

British Winter Sim Pairs



**Thursday
16th January 2025**

Welcome to the British Winter 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 Brian Senior.

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) can change once all the national results are incorporated.

This is the start of the 2025 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 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.

Good luck and do enjoy your bridge.

Adrian Darnell, Chairman EBU

<p>♠ A8 ♥ Q52 ♦ 876 ♣ K10954</p> <p>♠ J9752 ♠ Q643 ♥ K3 ♥ A986 ♦ KJ32 ♦ Q ♣ 32 ♣ QJ87</p> <p>♠ K10 ♥ J1074 ♦ A10954 ♣ A6</p>	<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <p>Had the queen of diamonds been in a different suit, East might have opened with 11 working points. However, when 2 HCP are in the form of a bare queen, a 4-4-1-4 11-count should pass, leaving South to open the bidding.</p> <p>If playing strong NT, South will presumably open 1♦, West perhaps overcall 1♠, though that is hardly compulsory with such a poor suit, and North perhaps bid 1NT, or perhaps 2♣ – the latter becomes a more attractive option when we have already passed, as partner cannot expect us to be stronger than is actually the case. If facing a 1♠ overcall, East will make a constructive raise to the three level – one too high as it turns out, but that is what the hand is worth, and is the price that has to be paid for the weak overcall.</p> <p>If West has not overcalled and North responds either 1NT or 2♣, East may make a take-out double and now West will compete in spades, again possibly going one level too high.</p> <p>While eight tricks is the theoretical limit, NS have some chance of making 3♦ if the defence fails to find its heart ruff. Plus 110 will score very well for NS. Some Souths may open a weak NT and, after two passes, East may compete in the majors via a Landy 2♣ or one of the other defences to show two or more places to play.</p>																																																
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<p>♠ AK86 ♥ KJ6 ♦ K8 ♣ KQJ10</p> <p>♠ 53 ♠ 104 ♥ 9852 ♥ A743 ♦ Q109 ♦ A65432 ♣ A542 ♣ 8</p> <p>♠ QJ972 ♥ Q10 ♦ J7 ♣ 9763</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>8</td><td>N</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>6</td><td>S</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	20	8	N	4	-	-	3	-	6	6	S	4	-	-	3	2			E	-	2	1	-	-			W	-	2	1	-	-	<p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <p>Not only does the East hand contain a biddable four-card major on the side, but two aces and an empty main suit is far from being ideal for a weak two opening. Pass is the wiser choice, as opening 2♦ will see partner misjudge far too often.</p> <p>So, there are likely to be three passes to North who, with a balanced 20 HCP, can open 2NT.</p> <p>South will respond 3♥, transfer to spades and intending to continue with 3NT to offer a choice of games. Many Norths, however, will break the transfer and jump to 4♠ over 3♥ – not that it matters, as 4♠ will always be North's choice after being given a choice of games.</p> <p>Were East to lead ace and another diamond, this would give the contract, but a singleton club lead, West winning and continuing the suit to give East a ruff, beats it easily enough. Declarer will be able to get rid of one of dummy's diamonds on the third heart, but there will still be the two red aces to be lost, so 4♠ should be down one.</p>
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<p>♠ 10632 ♥ 754 ♦ AK98 ♣ 54</p> <p>♠ 9854 ♠ KJ7 ♥ 6 ♥ AQ8 ♦ 107632 ♦ QJ4 ♣ K93 ♣ A762</p> <p>♠ AQ ♥ KJ10932 ♦ 5 ♣ QJ108</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>17</td><td>N</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>13</td><td>S</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	7	17	N	1	-	4	-	1	3	13	S	1	-	4	-	1			E	-	-	-	-	-			W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <p>South opens 1♥ and North responds 1♠. If EW play that a 1NT overcall would be natural in this position, East will presumably do that, and South will repeat the hearts, playing in 2♥ and losing two clubs and one or two hearts according to how he plays the suit.</p> <p>If a 1NT overcall would be artificial, showing the other two suits, East will of course not make the bid. In that case he does best to pass, as the East hand has very little playing strength and has the wrong shape for a take-out double. Better to keep quiet and only come in later if that seems a sensible idea by then.</p> <p>Some Norths, playing five-card majors, will ignore the weak four-card spade suit and instead raise to 2♥. Despite the 3-3-3-4 shape, East may double that, but South will bid on in hearts. A few will even get to the heart game, where it will be essential for declarer to get the hearts right.</p> <p>Plus 420 will be very good, and +170 may also be above average.</p>
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<p>♠ QJ73 ♥ K83 ♦ Q863 ♣ 103</p> <p>♠ 1062 ♠ K54 ♥ AQ ♥ 107542 ♦ 92 ♦ KJ104 ♣ AQJ964 ♣ 7</p> <p>♠ A98 ♥ J96 ♦ A75 ♣ K852</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>7</td><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>12</td><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	8	7	N	-	-	-	-	-	13	12	S	-	-	-	-	-			E	1	-	1	-	1			W	1	-	1	-	1	<p>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <p>EW will bid 1♣ – 1♥ – 2♣, and there is no obvious point at which NS might get involved in the bidding so 2♣ will often be the final contract.</p> <p>Superficially, 2♣ must go down, as the ♠A and ♥K are both offside, and I am sure that many declarers will be defeated, just as the double dummy analysis tells us should be the case. However, suppose that North leads a low spade, an eminently reasonable choice: declarer will play low from dummy and South may win the ace (even if he ducks, declarer has a spade trick which he could not have created left to himself). It's maybe a little double dummy, but on a heart switch declarer can even make an overtrick by spurning the finesse, instead winning the ace and running the nine of diamonds. With the ♠K still in the dummy, declarer gets two diamonds, a spade and five clubs. Perhaps more likely, declarer takes the losing heart finesse, and is now on the diamond guess for his contract.</p>
