Junior Squad Sim Pairs

Thanks to our many contributors

Wednesday/Thursday

4-5·02·2026

Welcome to the 2026 EBU's Junior Squad Sims Pairs. Thank you for playing and I hope you have enjoyed the event and will take pride in having supported our Junior International Teams and the squad system which trains them. Last year we had five squads played in the World Youth Teams Championships in Salsomaggiore in Italy. The EBU can only provide limited funding for these teams, and it is these simultaneous pairs events (alongside much appreciated donations from County Associations, clubs and individuals) which make attendance at these events possible. I very much hope you will enjoy reading the commentary, which this year is provided by members and recent graduates from the Junior Squads. The contributions were organised by three from the EBU's newly formed Junior Council – Liam Fegarty, Stephen Kennedy, and Liam Sanderson; many thanks to them. Please continue to support this annual event, and encourage your club to participate in the future.

Patrick Shields, this year's Editor for this publication.

♠ 1098
♥ Q7
♦ KJ1064
♣ KJ3

♠ Q543   ♠ K62
♥ J8   ♥ AK10632
♦ A52   ♦ 987
♣ A942   ♣ 5

♠ AJ7
♥ 954
♦ Q3
♣ Q10876

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
10	N	1	-	-	-	-
11 10	S	1	-	-	-	-
9	E	-	-	3	2	2
	W	-	-	3	2	2

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Passs	2♥	Pass
3♥	All Pass		

At match-pointed pairs, with ten sharp high card points, and nine cards in the majors, East should open at the 1-level, with 1♥, and rebid 2♥ showing up to 14 high card points and a six-card suit. West, with the possibility of game and a known 8-card fit should raise their partner to 3♥, but East should not accept that invite.

On the likely lead of a club, declarer will have no problem making their nine tricks, after winning the first club, crossing to the ♥A, and crossing back to the dummy to take a heart finesse, and scoring +140.

♠ AJ87
♥ 4
♦ A987653
♣ 2

♠ 943   ♠ K10
♥ AKJ3   ♥ 52
♦ KJ   ♦ Q102
♣ AQ103   ♣ K98754

♠ Q652
♥ Q109876
♦ 4
♣ J6

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
9	N	-	2	-	1	-
18 8	S	-	2	-	1	-
5	E	4	-	1	-	4
	W	4	-	1	-	4

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♥	3♦	Pass	Pass
Dble	Pass	3NT	All Pass

After pass from East, and a conservative pass from South, West should open 1♥ if system allows, with a view to rebidding 2NT (17-18 HCP). However, an aggressive North could choose a pre-empt, opposite a passed partner, leaving the opening side with work to do to get to game. In pass-out seat, West may choose a take-out double, as they have no trick source for 3NT, and only a single diamond stopper. An imaginative East, knowing that a hand with some aces and a club fit would give them nine tricks in no-trumps can choose 3NT.

On the lead of the ♠2 spade, which feels natural on the auction, North will win and continue. From the opening lead, East might conclude, after cashing clubs, that North must be 4=1=7=1, making a second-round heart finesse relatively safe for ten tricks, before the defence have chance to cash their established spade tricks and the diamond ace.

Board 3

♠Q2
♥AQJ52
♦J2
♣10932

♠KJ98   **♠10743**
♥1073   **♥K**
♦Q976   **♦A1085**
♣54   **♣AKJ7**

♠A65
♥9864
♦K43
♣Q86

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	10	N	1	-	1	-	1
6	15	S	1	-	1	-	1
	9	E	-	3	-	3	-
		W	-	3	-	3	-

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

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

Some Easts may open 1♣ or 1♦ depending on style, and this might allow North-South to introduce their hearts. Easts who open 1♠ will see a simple raise to 2♠ and will often be allowed to play there. South on lead isn't spoiled for choice here and should opt for a passive heart to the ♥A, after which North's natural choice might be a club. East can win the ace and try a spade to the ♠8. North can win, and might decide that, if partner has the ♠A, that ♥Q looks the most troubling for declarer. After that, If declarer tries to draw trumps, South can now rise with the ace and draw a third trump to remove the chances of another heart ruff. With only one trump left in dummy, West has to play on the diamonds hoping to pick up three tricks and will make their contract today only if they guess that suit correctly.

