



Commentary for the IBU Autumn Simultaneous Pairs

Thursday 6 November 2025

Dear Bridge Player,

Thank you very much for playing in the IBU Simultaneous Pairs 2025, 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. Summer 2026 sees the European Championships in Riga, Latvia, to which the IBU intends to send four teams. 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) provided plenty of difficult decisions. Many thanks to our expert commentators Brian Senior (Monday), James Heneghan (Tuesday), Fearghal O'Boyle (Wednesday), Paul Delaney (Thursday), and Enda Murphy (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 <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims>. You'll find the daily commentaries there too.

Gordon Lessells

President, Irish Bridge Union

Introduction from Paul Delaney

The recommended auctions are based on weak no-trump and 4 card majors. Where an opportunity arises I will highlight 5 card major/strong no-trump auctions which are increasingly standard among experienced players.

This year for the first time the AI ChatGPT 5 provided superhuman proofreading skills and even made sensible 'bridge logic' suggestions.

This commentary will also use the chess-style symbols ! and ? to denote good and bad plays or bids.

- ? poor bid or play
- ?? blunder
- ! excellent bid or play
- !! brilliant

| | | | |
|---------|---------|----------|-----------|
| Board 1 | | ♠ K106 | Dealer N |
| | | ♥ A8 | Vul: None |
| | | ♦ KJ32 | |
| | | ♣ 7542 | |
| ♠ J982 | | ♠ AQ53 | |
| ♥ 9543 | | ♥ Q72 | |
| ♦ Q64 | | ♦ A85 | |
| ♣ 93 | | ♣ K86 | |
| | ♠ 74 | | |
| | ♥ KJ106 | | |
| | ♦ 1097 | | |
| | ♣ AQJ10 | | |
| West | North | East | South |
| | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| Pass | INT* | All Pass | |

* North's 4th hand INT bid is known as protective INT. It shows 10-14 pts (here 10-11 since North is a passed hand)

INT North lead ♠3 (!)

East has unattractive suits to lead from and opts for 4th best ♠3. North beats ♠J with ♠K.

Declarer Plan

Declarer reviews the lead and bidding to gather information before making a plan to play the hand. The ♠3 lead could be from 4 or 5 spades.

Both North and South have 11 pts each for a total of 22 pts. So East/West have a combined 18 points.

West has less than 6 points and has shown the ♠J. East is almost certain to hold ♦A.

East is playing 4 card majors and weak no-trump so may have been planning a INT rebid showing 15-17 balanced. In this case spades may be 4-4.

East is marked with most of the high cards but with limited entries to North we will need to time the play well to maximise tricks. We have 4 top tricks and repeating a successful club finesse gives us 7 tricks. We also have diamond and heart positions available for further tricks.

The Play

At trick 2 play to a club to ♣Q, heart to ♥A and repeat the club finesse, cash the clubs. East discards a diamond on the 4th club. Now we run the ♦10 ! successfully. East cashes 3 spades. With the ♦Q onside and diamonds breaking declarer has the rest making 9 tricks for 70%+ board.

Some Easts opens Strong INT (15-17)

If East plays strong no-trump they play in INT with South on lead. Now South should defend INT as they would declare INT their way and find the killer lead ♦10 !! This amazing lead will knock East's INT contract by at least 4 tricks for a 100% board.

Winning Tip:

On lead your first decision is whether to lead actively or passively. When South is on lead into East's strong NT hand a passive lead from small cards e.g. ♦10 !! has merit rather than guessing to lead from your suits with broken honours in hearts or clubs.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------|
| Board 2 | ♠ K5 ♥ K9542 ♦ 1097 ♣ K74 | Dealer E Vul: N-S | |
| ♠ A864 ♥ J76 ♦ K3 ♣ 10953 | ♠ Q102 ♥ 3 ♦ A8542 ♣ AQ82 | ♠ J973 ♥ AQ108 ♦ QJ6 ♣ J6 | |
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | 1♥ | Pass | 1♦ |
| Pass | 2♦ | Pass | 2♣ |
| | | All Pass | |

Extra Tricks with Trumps

2♦ by South on the ♥6 lead is an excellent contract. The routine trump play of an early Ace and another diamond (?) will make 8 tricks for a 40% score. An ambitious declarer can make 9 tricks by postponing drawing trumps and playing to get ruffs in dummy.

The Play

East wins ♥Q and switches to ♣J. Now declarer wins ♣A and plays a spade with ♠K (!) aiming to ruff a spade if necessary. The ♠K wins and we continue with a finesse of ♠10 to ♠A.

This sets up two spade tricks.

We no longer need a spade ruff and our new focus is a club ruff in dummy!

Win the club continuation in dummy with ♣K. Play a 3rd club through East (!). They can only ruff your losing club. East discards and you win and ruff your 4th club in dummy making 9 tricks for a 90% score.

Winning Tip:

As declarer in a suit contract one of your standard plans should be to play for ruffs in

dummy (the short trump hand) to make extra tricks and a good score.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Board 3 | ♠ A | Dealer S |
| | ♥ 10743 | Vul: E-W |
| | ♦ K5 | |
| | ♣ KJ7532 | |
| ♠ | ♠ KQ10976 | |
| ♥ AK98652 | ♥ Q | |
| ♦ AQ63 | ♦ J1082 | |
| ♣ 98 | ♣ Q10 | |
| | ♠ J85432 | |
| | ♥ J | |
| | ♦ 974 | |
| | ♣ A64 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|------|-------|
| | | | Pass |
| 1♥ | 2♣ | 2♠ | 3♣* |
| 3♦ | Pass | 4♦ | Pass |
| 4♥ | All Pass | | |

* It is a good idea to support partner in the auction especially when it directs a lead

Show Your Support for Partner

Momentum and long suits will likely carry E-W to a game contract.