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<p> ♠AQ6 ♥A75 ♦K987 ♣KQ4 ♠954 ♠K83 ♥KJ8 ♥1042 ♦J10 ♦Q6543 ♣A9872 ♣53 ♠J1072 ♥Q963 ♦A2 ♣J106 </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="67 539 188 728"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>18</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="226 539 470 728"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>E</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></tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		18		9	5	8		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	1	2	2	3	S	2	1	2	2	3	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <p>The auction looks to be fairly straightforward: 1♦ – 1♥ – 2NT – 3NT, except that those playing five-card majors may have to checkback for a four-four spade fit on the way.</p> <p>How the play will go is much less clear. For a start, will East lead a diamond despite the suit having been opened by declarer? My guess is that, yes, a good number of Easts will lead a diamond, simply because neither of the unbid suits looks like a particularly attractive alternative. Then, will declarer duck the first trick? Suppose that declarer wins the first or second diamond in dummy and runs the jack of spades. East can win the king but, if declarer has ducked the first diamond, cannot afford to continue diamonds as that gives declarer a cheap trick. However, either a club or a heart is OK for the defence and, with the spades blocked, declarer will struggle to come to nine tricks.</p> <p>Winning trick one in hand and playing ace then queen of spades works better, and the fortunate diamond position may now see declarer home.</p> <p>It's a tough one, and those who make 3NT should score well.</p>
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<p> ♠AJ975 ♥8653 ♦K5 ♣A9 ♠KQ1043 ♠- ♥9 ♥K2 ♦9832 ♦AQJ1074 ♣KJ10 ♣87632 ♠862 ♥AQJ1074 ♦6 ♣Q54 </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="67 1234 188 1422"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>12</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="226 1234 470 1422"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		12		9	10	9		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	4	2	2	S	-	-	3	2	1	E	4	5	-	-	-	W	4	5	-	-	-	<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <p>The six-five shape justifies East opening at the one level, should he judge that to be the best tactical approach but, with only two cards in the majors, there is a case for opening with a pre-empt in hope of making life tough for the opposition and accept the risk of slightly misleading partner.</p> <p>Say that East opens 3♦; South will probably scrape up a 3♥ overcall, and West may try 3♠, or may just blast 5♦. North can hardly not bid 5♥ over 5♦, and that is an easy down one on a diamond lead or perhaps down two via a ruff on a spade lead and club switch. Those who are left to play in a diamond contract will be pleasantly surprised to find that 11 tricks cannot be prevented thanks to the friendly lie of the two minors.</p> <p>If East opens 1♦, it may be South who pre-empts – I like 3♥ at favourable vulnerability. West may introduce the spades or may compete with 4♦. Either way, North has to bid 4♥. If West has supported diamonds, East will go on to 5♦, in case either game is making, while if West's first bid was 3♠ East may stay silent for now, sniffing a possible misfit. However, West may bid 5♦, and it will be a question of whether or not NS find the 5♥ save.</p>
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<p> ♠1065 ♥KJ32 ♦A32 ♣A86 ♠83 ♠KJ42 ♥Q1054 ♥A86 ♦KJ1084 ♦65 ♣K9 ♣Q1054 ♠AQ97 ♥97 ♦Q97 ♣J732 </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="67 1928 188 2116"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>12</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="226 1928 470 2116"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>N</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>E</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></tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		12		9	10	9		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	1	-	-	1	1	S	2	-	1	2	1	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <p>If playing strong NT, North will open 1♣ and rebid 1NT over the 1♠ response, and that will be that.</p> <p>With spades shown by dummy, East will lead a club to the nine and ace. There is some work for declarer to do, but the obvious suit on which to play is spades, and they can provide four tricks if declarer starts with the ten from hand.</p> <p>Though the spades lie very kindly, there is no more good fortune. The ♦K is offside, and declarer has to guess well to get a heart trick. All of which means that seven tricks for +90 will be the limit unless the defence is in generous mood.</p> <p>The top spot is a spade partscore played by South, where eight tricks can be made for +110. This is achievable by the simple expedient of North passing the 1♠ response, a reasonable shot given that there can surely be no game on for NS. And if NS are playing weak NT? Most will open 1NT and play there. Some may now get a spade lead, but that doesn't really matter, as declarer was going to pick up the spades anyway. Personally, though it doesn't work out well on this occasion, I would give very serious consideration to not opening the empty North hand at all if the alternative was to open 1NT.</p>
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<p>♠ K108 ♥ J109632 ♦ 3 ♣ AJ10</p> <p>♠ J54 ♠ Q976 ♥ 74 ♥ K85 ♦ Q97 ♦ A1082 ♣ Q9432 ♣ 85</p> <p>♠ A32 ♥ AQ ♦ KJ654 ♣ K76</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: left;">HCP</th> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: left;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>9</td> <td>S</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>17</td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		9		N	3	3	5	3	4	5	9	S	3	3	5	3	4			E	-	-	-	-	-		17	W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <p>It isn't ideal to have a weak main suit but near maximum in high-card terms for a weak two opening. Nonetheless, it does generally pay to get in the first blow so I would open the North hand with 2♥. Unless North is prone to opening very poor weak twos, often on five-card suits, the practical action is for South to just raise straight to 4♥, thereby giving away as little information as possible, and making the defence as difficult as possible. If North is prone to very aggressive weak two openers, perhaps South can respond 2NT, asking, and be prepared to stop at the three-level facing a minimum. Say that East leads a spade to the jack and king. Declarer should play a diamond at trick two – trumps can wait. Though they would do better to play low, some Easts will rise with the ace, a common enough mistake, and that gives declarer a winner on which to pitch the spade loser. He will be able to set up the fifth diamond as a discard for the potential club loser and come to an overtrick. If East plays low in tempo, declarer will probably get the diamonds wrong, as he knows that some Easts would have played the ace had they held. Eleven tricks are still possible: ♦Q, spade return, diamond ruff, ♥Q, diamond ruff, ♥A, diamond ruff, ♣K, ♦K for spade pitch, club to the jack, but that requires a lot more hard work than if East grabs the ♦A at trick two.</p>
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	17	W	-	-	-	-	-																																										

