



Commentary
for the
IBU Autumn Simultaneous Pairs
Wednesday 6th November 2024

Dear Bridge Player,

Thank you very much for playing in the IBU Simultaneous Pairs 2024, 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. Within the past twelve months there have been two such competitions, and the IBU sent four teams to the European Championships in Denmark, and three to the World Bridge Games in Argentina. 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 test yourself 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 difficult decisions. Many thanks to our expert commentators Randal Milne (Monday), Thomas MacCormac (Tuesday), Paul Delaney (Wednesday), Brian Senior (Thursday), and Enda Murphy (Friday) for their guidance through the maze. I hope that you have picked up some useful tips from their advice. For Tuesday night, Thomas has done his commentary in a series of videos rather than as a written commentary, which is a new departure for us; we hope you'll like it, and would welcome your feedback.

Don't forget to check your standing in the national results at www.ecatsbridge.com/sims. You'll find the daily commentaries there too.

Heather Hill

President, Irish Bridge Union

Board 1	♠ Q10943	Dealer N	
	♥ 10765	Vul: None	
	♦ J		
	♣ KJ9		
♠ A8		♠ KJ762	
♥ 9		♥ KQ83	
♦ KQ8532		♦ 74	
♣ Q654		♣ A8	
	♠ 5		
	♥ AJ42		
	♦ A1096		
	♣ 10732		
West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	Pass*	All Pass

* East has no fitting diamond honour and weak major suit intermediates (no ♠10, no ♥10)

On this hand strong NT bidders not playing 2/1 Game Force will have the same auction as weak NT players.

North has a lead problem. With 3 suits bid naturally by the opponents and an unattractive club lead they will eventually lead a heart (best) to East's ♥K and South's ♥A.

2NT West lead ♥5

Play: After losing the heart lead ♥K to ♥A.

Win the return and play a diamond up to ♦K. With the fall of ♦J indicating the diamonds are likely not behaving play ♠A and finesse J♠ which wins. Now clear the spades and you make 7 tricks with a chance for an extra trick if the defence goes wrong in the endgame.

This is a misfit hand with the cards lying poorly for EW. Declarer has no communication between the two hands. In a hopeless contract you need to scramble for tricks. On this hand the top score will be 2NT-1 with most pairs playing in 3NT-2 or 3NT-3.

Winning Tip:

If you have found no fit and there is no opposition bidding you should decline many game invitations at pairs. If the decision is close use the presence or absence of intermediates (10's and 9's) to make the final decision.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 2

♠ 10	Dealer E
♥ 1063	Vul: N-S
♦ 9642	
♣ A10962	

♠ 9876	♠ KQJ52
♥ 975	♥ KQJ84
♦ J8753	♦ A
♣ 7	♣ KJ

♠ A43
♥ A2
♦ KQ10
♣ Q8543

West	North	East	South
		2♣*	Pass
2♦**	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠***	Pass	Pass	All Pass

* East evaluates their hand as a strong two suiter with 20 points and only 3 losers.

So if there is a fit with partner the 10 tricks necessary for a major suit game will be present. It's a 2C opening.

** Negative

*** Too good for 2NT (second negative). 4♠ is weaker than the alternatives 3♠ or 4♣ splinter.

After East shows their spade suit. West who has given a negative and can now jump to game hoping that the club singleton will provide ruffs

for partner. This contract will make easily unless a brilliant defence is found by South.

4♠ East lead ♦K (?)

Commentators note: In the analysis (?) indicates a mistake and (!) indicates an excellent play.

Play : Declarer wins the likely ♦K lead and draws trumps to make 4♠ in comfort +420 for EW.

Let us take the South cards and consider the best lead and defensive plan against 4♠. When you hold a high trump honour you will frequently profit by playing for a ruff. You control the trump suit so you have an extra tempo to find partner with an entry to give you a ruff.

South leads ♥A (!) and continues hearts.

Declarer wins and plays K♠ which South ducks (!) and takes the second spade as North gives their agreed discard signal e.g.

Traditional attitude signal ♣9 high = like suit

Upside down attitude signal ♣2 low = like suit

Suit preference signal ♦2 low = I like another lower ranking suit e.g. clubs

Italian Discards even card = suit preference ♦2 or odd card = like this suit ♣9

Having received the discard signal South switches a club (!) to North's ♣A and receives a heart ruff to defeat 4♠. Without the discard signal South will be guessing whether to switch to a club or diamond.

