

British Winter Sim Pairs



**Thursday
15th January 2026**

Welcome to the British Winter 2026 Simultaneous Pairs, whether you are playing online or Face to Face. I sincerely hope you enjoy the event and also the commentary provided by a leading expert who, for this set of hands, is Paul Bowyer.

Simultaneous Pairs are a great opportunity to play against new opposition – all the pairs from the other participating Clubs from all over the country. It's always fascinating to see how your 'local' score in your own Club (against opponents whom you know) changes once all the national results are incorporated.

This is the start of the 2026 Simultaneous Pairs season, so it's a new year for prizes. Every host club will be entered in to a prize draw made at the AGM in November, so every participating club has a chance to win one of eight cash prizes of £200. Not only clubs win prizes, but so do players – the prize for the overall winners of each Sim Pairs is £100, and we wish you luck.

You can find all the full details, results and last year's prize winners at www.ebu.co.uk/sims/

Blue points are awarded to the top third of the field but please don't be impatient for the results! Although provisional results will appear fairly quickly they won't be finalised, nor will the Master Points, until all the results are in and any score corrections have been made. This can take up to three weeks. It really helps us sort any issues if you have kept your scorecard.

Thanks for choosing to play in this Sim Pairs event. Good luck and do enjoy your bridge.

Adrian Darnell, Chairman EBU

<p>♠ J ♥ A965 ♦ 73 ♣ AKQ874</p> <p>♠ A8 ♥ QJ1084 ♦ Q1092 ♣ J3</p> <p>♠ Q9632 ♥ None ♦ AJ54 ♣ 10965</p> <p>♠ K10754 ♥ K732 ♦ K86 ♣ 2</p>		<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>2♣</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table>	West	North	East	South		1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣	All Pass																															
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<div><div><div>♠A84</div><div>♥A10</div><div>♦Q72</div><div>♣AKQ75</div></div><div><div>♠963</div><div>♥9753</div><div>♦6</div><div>♣96432</div></div><div><div>♠KJ10</div><div>♥QJ84</div><div>♦KJ1053</div><div>♣10</div></div><div><div>♠Q752</div><div>♥K62</div><div>♦A984</div><div>♣J8</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>19</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>0</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td></td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		19		0	11	10		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	5	3	1	5	5		S	5	3	1	4	5		E	-	-	-	-	-		W	-	-	-	-	-		<div>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</div> <div><table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>2NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>3NT</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td></td></tr></table></div> <div>East has a marginal opening bid, but with a nice 5-4-3-1 hand with three tens, I suspect most will try 1♦. That should float to North who has to find a descriptive bid. Well, there is little point in playing two-suited overcalls in fourth seat, especially over a minor-suit opening, and a jump to 2NT should be reserved for a hand in the 19-20 point range (or thereabouts). South has an easy raise to 3NT now, although some may deem it reasonable to employ Stayman in an attempt to locate a spade fit. No matter, all roads should lead to 3NT, and the only question is one of overtricks. Best defence is for East to lead the ♥Q, but that isn't at all obvious and many will try the ♦J, giving North three diamond tricks. On the lie of the cards, North is likely to make eleven tricks even without making five in clubs.</div>	West	North	East	South			1♦	Pass	Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass	
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<div><div><div>♠9</div><div>♥J965</div><div>♦AK65</div><div>♣A1097</div></div><div><div>♠K108432</div><div>♥Q3</div><div>♦J942</div><div>♣Q</div></div><div><div>♠Q65</div><div>♥A1042</div><div>♦73</div><div>♣K642</div></div><div><div>♠AJ7</div><div>♥K87</div><div>♦Q108</div><div>♣J853</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>12</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td></td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		12		8	9	11		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	4	2	3	-	3		S	4	2	3	-	3		E	-	-	-	1	-		W	-	-	-	1	-		<div>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</div> <div><table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>2♠</td><td>Dble</td><td>3♠</td><td>Dble</td></tr><tr><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table></div> <div>West doesn't really have a classical weak two in spades (a poor trump suit, scattered points outside), but many will choose to wheel out their favourite toy. After all, it is match-point pairs, and anything goes at this form of scoring...