<p>♠ KQ983 ♥ 10652 ♦ 10 ♣ AK3</p> <p>♠ J542 ♠ A7 ♥ Q4 ♥ AK87 ♦ 65 ♦ AJ98 ♣ QJ854 ♣ 962</p> <p>♠ 106 ♥ J93 ♦ KQ7432 ♣ 107</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: left;">HCP</th> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: left;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>12</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>16</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>6</td> <td>W</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		12		N	-	1	-	-	-	6	16	S	-	1	-	-	-			E	3	-	1	-	2		6	W	3	-	1	-	2	<p>Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</p> <p>If East opens a strong NT, there will usually be two passes to North, who can bid 2♣ for the majors or similar. If NS play 2♥, they may regret it, as 2♥ can be down two for -200 and that is usually bad news on a partscore deal. Meanwhile, EW can make 3♣ or, at least at double dummy, 2NT. This is a deal on which NS do much better to keep quiet, as they can only come to seven tricks with diamonds as trumps, and 1♦ is not a likely contract. If East is playing Acol, he will usually open 1♥, and West respond 1♠. That will silence North and East will rebid 1NT and play there. A diamond lead will give a trick, and declarer will play on clubs and, if winning a cheap trick at trick one, can come to nine tricks. If South led a diamond honour at trick one, that may be enough to hold the contract to eight. With the ♣10 well-positioned, even a spade lead from South does NOT prevent eight tricks being made if declarer reads the position.</p>
HCP		Makeable contracts																																															
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<p>♠ K53 ♥ 10982 ♦ 10764 ♣ K7</p> <p>♠ Q97 ♥ KJ6 ♦ J9 ♣ J8653</p> <p>♠ A862 ♥ AQ53 ♦ AQ52 ♣ 10</p> <p>♠ J104 ♥ 74 ♦ K83 ♣ AQ942</p>	<p>Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <p>There will be three passes to East who, if playing five-card majors, will have to open 1♦. If South comes in with a 2♣ overcall, West should pass, then pass again when East's reopening double comes back to him. South can at best come to six tricks in 2♣ doubled.</p> <p>If South passes, a wiser choice when holding a balanced non-opening bid, West will respond 1NT and usually play there. The contract is secure, so the play will be all about the overtrick. The defence cannot prevent an eighth trick, but not all declarers will find a winning line and will have to settle for seven tricks.</p> <p>Acol players may open 1♥ and West raise to 2♥. East is close to making a move towards game, but matchpoints is not the form of scoring to play in thin games. With only four trumps and a lot of potential losers, passing out 2♥ rates to be the long-term winner, though of course if the hands fit well 4♥ could be an easy make.</p>
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HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
6		N	-	-	-	-	-
8	16	S	-	-	-	-	-
10		E	1	2	3	3	2
		W	1	2	3	3	2