Game contracts by West of 4♥ and 5♦ may fail especially if N-S take their club tricks immediately. Otherwise the ♠A lead from North may give away the contract.

An expert defender starts the defence during the auction by making lead directing bids. South wisely raises partner's clubs holding ♣A. Partner leads a club against 4♥ quickly scoring 2 clubs, diamond and a trump trick.

Adventurous Souths who open an unsound weak 2♠ Non Vul with the South hand are punished appropriately when partner leads ♠A. Declarer ruffs gleefully as South follows with ♠2 (suit preference not count!) and crosses to Q♥. ♠K (South plays ♠3!) throwing a club loser as North ruffs. South

has played their smallest spades to indicate a preference for clubs. So North plays ♣J (also suit preference!) to South's ♣A. Now a spade continuation promotes North's ♥10 into the setting trick.

This complex 'suit preference' defence knocks 4♥. It is much easier to defeat the contract by supporting partner and cashing your clubs immediately.

5♦ always fails since NS have many chances to cash their clubs.

Winning Tip:

In defence when your attitude and count are known the card you play is suit preference

- Low card signal for the lowest suit (clubs)
- High card signal for a higher suit (diamonds)

Makeable Contracts

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

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| | | |
|---------|----------|-----------|
| Board 4 | ♠ 652 | Dealer W |
| | ♥ A7 | Vul: Both |
| | ♦ 73 | |
| | ♣ Q98732 | |
| ♠ A87 | ♠ J43 | |
| ♥ KQ5 | ♥ J8632 | |
| ♦ A962 | ♦ KQ54 | |
| ♣ AK5 | ♣ 4 | |
| | ♠ KQ109 | |
| | ♥ 1094 | |
| | ♦ J108 | |
| | ♣ J106 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|-------|----------|------|-------|
| 2NT* | Pass | 3♦** | Pass |
| 3♥ | Pass | 3NT | Pass |
| 4♥*** | All Pass | | |

* 20-22

** East transfers to hearts

*** West must choose between 4♥ or 3NT

4♥ by West on the ♣7 lead makes a quiet 11 tricks for an average score.

Develop Your Pairs Tactics

Most players look to make the standard bids and plays. However Pairs bridge rewards calculated risk taking. There is a big opportunity available on this hand.

As West you are offered a choice of game by partner – 3NT or 4♥ ?

In teams you bid 4♥ routinely but this is pairs. So you appraise your hand closely

- No ruffing value for hearts (NT lean)
- Prime cards with no slow values (Suit lean)

In pairs the risk takers (who win prizes more frequently) pass and play 3NT.

This is a very real risk and they have their apologies ready for partner if it does not work out.

On this hand it's all smiles as a club is led. Now 3NT makes the same 11 tricks as 4♥ for a 90% score. It is not easy for North to reject a club lead in favour of a spade from three small.

Winning Tip:

For success at pairs develop and apply winning pairs tactics. Take note of what scores well (here 3NT 90% or 4♥ 50%) and adjust your style accordingly.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 5

♠ Q
♥ Q98
♦ AQ10985
♣ 975

Dealer N
Vul: N-S

♠ 854
♥ K1075
♦
♣ AK8632

♠ AK1032
♥ A63
♦ 7643
♣ J

♠ J976
♥ J42
♦ KJ2
♣ Q104

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|------|-------|
| | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2♣ | 2♦ | 2♠ | 3♦ |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

4♠ East on a diamond lead ♦K or ♦2 (?)

Brilliant Declarer Play can make 12 tricks on a diamond lead

Most East's will make 11 tricks in their 4♠ contract and score well since some pairs may miss game.

There is an elegant line to make 12 tricks on a diamond lead by playing on cross ruff lines.

Ruff the diamond lead. Play ♣A and ruff a club. Ruff a 2nd diamond, cross to ♥A and ruff a 3rd diamond.

♣K to throw a heart (!) now ♥K and ruff a heart (!). Cash ♠A noting the fall of North's ♠Q. Exit with your last loser (!) (♦7) to endplay South who ruffs from ♠J97 to lead a spade into your ♠K10.

The diamond lead gets declarer off to the right start. After a heart (!) or trump (!) lead declarer can only make a maximum of 11 tricks. They lack the tempo to ruff their diamonds the lead provided.

Winning Tip:

Cross ruff declarer play works as follows

- Postpone drawing trumps
- Cash your side winners early
- Ruff in both hands to turn small trumps into extra winners

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Board 6 | ♠ K8643 ♥ 965 ♦ 3 ♣ J964 | Dealer E Vul: E-W |
| | ♠ 75 ♥ K102 ♦ Q985 ♣ 8752 | ♠ 109 ♥ AJ8743 ♦ 76 ♣ KQ3 |
| | ♠ AQJ2 ♥ Q ♦ AKJ1042 ♣ A10 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| | | 2♥* | X |
| Pass | 2♠ | Pass | 4♥** |
| Pass | 4♠ | All Pass | |

* Weak two showing 6 card suit and 5 to 10 pts. A 1♥ opening is also perfectly reasonable.

** Splitter bid showing heart shortage and slam interest with 4+ card spade support

4♠ North lead A♥

South has a powerhouse hand but will get no cooperation from North in any moves towards slam.