</div> <div>North has a textbook take-out double and East should raise the ante with a defensive raise to 3♠. Now what, South? Top banana goes to anyone brave enough to try 3NT and makes it. However, this needs X-ray vision to make: declarer must duck two rounds of spades and then run the ♦10 – not very likely. South might try doubling 3♠, probably for take-out. If North braves it out and passes, his side may take the kiss-of-death score of 200 or, on a trump lead, a top score of 500.</div>	West	North	East	South	2♠	Dble	3♠	Dble	All Pass							
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<p>♠8742 ♥6 ♦J4 ♣AQ6532</p> <p>♠A95 ♠Q6 ♥AKJ1097 ♥853 ♦53 ♦AQ98762 ♣109 ♣K</p> <p>♠KJ103 ♥Q42 ♦K10 ♣J874</p>	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>1♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4♥</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>More marginal decisions. East may well choose to open 1♦ rather than make some pre-emptive noise. If so, it's hard for East-West to avoid the contract of 4♥ – West may just blast that contract with such powerful trumps.</p> <p>Should 4♥ make? Yes, says <i>Deep Finesse</i> but then the computer can see all four hands. With a spade, diamond and club to lose, the whole hand depends on picking up the trumps for no loser. The odds suggest cashing the ♥AK, a play that would lead to defeat. Declarer needs to time the hand carefully, taking the heart finesse <i>en route</i>. Tricky.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	4♥	All Pass																																														
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<p>♠ J32 ♥ A74 ♦ KQJ85 ♣ 87</p> <p>♠ K85 ♠ AQ10 ♥ 10986 ♥ Q32 ♦ 972 ♦ A43 ♣ Q42 ♣ K963</p> <p>♠ 9764 ♥ KJ5 ♦ 106 ♣ AJ105</p>	<p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>I wouldn't open that North hand in second seat, but many will. If North keeps shtum, East will open 1♣ and that should come back to North who can protect with 1♦. South can close proceedings with 1NT, where he may make as many as nine tricks unless East-West cash three spades, a diamond and a club.</p> <p>Variations may come if North opens 1♦ and East overcalls 1NT. South may double that and take a useful penalty after a diamond lead. If East makes a take-out double of 1♦ the outcome of the auction is unclear, but North may end up in 2♦, making on the nose. Finally, it is possible that East opens 1NT in third seat. That should fail by two tricks after a spade lead, but may escape for one down if South sees fit to lead a club.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass	1NT	All Pass																																															
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HCP																																																													
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<p>♠ KQ9653 ♥ 1062 ♦ 10 ♣ AK7</p> <p>♠ 1084 ♠ AJ7 ♥ 4 ♥ AKQ873 ♦ AK98752 ♦ J ♣ 85 ♣ J104</p> <p>♠ 2 ♥ J95 ♦ Q643 ♣ Q9632</p>	<p>Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♥</td><td>Dble</td><td>3♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>4♦</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>This hand may give North a nightmare in the bidding. After two passes, West does best to open 2♥, with pre-emption the order of the day opposite a passed partner. North has a far from ideal hand for a take-out double, but what is the alternative? East should raise the barrage with 3♥ (a contract which makes, incidentally) and that floats back around to North. What now? Another take-out double risks South bidding 3♠ on rubbish or, worse, jumping to 4♠ with some useful points but inadequate trumps. North might grit his teeth and pass, but that would be raising the white flag. A shot in the dark of 4♦ works well on this layout (4♣ would work even better!) and wins the coconut. It is, though, a quite horrible problem to get at the table.</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	Pass	2♥	Dble	3♥	Pass	Pass	4♦	All Pass																																													
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<p>♠ AK ♥ 43 ♦ AQ875 ♣ AQJ4</p> <p>♠ 8765 ♠ QJ932 ♥ AK10986 ♥ J75 ♦ 64 ♦ K109 ♣ K ♣ 86</p> <p>♠ 104 ♥ Q2 ♦ J32 ♣ 1097532</p>																																																													
<table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>20</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>3</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		20	7	10	3	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	4	4	-	-	1		S	4	4	-	-	1		E	-	-	3	3	-		W	-	-	3	3	-														