<p>♠ QJ97 ♥ 642 ♦ A843 ♣ K4</p> <p>♠ A104 ♥ KQ85 ♦ 96 ♣ 9753</p> <p>♠ K653 ♥ J ♦ Q1075 ♣ J1082</p> <p>♠ 82 ♥ A10973 ♦ KJ2 ♣ AQ6</p>	<p>Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <p>If playing weak NT, that should be South's choice of opening bid. The hand is not really worthy of an upgrade, so there is no good rebid after a 1♥ opening and 1♠ response.</p> <p>Conversely, if playing strong NT, opening 1♥ and rebidding 1NT over a 1♠ response is just perfect, whether playing four- or five-card majors.</p> <p>The bad heart layout means that declarer will have three trump losers in a heart contract, holding him to only eight tricks.</p> <p>In a NT contract, however, the friendly spade layout means that nine tricks are possible. Of course, after a club lead, declarer may start out on hearts and find that he is a tempo behind, and can no longer take advantage of the spade position, so nine tricks in NT are a long way from being assured.</p>
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HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
10		N	1	3	2	2	3
9	7	S	1	3	2	2	3
14		E	-	-	-	-	-
		W	-	-	-	-	-

<p>♠ A10 ♥ 63 ♦ AK10943 ♣ 532</p> <p>♠ K98542 ♥ 85 ♦ - ♣ AKQJ10</p> <p>♠ J63 ♥ J10974 ♦ QJ85 ♣ 8</p> <p>♠ Q7 ♥ AKQ2 ♦ 762 ♣ 9764</p>	<p>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <p>North will open 1♦ and South respond 1♥. Now, what will West do?</p> <p>I don't like take-out doubles on extremely two-suited hands – how do we then differentiate between our actual hand and a (semi-)balanced 13 HCP? Most pairs will be able to bid one or more of 2♦, 2♥ or 2NT to show a genuine black two-suiter. Failing that, a simple 1♠ overcall is not going to get passed out, and West can start with that then introduce the clubs on the next round of the auction. When East gives preference to spades, West will be very tempted to go on to game, but 4♠ should be down one whatever the opening lead.</p> <p>South will lead three rounds of hearts against a spade contract. Declarer ruffs the third round with the eight and North over-ruffs with the ten. Say that North gets off play with a top diamond. Declarer ruffs and, having seen South turn up with all the top hearts, knows that North must hold the ace of spades. To cater to either a stiff or a doubleton queen with South, declarer plays two rounds of clubs, ruffing the second one, so that he can lead a trump from the East hand. When South follows with the seven, West's nine forces the ace and declarer has nine tricks.</p>
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HCP		Makeable contracts					
			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
11		N	-	2	-	-	1
13	5	S	-	2	-	-	1
11		E	-	-	-	3	-
		W	-	-	-	3	-

