East	South
-	Pass	Pass	1♣
2♥*	x	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
?			

*The four-card spade suit should be ignored

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 14 ♠ AQJ6 Dealer E
 ♥ A103 Vul: None
 ♦ Q108432
 ♣ -

♠ 97 ♠ 4
 ♥ Q42 ♥ 986
 ♦ 765 ♦ KJ9
 ♣ KQJ86 ♣ A109542

♠ K108532
 ♥ KJ75
 ♦ A
 ♣ 73

Board 15 ♠ K42 Dealer S
 ♥ A6542 Vul: N-S
 ♦ QJ8
 ♣ 104

♠ AQ1085 ♠
 ♥ J7 ♥ KQ8
 ♦ A2 ♦ K97643
 ♣ K832 ♣ A976

♠ J9763
 ♥ 1093
 ♦ 105
 ♣ QJ5

The first decision is for North to bid 2NT (Jacoby) rather than 2♦. Unlike an earlier hand, here the diamond suit is not a quality suit, and it is more important to show the other hand features.

South should show his singleton diamond after the Jacoby 2NT, and after 3♦, 3♥ will help partner to show more interest by bidding 3♠. But 4♦ is also a possibility.

If you have had the auction below I would be very impressed:

West	North	East	South
-	-	Pass	1♠
Pass	2N	Pass	3♦* --
Singleton Diamond			
Pass	3♥*	Pass	4♦* -- No
Club Control			
Pass	4N*	Pass	5♠* -- Q♠
or the 6 th SPassade			
Pass	5N	Pass	6♥* -- K♥
Pass	7♠	Pass	

It is rare to bid 4N with a void but North is pretty sure South has no club control.

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	5	6	7	1
S	-	5	6	7	1
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

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East should investigate alternative spots with his 2NT, but eventually settles for 3NT and tries to make eleven tricks but will probably score his 40% for ten tricks.

Partnerships should agree whether West should rebid 2♠, 2NT, or 3♣ with this type of hand. My preference is to keep 2♠ as a "catch all" bid with 5 or 6 spades, and 3♣ as a good 15+ hand, leaving 2NT for a genuine 12-14 hand where you have a stop or three cards in the unbid suits.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	2N*	Pass
3NT	Pass*	Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 16 ♠ AQJ Dealer W
 ♥ Q3 Vul: E-W
 ♦ AKQ87
 ♣ AJ4

♠ K98 ♠ 10543
 ♥ AKJ108652 ♥
 ♦ ♦ J532
 ♣ 95 ♣ KQ876

♠ 762
 ♥ 974
 ♦ 10964
 ♣ 1032

A 4♥ (or 4♣, namyats) opening will result in a takeout double from North, South will have to close his eyes* and pass. After 4♥ opening doubles are primarily takeout

After 4♠ opening double is more general purpose and you should usually pass it.

West	North	East	South
4♥	Dbl	Pass	Pass*

* In the words of Joseph and his technicolour dream coat.

"I closed my eyes, pulled back the curtains".

When the dust settles this probably drifts one off. A bid at the 5-level could end in a nasty shock for N/S.

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

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Board 17 ♠ AJ76 Dealer N
 ♥ Q85 Vul: None
 ♦ QJ106
 ♣ J10

♠ Q1093 ♠ K842
 ♥ A96 ♥ 1073
 ♦ 83 ♦ K754
 ♣ 9632 ♣ 84

♠ 5
 ♥ KJ42
 ♦ A92
 ♣ AKQ75

Some will open the North hand and may end up in 6NT. It will come down to an opening lead choice as to whether E/W to score 70% or 30% for holding the contract to nine tricks rather than twelve tricks.

If your E/W and the N/S pair reach 6♣ or 6♥ I suggest you hold your cards closer to your chest in future.

West	North	East	South
-	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass

Makeable Contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	6	4	6	2	3
S	6	4	6	2	3
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

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Board 18 ♠ Q972 Dealer E
 ♥ 863 Vul: N-S
 ♦ A
 ♣ QJ864

♠ K1053 ♠ 864
 ♥ A10 ♥ J9754
 ♦ J105 ♦ K9764
 ♣ K732 ♣

♠ AJ
 ♥ KQ2
 ♦ Q832
 ♣ A1095

A Diamond lead will score well against 3NT. But those pairs stopping in a club partial will also get their 70% scores.