Winning Tip:

Agree discard signals with partner to show the switch you would like them to make. Suit preference discards are simplest and best. Many experienced players find Italian (Odd/Even) Discards offer greater flexibility.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 3 ♠ 109642 Dealer S
 ♥ QJ Vul: E-W
 ♦ 92
 ♣ AK42

♠ AK7 ♠ QJ5
 ♥ 1098 ♥ 763
 ♦ A765 ♦ KQ8
 ♣ Q53 ♣ J1076

♠ 83
 ♥ AK542
 ♦ J1043
 ♣ 98

West	North	East	South
			Pass
INT	Pass	Pass	2♥*
All Pass			

*2♥ is hearts and a minor (Multi Landy) or if playing natural bids it just shows 5+ hearts

South is non vulnerable with a little shape and aggressively overcalls 2♥. This contract will make for a great score for NS. INT by West on a spade lead will also frequently make when North fails to find a heart switch in time.

The strong no trump pairs will play INT from East's hand on a small heart lead to North's ♥J.

North continues with ♥Q and if South is alert they overtake to cash the hearts. North will signal for clubs and INT is defeated for +50 NS.

2♥ South lead ♠K

Play : After West leads a high spade they should reassess their defensive plan. Dummy's spade suit is a serious concern with spades breaking 33. The best defence is to attack declarers side entries for the spade suit by switching to clubs at trick 2 (!).

Thos holds declarer to 8 tricks in 2♥.

On a trump switch (?) declarer wins the ♥J and plays on spades planning to ruff the 3rd round and setup two winners in dummy and reach them with the club entries to make 9 tricks.

2♥+1 for a top score.

Winning Tip:

Bid aggressively for the part score when non vulnerable especially against the weak no trump.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 4 ♠ AJ2 Dealer W
 ♥ AK985 Vul: Both
 ♦ 932
 ♣ K2

♠ Q10543 ♠ K98
 ♥ 107 ♥ QJ42
 ♦ K7 ♦ AQ5
 ♣ AQ64 ♣ J95

♠ 76
 ♥ 63
 ♦ J10864
 ♣ 10873

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

* Even playing 5 card majors 3NT (!) is the right bid showing 13-15 points.

East has two slow heart stoppers which have little value in a spade contract but have full value in 3NT. East takes a slight chance with the club stopper and bids an enterprising 3NT.

3NT East lead ♥6

Play : On a heart lead against 3NT North must duck playing ♥8 (!) to preserve communication with partner. Now declarer faces a deadly heart continuation whichever defender gets in. They can only make 3NT by playing North for ♠J and playing an early spade to ♠9 making 4 spade tricks.

If North instead plays a lazy ♥AK and a 3rd heart now declarer can play North for the ♠J without risk since South is the 'safe hand'. This makes 10 tricks for EW and a top score EW +630.

A 4♠ contract for EW has no chance and may go down two tricks when North plays a 3rd heart for partner to ruff out one of East's heart winners.

Winning Tip:

As declarer play to lose tricks into the 'safe hand'.

As defender consider ducking your high honour in your long suit to preserve communication with partner and deny declarer a later 'safe hand' play.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 5 ♠ Q10 Dealer N
 ♥ K62 Vul: N-S
 ♦ A2

♠ KJ72		♠ 96
♥ A7		♥ QJ983
♦ QJ7		♦ K1086
♣ J732		♣ KQ
	♠ A8543	
	♥ 1054	
	♦ 9543	
	♣ 5	

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

* INT after partner overcalls shows 9 to 12 points.

** If North overcalls 2♣ then EW can double for penalties to collect a top score.

INT West lead ♣10

A tricky battle between declarer and the defence

Play : Declarer wins the ♣Q in dummy and assesses their winners and likely losers.

Declarer has 6 certain tricks with 3 diamonds, 2 clubs and the ♥A. With the ♥K likely to be with North there will be 7 losers if we lose to the ♥K, 4 clubs and two aces.

The best declarer plan is to setup and cash diamonds on which North must make 2 discards.

When under pressure North discards a club declarer now makes 7 tricks by playing ♥A and another heart and waiting for a spade trick at trick 12. Alternatively declarer might try to guess spades correctly (not easy).