Board 4

♠A9754
♥Q4
♦J6
♣K652

♠Q10   **♠K3**
♥K106   **♥AJ9872**
♦AQ743   **♦105**
♣1043   **♣AJ8**

♠J862
♥53
♦K982
♣Q97

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	10	N	-	-	-	-	-
11	13	S	-	-	-	-	-
	6	E	2	3	5	-	4
		W	2	3	5	-	4

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

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

East will be looking to maximise their overtricks here as soon as the dummy hits. South is likely to lead a spade which North will win their ace and now North has a dilemma. Looking at a possible diamond trick source in the dummy and the heart finesse onside for declarer, it might be best for them to cash out any tricks their side might make. Do they try spades or switch to clubs? A club switch looks like it could yield more tricks if South has lead their fourth highest spade. On a club switch, declarer must duck in case the ♦K is offside, South's queen will win and they'll return a club back into East's ♣AJ. Declarer can now play a heart to the king, and a heart back. Good news for East as the queen appears, and they can just finesse the diamond for eleven tricks. Kudos to any Easts who unblock the ♠K at trick one to create the ♠Q as a possible late entry for diamonds.

Board 5

♠A1065
♥A62
♦1042
♣K95

♠Q4   **♠K**
♥K94   **♥J1053**
♦J986   **♦K7**
♣A873   **♣QJ10642**

♠J98732
♥Q87
♦AQ53
♣-

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	11	N	-	2	-	3	1
10	10	S	-	2	-	4	1
	9	E	2	-	1	-	-
		W	2	-	1	-	-

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

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

Looking at this deal, one can see many variations on the auction. Some Easts may choose to pre-empt and open a heavy 3♣, after which South has a tricky decision to make. After pass-pass, many Souths will have opinions over what to open in third seat. North-South could bid quickly to 4♠, or East-West could steal a club part score on a very good day, or may end up sacrificing in 5♣. Leading the top club against 4♠ is fatal for the defence as South now has a very easy run to their desired ten tricks (five spades, one heart, two diamonds, one club and a diamond ruff). On a diamond lead, many Souths will try to play a heart to their queen to make the tenth trick; with the king offside, this simple play will cause us to go down one. A key point for West is never to try to cash the ♣A, as this trick won't be going anywhere. If South has a club, eventually they will play the suit.

♠QJ ♥Q103 ♦J9643 ♣J63	**Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable**

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

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

Hands:

North: ♠QJ ♥Q103 ♦J9643 ♣J63
West: ♠1092 ♥AK84 ♦752 ♣KQ2
East: ♠AK853 ♥J9 ♦KQ10 ♣A109
South: ♠764 ♥7652 ♦A8 ♣8754

East starts with 1♠, and now West has an interesting decision. With an opening hand opposite an opening, it's certainly going to be at least a game, but which one is right? If you just had one bid, for sure you would pick 3N with the super flat 3433 shape, but bridge is not a race, and it's good to get partner involved. Biding 2♦ or 2♥ would show more cards than we have, and we cannot make a raise in spades and risk partner passing, so we pick the semi-natural 2♣. Here we are grateful to hear 2N from partner, showing 15-19 and, more importantly, a balanced hand. This is all we need to hear and we can now place the contract of 3N (not worth 4N with a max 31HCP combined and no trick source or ruffing values). You will notice that slam does make, but don't forget the very favourable ♠QJ – and you still have to guess the diamond position correctly!

HCP		
	7	
12		17
	4	

Makeable contracts

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

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Hands:

North: ♠Q1086 ♥743 ♦AK2 ♣AJ8
West: ♠AKJ92 ♥A96 ♦Q75 ♣K4
East: ♠753 ♥J5 ♦J843 ♣10765
South: ♠4 ♥KQ1082 ♦1096 ♣Q932

I must admit I would not do very well as North-South on this board. You may be tempted to open the South hand a weak 2♥ – I hope this remains just a temptation, you cannot do this at vulnerable here (although it's perfect for a Lucas Two Bid). North is stuck for a bid over 1♠, not strong enough for 1N, and you can't make a takeout double when your best suit is their one! The interesting decision is South's in protective position, but I just don't think you have enough to bid with a 7-count, partner hasn't made a bid over 1♠, so why should you now dredge up a double. You will be surprised how often your opponents will thank you with a smirk and bid their cold game as soon as you reopen on hands like this. Here it works terribly but I still think Pass is the right bid by South – and if you collect +200, you will beat any part-score you might make.