On the auction below West, with most of the defensive points, should be reluctant to lead from an empty club suit and choose the safer ♦J lead in a pairs game, where giving away an unnecessary trick is usually very costly.

West	North	East	South
-		Pass	INT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3NT		

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 19	♠ 1073	Dealer S
	♥ 7543	Vul: E-W
	♦ A1092	
	♣ K4	
♠ 9		♠ Q652
♥ KJ962		♥ A10
♦ 54		♦ Q8763
♣ Q10986		♣ A5
	♠ AKJ84	
	♥ Q8	
	♦ KJ	
	♣ J732	

There will be a lot of variety here as some pairs may make a Ghestem (two-suited) bid on the West hand, or overbid on the N/S cards. +110 should score well for N/S but I expect to see a lot of -50's and -100's.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 20	♠ Q852	Dealer W
	♥ QJ9	Vul: Both
	♦ K106432	
	♣	
♠ K3		♠ J97
♥ 854		♥ 7632
♦ 875		♦ Q9
♣ AQ743		♣ J982
	♠ A1064	
	♥ AK10	
	♦ Aj	
	♣ K1065	

Many auctions are possible here.

West will lead a red card against the 4♠ contracts, and South will go about setting up his diamonds after playing A♠ and a small spade to the Q. Twelve tricks will be very common.

Voids are more useful when you have a 9-card fit and 6♠ doesn't really deserve to make. But I see a few N/S pairs getting excited here and gaining an undeserved good score for bidding the slam.

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	6	4	6	5
S	2	6	4	6	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

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Board 21	♠ J	Dealer N
	♥ AKJ6	Vul: N-S
	♦ J8642	
	♣ 753	
♠ KQ986		♠ A107432
♥ 72		♥ 1094
♦ 3		♦ K109
♣ AKJ84		♣ 9
	♠ 5	
	♥ Q853	
	♦ AQ75	
	♣ Q1062	

A routine ten tricks for E/W in spades. But N/S must be careful to cash out to get their 65%.

West	North	East	South
-	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

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

=====

Board 22		♠ Q107	Dealer E
		♥ J632	Vul: E-W
		♦ Q32	
		♣ K87	
♠ J2		♠ A953	
♥ K9754		♥ AQ8	
♦ 10854		♦ A6	
♣ 52		♣ Q1043	
	♠ K864		
	♥ 10		
	♦ KJ97		
	♣ AJ96		

If East allowed to play in 2♥ she must take care to avoid the dreaded -200, usually fatal at pairs. After the ♠4 lead, when Dummy goes down it is likely North has a 3-4-3-3 shape hand from the auction.

In 2♥, East should plan to ruff one club and one spade in Dummy to make one spade, three hearts, one diamond, and two ruffs in Dummy ... a Dummy reversal.

N/S will also have to play very well to make 2♠ if E/W sell out. The art of 4/3 fits and when not to panic could be truly tested here.

West	North	East	South
-	-	INT	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	x
Pass	2♠*	Pass**	Pass

* Hobson's choice of 3-card suits to bid.
 ** I don't like the quality of the side suit and the vulnerability.

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

=====

Board 23		♠ J3	Dealer S
		♥ Q3 <td>Vul: Both</td>	Vul: Both
		♦ A72 <td></td>	
		♣ AKJ1064 <td></td>	
♠ Q762		♠ A1098	
♥ K10942		♥ 87	
♦ 543		♦ Q86	
♣ 5		♣ Q983	
	♠ K54		
	♥ AJ65		
	♦ KJ109		
	♣ 72		

Nearly everyone will reach 3NT played by South, and ten or eleven tricks will score well.

This is all about the timing on the ♥4 lead. We are worried about spades as well as hearts, so it's best win with ♥J and finesse the ♣10. East will return ♥7, and we do best to rise with the ♥A immediately, play ♦AK and run all our clubs, then play a spade towards the K for ten tricks.

There are lines to make eleven tricks that risk the contract when West has ♦Q and finds a spade switch.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♦
Pass	2♣	Pass	2N
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass

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

=====

Board 24 ♠ 732 Dealer W
 ♥ Q2 Vul: None
 ♦ QJ96
 ♣ QJ96

♠ AK1096 ♠ Q4
 ♥ ♥ A10864
 ♦ K103 ♦ A84
 ♣ K10854 ♣ A72

♠ J85
 ♥ KJ9753
 ♦ 752
 ♣ 3

West does not have enough points to rebid 3♣, so should content herself with 2♠. When you play 2-over-1 game-forcing it is best to avoid bidding at the 3-level on weak hands or you make it very difficult for partner to judge.

