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British Autumn Sim Pairs



Thursday
8th October 2026

Welcome to the 2026 British Autumn Simultaneous Pairs.

I am sure you will enjoy playing in this Sim Pairs event. It is always interesting to compare your “local” with your “national” score and to try to work out why they differ (in both directions and sometimes by a significant amount). It’s also an opportunity to “play” against friends from geographically distant Clubs and Counties. I do hope you enjoy the boards, as always, and that you find the commentary both helpful and instructive. The commentator for this set of hands is Heather Dhondy.

I am occasionally asked if the hands we use in Sims events are ‘constructed’ in some sense. May I take this opportunity to say that this is absolutely not the case; any 5-0 splits or offside picture cards, for example, are no more likely in these events than in any other set of randomly dealt boards. The hands are computer-dealt and not “selected or constructed” to be “interesting”!

You will be able to find the full details of the event (and, in due course, the results) at www.ebu.co.uk/sims/. Provisional master points will be shown on the early results pages and once the event is finalised (following receipt of all the results and any score corrections, a process which can take about three weeks) the final standings will be confirmed. Blue Points will be awarded to the top third of the national field (in England).

Above all, do enjoy your bridge.

Adrian Darnell

Chair EBU

♠A3 ♥QJ84 ♦108762 ♣AJ ♠972 ♥A106 ♦AJ ♣Q9843 ♠J1054 ♥K9 ♦K953 ♣K72		♠KQ86 ♥7532 ♦Q4 ♣1065																																										
<table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>10</td></tr></table>		HCP		12	7	11	10	<table><tr><th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table>		Makeable contracts						♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	3	2	1	2	S	-	3	1	1	2	E	1	-	-	-	-	W	1	-	-	-	-
HCP																																												
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S	-	3	1	1	2																																							
E	1	-	-	-	-																																							
W	1	-	-	-	-																																							

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

West	North	East	South
	1NT	All pass	

I don't usually advocate opening 1NT with this shape but, on this occasion, I can't face rebidding 2♦ with that poor diamond suit, and reversing into 2♥ is out of the question with this weak hand.

On the likely low spade lead, declarer will win in dummy and probably lead the ♥K. West will take this and clear the spades. Now in hand, North will lead a diamond towards the king. This loses to the ace, and the defence will end up with two diamonds, two spades and a heart, resulting in +120 for North-South.

This scores better than the alternative diamond part-score, which should be limited to nine tricks.

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all
West North East South
 1NT All pass

I don’t usually advocate opening 1NT with this shape but, on this occasion, I can’t face rebidding 2♦ with that poor diamond suit, and reversing into 2♥ is out of the question with this weak hand. On the likely low spade lead, declarer will win in dummy and probably lead the ♥K. West will take this and clear the spades. Now in hand, North will lead a diamond towards the king. This loses to the ace, and the defence will end up with two diamonds, two spades and a heart, resulting in +120 for North-South. This scores better than the alternative diamond part-score, which should be limited to nine tricks.

♠AJ105

♥KQ32

♦KQ3

♣J5

♠Q762

♥AJ6

♦107652

♣6

♠843

♥754

♦J

♣A109832

♠K9

♥1098

♦A984

♣KQ74

HCP

16

7

12

5

Makeable contracts

♣♦♥♠NT

N33245

S33245

E-- --

W-- --

♠K4

♥K1085

♦J103

♣7542

♠AJ63

♥J96

♦A2

♣A1063

♠987

♥AQ7

♦Q54

♣KJ98

♠Q1052

♥432

♦K9876

♣Q

HCP

7

14

7

12

Makeable contracts

♣♦♥♠NT

N-- -- --

S-- -- --

E4--234

W41232

♠6

♥K10

♦K109432

♣K875

♠1075

♥AQ6532

♦8

♣1092

♠K842

♥974

♦65

♣AQJ6

♠AQJ93

♥J8

♦AQJ7

♣43

HCP

9

6

15

10

Makeable contracts

♣♦♥♠NT

N14--33

S14--22

E--3--

W--2--

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West

North

East

South

Pass

2♣

Pass

1NT

Pass

3NT

All pass

This will be played in 3NT by South almost universally, whatever system is being used.

On this hand it makes little difference what is led. Declarer will drive out the ♣A and play on hearts which are favourably placed.

In the later play, West will have some uncomfortable discards to find and will be forced to give up either the diamond or spade position, enabling declarer to come to eleven tricks.