HCP		
	14	
17		2
	7	

Makeable contracts

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

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Hands:

North: ♠K85 ♥A107 ♦J9732 ♣98
West: ♠J974 ♥Q42 ♦A54 ♣J76
East: ♠A10 ♥J865 ♦K6 ♣K5432
South: ♠Q632 ♥K93 ♦Q108 ♣AQ10

I need little encouragement to open third-in-hand, especially non-vulnerable. Here to me 1N is clear, sometimes (here) it just helps you win the part-score battle, even better than that you can stop the other side bidding their easy game – just be ready to accept the occasional -500 against bloodthirsty opponents!

Another advantage is that opponents will often give away a trick on the lead; it is very tricky on these auctions not to do so. It's a contributor to what is called "Declarer's Advantage". Here South will surely lead a spade or a heart, and this may well be enough for you to wriggle home in 1NT (and even if it's off, it's only 50s).

HCP		
	8	
8		11
	13	

Makeable contracts

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

Board 9

♠ 432
♥ J10875
♦ A
♣ A762

♠ J98 ♥ AQ ♦ K10872 ♣ J83   ♠ AK1065 ♥ K32 ♦ QJ ♣ Q109

♠ Q7
♥ 964
♦ 96543
♣ K54

HCP	
	9
11	15
	5

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Many don't like opening 1NT with a nice 5 card major suit. I guess that's just personal preference.

South will probably lead a diamond against 3NT. No matter what North does, declarer can always set up a club trick, getting three diamonds, three hearts, a club and two spades.

If North-South don't attack clubs, the spades could be set up. If North-South do attack clubs, and declarer decides to play safely for nine tricks by cashing ♠AK, they will enjoy seeing off-side doubleton ♠Q drop from South, leading to at least one overtrick.

Board 10

♠ 8
♥ 54
♦ AKJ942
♣ AJ32

♠ AJ75 ♥ K1087 ♦ 7 ♣ Q764   ♠ K642 ♥ AJ96 ♦ 65 ♣ K109

♠ Q1093
♥ Q32
♦ Q1083
♣ 85

HCP	
	13
10	11
	6

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

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

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

North leads a spade against 3♥. Declarer knows it is a singleton straight away but is not worried as the fourth spade was always a loser. Depending on how good declarer is at guessing (in trumps and clubs), they will emerge with between nine and eleven tricks. I'm not sure I can really see a particular reason to get either clubs or hearts right.

Board 11

♠ 10643
♥ K63
♦ A5
♣ Q953

♠ J9 ♥ QJ1042 ♦ Q92 ♣ 872   ♠ 852 ♥ 87 ♦ J10876 ♣ AJ4

♠ AKQ7
♥ A95
♦ K43
♣ K106

HCP	
	9
6	6
	19

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	5	3	3	6	5
S	5	3	3	6	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

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

We arrive in 4♠. After a diamond lead, we draw trumps and have to decide who to play for the ♣J. With the clubs breaking evenly, if we get it right that is twelve tricks, and if not, only eleven.

From what we know in the trump break, West has more vacant spaces than does East, which points to playing West for the ♣J. Sadly!

♠Q1095
♥63
♦QJ7
♣Q1096

♠K8732　　♠J
♥75　　　　♥AKJ982
♦98　　　　♦A43
♣K872　　　♣AJ5

♠A64
♥Q104
♦K10652
♣43

HCP		
	7	
6		18
	9	

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

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

I decided to assign 3NT as meaning maximum hand with six+ hearts, semi-balanced (typically meaning 6322-ish) as it feels like 3♥ may be an underbid here. If we don't have this 3NT bid available, we may try 3♣ as a natural GF rebid. Partner can bid 3♥ over this suggesting a doubleton heart and then we find 4♥, but if partner supports clubs the auction becomes more murky. South has a tricky lead against 4♥. The only thing that is for sure is that we definitely don't want to lead a heart. Let's say South leads a low diamond. Declarer should now duck a diamond and ruff the losing diamond before trying to draw trumps. When declarer finesses the heart, it loses to the queen. After drawing the remaining trumps, declarer should play a spade toward dummy. If South has the ace, declarer no longer needs the club finesse.