If instead North keeps their club winners intact and discards a spade declarer should assume North is protecting ♥Kx. Declarer plays spades which endsplay North to give 2 heart tricks after

they cash their club winners. EW INT making +90

Winning Tip:

Agree that a INT bid opposite partners overcall shows 9 to 12 points and denies 3 card support.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 6 ♠ Q2 Dealer E
 ♥ 8 Vul: E-W
 ♦ Q8532

♠ AK1073		♠ J984
♥ J943		♥ AQ105
♦ AKJ7		♦ 94
♣		♣ 1032

	♠ 65
	♥ K762
	♦ 106
	♣ AJ965

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

* Unusual 2NT showing at least 55 in the lower two suits (the minors in this case)

** The 3♠ bid here shows a weakish raise

*** Noting the vulnerability South applies pressure with 5♣ which if doubled goes down 3 tricks -500

5♠ West lead ♥8

Play : Declarer should assess the lead as a likely singleton. Rise with the ♥A and cash spades from the top to make 12 tricks 5♠+1 +680.

If South bids only 4♣ (rather than 5♣) now with the extra space West will bid 4♦ showing slam interest and now EW just might bid to the excellent 6♠ slam.

Winning Tip:

The Unusual 2NT is a fun convention. You should have all your points in the two suits to achieve the best results.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 7

♠ 953		Dealer S	
♥ 52		Vul: Both	
♦ QJ108			
♣ Q764			
♠ Q7		♠ AI064	
♥ J		♥ AKQ9843	
♦ 76532		♦ K	
♣ AKJ95		♣ 2	
♠ KJ82			
♥ 1076			
♦ A94			
♣ 1083			

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

* Many experienced players will open 4♥ opposite a passed hand

4♥ East lead ♦A

Play: On the ♦A and a diamond continuation. Declarer has 10 tricks and a small spade towards the ♠Q makes 11 tricks for a flat board 4♥+1 +650 for EW.

A spade lead by South is disastrous and gives 12 tricks for an EW top.

Winning Tip:

When partner is a passed hand you can vary the strength of your opening jump bids.

Your weak two or three openings can be wide ranging 5 to 12 points.

You can also open 4♥ or 4♠ with a long suit/good hand reasoning that a slam is unlikely opposite a passed hand

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 8

♠ Q		Dealer W	
♥ AQ952		Vul: None	
♦ J875			
♣ Q54			
♠ 7652		♠ J94	
♥ K863		♥ 1074	
♦ Q3		♦ K96	
♣ 863		♣ AK107	
♠ AK1083			
♥ J			
♦ A1042			
♣ J92			

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

All Pass

* South has a close decision and with good intermediates the ♠10 8 , ♦10 and ♣9 raises to game.

3NT North lead ♣K

Play: East leads ♣K and continues with a small club to South's ♣J. Now with the heart finesse working and the ♠J falling North has 9 fortunate tricks in 3NT. NS +400

Alternative contracts also play well e.g. 3♦+1 10 tricks and 2♠+2 10 tricks.

Winning Tip:

Upgrade your hand if you have a long suit with good intermediates.

Downgrade your hand if you have no long suit or no 10's and 9's.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 9 ♠ J107 Dealer N
 ♥ AK2 Vul: E-W
 ♦ A85
 ♣ 9872

♠ A8654 ♠ KQ32
 ♥ 7654 ♥ QJ
 ♦ ♦ Q7643
 ♣ AJ53 ♣ 64

♠ 9
 ♥ 10983
 ♦ KJ1092
 ♣ KQ10

West	North	East	South
	INT	Pass	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♠	3♦**
All Pass			

* 2♣ shows both majors – this is the Landy bid within Multi-Landy

** South cannot allow the opponents to play in 2♠ and competes to 3♦

This is a typical pairs pair score battle. INT will make for NS and EW have an excellent spade fit.

After EW find their spade fit South will compete to 3♦ which poses a competitive decision to EW.

The vulnerability will prevent many EW pairs from bidding 3♠.

Those brave enough to bid 3♠ will be richly rewarded with a top score as 3♠ makes 9 tricks.

Indeed the defenders will need to play trumps at each opportunity otherwise some declarers will make 10 tricks with extra ruffs in dummy.

3♦ South lead ♠A and spade continuation to 10♠ and ♠Q.

Play : In 3♦ declarer has a shock coming with the bad diamond break but they can make the contract if they guess well to drop the ♥QJ doubleton. . The early play makes it clear that East has ♠KQ. This makes it fairly certain that West has ♣A. It is good technique to lose tricks that must be lost as early as possible. So South plays an early ♣K to West's ♣A and ruff's the spade return. Now a diamond to ♦A and 3 rounds of hearts allows South to make 3♦.