North will make 11 tricks in 4♠ unless declarer plays West for ♦Q with a ruffing finesse.

The only way this might happen is if East telegraphs their hand by opening a Weak 2♥, leading A♥ and switching to ♣K, showing perhaps 9+ pts.

Now declarer should realise West must have ♦Q. They draw trumps cash ♦AK and then run ♦J (a ruffing finesse) throwing a club for 12 tricks and a 99% score.

Winning Tip:

The South hand is too strong to simply overcall. Instead they use the '**Power Double**'. You double for takeout and after partner's reply - you bid your own suit.

Power Double Example Auction

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| | | 2♥* | X |
| Pass | 3♣ | Pass | 3♦* |

That 3♦ bid shows a power double hand of 18+ pts and says, "I was too strong to overcall 3♦ directly."

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Board 7 | ♠ AQJ64 ♥ K7 ♦ K42 ♣ AQ3 | Dealer S Vul: Both |
| | ♠ K2 ♥ J94 ♦ Q1076 ♣ K1086 | ♠ 10985 ♥ A106 ♦ 983 ♣ 975 |
| | ♠ 73 ♥ Q8532 ♦ AJ5 ♣ J42 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| | 1♠ | Pass | Pass |
| Pass | 3NT | All Pass | INT |

3NT South lead ♦6

With a balanced 19 points North keeps it simple and bids 3NT directly. Many playing 4 card majors may jump to 3♣ as their rebid (checkback style) to see if partner has 3 spades.

Against 3NT once again there is no good lead from the West hand. A club lead or normal diamond lead both give away a trick. Declarer will play to set up the spades for 10 tricks and a 60% score.

An unfortunate heart lead and continuation from the defence may allow the declarer to make 11 tricks for the top on the board.

On this hand many experts would be keen to play No-trump from the North hand to protect their honours and maximise lead benefits. They apply this winning tip.

Winning Tip:

Open 2NT as North to right side the contract. Upgrade your 19 point hand to 20 points arguing that the 5th spade is worth an

extra point. You should also play Puppet Stayman responses to find any possible 5-3 spade fit.

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Board 8 | ♠ QJ75 ♥ 63 ♦ Q4 ♣ A6543 | Dealer W Vul: None |
| ♠ K3 ♥ QJ102 ♦ K10 ♣ QJ1098 | | ♠ 1092 ♥ 9854 ♦ 8763 ♣ K7 |
| | ♠ A864 ♥ AK7 ♦ AJ952 ♣ 2 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| 1♣ | Pass | Pass | X |
| Pass | 1♠* | Pass | 2♠** |
| Pass | 4♠*** | All Pass | |

* It is close - North could jump to 2♠ in reply to the double

** South shows extras e.g. 15+ pts

*** With values in reserve it is clear for North to bid game

4♠ North lead ♣K

How to Declare a Hand

Good bidding by N-S will reach the spade game. Let us walkthrough best practice declarer play.

Before we touch a card in dummy ...

1. **Gather Information** from the Lead, Bidding and high card point distribution
2. **Count winners and losers** noting possible sources of extra tricks
3. **Make a declarer plan** to play the hand with a trick target taking account of any risks.

1. Gather Information

The ♣K lead is likely a doubleton or singleton.

We have a combined 16+9 = 25 points between our hand and dummy. So 15 pts for opponents.

East has less than 6 pts with ♣K shown. West has opened the bidding and rates to have every other honour to make up opening bid values.

2. Count Winners, Losers and possible source of tricks

We must lose to West's ♠K and ♦K unless they are singleton. We have 4 trump tricks assuming a 3-2 break with 4 top tricks ♥AK ♦A ♣A. We could try cross ruff to make our game with 5 trump tricks. However much better is to knockout the ♦K and enjoy the diamond tricks.

3. Declarer Plan

Our trick target is 11 tricks. We will establish diamonds losing only to ♠K and ♦K. There is a risk to consider. The defence is forcing us in clubs so we will need to keep ♠A and some small spades for extra protection.

The Play :

Win the ♣K lead with ♣A. Cross to dummy with a heart and play a small spade off dummy. West wins the ♠K. If they force us again clubs we have small trumps to ruff with. The defence is helpless to prevent us knocking out the ♦K next for 11 tricks and a 70% score.

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Board 9 | ♠ J632 ♥ Q83 ♦ A ♣ KJ973 | Dealer N Vul: E-W |
| ♠ Q9 ♥ J10754 ♦ 109765 ♣ Q | ♠ K1084 ♥ 9 ♦ K32 ♣ 86542 | |
| | ♠ A75 ♥ AK62 ♦ QJ84 ♣ A10 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|-------|------|--------|
| | 1♣ | Pass | 1♥ |
| Pass | 1♠ | Pass | 2♦* |
| Pass | 2♥ | Pass | 2NT** |
| Pass | 3NT | Pass | 4NT*** |
| All Pass | | | |

- * 4th suit forcing – play this as Game Forcing (GF)
- ** 2NT is forcing – this also shows only 4 hearts since South can bid 3♥ with 5+ hearts slam interest
- *** 4NT is slam invitational – opener with a minimum hand 11 points of course declines

4NT South lead ♦6

North has a minimum opening bid and South has a strong hand. Some pairs may get overboard and go down in slam. In reality N-S have no good fit and sensible bidding should stop in game 3NT/4NT.

After North opens 1♣ and rebids 1♠ South must consider how to proceed with their second bid.

South has many ways to invite game e.g. 2NT, 3♣, 3♥, 3♠ are all invitational bids.