♠96
♥J643
♦J62
♣KJ93

♠K107　　♠AQJ54
♥K1075　　♥AQ82
♦AQ104　　♦73
♣104　　　♣62

♠832
♥9
♦K985
♣AQ875

HCP		
	6	
12		13
	9	

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

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

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

It is generally preferable to play a 4-4 fit over a 5-3 fit when we have the option between two suits – which is why West bid 4♥ instead of 4♠. South has a horrible lead again. If they lead a heart, it will give away the suit but say South does lead it; declarer now has five spades, four hearts and two diamonds. They should finesse the diamond before drawing all trumps, in case it loses, so they are able to ruff a club return. Without a heart lead, when East cashes the ♥A and sees the ♥9 fall they will have to decide who to play for four trumps. South may have (correctly) false-carded the 9 from J9xx and in that case you cash the ♥Q next. East may decide that South would not find this false-card and instead cash the ♥K, planning to finesse against North. In theory, it is right to play South to have J9xx (more likely than a stiff) but in practice, it may be best to play North for four.

♠AJ5
♥42
♦A976
♣10982

♠K83　　　♠9762
♥A1063　　♥97
♦K3　　　　♦Q102
♣AK76　　　♣J543

♠Q104
♥KQJ85
♦J854
♣Q

HCP		
	9	
17		3
	11	

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

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
1NT	Dble	All Pass	

When North penalty doubles 1NT, South may start to regret their fairly disgusting 1♥ opening (perhaps we should pass initially but what's the fun in that?). I reckon that 1NT-doubled is most likely to be one down. I think West will probably end up with two hearts, three clubs and a diamond. There are other ways it could go but I think most lines will lead to down one.
On a heart lead, declarer probably does best to hold up for one round, win the ace and then cash ♣AKJ and exit with a club to North. This certainly makes things harder for the defence (South will have had to provide three discards), but it will still probably end up as down one as long as North does not play spades.

♠KJ42 ♥9 ♦92 ♣AK9643	**Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable**

♠A53	♠87
♥KJ8754	♥Q10632
♦10	♦87654
♣QJ7	♣8

♠Q1096 ♥A ♦AKQJ3 ♣1052	

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

To make twelve tricks in spades, declarer must finesse against the ♣QJ (twice) which is bad odds compared to playing for the drop. If South plays for the drop, and East shows up with a club honour on the first round, the restricted choice argument makes it right to now play for West to have Hxx and finesse o the second round.

The defence can stop declarer making twelve tricks by leading a club at trick one and taking a club ruff on winning the ♠A.

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
11		N	6	5	-	5	5
11	2	S	6	5	-	5	5
16		E	-	-	3	-	-
		W	-	-	3	-	-

♠1083 ♥- ♦AK10983 ♣9865	**Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable**

♠Q97642	♠-
♥Q862	♥AJ10
♦J7	♦Q42
♣K	♣AQJ10743

♠AKJ5 ♥K97543 ♦65 ♣2	

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♦	4♣	All Pass

North, with such a good suit and with 6430 shape, and with favourable vulnerability, decides to open their 6-card suit at the 3-level. This puts East in a horrible position. East might consider 3NT on this auction, but I'm just not sure that it's right: partner has at most eleven HCP and probably has too much in spades (which would be wasted opposite my hand) or not enough (and the opponents can cash spades). 3NT may be an option if partner isn't a passed hand (perhaps more at imps scoring) with a view to pull to 4♣ if the opponents double. 4♣ may be the sensible call, but it does feel like we may be converting a plus score to a minus score. Perhaps we should just pass? With a decent hand with a seven-card suit header by the AQJT, it's normally right to say something. To beat 4♣, South must lead a low heart, giving North a ruff. But they will most likely just lead a spade. Declarer may still try the heart finesse, in search of an overtrick, and go down. If not, they lose two diamonds and a heart.

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
7		N	-	-	-	1	-
8	14	S	-	-	-	1	-
11		E	3	-	1	-	3
		W	4	-	1	-	3

♠6542 ♥K762 ♦Q7 ♣Q96	**Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all**

♠J108	♠AK93
♥Q8	♥J94
♦A932	♦105
♣AK108	♣7543

♠Q7 ♥A1053 ♦KJ864 ♣J2	

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

South may not have the full twelve points needed to open the bidding, but in third position such restrictions should be lifted a little. Partner didn't have the points to open the bidding, so it's not as if they will raise to game, and opening in third can come with many a benefit. It can get partner off to the right lead when the opponents inevitably play the hand, and on this deal it may steal the contract from them entirely!

West has no good call over 1♦, and East-West are likely to sell out to 2♥, which has six obvious losers for one down, but -50 is a better score than -120 from defending 1NT+1.