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

West

North

East

South

1NT

Pass

2NT

Pass

3NT

All pass

This looks a likely auction for weak NT players. I expect North to lead a heart, but the winning lead is the ♦J.

On a heart lead, declarer is given a third trick in the suit, and will certainly make nine tricks – four clubs, three hearts and two other aces – but also has time to play on spades. Running the ♠9 loses to the ♠K, and even on a diamond switch, declarer can still pick up three spade tricks with two further finesses for eleven tricks.

Unluckily for North, a heart is the only lead to give eleven tricks.

On the ♦J lead, declarer can't even make nine tricks.

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West

North

East

South

Pass

2♦

Pass

1♠

All pass

3NT

What do you rebid with the South hand after partner has responded 2♦ to your 1♠ opening bid? Playing Acol, a 2NT rebid is game-forcing. This frees up a 3NT rebid to have a specific meaning, and my suggestion would be that you should use it to show four-card support for partner's minor in a strong NT-type hand, but that it should be non-forcing.

On the hand above, North is happy to pass 3NT, and it is the game that is most likely to make. Only the ♣10 lead will defeat it. When East is on lead after the second round of clubs, West can be put back on lead with the ♥A to play through another club.

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West North East South
 Pass Pass 1NT
 Pass 2♣ Pass 2♦
 Pass 3NT All pass

This will be played in 3NT by South almost universally, whatever system is being used. On this hand it makes little difference what is led. Declarer will drive out the ♣A and play on hearts which are favourably placed. In the later play, West will have some uncomfortable discards to find and will be forced to give up either the diamond or spade position, enabling declarer to come to eleven tricks.

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all
West North East South
 1NT Pass 2NT Pass
 3NT All pass

This looks a likely auction for weak NT players. I expect North to lead a heart, but the winning lead is the ♦J. On a heart lead, declarer is given a third trick in the suit, and will certainly make nine tricks – four clubs, three hearts and two other aces – but also has time to play on spades. Running the ♠9 loses to the ♠K, and even on a diamond switch, declarer can still pick up three spade tricks with two further finesses for eleven tricks. Unluckily for North, a heart is the only lead to give eleven tricks. On the ♦J lead, declarer can’t even make nine tricks.

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable
West North East South
 Pass 2♦ Pass 1♠
 All pass 3NT

What do you rebid with the South hand after partner has responded 2♦ to your 1♠ opening bid? Playing Acoll, a 2NT rebid is game-forcing. This frees up a 3NT rebid to have a specific meaning, and my suggestion would be that you should use it to show four-card support for partner’s minor in a strong NT-type hand, but that it should be non-forcing. On the hand above, North is happy to pass 3NT, and it is the game that is most likely to make. Only the ♣10 lead will defeat it. When East is on lead after the second round of clubs, West can be put back on lead with the ♥A to play through another club.

♠1097 ♥AK1086 ♦KQ ♣A93		♠Q8632 ♥J974 ♦9 ♣K42	
♠J54 ♥Q3 ♦J10875 ♣1086		♠AK ♥52 ♦A6432 ♣QJ75	
HCP	Makeable contracts		
16	4 4 4 2 4		
4	4 4 4 2 4		
14	- - - - -		
	- - - - -		

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All pass	

North-South don't quite have the values for a slam, and when neither red suit breaks and the club finesse fails, those who stop quietly in 3NT will be grateful as the limit of the hand is ten tricks. On a likely spade lead declarer might test the diamonds, but will quickly abandon that idea and should revert to clubs, since they provide a guaranteed two tricks and are quite likely to provide three, as they do on this layout.

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

All pass

Some players will open the East hand in third seat. If they do open 1♦, West will respond 1♠, and East will rebid 2♣. Now all West can do is to return to 2♦ which should end the auction. There are certainly six losers on the hand, and declarer might go one or two down depending on how the play goes. Those who choose to pass the hand out should score well as East-West.

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

	1♦	Dbl	2♦
--	----	-----	----

All pass

North-South have a comfortable diamond part-score, and there is no reason to get too high, having just a combined 21 count. In a diamond contract, with the heart finesse working, there is just a spade, a trump and a club to lose. East-West might compete as far as 2♠, which North-South would do well to defend since they can get it two down with the aid of a heart ruff.