Winning Tip:

Bid to the level of your fit (Holding 9 trumps compete to the 3 level e.g. 9 tricks)
 On this hand EW have a 9 card spade fit and do best by bidding to 3♠.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 10 ♠ K10543 Dealer E
 ♥ A Vul: Both
 ♦ J1082
 ♣ 765

♠ J2 ♠ AQ7
 ♥ 8432 ♥ KJ5
 ♦ KQ7 ♦ 943
 ♣ AJ93 ♣ KQ82

♠ 986
 ♥ Q10976
 ♦ A65
 ♣ 104

Weak No Trump

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1♥	1♠	INT*	2♠**
3NT	All Pass		

* It is now best practice to play this INT rebid as 15-17 points

** Aggressive but in keeping with the policy of bidding to the level of your fit (8 trumps so 8 tricks)

3NT East lead ♠9

Play : After North makes a lead directing 1♠ overall the spade lead spells doom for the weak no trump declarers. Winning the spade lead declarer at trick 2 makes the natural play of a diamond towards ♦KQ. This allows an alert South to rise with the ♦A and play a second round of spades to setup the suit with partners ♥A still intact as a certain entry.

3NT-1 +100 to EW

After a spade lead the 'impossible play' of a club to dummy to play a heart through North makes 3NT.

Strong No Trump

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

3NT East lead ♥10

Play : Without any bidding South makes the normal ♥10 lead to North ♥A. Now declarer has 9 tricks without any fuss. The strong no trumps bidders will wonder why they received such a good score with the red suit aces lying well.

3NT making +600 to NS

This hand is a good illustration of how choice of system causes swings on many boards.

It also highlights the value of light lead directing overcalls (Norths 1♠ overcall above)

Winning Tip:

Playing weak no trump the traditional jump to 2NT showing 17-18 points is now regarded as a severe weakness. The INT rebid in the modern weak no trump system shows 15-17 points and this allows the jump to 2NT to show 18-19 points.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 11 Dealer S
Vul: None

♠ KJ106	♠ Q4
♥ 984	♥ QJ1063
♦ AJ1084	♦ 963
♣ 7	♣ J84

♠ A853	♠ 972
♥ A2	♥ K75
♦ K72	♦ Q5
♣ AQ103	♣ K9652

Weak No Trump

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

* 15-17 points

** East should prefer to bid 2♥ knowing that this is where the strong no trump bidders will be playing. The East hand may have very

few entries for partner in NT and will play better with hearts as trumps.

INT West lead ♦J

Play : West wins the diamond lead and desperate for a dummy entry plays ♣Q ducked by South. Now a desperate declarer leads a spade towards ♠Q to make INT.

Strong No Trump

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

* 15-17 points

2♥ West lead ♣7

Play : Declarer plays ♣J to ♣K and ♣A. Now after ♥A and another heart South wins ♥K.

A little thought and they may realise that if they give partner an immediate ruff North will be endplayed to lead a spade or diamond giving declarer 9 tricks and a top score. At trick 4 instead of giving the ruff the ♦Q switch (!) holding declarer to 8 tricks.

Winning Tip:

Holding a weak hand with a good 5+ card suit and few side entries it will often be best to play in your own suit.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 12 Dealer W
Vul: N-S

♠ 10973	♠ 852
♥ J106	♥ AQ9754
♦ 984	♦ 107
♣ A62	♣ J5

♠ AKQ	♠ J64
♥ 83	♥ K2
♦ Q5	♦ AKJ632
♣ Q98743	♣ K10

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

- * A two level overcall shows 10 to 17 pts
- ** A good expert method is for South to double at their second bid showing a maximum overcall 16 to 17 pts. North will now bid 3♦ which makes easily for a top score for NS.

Without this agreement South may rebid a 3♦ on their own.

2♥ East lead ♦K asking for count

Play : South leads the two top diamonds and switches a spade. Now declarer must lose at least one heart trick so it costs nothing to run the ♥8 on the first round. This is richly rewarded when ♥8 loses to the ♥K making 2♥ +110 to EW. The routine play of a heart to ♥Q loses 2 heart tricks 2H-1 +50 to NS.

Winning Tip:

Talk to your partner and agree that an overcall followed by a double shows a very good overcall and is not penalties. This is a type of competitive double and shows extra strength with no clear bid and asks partner to do something sensible.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 13	♠ A1074	Dealer N
	♥ K109	Vul: Both
	♦ Q84	
	♣ KJ4	
♠ K532		♠ 98
♥ J7643		♥ AQ85
♦ 9		♦ K10
♣ A76		♣ 108532
	♠ QJ6	
	♥ 2	
	♦ AJ76532	
	♣ Q9	

Weak No Trump

West	North	East	South
	INT	Pass	3NT*
All Pass			

- * If the diamond suit runs partner will have at least 9 tricks

Strong No Trump

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	INT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

3NT North lead ♣3 to ♣Q and ♣A. West continues clubs (?).