East will either bid 2NT or 3NT and South should try a diamond lead. Ten tricks look normal but careful play may lead to eleven. Once again, there is the possibility of a squeeze to make an extra trick, a big opportunity in pairs. This one is called a "squeeze without rectifying the count".

Take the first diamond with the K, cash five spades discarding three hearts. North has no safe discard on the fifth spade and must throw both his hearts. Now you play a club towards A72 and North must play the 9 or the 7 will win. Cash the ♥A which puts North under more pressure, and she pitches a diamond, now you run ♣7 and we are left with K10 clubs in Dummy and North has Q6 and is on lead.

Extremely careful counting and anyone who finds this line on a club night deserve a lot of respect to go with their excellent score.

♣K10 ♣Q6
 ♥10
 ♣2
 ♥KJ

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

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 25 ♠ QJ104 Dealer N
 ♥ A6 Vul: E-W
 ♦ Q10987
 ♣ 32

♠ 98 ♠ 632
 ♥ KQJ1032 ♥ 987
 ♦ KJ2 ♦ A6
 ♣ A6 ♣ J10974

♠ AK75
 ♥ 54
 ♦ 543
 ♣ KQ85

This will be very difficult for both sides to judge and +140 for E/W or +140 N/S will score well for either side.

West	North	East	South
-	Pass	Pass	1♣
1♥	Dbl	2♥	2♠
3♥	3♠	Pass	Pass

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 26 ♠ AQJ Dealer E
 ♥ 102 Vul: Both
 ♦ J1098
 ♣ K943

♠ 10643 ♠ 8752
 ♥ A43 ♥ J75
 ♦ K742 ♦ 65
 ♣ 85 ♣ Q762

♠ K9
 ♥ KQ986
 ♦ AQ3
 ♣ AJ10

Most roads lead to N/S +660 but there is plenty of scope for E/W to ship a trick in the defence.

Not everyone will agree with my choice of a INT response with the North hand and indeed many would have opened with all those 10's and 9's. The play is of interest, and the opening lead may be critical here. ♠3 would be my choice as the diamond suit would take a lot of work to build extra tricks. Declarer wins with the ♠J and fears no switch from West so should run ♥10, win the spade continuation and guess between the club and the diamond finesse. If Declarer plays a heart to the Q, West should duck smoothly.

If West has taken a long time to find the Spade lead, then strongly favour the club finesse. With nothing to go on, it is very close which minor finesse we take to try and make four tricks in that suit.

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

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 27	♠ Q2	Dealer S
	♥ 753	Vul: None
	♦ 954	
	♣ Q10532	
♠ A108		♠ K97653
♥ Q642		♥ 109
♦ Q10832		♦ AJ
♣ J		♣ K64
	♠ J4	
	♥ AKJ8	
	♦ K76	
	♣ A987	

West is very strong for 2♠ after the takeout double, but should not raise East's 3♠ as this is a pre-emptive bid to make the N/S bidding difficult. Do not redouble with the West hand as you don't really want to defend here.

South must show good judgement by not making a second takeout double. If she had only 1♠ and 16+, doubling again would be straightforward, but here the risk of no fit is too high.

+ 140 will score well for E/W but there should be a few +150's, or even +300's, when N/S overstretch.

West	North	East	South
-	-	1♠	Dbl
2♠*	Pass	3♠**	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 28	♠ KJ103	Dealer W
	♥ 876	Vul: N-S
	♦ Q876	
	♣ 65	
♠ Q642		♠ A8
♥ J102		♥ K94
♦ 1053		♦ KJ2
♣ AKQ		♣ 109832
	♠ 975	
	♥ AQ53	
	♦ A94	
	♣ J74	

The weak NT players will arrive in 2NT, but some of the strong NT players will be able to stop in INT, especially in pairs.

South has a tough opening lead and should probably chose a spade. East will unblock the clubs and try to guess the hearts, but will ultimately lose five or six tricks.

I expect +120 to score well for E/W and don't see many leading the 9♠ to hold it to +90. We have seen the 11-HCP INT response scoring well in previous boards; it is particularly effective in a pairs competition where the main

driver of success is the maximum number of tricks, not to bid all your thin games.

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	INT*	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Makeable Contracts

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

=====