♠J7 ♥AKQ73 ♦964 ♣J85		♠Q1053 ♥8542 ♦8 ♣K432	
♠AK98 ♥J6 ♦KJ75 ♣1076		♠642 ♥109 ♦AQ1032 ♣AQ9	
HCP	Makeable contracts		
11	N 1 2 2 - 1		
12	S 1 2 2 - 1		
5	E - - - 1 -		
12	W - - - 1 -		

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	2NT	All pass	

This looks a normal sequence to a reasonable 2NT part-score, but the cards are not lying kindly. The diamonds are all offside and the hearts don't break. South will gain the lead at some stage and will try the ♥10. If West fails to cover, South may take the finesse given lack of entries to dummy, but West really should cover. It can't cost and is important on this layout since it blocks the suit.

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	All pass	

Although North-South have 26 combined points, they do well to stop low, and this sequence doesn't look unreasonable to me. Both players are at the top end of their actions, points-wise. On a spade lead, taken by the ♠A, declarer will probably go about ruffing a diamond, and then attempt to discard the spade loser on the third round of clubs. This is ruffed and over-ruffed, and declarer now ruffs the last diamond, which is over-ruffed. This leaves declarer with four trump losers and one in diamonds. Although declarer can make nine tricks, the line is rather double-dummy.

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

3♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
----	------	------	-----

Do you open with the South cards? It is marginal, but the singleton might be useful, so I would. Having done so, do you re-open when West's 3♠ overcall is passed back to you? With a singleton spade, the chances are that partner is lying in wait with a penalty pass, so you should double. Dummy is alarmingly strong but, provided the defence hold their nerve, declarer can only come to eight tricks. You have your two aces and will come to three trump tricks via a trump promotion. North leads a diamond, collects a ruff, and puts partner in with the ♣A to lead another diamond. If declarer ruffs high, North should decline to over-ruff.

♠A9	
♥74	
♦A108652	
♣753	
♠KQJ3	♠87654
♥A1032	♥Q96
♦K4	♦Q73
♣1092	♣AJ
♠102	
♥KJ85	
♦J9	
♣KQ864	
HCP	
8	9
13	10
Makeable contracts	
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT	
N	2 2 - - -
S	2 2 - - -
E	- - - 2 3 1
W	- - - 2 3 -

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

Pass	Pass	Pass	
------	------	------	--

1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
-----	------	----	------

3♠	All pass		
----	----------	--	--

If North passes as dealer, the auction will probably go as that given above. North may decide to open 2♦, if that is weak, but the contract will still end up in a spade part-score when West makes a take-out double.

The defence will come to a trick in each suit, to hold 3♠ to nine tricks. The only suit of interest is hearts. If North opens a weak 2♦, West will get hearts right for certain.

With no opponents bidding, the correct line is to lead low to the nine and, if this loses to the jack, finesse South for the king.

♠K95	
♥QJ643	
♦K4	
♣1032	
♠A108	♠7643
♥985	♥AK10
♦A872	♦J10963
♣AKQ	♣7
♠QJ2	
♥72	
♦Q5	
♣J98654	
HCP	
9	8
17	6
Makeable contracts	
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT	
N	- - - - -
S	- - - - -
E	1 5 2 4 4
W	1 5 2 4 4

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

		Pass	Pass
--	--	------	------

1♦	1♥	2♥	Pass
----	----	----	------

3♥	Pass	3NT	All pass
----	------	-----	----------

What call do you make with the East hand after 1♦ – 1♥? Clearly 3♦ is a possibility, but the hand looks a little strong for a pre-emptive raise. I prefer the slight overbid of 2♥, an unassuming cue-bid.

Facing this, West will certainly want to be in game – preferably 3NT if partner has a stopper in hearts – so bids 3♥ to find out.

Happily, partner has three stoppers, and when diamonds divide two-two, declarer has eleven tricks. Only an unlikely spade lead will hold the contract to ten tricks.

♠J105	
♥K976	
♦K97	
♣K97	
♠AKQ86	♠3
♥42	♥A1083
♦AQ43	♦10865
♣J2	♣A1064
♠9742	
♥QJ5	
♦J2	
♣Q853	
HCP	
10	8
16	6
Makeable contracts	
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT	
N	- - - - -
S	- - - - -
E	2 4 2 3 2
W	2 4 2 3 2

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
----	------	-----	------

2♦	Pass	3♦	Pass
----	------	----	------

3NT	All pass		
-----	----------	--	--

On the auction above, it is hard to see what West can do over 3♦. It is hardly ideal to bid 3NT with two small doubletons in the unbid suits and rely on partner (who only responded 1NT) to have decent stoppers in both, and yet game in diamonds looks a long way away as well. In theory, the winning action is to pass but, in practice, 3NT is tough to defeat.