Play : Winning the ♣K at trick 2 declarer plays ♦Q covered by ♦K. We now have 10 tricks. However if declarer runs the diamonds straightaway this squeezes their own hand and presents some nasty guesses in the endgame.

The diamonds can wait (!). Play ♠Q and run it making 12 tricks when the ♠K is onside scoring 3NT+3 +690 for a top board. This play cannot cost since your ♥K is protected.

The defensive top on this board is achieved by West if they switch a heart at trick 2 to hold declarer to 10 tricks.

Winning Tip:

When one defender cannot hurt you with any switch they are the 'safe hand'. It cannot cost to finesse into that defender.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 14	♠ QJ94	Dealer E
	♥ AK85	Vul: None
	♦ A7	
	♣ 982	
♠ K8		♠ 7653
♥ QJ1076		♥ 32
♦ K3		♦ J864
♣ AQ104		♣ KJ5
	♠ A102	
	♥ 94	
	♦ Q10952	
	♣ 763	

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	Pass*	Pass

* A 1♠ bid from responder with only 5 points is not to everyone's taste. However most experienced tournament players would bid 1♠ hoping to win the part score battle.

1♥ West lead ♠Q (?) this solves one problem for declarer. The best lead for the defence is a passive club (!) which eats away at dummy's entries.

Play : South wins the ♠A and switches a club. Now declarer should win the ♣10 and cash ♠K. If declarer crosses to dummy twice to ruff spades they will make 1♥+1 when the defence is left to open up the 'frozen' diamond suit late in the play.

The straightforward line of a diamond to the ♦K by declarer will lead to 1♥ making 7 tricks 1♥ +80

Winning Tip:

A suit that loses a trick for whoever plays the suit first is called a frozen suit. Avoid playing frozen suits if you can.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 15	♠ 953	Dealer S
	♥ 9	Vul: N-S
	♦ 962	
	♣ KQ6532	
♠ J86		♠ AKQ104
♥ AKJ		♥ 752
♦ AK5		♦ J1043
♣ A1097		♣ 4
	♠ 72	
	♥ Q108643	
	♦ Q87	
	♣ J8	

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

* transfer to spades

** This transfer break is a cue bid showing spade support.

*** 4♥ is a retransfer to spades – essential if you permit transfer breaks

**** 4NT Roman Key Card 1430 responses - 5♦ shows 3 of 5 aces (♠K counted as an extra Ace)

6♠ West lead ♣K

Play : Declarer makes 13 tricks when both red queens are onside. 6♠+1 +1460 EW

Winning Tip:

4NT Roman Key Card Blackwood with 1430 responses enables you to check on trump quality and count your aces as you consider whether to bid a slam.

After 4NT if you find you have all 5 aces and queen trumps you can bid 5NT which in standard methods asks for quantity of side kings. The responses are 6♣ no side king, 6♦ one side king etc.

Experts use this 5NT bid to ask for lowest specific king.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	3	7	4	7	7
W	3	7	4	7	7

=====

Board 16	♠ KJ4	Dealer W
	♥ 10	Vul: E-W
	♦ AQ754	
	♣ AK32	
♠ 85		♠ A963
♥ AK92		♥ 7
♦ 32		♦ KJ986
♣ J10874		♣ Q96
	♠ Q1072	
	♥ QJ86543	
	♦ 10	
	♣ 5	

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

* 15 to 17 pts (as previously discussed)

On lead against 2♥ with a strong 4 card trump holding West has two equally good defensive plans

Lead ♣J to shorten declarers trumps and attack their trump control.

Lead ♠8 hoping to score a ruff

2♥ South lead ♠8

The play : East plays attitude to partners doubleton lead

♠9 if playing standard attitude so high encourages

♠3 if playing upside down attitude so low encourages

As it happens both 2♥ and 3♥ are bullet proof contracts and easily make 9 tricks.

However any NS pairs over reaching to game will go down and score very badly.

Winning Tip:

Agree with partner what you play in 3rd hand on your short suit leads

Partner leads a doubleton: show attitude if you duck your ace.