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<p>♠ J982 ♥ 852 ♦ Q9752 ♣ 6</p> <p>♠ Q43 ♥ J1064 ♦ AK84 ♣ 52</p> <p>♠ AK ♥ Q ♦ J1063 ♣ KQ9843</p> <p>♠ 10765 ♥ AK973 ♦ None ♣ AJ107</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>12</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="6">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>-</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td></tr></table>	HCP		3	15	10	12	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	1	1	-	S	-	-	1	1	-	E	3	2	-	-	2	W	3	2	-	-	2	<p>Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♥</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3NT</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>A tricky hand, this one: East-West have a combined 25 points and have South's suit double-stopped. Nonetheless, against tight defence, 3NT should fail. The problem is the nasty club split combined with the ♦Q lying offside. After 1♥ is passed around to East, that player does best to jump to 3♣. In these protective positions, a simple overcall is often bid on the sniff of an oil rag. With genuine values it is often right to jump the bidding, allowing West to try his luck in 3NT.</p> <p>After a heart lead, South does best to take the ♥K and switch to spades. Now there is no route to nine tricks for West.</p>	West	North	East	South				1♥	Pass	Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT	All Pass		
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<p>♠ K87 ♥ 10 ♦ AJ76 ♣ AJ1072</p> <p>♠ J10654 ♥ AJ95 ♦ 92 ♣ 53</p> <p>♠ AQ9 ♥ KQ87 ♦ K543 ♣ KQ</p> <p>♠ 32 ♥ 6432 ♦ Q108 ♣ 9864</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>13</td><td>19</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>2</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>4</td></tr></table>	HCP		13	19	6	2	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	-	-	-	-	S	2	-	-	-	-	E	-	2	4	5	4	W	-	2	4	5	4	<p>Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♣</td><td>Dble</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♥</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>This deal has echoes of Hand 7. East has 19 points and has an easy take-out double of North's 1♣ opening bid. South has nothing to say (did anyone raise clubs, vulnerable?) and West is a smidgeon away from a jump to 2♠. After the 1♠ response, East bids 1NT to show a balanced 18-19, or thereabouts, and West has enough now to insist on game. To do this, West can jump to 3♥, showing 5-4 in the majors and about 6-7 points, and East has an easy raise to game. 4♥ can be held to ten tricks by either a trump lead or the play of the ♣A and another club – declarer is unable to draw all the trumps and enjoy all five spades. A diamond lead or a spade lead, however, allows West to take two diamond ruffs in the West hand and make an overtrick. 4♠, though, is not affected by the 4-1 heart break and can always make eleven tricks.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	1♣	Dble	Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass
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<p>♠ J65 ♥ J6 ♦ 64 ♣ 1098652</p> <p>♠ AK9 ♥ A9732 ♦ 1053 ♣ 43</p> <p>♠ 42 ♥ Q1084 ♦ AK2 ♣ AKQ7</p> <p>♠ Q10873 ♥ K5 ♦ QJ987 ♣ J</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>9</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="6">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>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>1</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>1</td><td>6</td></tr></table>	HCP		2	18	11	9	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	3	3	6	1	5	W	3	3	6	1	6	<p>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>1♥</td><td>1♠</td></tr><tr><td>2♠*</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♥</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>East-West have a decent slam available on their cards, the play made especially easy by the 2-2 trump break. However, it is not easy to see a way to bid to 6♥ without specialised methods. Maybe the Strong Club adherents can find a route to get there, despite South getting in on the action? East will open 1♣ or 1♥ according to system or taste and South will surely overcall in spades (indeed, some may make a Michaels style two-suited overcall of 2♥ over 1♥ to show spades and a minor). In the auction above, South bids a modest 1♠, West's 2♠ shows a raise to 3♥ with genuine values and East, seeing many major-suit losers, contents himself with a game bid in hearts.</p> <p>How many reached 6♥ on this one tonight? Congratulations if you did. A score of 1430 is sure to rake in at least 90% of the match-points.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1♥	1♠	2♠*	Pass	4♥	All Pass				