<p>♠ 5 ♥ A107652 ♦ A1093 ♣ A4</p> <p>♠ J42 ♠ AK1086 ♥ 83 ♥ KQ4 ♦ KQ2 ♦ J5 ♣ QJ932 ♣ K75</p> <p>♠ Q973 ♥ J9 ♦ 8764 ♣ 1086</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: left;">HCP</th> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: left;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>♣</td> <td>♦</td> <td>♥</td> <td>♠</td> <td>NT</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>12</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>16</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>3</td> <td>E</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		12		N	-	1	1	-	-	9	16	S	-	1	1	-	-		3	E	3	-	-	3	2			W	3	-	-	3	2	<p>Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all</p> <p>If East opens a strong NT, West may just raise to game. That will probably shut North out of the auction, and South may lead a spade, which is a good start for declarer, who plays on clubs. There is nothing North can do to threaten the contract after winning the ♠A, and at least nine tricks will be made. A diamond lead is also ineffective. Declarer wins and sets up the clubs, the defence clears diamonds, but the even diamond break means that declarer has time to set up a ninth trick in hearts, losing two diamonds and two aces. A slower auction will be less effective, firstly because it will give the defenders more information about declarer's hand – after a 1♠ opening from East, that opening lead is out of the equation – but secondly because North will be able to come in with a heart bid, after which a heart lead holds a NT contract to eight tricks.</p> <p>As for 4♣, which is the most likely contract after a 1♠ opening, there is a loser in each suit, so the spade game is down one.</p>
HCP		Makeable contracts																																															
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<p>♠ A106 ♥ A5 ♦ J108754 ♣ AJ</p> <p>♠ QJ72 ♠ 954 ♥ 98 ♥ Q1076 ♦ AQ63 ♦ 2 ♣ Q82 ♣ K10543</p> <p>♠ K83 ♥ KJ432 ♦ K9 ♣ 976</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: left;">HCP</th> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: left;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>♣</td> <td>♦</td> <td>♥</td> <td>♠</td> <td>NT</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td> <td>5</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>10</td> <td>E</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		14		N	-	4	2	1	1	11	5	S	-	4	2	1	1		10	E	1	-	-	-	-			W	1	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</p> <p>If there are two passes to North, some will open a weak NT, but the majority, either for reasons of judgement or of system, will open 1♦. When South responds 1♥, North will rebid 2♦ and often play there, though South might scrape up a raise to 3♦, expecting a six-card suit for North's bidding, and wanting to keep 3NT in the picture while playing the safer partscore if North is not interested in going on. Most will play a diamond partscore. There are two trump losers, a club and a spade. The spade can be disposed of on the jack of hearts and, if declarer plays carefully and takes the heart finesse, ten tricks are possible; otherwise nine.</p> <p>Were NS to bid to 3NT, a club lead would see that contract down two. Even after a non-club lead, they have time to switch their attention to clubs when West wins the first diamond.</p> <p>NS can also make 2♥, outscoring those who make seven tricks in 1NT.</p>
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<p>♠ KQ6 ♥ 74 ♦ J109754 ♣ Q10</p> <p>♠ - ♠ AJ754 ♥ QJ932 ♥ 6 ♦ AK832 ♦ Q ♣ K64 ♣ AJ9853</p> <p>♠ 109832 ♥ AK1085 ♦ 6 ♣ 72</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: left;">HCP</th> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: left;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>♣</td> <td>♦</td> <td>♥</td> <td>♠</td> <td>NT</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13</td> <td>12</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>7</td> <td>E</td> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		8		N	-	-	-	-	-	13	12	S	-	-	-	-	-		7	E	5	2	2	2	4			W	5	2	2	2	4	<p>Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</p> <p>When West opens 1♥, North's diamonds do not look right for a weak jump overcall, while the all-round strength of the hand doesn't look right for a simple 2♦ overcall. Most Norths will therefore pass, and East-West will usually get an uncontested auction. Some will respond 1♠, but I think it better to bid the longer suit first when strong enough to force to game. Respond 2♣, then bid 2♠, then 3♠, and partner knows we are at least six-five with game values – something which cannot be achieved after responding 1♠.</p> <p>Once East has described his hand, it will be up to West to make the final decision as to where to play the hand.</p> <p>With clubs coming in without a guess being required, there are ten top tricks in NT, and on a tricky hand +630 should score well. But West will know there is a six-three club fit and may commit to a club contract instead. After all, even 6♣ could be on if the East hand is a little better. In practice, the six-one diamond split means that declarer can either take spade ruffs in the dummy, or cash West's top diamonds, but can't do both. Twist and turn as he may, he should be held to 11 tricks in a club contract.</p>