Partner leads a singleton as declarer wins the Ace: show suit preference for your entry

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 17 Dealer N Vul: None

♠ 10	♠ Q854
♥ Q1087	♥ J4
♦ J10872	♦ 9654
♣ KJ4	♣ Q87

♠ KJ9732	♠ A6
♥ A62	♥ K953
♦ AK	♦ Q3
♣ A3	♣ 109652

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

* You have only 5 points but partners 1♠ opening has improved your hand – so find a bid

Strong no trump bidders who play constructive 2M raises showing 8 to 10 pts will bid INT then follow with 2♠

4♠ West North lead ♦J

Play : 4♠ will make 10 tricks and score about 65% since some pairs will pass 1♠ and miss game

Winning Tip:

As responder with values in the majors try to keep the bidding on with 5 points or so.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 18 Dealer E Vul: N-S

♠ K6	♠ Q85
♥ AJ6	♥ Q9542
♦ K842	♦ A63
♣ KQ73	♣ 64

♠ J1074	♠ A932
♥ 1087	♥ K3
♦ 1095	♦ QJ7
♣ AJ5	♣ 10982

Weak No Trump

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♦	1♥*	Double**
2♥	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

* These minimum overcalls are winning bids especially non-vulnerable.

** Negative double promising 6+ points 4 spades and at least 3+ clubs

Strong No Trump

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

3NT North West lead ♥4

Declarer Play : The heart lead gives declarer an extra trick and now declarer can make 11 tricks for a top score. A spade lead hold declarer to 9 tricks.

Winning Tip:

Playing match point pairs leading a short suit against 3NT is popular among experts and has a lot to recommend it. It is noteworthy that all the online bridge Robots (BBO, Funbridge, Intobridge) play many more passive leads than human players.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 19

♠ 43	Dealer S
♥ J10	Vul: E-W
♦ AK732	
♣ 10975	
=====	
♠ Q5	♠ KJ9876
♥ A98652	♥ Q
♦ Q5	♦ 104
♣ J32	♣ AQ84
=====	
♠ A102	
♥ K743	
♦ J986	
♣ K6	

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
INT	Pass	2♣	Double*
2♠	3♦	3♠	All Pass

* Takeout of their bid suits showing 4+ hearts and 4+ diamonds

After a lively auction East is pushed to 3♠

3♠ East lead ♣Q

Play : After a diamond lead most Norths will cash 2 diamonds and now declarer makes 9 tricks in comfort.

There is a hidden almost fatal defence. At trick 2 North switches to ♣5 (!). Now if declarer finesses South wins ♣K and continues clubs. Winning the ♠A South continues this excellent defence by playing the second diamond to partners ♦A to receive a club ruff and a top score for 3♠-1.

On a club switch the only counter to this sharp defence is for declarer to rise with ♣A (!) and play a diamond (!!) to cut communication between the defenders. Now with the ♣K still to be cashed North has no entry to give the club ruff.

Winning Tip:

If a ruff is threatened see if you can knockout the entry for the hand trying to give the ruff.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 20

♠ AQJ9	Dealer W
♥ A	Vul: Both
♦ J	
♣ AJ98532	
=====	
♠ 43	♠ 10762
♥ K98765	♥ 1042
♦ 962	♦ A8754
♣ Q10	♣ 7
=====	
♠ K85	
♥ QJ3	
♦ KQ103	
♣ K64	

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

* This 1♠ bid is best played as wide ranging and potentially strong 11 to 18 points.

** 4th suit forcing – best played as Game Forcing (GF)

*** Roman Key Card (4 aces + king trumps)
with 1430 responses

**** 3 or 0 of the 5 aces

6♣ North lead 2♥

The play : On a heart lead declarer makes 13 tricks in 6♣ making drawing trumps and taking the ruffing finesse with ♥Q to discard the diamond loser. 6♣+1 North 1390

Most pairs will play in 3NT making 12 tricks. Some declarers may sneak a diamond past the ♦A for 13 tricks and a top score.

Winning Tip:

4th suit forcing is an excellent convention. Play it as forcing to game and asking partner for more information.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 21 ♠ AJ1073 Dealer N
 ♥ 1097 Vul: N-S
 ♦ J
 ♣ AQ52

♠ 865	♠ K4
♥ J	♥ KQ863
♦ KQ10754	♦ A9
♣ K64	♣ J973

♠ Q92
♥ A542
♦ 8632
♣ 108

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

* South should guess to support partner even playing 4 card majors

North takes the push to 3♠ expecting that 3♦ will play very well for EW

3♠ North lead ♦A

Play : The defence leads and continues diamonds which declarer ruffs. Now declarer can make 3♠ by crossing to ♥A to finesse the ♣Q and then ruff 2 clubs in dummy 3♠ NS +140.