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
7		N	-	-	1	-	-
14	8	S	-	-	1	-	-
11		E	3	1	-	2	2
		W	3	1	-	2	2

♠Q1043
♥KJ
♦KJ104
♣1043

♠AK82   ♠765
♥5   ♥109643
♦Q9752   ♦86
♣KQ5   ♣A92

♠J9
♥AQ872
♦A3
♣J876

HCP	Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
10	N	1	1	1	-	2
14 4	S	1	1	1	-	2
12	E	-	-	-	-	-
	W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		Pass	1♥
Dble	ReDble	Pass	Pass
1♠	1NT	All Pass	

West doubling South's 1♥ opening gives North the chance to use the often neglected redouble (showing 9+ HCP and no fit with partner). North could bid 1♠, of course, but bidding spades isn't so great when West has suggested four spades with their double. Redoubling also gives North-South the chance to catch East-West in a penalty.

East won't like that, but they can pass over the redouble to show no good suit to bid. When this comes round to West, they can escape into their good four-card spade suit and that will leave North with a decision.

They could double for penalty, but you would prefer a better suit when doubling at the 1-level. 1NT is a practical bid that should end the auction.

♠AK62
♥102
♦AJ543
♣73

♠73   ♠QJ954
♥J7654   ♥Q
♦-   ♦Q1087
♣Q109654   ♣AJ8

♠108
♥AK983
♦K962
♣K2

HCP	Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
12	N	-	4	3	1	1
3 12	S	-	4	3	1	1
13	E	2	-	-	-	-
	W	2	-	-	-	-

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

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

If East-West were non-vulnerable, West might try a cheeky 3♣ overcall. As it is, I know several junior players who would overcall 3♣ regardless of the vulnerability (send help, please). In any case, I'm sure you are made of sterner stuff and that North-South had the auction to themselves. With 12 opposite 13, it won't be surprising to see most in 3NT.

With diamonds 4-0 and the threat of cashing clubs on the horizon, today will be a contest to see who can go the least off in 3NT. Those who go only one off can be assured a good score, losing only to the pairs who defended clubs doubled after too much bidding from West, and those who stopped in a part-score.

♠7
♥AKJ73
♦Q8762
♣KJ

♠AQ1092   ♠K864
♥1042   ♥Q9
♦K95   ♦AJ3
♣86   ♣A952

♠J53
♥865
♦104
♣Q10743

HCP	Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
14	N	-	-	2	-	-
9 14	S	-	-	2	-	-
3	E	1	-	-	4	2
	W	1	-	-	4	2

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
Pass	1♥	Dble	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

With 14 points and at least three cards in all the unbid suits, East should make a takeout double of 1♥ despite holding Qx in the enemy suit. With the help of the diamond finesse, 4♠ is an easy make, but will most pairs get there? It is 9 opposite 14 after all, and if West bids a simple 2♠, I see no reason for East to go on.

West may choose to bid a little more on the strength of their five-card suit, and those of you who had too much porridge for breakfast are likely to get a good score out of 4♠. I know all of the junior players will bid it! They tend to bid everything…

♠8
♥J
♦AK3
♣AKJ65432

♠AQ965   ♠32
♥K10954   ♥AQ73
♦92   ♦QJ8764
♣8   ♣9

♠KJ1074
♥862
♦105
♣Q107

HCP
16
9   9
6

Makeable contracts

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

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	2♣	3♦	Pass
Pass	4♣	Pass	5♣
All Pass			

Wow! Another hand for junior players to overbid on. Despite a lack of twenty+ high card points, the North hand is very strong (essentially ten winners on its own) and is worth an opening 2♣ bid.

East should not remain silent over this, and at favourable vulnerability it may even be right to overcall 3♦ (weak) to get in the way of the opponents' bidding. In any case, all will depend on how cautious North wants to be. With all the space taken up by 3♦, North will have to guess whether or not their partner has the ace they need to make 6♣ a worthwhile venture.

♠QJ1097
♥K863
♦64
♣Q6

♠6543   ♠8
♥QJ97   ♥1052
♦AJ93   ♦KQ102
♣K   ♣A9843

♠AK2
♥A4
♦875
♣J10752

HCP
8
11   9
12

Makeable contracts

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

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

A good hand for the weak NT, allowing South to get in without allowing East-West to describe their hands. If South opens 1♣, West may manage a cheeky takeout double and East-West will get together in diamonds. As it is, East may not sell out to 2♠ on the above auction, but coming in with a double at unfavourable vulnerability will be too much for most.