The tens in clubs and hearts give those suits some protection. In fact, only a spade lead gives the defence a chance of beating the contract.

♠K987	
♥AJ2	
♦J76	
♣KJ2	
♠52	♠J64
♥Q10964	♥K8753
♦Q852	♦103
♣75	♣A103
♠AQ103	
♥-	
♦AK94	
♣Q9864	
HCP	
13	8
4	15
Makeable contracts	
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT	
N	5 4 - 6 5
S	5 4 - 6 2
E	- - 1 - -
W	- - 1 - -

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

			1♣
--	--	--	----

Pass	1♠	Pass	3♥
------	----	------	----

Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
------	----	------	----

Pass	4♥	Pass	5♦
------	----	------	----

Pass	6♠	All pass	
------	----	----------	--

Another three-level splinter, but this time North will be interested. North's club holding looks useful facing partner's 1♣ opening bid, and with plenty of extra values and a suitable holding in the splinter suit, a cue-bidding sequence should follow to 6♠.

When no club ruff is possible for the defence, declarer should have little difficulty in wrapping up twelve tricks, by drawing trumps and setting up the clubs.

♠AK73	
♥AK4	
♦1097	
♣K76	
♠J86	♠105
♥Q6532	♥987
♦AK4	♦832
♣104	♣AQ932
♠Q942	
♥J10	
♦QJ65	
♣J85	
HCP	
17	6
10	7
Makeable contracts	
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT	
N	1 2 1 2 2
S	1 1 1 2 2
E	- - - - -
W	- - - - -

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

	1♠	Pass	2♠
--	----	------	----

Pass	2NT	All pass	
------	-----	----------	--

On the sequence above, South would normally correct to 3♠ with four-card support and a minimum, but on this hand, with all your values in queens and jacks, it should be tempting to leave 2NT, and that is the winning action.

3♠ can be defeated on a diamond lead by East to partner's ♦AK, and a club switch, resulting in two club tricks and a ruff for one down.

In 2NT, East will probably lead a club. That sets up four tricks in clubs to go with two diamond tricks but, if declarer is brave enough to try the heart finesse, that will score the eighth trick.

♠KQ9875	
♥Q62	
♦953	
♣4	
♠3	♠42
♥1098	♥J53
♦A1042	♦K876
♣KQ972	♣AJ86
♠AJ106	
♥AK74	
♦QJ	
♣1053	
HCP	
7	9
9	15
Makeable contracts	
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT	
N	- - 4 4 -
S	- - 4 4 -
E	3 2 - - -
W	3 2 - - -

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

		Pass	1♥
--	--	------	----

Pass	1♠	Pass	3♠
------	----	------	----

Pass	4♠	All pass	
------	----	----------	--

4♠ will be a very popular contract, especially since the vulnerability is wrong for East-West to be considering a save in 5♣.

4♠ has three obvious losers, but the defence will need to get their club trick before losing the lead to declarer, since otherwise it will disappear on the fourth round of hearts.

♠8	
♥83	
♦AK1043	
♣106543	
♠Q9654	♠A32
♥542	♥KQJ7
♦J75	♦9862
♣AQ	♣72
♠KJ107	
♥A1096	
♦Q	
♣KJ98	

HCP	
7	
9	10
14	

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

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

Pass	Pass	1♣	
------	------	----	--

Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
------	----	------	----

Pass	3♣	All pass	
------	----	----------	--

I expect most North-Souths to end up in a club part-score, with some having a go at game.

To hold 3♣ to nine tricks West will need to find a heart lead, which is unlikely if South rebids 1♥. On the more likely spade lead, declarer will be able to dispose of dummy's heart loser on the ♠K and lose just two trumps and a spade for ten tricks.

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

Pass	Pass	1♥	
------	------	----	--

Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
------	----	------	----

Pass	3♥	All pass	
------	----	----------	--

This hand raises the age-old question, playing a weak NT, of whether to open 1♥ or 1NT. On this occasion there is one more trick available in hearts, and although both 3♥ and 2NT can be defeated on a club lead, in practice they will make as West's normal lead is a top diamond.

Against 3♥, if West cashes a top diamond and switches to a club at trick two, declarer must put up the ♣Q to prevent the defence from being able to take two club tricks. South will know that West almost certainly holds the other top diamond honour, so it is very possible to find the right play.