The top score for EW is an undisturbed 3♦ which also makes 9 tricks for the EW top score unless North leads a heart and South switches a club to get a ruff and defeat 3♦ by one trick.

Winning Tip:

In a competitive auction it pays to outbid your opponents if you have shape.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 22 ♠ Q7 Dealer E
 ♥ 976 Vul: E-W
 ♦ AJ1032
 ♣ A62

♠ AK10842	♠ 9653
♥ Q754	♥ Q1032
♦ J94	♦ K6
♣ J	♣ 1075

♠ J
♥ AKJ854
♦ 98
♣ KQ83

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
2♠	3♥	3♠	4♥
4♠*	X	All Pass	
All Pass			

* A daring bid vulnerable against non-vulnerable enthused by the heart void.

4♥ by South will make 10 tricks +420 to NS. Only 'Double Dummy' (see Makeable Contracts) can run the ♥9 to make 11 tricks.

The NS defence to 4♠x is of greater interest.

If West gets in to draw trumps 4♠x-1 -200 will be a top score for EW.

4♠x West lead ♥4

Play :

The killing defence by NS runs as follows. ♣A (!) lead, A♦ cashed (!) and 3 more rounds of clubs. The 4th club promotes North's ♠Q for 4♠x-2 - 500 and a near 100% board for NS.

Winning Tip:

In defence after you have cashed your high card tricks play for a trump promotion or trump uppercut.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 23 ♠ AK94 Dealer S
 ♥ J5 Vul: Both
 ♦ QJ96
 ♣ K83

♠ 103	♠ QJ5
♥ 864	♥ K107
♦ A3	♦ 107542
♣ J106542	♣ Q7

♠ 8762
 ♥ AQ932
 ♦ K8
 ♣ A9

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

4♠ North lead ♦4

Play : Could this be a flat board across the country 4♠+1 for 50% ?

A diamond lead helps declarer on their way. With the ♥K inside all roads lead to 11 tricks.

Ignore the dummy dummy analysis showing 12 tricks can be made in NT. If you can see all the cards you can finesse the ♥K ♥10 and ♦10 successfully.

Winning Tip:

North can show good declarer technique on this hand. Finesse the heart first (!) before cashing the second round of trumps. This idea is that if you cash two high trumps and then finesse the heart West might win ♥K and cash a spade winner thereby pulling two of your valuable trumps.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	3	4	5	5	6
S	3	4	5	5	6
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

=====

Board 24 ♠ 2 Dealer W
 ♥ A92 Vul: None
 ♦ KQ1084
 ♣ J743

♠ AQ10985	♠ J6
♥ 10	♥ QJ875
♦ J95	♦ A63
♣ 852	♣ K96

♠ K743
 ♥ K643
 ♦ 72
 ♣ AQ10

West opens a weak two

West	North	East	South
2♠*	All Pass		

* 6 spades and 5 to 10 pts

The weak two bid by West finds the NS pair without any clear bid.

2♠ West lead ♦K

this contract has no play and NS can defeat 2♠ by 2 tricks for an excellent +100.

If West passes East opens 1♥ in 3rd hand South plays 2NT

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

2NT South lead ♠10

Play : 2NT or even 3NT makes for NS in quite an amazing fashion.

If declarer takes the spade lead they are down 3NT-2.

Declarer ducks the spade lead (!) ♠10 (♠J from East)

East continues spades to ♠Q. West now switches a heart.

Now South must pray for a miracle e.g. ♦J inside and diamonds 33 and for good measure why not

♣K onside. On this layout South's prayers are answered with 4 diamond tricks, 2 hearts and 4 clubs for 10 tricks (9 if the ♠A is cashed)

Winning Tip:

In a precarious contract play for the cards that matter to be well placed.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 25	♠ J	Dealer N	
	♥ Q84	Vul: E-W	
	♦ J10832		
	♣ Q1053		
♠ Q103		♠ K52	
♥ K52		♥ A1073	
♦ 954		♦ AKQ76	
♣ KJ98		♣ 4	
	♠ A98764		
	♥ J96		
	♦		
	♣ A762		
West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♦	1♠
INT	Pass	2♥*	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

* Reversing values showing 16+ pts

3NT West lead ♠J

Play : This is a delicate 3NT contract requiring careful play.

The defence leads ♠J to ♠K and ♠A. South continues spades as declarer wins ♠Q.