So on this game forcing hand South bids 2♦ (4th suit forcing) to extract further information from opener.

After 3NT no suit has been agreed so 4NT is not Blackwood. South's 4NT is slam invitational to 6NT.

The Play

On a diamond lead declarer's best source of tricks is clearly the club suit. Entries to dummy are quite scarce. The fall of the ♣Q singleton simplifies play and we unblock clubs (cash ♣10) and play ♦Q making 11 tricks.

Winning Tip:

Play a bid of the 4th suit as a game forcing enquiry asking partner to describe their hand. With extra values, bid slowly to game to explore the best contract - game or slam.

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|----------|---------|-----------|
| Board 10 | ♠ K93 | Dealer E |
| | ♥ 6 | Vul: Both |
| | ♦ KJ973 | |
| | ♣ K1093 | |
| ♠ A1072 | | ♠ Q84 |
| ♥ QJ852 | | ♥ K9743 |
| ♦ 10865 | | ♦ 2 |
| ♣ | | ♣ QJ85 |
| | ♠ J65 | |
| | ♥ A10 | |
| | ♦ AQ4 | |
| | ♣ A7642 | |

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

- * West makes a light overcall typical of aggressive pairs bidding
- ** North's 2♦ shows 10+ points 5+ diamonds. Some North's may bid 3♣ showing invitational values
- *** East is fearless and uses the Law of Total Tricks to jump to the 4♥ game

Aggressive E-W pairs will frequently play in 4♥X making 10 tricks +790 when the spades break kindly.

The bad club break means that N-S can only make a partscore despite their 25 points.

5♦-2 or 5♣-2

East may even double 5♣. The defenders knock these contracts by 2 tricks. 5♣X-2 is +500 assuming E-W switch to spades in time to score the ♠Q.

If E-W do not overcall then N-S will play in a quiet 3NT-1 on a heart lead.

By reviewing a vast number of competitive bidding hands with big trump fits the Law of Total Tricks was developed to guide how high we bid in competitive auctions.

Law of Total Tricks

Total number of cards in each partnership's longest suit is equal to the number of "total tricks" that either side can win in a suit contract.

- On this deal E-W have 10 hearts and NS have 9 clubs
- 19 trumps (in both sides best fit) and 19 tricks are made (10 heart tricks and 9 club tricks)

Winning Tip:

Use the Law of Total Tricks in competitive auctions. Bid quickly to the level of fit e.g. 3 level with 9 trumps and to the 4 level with 10 trumps etc

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|----------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Board 11 | ♠ 63 ♥ Q10973 ♦ 86 ♣ Q942 | Dealer S Vul: None |
| | ♠ 954 ♥ K52 ♦ 974 ♣ K1076 | ♠ A107 ♥ A84 ♦ AQ102 ♣ J83 |
| | ♠ KQJ82 ♥ J6 ♦ KJ53 ♣ A5 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| Pass | Pass | INT* | 1♠ |
| Pass | 2♥** | All Pass | 2♦ |

* INT is best although a slight underbid if East plays a protective INT bid as 10-14 pts

** North offers a 2♥ contract and lands in the best spot when South passes.

2♥ North ♣3 lead making 8 tricks +110

This hand provides an opportunity to show good bidding judgement. Responder shows a weak hand with a heart suit. In 2♥ South's high cards and North's trumps combine well and provide entries and communication to maximise the tricks taken. The hand plays well in 2♥.

In contrast if South plays in 2♠ they may be quickly cut off from the North hand. They will have to play suits out of their own hand resulting in 2♠-2 or 2♠-1.

Many South's will pass INT and defeat the contract by 1 trick for +50.

2♥ by North making will be the top score at 80%+

Winning Tip:

Bid aggressively when non vulnerable especially at pairs. If you go one trick down doubled or two down undoubled this is still better than their making part score.

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Board 12 | ♠ 3 ♥ K1073 ♦ 105 ♣ KQ10852 | Dealer W Vul: N-S |
| ♠ 1094 ♥ Q9 ♦ Q8632 ♣ J93 | ♠ KQJ72 ♥ J64 ♦ K974 ♣ 6 | |
| | ♠ A865 ♥ A852 ♦ Aj ♣ A74 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | Pass | 1♠* | INT** |
| Pass | 2♣** | Pass | 2♥ |
| Pass | 3♥ | Pass | 4♥ |
| All Pass | | | |

* East opens light 3rd in hand (!) with a good major suit

** South's INT should be played as 15-18 pts (now expert standard)

*** 2♣ is Stayman - after a 1NT overcall you play your normal NT system as responder

4♥ South ♠4 lead making 12 tricks +680 or 3NT South making 10 tricks.

Bid Aggressively Non Vul v Vul when you have shape

It pays to bid aggressively when non-vul against vul with weak shapely hands.

The East hand is a good example of this style. Some Easts who play Tartan openings will open 2♠ showing 5 spades and a 4+ minor 5-10 pts. Some others will open 2♠ as a weak two usually 6+ cards but here 5 good spades. E-W's aim is to make their vulnerable opponents' life miserable by taking their bidding space and cause them to miss the right contract.

4♠X down 3 tricks for -500 is also a good sacrifice against the cold vulnerable 4♥ game

If South (playing 4 card majors) is allowed to open 1♥ then N-S will quickly bid their game. There is nothing to the play in 4♥ on a spade lead. We cash two top trumps and run the clubs making 12 tricks. It takes a diamond lead to hold declarer to 11 tricks.

Winning Tip:

Open light with a good major suit 3rd in hand when non vulnerable.