In 2♠, declarer should make eight tricks with the aid of a heart ruff in the South hand. In fact, dummy's strong trump suit should allow declarer to ruff two hearts in the South hand. They can play ♥A, ♥K, and then ruff a heart with the ♠K. Then the ♠2 back to dummy allows declarer to ruff the fourth heart with ♠A. To stop this, the defence will need to lead trumps at an early stage (to hamper communication) which may not be obvious.

♠753
♥107
♦AKJ83
♣1083

♠A96   ♠4
♥KJ86   ♥A5432
♦72   ♦1095
♣KQJ4   ♣A962

♠KQJ1082
♥Q9
♦Q64
♣75

HCP
8
14   8
10

Makeable contracts

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

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			2♠
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

South may not have a shortage, but this still looks like a Weak Two bid to me. Passing with KQ10 in my suit doesn't sit right with me, and the hand isn't quite good enough to open 1♠. Partner should expect something for a vulnerable Weak Two opening, so we shouldn't be at risk of missing game by opening 2♠.

And as it happens, the pair making game our opponents! West doesn't have a suitable call over 2♠, and if North raises pre-emptively to 3♠, the opponents will have no chance of getting together in hearts.

♠86 ♥72 ♦AKJ1073 ♣K64	**Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all** ***West North East South*** Pass 1♦ 1♠ 3NT All Pass

♠KQ   ♠J9754
♥10984   ♥AKQ6
♦85   ♦962
♣109873   ♣Q

♠A1032
♥J53
♦Q4
♣AJ52

Unlike the last hand, the North hand here is definitely too good to open a Weak Two. With a six-card suit capable of bringing in six tricks on its own (and an outside king) this is definitely worth a full opening bid.

East should overcall 1♠, but that is likely to cost on this hand. West will lead partner's suit against 3NT, and declarer should get home with one spade, six diamonds, and three clubs for ten tricks and plus one.

An opening heart lead will hold the contract to just nine tricks and anyone savvy enough to overcall 1♥ is likely to see great profit (and a few raised eyebrows).

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
11		N	1	4	-	-	3
5	12	S	1	4	-	-	3
12		E	-	-	2	1	-
		W	-	-	2	1	-

♠A3
♥AK76
♦J9753
♣J6

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable
West   North   East   South
         1NT   Pass   2♠
Pass   3♣   All Pass

♠J84   ♠Q9752
♥Q543   ♥98
♦Q1084   ♦AK2
♣A2   ♣1073

♠K106
♥J102
♦6
♣KQ9854

The 2=4=5=2 shape is an awkward shape to bid and this hand in particular is one where you'd hate an auction of 1♦-2♣-2♦-P. By opening 1NT you will always get to a sensible contract and never miss a heart fit if partner has a good hand.

On this deal South might consider passing but there is a danger of the long clubs being cut off if the ♠K is not an entry, plus the fact that bidding here stops West coming into the auction. The transfer to clubs works well here. Playing in clubs the defence are restricted to their two aces, as the hearts behave so well (generating four tricks) for declarer.

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
13		N	5	2	3	-	3
9	9	S	5	2	3	-	3
9		E	-	-	-	1	-
		W	-	-	-	1	-

♠A
♥AK954
♦AKJ
♣Q732

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable
West   North   East   South
                  Pass   Pass
Pass   1♥   Pass   1♠
Pass   3♣   Pass   5♣
Pass   6♣   All Pass

♠J753   ♠K42
♥J762   ♥Q10
♦Q1086   ♦95432
♣10   ♣K64

♠Q10986
♥83
♦7
♣AJ985

The North hand is very strong but three suited hands are generally difficult to bid after starting with 2♣, and the 1♥ opener here, with a singleton spade, is very unlikely to be passed out. After partner's 1♠ a jump to 3NT could apply but would for many show a different hand type (long hearts and some stoppers outside). The jump to 5♣ here by South should indicate good clubs (otherwise different contracts would be possibilities) and it is on that basis North is justified in bidding the slam. Even if South plays too many trumps early, they can make twelve tricks thanks to the diamond finesse (or the ♠K dropping).