Now a diamond to ♦Q reveals the 5-0 diamond break.

After West recovers from the shock there are now 2 ways for declarer to make 9 tricks.

Duck a heart and later guess that South has the ♣A or alternatively return to hand twice to play diamonds up and eventually promote the ♦7 for 9 tricks.

Winning Tip:

As declarer when you receive bad breaks keep positive. Remember the breaks are bad for every declarer. Reassess the new situation and look for your opportunities.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 26	♠ AKJ82	Dealer E	
	♥ KJ1062	Vul: Both	
	♦ 76		
	♣ 2		
♠ 1063		♠ 9754	
♥ Q5		♥ 43	
♦ AQ103		♦ KJ82	
♣ KJ109		♣ 843	
	♠ Q		
	♥ A987		
	♦ 954		
	♣ AQ765		
West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
INT	2♣*	Pass	3♥**
Pass	4♥	All Pass	
All Pass			

* 2♣ Multi Landy shows both majors

** invitational

4♥ South lead A♦ !

Play : There is nothing to the play with 11 tricks available for NS.

Indeed unless the diamonds are cashed immediately declarer will make all 13 tricks.

Winning Tip:

Lead Ace for attitude and King for count.

Using this method in a suit contract you lead the King from AK to ask for count and see how many tricks will cash in the suit.

When you lead an Ace you ask partner to show attitude if they hold the King.

On this hand $\heartsuit A$ is led and East plays the agreed attitude signal ($\heartsuit 8$ standard attitude or $\heartsuit 2$ upside down attitude) to show the $\heartsuit K$.

Makeable Contracts

	\clubsuit	\heartsuit	\spadesuit	NT
	=	=	=	==
N	2	-	5	3
S	2	-	5	3
E	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-

=====

Board 27 \spadesuit 9753 Dealer S
 \heartsuit 953 Vul: None
 \heartsuit A1087
 \clubsuit K8

\spadesuit AK \spadesuit Q42
 \heartsuit AKQ7642 \heartsuit J
 \heartsuit 54 \heartsuit KQ2
 \clubsuit Q3 \clubsuit AJ10654
 \spadesuit J1086
 \heartsuit 108
 \heartsuit J963
 \clubsuit 972

West	North	East	South
			Pass
2 \clubsuit *	Pass	2 \heartsuit **	Pass
3 \heartsuit ***	Pass	4NT	Pass
5 \heartsuit ****	Pass	6NT	Pass
All Pass			

- * West has 9+ tricks and forces to game
- ** Relay – with a huge hand opposite a 2 \clubsuit opener East bides their time
- *** solid 7+ card heart suit
- **** 3 of 5 aces

6NT East lead $\heartsuit J$

Play : 6NT is the top spot and quickly makes 12 tricks

Winning Tip:

If partner shows a solid suit and you have no ruffing value consider playing a NT contract to gain extra matchpoints.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 28 \spadesuit K8 Dealer W
 \heartsuit KJ74 Vul: N-S
 \heartsuit 752
 \clubsuit K642
 \spadesuit 9643 \spadesuit AJ105
 \heartsuit A93 \heartsuit 105
 \heartsuit Q9 \heartsuit A863
 \clubsuit 10875 \clubsuit AQ3
 \spadesuit Q72
 \heartsuit Q862
 \heartsuit KJ104
 \clubsuit J9

This hand illustrates some of the key differences between the weak and strong no trumps.

The weak no trump bidders find the 4-4 major fits but often finish at the 3 level.

The strong no trump system plays the same hand at a safer level in INT but frequently miss the 4-4 major fits.

Weak No Trump

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1 \spadesuit	Pass
2 \spadesuit	Pass	3 \heartsuit *	Pass
3 \spadesuit **	All Pass		

- * diamond values game invitational
- ** minimum – so no thank you to game invite

3 \spadesuit East lead $\heartsuit 2$

Play: making 9 tricks +140 for EW

Strong No Trump

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	INT	All Pass

INT East lead $\heartsuit 2$

INT+1 +120 EW

Play : $\heartsuit 2$ A likely 4 card suit so we duck the first trick and take the heart continuation. Now a spade to $\spadesuit J$ loses to $\spadesuit Q$. The defence takes 2 hearts tricks and now has no good switch. Declarer makes 8 tricks with $\spadesuit K$ dropping and $\clubsuit K$, $\heartsuit K$ onside.

Winning Tip:

If you play 4 card majors make sure you open your 4 card majors as often as you can.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====