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Board 13 | ♠ AJ ♥ K4 ♦ 732 ♣ QJ9642 | Dealer N Vul: Both |
| ♠ 54 ♥ J1095 ♦ AK4 ♣ AK85 | ♠ K873 ♥ AQ72 ♦ QJ95 ♣ 10 | |
| | ♠ Q10962 ♥ 863 ♦ 1086 ♣ 73 | |

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

* West has game forcing values and starts with a cue bid asking partner to describe their hand

4♥ East ♣7 lead making 12 tricks +680 a flat board 50%

Declarer rattles home with 12 tricks with the marked heart finesse and ♠A onside. Missing 2 key cards this is a difficult slam to bid.

Winning Tip:

After partner makes a takeout double you cue bid in response to show an invitational or better hand (INV+) asking partner to describe their hand. You promise another bid.

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Board 14 | ♠ QJ76 ♥ 9 ♦ J1094 ♣ K976 | Dealer E Vul: None |
| ♠ A1083 ♥ KJ8 ♦ 8532 ♣ J4 | | ♠ K542 ♥ Q1043 ♦ AK7 ♣ A5 |
| | ♠ 9 ♥ A7652 ♦ Q6 ♣ Q10832 | |

Weak No-trump

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|------|-------|
| 1♠ | Pass | 1♥ | Pass |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

4♠ West ♦J lead

The bad spade break dooms this contract. North with natural trump tricks chooses a top-of-sequence lead rather than a singleton. Anybody who misses their spade fit

completely and plays 3NT going one down will be amazed when they get quite a good score.

Strong No-trump

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|------|-------|
| | | INT* | Pass |
| 2♣ | Pass | 2♥ | Pass |
| 2NT | Pass | 3♠** | Pass |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

* 15-17

** If 2♣ is ordinary Stayman then West must have 4 spades

Winning Tip:

Short suit leads especially singletons are frequently best. However with natural trump tricks prefer another lead.

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Board 15 | ♠ AK10976 ♥ 108 ♦ KQ10 ♣ 97 | Dealer S Vul: N-S |
| ♠ J5 ♥ 974 ♦ AJ54 ♣ A832 | ♠ Q842 ♥ KQJ5 ♦ 962 ♣ K4 | |
| | ♠ 3 ♥ A632 ♦ 873 ♣ QJ1065 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| Pass | 1♠ | Pass | Pass |
| Pass | 2♠ | All Pass | INT |

2♠ North ♥K lead

In Dummy Once - Take the Finesse That Matters

At most tables round the country 2♠ will go one down for an average score.

However this board provides an opportunity for both declarer and the defence to showcase their skills.

The ♥K lead attacks declarer's only dummy entry. You duck this and East continues the good work with ♥Q. In dummy for the last time an astute declarer should finesse the ♦10. The normal play of a diamond to an honour if successful cannot be repeated.

Look out for trump promotions

North's 2♠ contract is now due to make unless the defence shows its brilliance in turn.

When East is in later with ♠Q West should signal for a club with their discards. This helps East switch to ♣K and a club to partner's ♣A. Now West plays a 3rd club through to promote ♠8 into the setting trick – a trump promotion.

Winning Tip:

After you have collected your winners in defence look for opportunities to force declarer to ruff high and promote your smaller trumps.

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Board 16 | ♠ Q84 ♥ ♦ KQ973 ♣ AK1052 | Dealer W Vul: E-W |
| ♠ AJ1075 ♥ AK4 ♦ 108 ♣ 743 | ♠ 63 ♥ J976532 ♦ 5 ♣ 986 | |
| | ♠ K92 ♥ Q108 ♦ AJ642 ♣ QJ | |

Conservative

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|-------|------|-------|
| 1♠ | 2♦* | Pass | 2♠** |
| Pass | 3♣*** | Pass | 3NT |
| All Pass | | | |

* 2♦ ! The North hand with 14 high points is unsuitable for the unusual 2NT (?) both minors.

Keep this bid for weaker shapely hands

** 2♠ is an Unassuming Cue Bid (UCB) 10+ points with support

*** Extra values with 4+ clubs

3NT South ♠ lead making 11 tricks +460
Aggressive –

this shows a superb auction to the 6♦ slam

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| 1♠ | 2♦ | Pass | 2♠* |
| Pass | 4♣** | Pass | 4♠*** |
| Pass | 5♥*** | Pass | 6♦ |

All Pass

* 2♠ is an Unassuming Cue Bid (UCB) 10+ points with support

** 4♣ shows a strong hand with 5+5+ both minors

*** Cue Bid

6♦ North ♠6 lead making 12 tricks +920

Winning Tip:

A Cue bid shows slam interest in a game forcing auction. You cue bid an Ace, King, singleton or void. If you bypass a suit you deny control in that suit. South's 4♠ cue bid denies a heart control.

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|----------|--------|-----------|
| Board 17 | ♠ K642 | Dealer N |
| | ♥ 83 | Vul: None |
| | ♦ AJ2 | |
| | ♣ A976 | |

| | |
|----------|-----------|
| ♠ A1095 | ♠ 83 |
| ♥ KQ754 | ♥ 6 |
| ♦ K54 | ♦ Q976 |
| ♣ K | ♣ QJ10832 |
| ♠ QJ7 | |
| ♥ AJ1092 | |
| ♦ 1083 | |
| ♣ 54 | |

Weak No-trump Auction

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

* transfer to hearts

2♥ North ♣Q lead making 7 tricks +50 for E-W

When East's ♣Q lead is covered by West's ♣K South should suspect that the hearts are breaking badly. At a key moment East will get in on their ♦Q to cash their winning club and force declarer so West's 5th heart becomes the setting trick.