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<div><div><div>♠ 10987</div><div>♥ Q1042</div><div>♦ 76</div><div>♣ Q62</div></div><div><div>♠ K653</div><div>♥ AJ7</div><div>♦ 4</div><div>♣ A10984</div></div><div><div>♠ Q42</div><div>♥ K8653</div><div>♦ J932</div><div>♣ J</div></div><div><div>♠ AJ</div><div>♥ 9</div><div>♦ AKQ1085</div><div>♣ K753</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>17</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		4	7	12	17	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	1	2	-	-	2		S	1	2	-	-	2		E	-	-	3	1	-		W	-	-	3	1	-		<div>Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>1♦</td></tr><tr><td>Dble</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♥</td><td>3♦</td></tr></table> <div>All Pass</div> <p>A part-score battle with South likely to win it by declaring 3♦ and failing in his venture. Yes, <i>Deep Finesse</i> tells us that East-West can make 3♥, despite the 4-1 trump split, but that’s not a contract many would care to tackle. West has an easy take-out double over 1♦ and East should really bid 2♥ rather than an insipid 1♥ with a five-card suit and useful shape. South is more or less obliged to try 3♦ now, and that should end the auction. West has no easy opening lead, so the fate of this contract is not clear. Obviously, by looking at all four hands, the defenders can take the first four tricks (♣A, club ruff, ♥A, club ruff) with a spade to come, but it may well not go like that at all. The scores here could be very varied.</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	1♦	Dble	Pass	2♥	3♦				
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<div><div><div>♠ 62</div><div>♥ J874</div><div>♦ AJ</div><div>♣ KJ873</div></div><div><div>♠ QJ95</div><div>♥ K952</div><div>♦ Q432</div><div>♣ 4</div></div><div><div>♠ A873</div><div>♥ 63</div><div>♦ 9765</div><div>♣ Q95</div></div><div><div>♠ K104</div><div>♥ AQ10</div><div>♦ K108</div><div>♣ A1062</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>16</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		10	6	8	16	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	5	1	4	1	4		S	5	1	4	1	4		E	-	-	-	-	-		W	-	-	-	-	-		<div>Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♣</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3NT</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>With a combined 26 points and two balanced hands (more or less), there should be little problem in North-South reaching 3NT on this deal. Many will bid along lines indicated above; those who play a strong No Trump will start there and arrive in 3NT, probably via Stayman. It’s the play that is likely to prove challenging for South. West is surely going to lead the ♠Q, setting up three spade tricks for the defence. Now, with the heart finesse failing, South may well lose a club, a heart and three spades. However, if declarer plays three rounds of clubs, losing to East, and the defenders play on spades, West may be obliged to give South his ninth trick with the next lead. <i>Deep Finesse</i>, of course, in its infinite wisdom, takes the ♠K, plays a diamond to the ♦J, a club to the ♣10 and racks up an overtrick.</p>	West	North	East	South				1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass	
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<div><div><div>♠ KQ65</div><div>♥ K92</div><div>♦ Q5</div><div>♣ A765</div></div><div><div>♠ A3</div><div>♥ A10874</div><div>♦ AJ83</div><div>♣ K9</div></div><div><div>♠ J8</div><div>♥ QJ</div><div>♦ 9764</div><div>♣ QJ843</div></div><div><div>♠ 109742</div><div>♥ 653</div><div>♦ K102</div><div>♣ 102</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>14</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>16</td><td>3</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		14	7	16	3	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	2	-		S	-	-	-	2	-		E	3	3	2	-	1		W	3	3	3	-	1		<div>Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>1♥</td><td>Dble</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td></tr><tr><td>2♦</td><td>2♠</td><td>3♦</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>A typical match-point pairs bunfight. West opens 1♥ and North may well chance his arm with a dodgy take-out double (“Please don’t choose diamonds, partner!”). After that, North-South compete in spades and East-West in diamonds, with 3♦ scooping the pool. Provided that West plays trumps in the optimum fashion, leading low to the ♦8 (or equivalent), he can pick the suit up for one loser and make the contract for the loss of a trick in each suit.</p>	West	North	East	South	1♥	Dble	Pass	1♠	2♦	2♠	3♦	All Pass				
HCP																																																																	