♠K98				
♥K43				
♦10942				
♣954				
♠AJ10	♠742			
♥A1062	♥9875			
♦3	♦AK7			
♣AQJ102	♣K86			
♠Q653				
♥QJ				
♦QJ865				
♣73				
HCP				
6	10			
16	8			
Makeable contracts				
♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-
E	4	1	4	2
W	4	1	4	2

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
----	------	----	------

3♦	Pass	4♥	All pass
----	------	----	----------

A sequence similar to board 11 where, by jumping to 3♦, West agrees hearts and shows a diamond shortage. Again, East has wasted values in the splinter suit and weak trumps, so rejects any slam invitation by jumping straight to 4♥.

There are two trumps to lose, and South will need to lead a spade, or switch to one when on lead, to establish a winner in the suit before it can be disposed of on the clubs.

♠ J9	
♥ AQJ765	
♦ K5	
♣ K62	
♠ AKQ10	♠ 654
♥ 104	♥ 9
♦ A1042	♦ QJ986
♣ J108	♣ A973
♠ 8732	
♥ K832	
♦ 73	
♣ Q54	

HCP	
14	
14	7
5	

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

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

1NT	2♥	Pass	Pass
-----	----	------	------

Dbl	Pass	3♦	3♥
-----	------	----	----

All pass			
----------	--	--	--

It is rare for the 1NT opener to re-open the auction but, if there was ever a time, this is it. The vulnerability suggests competing, and you also have a small doubleton in their suit, four cards in the unbid major, and a maximum.

It is important to give them a push on this hand since 2♥ is making exactly eight tricks. You do even better to compete to 4♦, but that is hard to evaluate.

		♠Q92				
		♥A1094				
		♦763				
		♣964				
♠A876543		♠-				
♥2		♥KQ763				
♦A85		♦KQ104				
♣73		♣AK108				
		♠KJ10				
		♥J85				
		♦J92				
		♣QJ52				
HCP		Makeable contracts				
6		♣	♦	♥	♠	N
8	17	N	-	-	-	-
9		S	-	-	-	-
		E	4	5	3	4
		W	3	5	3	4

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

1♠	Pass	1♥	Pass
----	------	----	------

2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
----	------	----	------

3♠	All pass		
----	----------	--	--

West needs to bid spades three times before partner gets the message! When trumps divide three-three and the defence are unable to engineer a ruff, you make 4♠, but that is against the odds.

I expect that the pairs that reach game are those that are pushed there. Not by the opponents, but by their partner.

		♠AK7				
		♥Q832				
		♦A72				
		♣AJ9				
♠1098			♠Q654			
♥AJ			♥7654			
♦J9543			♦K			
♣743			♣KQ105			
		♠J32				
		♥K109				
		♦Q1086				
		♣862				
HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	N
18		N	1	1	3	1
6	10	S	1	1	2	1
6		E	-	-	-	-
		W	-	-	-	-

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
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Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
------	------	------	------

Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
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Pass	2NT	All pass	
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This will be a common Acoll auction, but how many tricks will declarer emerge with?

West will probably begin with a diamond to East's king. This will be followed by the ♣K switch, which declarer should duck, requiring East to switch to a spade or a heart.

On a spade switch, declarer can put up the ♠J, which wins. A heart switch resolves the guess in that suit, leaving declarer with eight top tricks, but if South reads the end game, East can be thrown in with a club to lead away from the spade for nine tricks.

♠Q9432 ♥9632 ♦AK ♣42	
♠876 ♥K10 ♦109852 ♣K103	♠10 ♥QJ7 ♦QJ743 ♣Q975
♠AKJ5 ♥A854 ♦6 ♣AJ86	
HCP	Makeable contracts
9	♣ 2 - 4 4 3
6	♥ 2 - 4 4 3
8	♦ - 2 - - -
17	♠ - 2 - - -

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

West	North	East	South
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		1♣	
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Pass	1♠	Pass	3♦
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Pass	4♠	All pass	
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On this auction, 3♦ is not natural since 2♦ would already be showing extra values. Some people play it as showing 18-19 balanced with four-card support for partner's major, and others play it as a splinter. However South chooses to proceed, the contract is bound to finish in 4♠.

There are three unavoidable losers – two in hearts and one in clubs – so 420 will be a very popular result.