Strong No-trump Auction

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| | 1♣ | Pass | 1♥ |
| Pass | 1NT | All Pass | |

1NT North ♣Q lead

Strong No-trump players will be in 1NT by North making 7 tricks on ♣Q lead overtaken by ♣K and now declarer must duck this club (!) to make their contract.

Winning Tip:

As declarer (like North in 1NT) look for opportunities to duck a trick to break communication between the defenders' hands

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|----------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Board 18 | ♠ A763 ♥ A3 ♦ 107632 ♣ 85 | Dealer E Vul: N-S |
| | ♠ KQJ10854 ♥ K9 ♦ QJ107 | ♠ Q1084 ♥ 7 ♦ AQJ854 ♣ 62 |
| | ♠ KJ952 ♥ 962 ♦ AK943 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| 4♥** | 4♠*** | Pass | 1♠* |
| | | All Pass | |

* 1♠! Opening 1♠ is the classical recommendation here expecting to bid spades later

** 4♥!! this bid nicely illustrates why a 1♠ opening by South is best

*** North's guesses to bid 4♠! This is a typical matchpoints pairs bid with lots of upside.

This bid is much easier for a 5 card major pair to find than those playing 4 card majors

4♠ South ♣K lead

First class declarer play needed to make North's 4♠ contract

In a delicate 4♠ contract South gathers the evidence. West has shown 7 hearts during the auction. Both spades and clubs are liable to break badly. In these circumstances we should immediately focus on setting up our key side second suit e.g. clubs.

Win the heart lead and play 3 rounds of clubs (!) ruffing in dummy with ♠6.

Ruff the diamond return and ruff the 4th club (!) with ♠7.

Now declarer is in command and makes 10 tricks losing one heart at the end.

Alert defence needed to knock West's 4♥ contract

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| 4♥ | Pass* | Pass | 1♣** |

* North is helpless to act over 4♥

** South now regrets opening 1♣

4♥ West ♣8 lead

This contract will make unless N-S find their diamond ruffs.

South plays ♣K, ♣A and ♣3! (suit preference for diamonds)

North in ♥A (now or later) can finally give South their diamond ruff!

Other plays e.g. forcing declarer in spades (??) allow 4♥ to make.

If North were to lead a diamond (!!) can cross ruff in defence and knock 4♥ by 3 tricks.

Winning Tip:

As declarer with a two suited hand play to setup your side suit early.

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Board 19 | ♠ K94 ♥ 532 ♦ J8543 ♣ 106 | Dealer S Vul: E-W |
| | ♠ 85 ♥ 10964 ♦ 1092 ♣ A987 | ♠ AQ10732 ♥ A8 ♦ AKQ ♣ 53 |
| | ♠ J6 ♥ KQJ7 ♦ 76 ♣ KQJ42 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|-------|----------|------|-------|
| Pass | Pass | X* | 1♣ |
| 1♥ | Pass | 2♠** | Pass |
| 4♠*** | All Pass | | |

* East chooses the scientific route.

** 2♠ is forcing

*** Partner has shown a monster and West has one certain trick

East has a powerful hand and can bid the hand in two ways

Simple and practical Bid 4♠

Scientific approach Double and jump bid prepared to stop below game if partner has nothing

Many pairs will stop out of game on this hand and score well with 2♠+1 +140 to E-W

4♠ East on the ♥K lead

Detective work and inspired guesswork needed to make 4♠

Declarer can see they will make 4♠ if they lose only one trump trick. They will be in dummy only once to play spades. When South has ♠KJ, ♠Kxx, ♠Jxx cashing the ♠A first before going to dummy will solve declarer's problems since an honour will drop from South or pop up from North on the second round of spades.

Win the heart and cash ♠A. Exit with a heart and South wins ♥J plays ♣K. We win ♣A and recap what we know before spade guess. It looks like South has the heart and club honours and so may have ♠Jx or ♠Kx. We play a second spade from dummy North plays low (!).

Let us use our card reading skills. If N-S are playing strong NT then ♠Kx with South would be a balanced 15 pts ... why no 1NT opening? Guess to play ♠Q (!!) dropping the doubleton ♠J and making 4♠

Winning Tip:

Buy a copy of the classic Mike Lawrence book 'How to read your opponents cards'. Study this easy to read book and your declarer play will improve dramatically !!

Then reread this book every year until you are expert.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

| | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Board 20 | ♠ 5 | Dealer W |
| | ♥ K109 | Vul: Both |
| | ♦ AKJ104 | |
| | ♣ 10874 | |
| ♠ 2 | | ♠ 98643 |
| ♥ A542 | | ♥ J87 |
| ♦ Q98652 | | ♦ 73 |
| ♣ J6 | | ♣ K53 |
| | ♠ AKQJ107 | |
| | ♥ Q63 | |
| | ♦ | |
| | ♣ AQ92 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 1♦ | Pass | 1♠ |
| Pass | 2♣ | Pass | 2♥* |
| Pass | 2NT | Pass | 3♣ |
| Pass | 3NT | Pass | 4♠ |

All Pass

* 4th suit forcing – play as a Game Force

4♠ South on the ♠2 lead

This misfit slam is best avoided by South since they are void in partner's main suit (diamonds).

Declarer can make 12 tricks in 4♠ despite the 5-1 spade break

Having drawn trumps play a heart to ♥K as West plays low. Then discard ♥Qx hearts on ♦AK.