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
21		N	7	3	5	4	5
4	8	S	7	3	5	4	5
7		E	-	-	-	-	-
		W	-	-	-	-	-

♠J4
♥AQJ1094
♦A10
♣J95

♠A98   ♠10752
♥-   ♥K3
♦Q74   ♦J9532
♣A876432 ♣Q10

♠KQ63
♥87652
♦K86
♣K

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
13		N	-	-	4	1	1
10	6	S	-	-	4	1	1
11		E	2	1	-	-	-
		W	2	1	-	-	-

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

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

Some might consider opening the South hand but a borderline hand, and a very poor suit, and an awkward bidding shape – these should be enough to put anyone off! After that the bidding is almost inevitable.

East's lead of their partner's suit turns out to look very favourable for declarer but it makes no difference to the outcome on the hand. There are two aces and the trump king which have to be lost.

♠Q10
♥A843
♦K94
♣AKQ3

♠AJ6543 ♠9
♥KJ106   ♥Q7
♦J   ♦AQ87652
♣94   ♣1087

♠K872
♥952
♦103
♣J652

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
18		N	1	-	-	-	1
10	8	S	1	-	-	-	1
4		E	-	2	-	1	-
		W	-	2	-	1	-

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

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

It is hard to pass with the West hand, in first seat at favourable vulnerability – and with weak-ish spades and such good hearts, it is not appropriate to open with a weak two in spades. After starting with 1♠ the auction cannot really stop before the 3♦ contract shown.

South might as well start off with their longest suit and when North sees the doubleton club in dummy, they should consider playing a trump at trick two. This will allow cashing of three clubs overall and will defeat the contract. The cost to declarer is only -50, which is below PAR, but it is still better than seeing North make eight tricks in no-trumps – which will happen sometimes on a low diamond lead.

♠K93
♥K3
♦AK97
♣A764

♠Q10842 ♠A75
♥752   ♥QJ964
♦Q6   ♦8
♣QJ3   ♣9852

♠J6
♥A108
♦J105432
♣K10

HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
17		N	3	5	1	2	5
7	7	S	2	5	1	1	5
9		E	-	-	-	-	-
		W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

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

* good diamond raise

We could equally well see North open a strong no-trump and be raised to game by partner. It is very hard for East not to lead a top heart and it will be disappointing to find the worst possible layout from their perspective.

After winning ♥K and cashing a top diamond to confirm that the suit will run, North has twelve tricks in their sights. They should cash them carefully as once in a blue moon there might be a spade-club squeeze, but here that doesn't emerge and twelve tricks is the limit.

♠A1086
♥J5
♦A82
♣J762

♠32　　　　♠54
♥A10432　　♥KQ98
♦J643　　　♦K975
♣Q10　　　♣K94

♠KQJ97
♥76
♦Q10
♣A853

HCP				
		10		
7			11	
		12		

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

Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all

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

As often is the case, and 11-count opening bid here by East makes the opponent's bidding less well defined than they would like, and in cases like this it is easy to end up one (or two) levels too high. South could pass over 1NT as they have a good lead, but if West removed to a 3♦ contract, they would feel they had missed the boat.

It is very difficult for the defence not to get five tricks here (two in each of hearts and clubs and one in diamonds).

♠J107
♥9
♦J654
♣98754

♠AK42　　　♠Q9653
♥A1072　　　♥J85
♦K8　　　　♦9732
♣K102　　　♣J

♠8
♥KQ643
♦AQ10
♣AQ63

HCP				
		2		
17			4	
		17		

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

Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♥
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Dble
ReDble	3♣	Pass	Pass
??			

There are some bidding choices here to discuss with partner; what would it mean were South to have doubled 2♥? Passing and then doubling was chosen to make it clear that the double was interested in all the other suits. And when West gets to re-double what does that suggest – extra values yes but a good spade fit or a bad spade fit? It will be hard for East-West to bid game after East gave up in an earlier round, but ten tricks are available in spades should they bid it.

♠105
♥1093
♦9853
♣A832

♠Q94　　　♠K762
♥Q8654　　♥A2
♦4　　　　♦AK1062
♣Q764　　♣95

♠AJ83
♥KJ7
♦QJ7
♣KJ10

HCP				
		4		
6			14	
		16		

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

Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♦	1NT
All Pass			

There are no major bidding decisions for anyone on this final board, but West has the choice of leading partner's suit or their own. Whichever suit is led, declarer will get one trick in that suit and then be struggling for tricks. West must be careful not to be covering the third round of clubs when it comes, as this could give declarer a fourth trick in the suit and now the 1NT contract might succeed.