♠532 ♥4 ♦Q82 ♣J96532	
♠J10 ♥J862 ♦AK943 ♣108	♠K986 ♥Q10975 ♦- ♣AKQ7
♠AQ74 ♥AK3 ♦J10765 ♣4	
HCP	Makeable contracts
3	♣ 1 2 - - -
9	♥ 1 1 - - -
14	♦ - - 4 - 1
14	♠ - - 3 - 1

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

		1♦	
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Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
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1♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
----	------	----	------

4♥	All pass		
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What call do you make with the East cards when 1♦ is passed round to you? The choices are between double and 1♥. I prefer double since the hearts are not that strong, and you have great support for the other two suits. There is also the possibility that West is lying in wait with a penalty pass, and you would be happy to defend in that situation. On this hand, partner chooses your five-card suit, and 4♥ is the likely contract. North will probably lead a diamond (partner's suit), but the contract would be defeated on a spade lead. Perhaps you should have bid 1♥ after all and protected your side from the lead!

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
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	Pass	1NT	Pass
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4♥	All pass		
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If South has a way to show the minors over East's 1NT, the auction will become highly competitive, with both sides able to make game. North-South can even make a slam. If South passes, West will want to get to 4♥ as quickly as possible to avoid the opponents getting into the auction.

In a heart contract there are two spades and a diamond to lose. The best way to avoid three spade losers, if West has to play them, is to play North for the ♠10.

In a club contract declarer needs to play East for the ♦Q. Then in due course the spade loser will disappear on a long diamond.

♠A105 ♥10 ♦853 ♣K109876	
♠Q62 ♥AQJ76432 ♦92 ♣-	♠J973 ♥K985 ♦AQ4 ♣Q3
♠K84 ♥- ♦KJ1076 ♣AJ542	
HCP	Makeable contracts
7	♣ 6 5 - - -
9	♥ 6 4 - - -
12	♦ - - 4 - -
12	♠ - - 4 - -

♠J532 ♥9 ♦852 ♣QJ1062	
♠KQ ♥1043 ♦Q1097 ♣A985	♠1087 ♥KQ2 ♦AKJ4 ♣K73
♠A964 ♥AJ8765 ♦63 ♣4	
HCP	Makeable contracts
4	♣ - - - - -
11	♥ - - - - -
16	♦ 1 2 - - 2
9	♠ 1 2 - - 2

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

West	North	East	South
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		1♦	1♥
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2♥	Pass	3NT	All pass
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On the auction above, West's 2♥ is an unassuming cue-bid showing a sound high-card raise to 3♦ or better. On that basis, East has enough for game, and a decent stopper in hearts, so simply bids 3NT.

Against 3NT, South needs to avoid a heart lead, since if declarer puts up dummy's ♥10, that becomes the ninth trick. On any other lead, declarer will struggle to get a ninth trick and should go one down if the defence are accurate.

♠A975 ♥62 ♦65 ♣AK1087	
♠J8 ♥94 ♦AK743 ♣Q543	♠K104 ♥KJ1085 ♦1098 ♣J2
♠Q632 ♥AQ73 ♦QJ2 ♣96	
HCP	Makeable contracts
11	♣ 3 - - 3 1
10	♥ 3 - - 3 2
8	♦ - - - - -
11	♠ - - - - -

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
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			Pass
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Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
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Pass	1♠	Pass	3♠
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All pass			
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This looks like a normal sequence to arrive in a spade part-score. The trumps are favourable and the heart finesse works, but with clubs breaking four-two you will have a loser in that suit to go with a trump and two diamonds.

♠10 ♥J2 ♦Q96542 ♣Q1083	
♠Q8732 ♥K1065 ♦- ♣K972	♠KJ ♥AQ84 ♦KJ83 ♣AJ5
♠A9654 ♥973 ♦A107 ♣64	
HCP	Makeable contracts
5	♣ - - - - -
8	♥ - - - - -
19	♦ 4 1 5 4 4
8	♠ 4 1 5 4 4

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
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			Pass
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Pass	2♦	Dbl	3♦
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3♠	Pass	3NT	All pass
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4♥	All pass		
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North will want to open something, third in hand at favourable vulnerability. If playing a weak two in diamonds, this looks like the best option. The East hand is too strong for 2NT so starts with a double. South raises to 3♦, and West is happy to make a free bid of 3♠ and will probably remove partner's 3NT to 4♥.

In 4♥, declarer can be held to eleven tricks, and one obvious way is by leading a singleton spade and getting a ruff.