To complete West's misery finesse a club making 12 tricks.

This play is known as a Morton's Fork.

John Morton, Henry VII's Lord Chancellor (late 1480s), justified squeezing taxes out of everyone: if you lived lavishly, you could clearly pay; if you lived frugally, you must have savings— so you could pay. That lose-lose dilemma became known as "Morton's Fork."

Centuries later Alan Truscott adopted the name for a declarer play that impales a defender on two bad options (take an honour now and set up extra winners, or duck and never get it)

Winning Tip:

To win at pairs play to make overtricks in game rather than bidding close slams.

=====

| | |
|-----------|--------|
| ♠ J | ♠ 753 |
| ♥ Q107542 | ♥ 986 |
| ♦ J54 | ♦ 1092 |
| ♣ KJ5 | ♣ A982 |

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|-------|------|-------|
| | 1♠ | Pass | 4♠ |
| Pass | 5♦* | Pass | 5♠ |
| All Pass | | | |

5♠ North ♣A lead !

You cue-bid upwards with an Ace , King , singleton or void.

North's 5♦ bid bypasses clubs and therefore denies club control

South slams on the brakes and stops in 5♠.

Winning Tip:

Never use 4NT Roman Key Card (RKC) or Blackwood when holding a void. You need to know which key cards partner has not how many. So cue bid instead.

=====

| | |
|--------|--------|
| ♠ J875 | ♠ Q103 |
| ♥ K943 | ♥ J765 |
| ♦ A9 | ♦ Q543 |
| ♣ K85 | ♣ A |

Weak No-trump Auction

INT South ♠5 lead

One of declarer's tasks on seeing dummy is to assess each suit for potential tricks. Let's practice this skill.

Spades : We have two spade stops and opponents have 2 tricks (if 4th best) 3 tricks otherwise. A thought, we might choose to exit in spades so they have to open other suits first.

Hearts: The ♥108 and ♥AQx have potential but we need opponents to play the suit first.

Diamonds: We have slow diamond tricks but no entries to reach them. The spade Ace will soon be knocked out. We can try to guess diamonds or bide our time.

Clubs: Possibly we have 2 club tricks if ♣J is onside ... this seems our best option

Declarer plan:

Win ♠K and play ♣10 losing to ♣J. When back in we play on clubs. We avoid playing hearts or diamonds and opponents give us a trick whenever they play a red suit. Our

passive line of play leads to INT-1 -50 a top score for NS

Winning Tip:

As declarer assess each suit when you first see dummy. When you have no clear plan, consider giving the defence the tricks they are due and let them open up new suits for your benefit.

Strong No-trump Auction

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|------|-------|
| X* | 1♦ | Pass | 1♣ |
| 2♥ | All Pass | 1♥ | INT |

* (?) West should have 3+ diamonds for this takeout double, its a calculated risk to find a 44 major fit.

2♥ East ♣4 lead

The strong no-trump may allow some pairs to reach this excellent 2♥ contract making +110 E-W

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|----------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Board 23 | ♠ 52 ♥ KJ5 ♦ J843 ♣ J843 | Dealer S Vul: Both |
| | ♠ KJ10987 ♥ 8742 ♦ 62 ♣ 9 | ♠ AQ43 ♥ A63 ♦ AK ♣ KQ62 |

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| | ♠ 6 ♥ Q109 ♦ Q10975 ♣ A1075 | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|

| West | North | East | South |
|--------|----------|--------|-------|
| Pass | Pass | 2♣* | Pass |
| 2♦** | Pass | 2NT*** | Pass |
| 3♥**** | Pass | 3♠ | Pass |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

* Strong either balanced 23+ or Game Force any suit

** Negative

*** 2NT shows a balanced 23-24 pts

**** Transfer

4♠ East on the ♠6 lead 10 tricks +620 a flat board 50% or so

Texas Transfers after a 2NT (and INT) opening are popular with experienced players

- 2NT 4♦ (shows 6+ hearts)
- 2NT 4♥ (shows 6+ spades)

After opener completes the transfer 4NT is Roman Key Card with 1430 responses

Winning Tip:

Introduce Texas transfers (to 6+ card major) to your system after you open INT/2NT.

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Board 24 | ♠ ♥ 1094 ♦ KJ8643 ♣ 9765 | Dealer W Vul: None |
| | ♠ Q10975 ♥ K5 ♦ 107 ♣ KQ84 | ♠ A63 ♥ AQ86 ♦ AQ5 ♣ A32 |
| | ♠ KJ842 ♥ J732 ♦ 92 ♣ J10 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|----------|
| Pass | Pass | 2NT | Pass |
| 3♥* | Pass | 3♠ | Pass |
| 3NT | Pass | 4♠ | All Pass |

* transfer showing 5 spades

4♠ with careful play makes 11 tricks +450

After partner opens 2NT the West hand may decide slam is unlikely

If so there is a strong case to simply raise 2NT to 3NT and not show the spades

28 point rule !

For those who love rules or guidelines, try this

When you know the combined hands have 28 to 31 points a 5-3 major game will often score the same number of tricks as 3NT. As responder you may choose not to transfer to a major when you have near slam values.

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|------|-------|
| Pass | Pass | 2NT | Pass |
| 3NT* | All Pass | | |

* With a combined 30/32 points West applies the 28 point rule

3NT South ♠4 lead making 12 tricks +490 a 100% score

Winning Tip:

Adopt the 28 point rule to garner extra matchpoints at Pairs.