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<p>♠ J ♥ K876 ♦ K7 ♣ 1097532</p> <p>♠ 10864 ♠ KQ52 ♥ A109 ♥ Q532 ♦ QJ5 ♦ 108642 ♣ KJ6 ♣ None</p> <p>♠ A973 ♥ J4 ♦ A93 ♣ AQ84</p>	<p>Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>North-South have a ten-card club fit but it's just possible that the suit doesn't get an airing at all.</p> <p>Strong No Trumpers may open 1NT as South and play there, although it is possible that North transfers to clubs. Those who open 1♣ on the South cards will also play in clubs, but at what level is unclear. Those who open 1♠ may well play in 1NT, as in the auction above.</p> <p>After a diamond lead, North looks well placed to make a lot of tricks in No Trumps until the diabolical club break is exposed at trick two. Now North may be able to scramble seven tricks by setting up the long clubs, but the defenders may be able to defeat the contract.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT	All Pass																																																					
West	North	East	South																																																														
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<table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>15</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		7	7	11	15	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	4	-	1	-	-		S	4	-	1	-	-		E	-	1	-	2	-		W	-	1	-	1	-		<p>Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2NT</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>Another awkward hand. East-West do best to end up in 2♣ after the auction (West first): 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♣ – Pass, but I suspect few will bid in that manner. Many will rebid 2NT on those West cards, with a few bidding an optimistic, game-forcing 3♣, leading probably to 3NT by East.</p> <p>Game has little chance, and even 2NT is going to struggle. North does best to lead a low club against 2NT by West, theoretically better than a diamond from those two minor-suit holdings. Now West has nowhere to go for tricks and the defenders may end up taking three clubs, two hearts and a diamond. Plus scores will be few and far between for East-West on this deal, I reckon.</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT	All Pass		
HCP																																																																	
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<p>♠ J10 ♥ J82 ♦ A1063 ♣ K1084</p> <p>♠ K7 ♠ A8542 ♥ AK643 ♥ 10 ♦ K8 ♦ Q974 ♣ AJ97 ♣ 632</p> <p>♠ Q963 ♥ Q975 ♦ J52 ♣ Q5</p>	<p>Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>6NT</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>Two consecutive hands with West having a 2NT opening bid. Here, the problem is with East after West shows 20-22 points. A quantitative raise to 4NT, the slightly pessimistic view of the East cards, is likely to be passed by West, and East-West will rack up a score of 690 for a well-below average match-point result.</p> <p>With 12 good points and a decent suit, East may well try a direct 6NT, although some may have esoteric methods to try to locate a 4-4 minor-suit fit. Those who do reach 6NT for an easy 1440 will score very well as there will be some super-scientists who locate the 5-3 heart fit and play in 6♥ for an underwhelming score of 1430.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	2NT	Pass	6NT	All Pass																																																				
West	North	East	South																																																														
			Pass																																																														
2NT	Pass	6NT	All Pass																																																														
<p>♠ 10842 ♥ J10 ♦ J975 ♣ 854</p> <p>♠ Q95 ♠ K3 ♥ AKQ54 ♥ 763 ♦ A3 ♦ KQ108 ♣ KQ10 ♣ A762</p> <p>♠ AJ76 ♥ 982 ♦ 642 ♣ J93</p>																																																																	

<p>♠ K1096 ♥ 1083 ♦ A52 ♣ A42</p> <p>♠ AQJ82 ♠ 4 ♥ AK ♥ J754 ♦ KQ84 ♦ J973 ♣ Q10 ♣ KJ95</p> <p>♠ 753 ♥ Q962 ♦ 106 ♣ 8763</p>	<p>Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>2NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♣*</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>3NT</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>A second successive 2NT opener for West. This time, though, his partner has a much worse responding hand. East should employ Stayman to try to locate a 4-4 heart fit and then subside in 3NT when West shows his spades.</p> <p>The effect of the bidding is to deter North from leading spades. That player now finds himself with a decidedly awkward opening lead. Best is a heart, actually the ♥10, but North is unlikely to find that. With a lead of either minor suit, it is possible that West establishes three winners in each of clubs and diamonds and eventually comes to two hearts and two spades.</p> <p>A heart lead, or switch, is necessary to hold declarer to nine tricks.</p>	West	North	East	South	2NT	Pass	3♣*	Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass																																																