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|-------------|-----------|----------|
| Board 25 | ♠ AQJ9843 | Dealer N |
| | ♥ 3 | Vul: E-W |
| | ♦ 954 | |
| | ♣ 63 | |
| ♠ 6 | | ♠ K2 |
| ♥ AKJ108652 | | ♥ 74 |
| ♦ KJ8 | | ♦ Q632 |
| ♣ 9 | | ♣ AQ1072 |
| | ♠ 1075 | |
| | ♥ Q9 | |
| | ♦ A107 | |
| | ♣ KJ854 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|------|-------|
| 5♥** | 3♠ | Pass | 4♠* |
| | All Pass | | |

* South uses the 'Law Of Total Tricks' to raise to game for details see hand 10

5♥ West ♠A lead makes 11 tricks +650

Law Protection and a 3-Major Preempt

As South when your partner opens 3♠ you expect that E-W have a big heart fit and likely

a game. With a 7-3 spade fit you will score very few spade tricks in defence to 4♥.

So you raise to 4♠ as a two way bet – you make 4♠ or you go down and stop E-W making 4♥

This is also known as 'Law Protection'. You have 10 trumps and contract for 10 tricks 'protected' by the Law Of Total Tricks. Apply this with caution when vulnerable against non-vulnerable.

Winning Tip:

When partner pre-empt by opening 3 of a major raise them to game holding 3+ card support.

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| Board 26 | ♠ 8 | Dealer E |
| | ♥ KQ1084 | Vul: Both |
| | ♦ AQ6 | |
| | ♣ Q1098 | |
| ♠ J63 | | ♠ K10942 |
| ♥ J965 | | ♥ 72 |
| ♦ 92 | | ♦ 7543 |
| ♣ KJ72 | | ♣ 43 |
| | ♠ AQ75 | |
| | ♥ A3 | |
| | ♦ KJ108 | |
| | ♣ A65 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| Pass | 1♥ | Pass | 1♦ |
| Pass | 3♣** | Pass | 2NT* |
| Pass | 3NT | All Pass | 3♠*** |

* 18-19 pts the modern weak NT system plays this as 18-19 not 17-18

** 3♣ is checkback asking for major suit lengths

*** 3♠ shows 4 spades and denies 3 hearts

Underbid with No Clear Fit

With no fit established North bids a cautious 3NT

If West leads a heart (?) or club (?) the declarer is likely to make 12 tricks

On lead against this strong auction West should look for a passive lead that will not give anything away

3NT South ♦9 ! lead 3NT+2 11 tricks the likely score

Winning Tip:

When you are on lead into a balanced hand. If you have no honour sequence, lead passively e.g. from 2/3 or more small cards.

Makeable Contracts

| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| | = | = | = | = | == |
| N | 6 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 6 |
| S | 6 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 6 |
| E | - | - | - | - | - |
| W | - | - | - | - | - |

| | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| Board 27 | ♠ K93 | Dealer S |
| | ♥ 9643 | Vul: None |
| | ♦ A10975 | |
| | ♣ 5 | |
| ♠ AJ7 | | ♠ Q108652 |
| ♥ A10875 | | ♥ KQ |
| ♦ 32 | | ♦ |
| ♣ A87 | | ♣ KQ1092 |
| | ♠ 4 | |
| | ♥ J2 | |
| | ♦ KQJ864 | |
| | ♣ J643 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|------|-------|
| I ♥ | Pass | I ♠ | 2 ♦ |
| X* | 4♦** | 4♠ | 5♦ |
| 5♠ | All Pass | | |

* A popular new agreement – Support double. Opener shows exactly 3 cards in partner's suit

** Law Protection North knows of at least a 55 diamond fit and bids to the level of the fit (10 tricks)

5♠+1 South ♦A lead

This is another hand featuring highly competitive bidding where the Law of Total Tricks applies.

N-S have 11 diamonds and E-W have 9 spades = 20 trumps

So the law predicts 20 tricks – does this hold true?

5♦ makes 9 tricks

6♠ makes 12 tricks

That's 21 tricks – it is very close

The Law slightly underestimated the tricks because E-W have a double fit.

Winning Tip:

Use the Law Of Total Tricks in competitive auctions and bid to the level of your fit with partner.

Makeable Contracts

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

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| Board 28 | ♠ 2 | Dealer W |
| | ♥ KJ3 | Vul: N-S |
| | ♦ AQ7654 | |
| | ♣ A105 | |
| ♠ QJ975 | | ♠ AK643 |
| ♥ A2 | | ♥ 874 |
| ♦ K109 | | ♦ J82 |
| ♣ J93 | | ♣ 87 |
| | ♠ 108 | |
| | ♥ Q10965 | |
| | ♦ 3 | |
| | ♣ KQ642 | |

5 Card Majors Facilitate 'Law Protected' Raises to Game

Auction 1

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|----------|
| I ♠ | 2♦ | 4♠ | All Pass |

West opens a minimum hand and East with 5 spades pre-empts applying the Law

If partner has overcalled 2♦ then South has no clear bid

Auction 2

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|-------|------|-------|
| 1♠ | X | 4♣ | 5♥ |
| All Pass | | | |

If partner has made a takeout double then
South will bid 5♥

Auction 3 4NT Two Places To Play

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

* Two places to play e.g. long clubs with
3 diamonds or 55 clubs/hearts

Many experts would overcall 2♦ and now the
only way to bid on sensibly for N-S is 4NT !

Winning Tip:

4NT in a competitive auction as 'Two Places
to Play' is a useful agreement

Makeable Contracts

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