West	North	East	South																																																										
2NT	Pass	3♣*	Pass																																																										
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HCP																																																													
11	6																																																												
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<p>♠ J98 ♥ Q10 ♦ A9843 ♣ A107</p> <p>♠ A7643 ♠ Q52 ♥ 96 ♥ K8754 ♦ 10 ♦ K52 ♣ Q9842 ♣ K5</p> <p>♠ K10 ♥ AJ32 ♦ QJ76 ♣ J63</p>	<p>Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>1♣</td><td>1♥</td><td>2♣</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>Despite the combined holding of 25 points there is no game for East-West. Many will end up in 3NT, but North-South have an easy defence to that after the ♥K lead, setting up four heart tricks and the ♦A. Indeed, if declarer tries the spade finesse, he will fail by two tricks.</p> <p>After North overcalls 1♥, West may well be wary of bidding 3NT with only a single heart stop, as there would have to be nine cashable winners after a heart lead. After the auction starts 1♣ – (1♥) just what should East bid? A simple raise to 2♣ looks to be an underbid but it leads to a good result on this layout. Some may prefer a pre-emptive jump to 3♣, which West would be well advised to leave alone. How many failing 3NT contracts were bid tonight?</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	Pass	1♣	1♥	2♣	All Pass																																																
West	North	East	South																																																										
		Pass	Pass																																																										
1♣	1♥	2♣	All Pass																																																										
<p>♠ K92 ♥ KQJ82 ♦ A5 ♣ J108</p> <p>♠ AJ10 ♠ Q83 ♥ A43 ♥ 109 ♦ Q62 ♦ K104 ♣ AQ72 ♣ K9543</p> <p>♠ 7654 ♥ 765 ♦ J9873 ♣ 6</p>	<table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>14</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>17</td><td>1</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr></table>	HCP		14	8	17	1	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	-	-		S	-	-	-	-	-		E	4	1	-	1	2		W	4	1	-	1	2													
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<p>♠AQ752 ♥K852 ♦952 ♣J</p> <p>♠K4 ♠10 ♥J3 ♥AQ10 ♦AK7 ♦QJ108 ♣AKQ965 ♣87432</p> <p>♠J9863 ♥9764 ♦643 ♣10</p>	<p>Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>1♣</td><td>1♠</td><td>2♠*</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>5♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>6♣</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>Two slams are available to East-West on this deal – the excellent 6♣ and the slightly dodgy 6NT by West. The latter needs the heart finesse for success; the former is cold on any lead or defence. Some may choose to open the West hand with 2NT; where this happens East will probably raise to 3NT making twelve tricks after a spade lead (or thirteen tricks if declarer risks the heart finesse). Where West opens 1♣, North will overcall 1♠ and East has the cards to justify raising to 3♣, probably via an unassuming cue-bid of 2♠. Now West can afford to employ Blackwood, being prepared to pass opposite no aces (unlikely) and to punt a slam opposite one ace. Sure, the hand may be off the ♥AK, but that isn't a likely prospect, and risks must be taken.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	1♣	1♠	2♠*	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass	6♣	All Pass		
West	North	East	South																		
			Pass																		
1♣	1♠	2♠*	Pass																		
4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass																		
6♣	All Pass																				
<p>♠A1086 ♥3 ♦K1063 ♣KQJ2</p> <p>♠J ♠KQ54 ♥KQ108762 ♥J5 ♦54 ♦AQ872 ♣1043 ♣65</p> <p>♠9732 ♥A94 ♦J9 ♣A987</p>	<p>Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>3♥</td><td>Dble</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♠</td></tr><tr><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>West has a textbook 3♥ opening bid, non-vulnerable, and North, holding a perfect 4-1-4-4 pattern, has an ideal hand for a take-out double. South can respond 3♠ and no one has any reason to bid again. Some optimists will reach 4♠, I have no doubt, but South is a little weak for a jump to game and North has no business raising a forced response with a minimum take-out double. 3♠ can be beaten by a diamond lead; East plays three rounds, allowing West to score the ♠J and East has two natural trump tricks to hold the contract to eight tricks.</p> <p>Although <i>Deep Finesse</i> says East-West can be held to eight tricks in hearts, it takes an initial trump lead (or the ♣K lead and a trump switch) to defeat 3♥.</p>	West	North	East	South	3♥	Dble	Pass	3♠	All Pass											
West	North	East	South																		
3♥	Dble	Pass	3♠																		
All Pass																					
<p>♠J4 ♥KQ653 ♦AK3 ♣Q65</p> <p>♠AK73 ♠Q852 ♥J92 ♥None ♦J ♦1097642 ♣AJ1092 ♣K84</p> <p>♠1096 ♥A10874 ♦Q85 ♣73</p>	<p>Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♥</td></tr><tr><td>3♣</td><td>3♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♠</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>A fascinating deal with a wide variety of possible outcomes. East-West can make 5♣ or 5♠ while North-South can make nine tricks in hearts. Absolute par, therefore, is for North-South to play in 6♥ doubled, losing 500 points against the 650 available to East-West. Will that happen often? No way, José! Much depends on South's initial response to North's opening 1♥ bid. A full-blooded, pre-emptive raise to 4♥ wins the coconut here as West is surely going to be frozen out of the auction. Those who play a 3♥ raise as non-constructive may do even better, by stealing the deal at the three-level and recording a plus score. Where South makes a gentle raise to 2♥, West should find a way into the auction and may just find a route to 4♠. This one could be very interesting.</p>	West	North	East	South		1♥	Pass	2♥	3♣	3♥	Pass	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass				
West	North	East	South																		
	1♥	Pass	2♥																		
3♣	3♥	Pass	Pass																		
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass																		

<div><div><div>♠9</div><div>♥K7654</div><div>♦QJ63</div><div>♣Q42</div></div><div><div>♠A85</div><div>♥982</div><div>♦AK42</div><div>♣AK5</div></div><div><div>♠J1043</div><div>♥Q103</div><div>♦107</div><div>♣J973</div></div><div><div>♠KQ762</div><div>♥AJ</div><div>♦985</div><div>♣1086</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>18</td><td>10</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		8	4	18	10	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	1	-	-	1		S	-	1	-	-	1		E	2	-	1	1	-		W	1	-	1	1	-		<div>Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</div> <div><table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>1♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td></tr><tr><td>1NT</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table></div> <div>After the excitement of Hand 25 comes this prosaic affair where no one can make much above the one-level. After West’s opening bid of 1♦ is passed to South, that player should protect with 1♠. West can show the strength of his hand with a 1NT rebid and that should win the auction. Leading partner’s suit is generally a good idea, but here a spade lead would allow West to make his contract. A heart lead, though, will defeat 1NT quite easily. I suspect there will many scores of 100 for contracts failing by a trick on this deal. We shall see.</div>	West	North	East	South			Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass	Pass	1♠	1NT	All Pass		
HCP																																																																	
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18	10																																																																
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<div><div><div>♠AJ1072</div><div>♥J93</div><div>♦92</div><div>♣A63</div></div><div><div>♠K4</div><div>♥85</div><div>♦AJ6543</div><div>♣Q104</div></div><div><div>♠Q</div><div>♥KQ1042</div><div>♦Q10</div><div>♣J9752</div></div><div><div>♠98653</div><div>♥A76</div><div>♦K87</div><div>♣K8</div></div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td></td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		10	10	10	10	10		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	2	-		S	-	-	-	2	-		E	3	2	2	-	-		W	3	2	2	-	-		<div>Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all</div> <div><table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♦</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table></div> <div>Would you open that West hand in second seat? Certainly, I think it far closer to a weak 2♦ opener than a 1♦ opening bid for all of its 10 points. Many will pass, and that choice cannot be criticised. Those who open 2♦ may get to play there and record a modest score of 90, Modest or not, that may well pull in a load of match-points as the “correct” auction on this deal is probably Pass – Pass – Pass – Pass!</div>	West	North	East	South				Pass	2♦	All Pass				
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