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<p>♠AQ10965 ♥5 ♦64 ♣J953</p> <p>♠K72 ♠J83 ♥K7642 ♥QJ1093 ♦103 ♦Q972 ♣A62 ♣10</p> <p>♠4 ♥A8 ♦AKJ85 ♣KQ874</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">7</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">10</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">17</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <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>6</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>6</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		7	6	10	6	17		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	6	5	-	4	2	S	6	5	-	4	2	E	-	-	1	-	-	W	-	-	1	-	-	<p>Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <p>I expect the popular opening bid to be 2♠ by North, though I would be quite tempted, with six-four shape and a good main suit, to open a level higher. Six Clubs is a pretty decent contract on the NS cards, but a 3♣ opening will certainly put paid to any hope of getting there, South simply raising 3♣ to 4♣. A club ruff leaves declarer to bring in spades for one loser to make 4♣. If there is no club ruff there is the possibility of an overtrick if declarer plays spades correctly. This suit combination isn't actually a guess, it is correct to lead to the queen rather than the nine or ten, as this picks up ♠Jx offside, while leading to the ten still leaves a second loser when there is ♠Kx offside. A weak 2♣ opener may give just a slight chance of getting to a club contract, but it will still be tough. Maybe if 2♣ – 2NT – 3♣ is semi-natural and non-minimum in the NS methods, but even then, South is going to have to make a big decision to play in clubs, especially at matchpoints, when +420 against +400 could be a big difference.</p>
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<p>♠AK106 ♥Q3 ♦J103 ♣K743</p> <p>♠7432 ♠J ♥J ♥109862 ♦Q764 ♦A952 ♣QJ108 ♣952</p> <p>♠Q985 ♥AK754 ♦K8 ♣A6</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">13</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">6</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">16</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <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>3</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>E</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></tr> </table>	HCP		13	5	6	5	16		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	3	1	4	6	4	S	3	1	4	6	4	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <p>Despite the five-one heart break, there is a double-dummy line to 12 tricks in a spade contract. It is far more likely that 11 tricks will prove to be the limit, so if anyone bids and makes slam they will get a virtual top score. Indeed, +680 should also score very well. At most tables, the final contract will be 4♠. South opens 1♥ and raises the 1♠ response to 3♠. If North cuebids 4♣ now, slam may well be reached, but I expect the majority to quietly raise themselves to game.</p>
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<p>♠KQJ ♥A764 ♦Q97 ♣J94</p> <p>♠8754 ♠962 ♥10532 ♥8 ♦854 ♦1032 ♣103 ♣KQ8762</p> <p>♠A103 ♥KQJ9 ♦AKJ6 ♣A5</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">13</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">0</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">22</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <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>3</td><td>6</td><td>6</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>6</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>E</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></tr> </table>	HCP		13	5	0	5	22		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	3	6	6	5	6	S	3	6	6	5	6	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <p>While I know that not everyone will bid as I do, for me this is a simple hand. South has a maximum for a 20-22 2NT opening; North, with 3-4-3-3, at least one honour in every suit, and 13 HCP, should just raise to 6NT without worrying about looking for a heart fit. For one thing, ace to four is always a dangerous holding with which to use Stayman: a four-four fit found, and a four-one split, means two trump losers when there could be 12 tricks available in NT. Anyway, on this deal there are 12 top tricks and one slow loser whether the hand is played in NT, hearts or, indeed, diamonds. Obviously, 6NT is the top-scoring slam. I would have some sympathy with anyone who thinks that the South hand is a touch too good for a 2NT opening and prefers to open 2♣ then show 23-24 with the rebid. North might invite Seven now but South, having already upgraded once, will decline the invitation.</p>
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<p>♠ 4 ♥ Q964 ♦ K1076 ♣ Q932</p> <p>♠ A982 ♠ 107653 ♥ J107 ♥ 85 ♦ A4 ♦ QJ85 ♣ AJ108 ♣ K7</p> <p>♠ KQJ ♥ AK32 ♦ 932 ♣ 654</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="67 577 188 763"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>7</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="226 577 470 763"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		7		14	6	13		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	1	-	1	S	-	-	1	-	1	E	-	1	-	2	-	W	-	1	-	2	-	<p>Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <p>West has one of those hands that are sometimes opened with a weak NT (14 HCP), but also sometimes opened a strong NT (look at those minor club honours and the possibly useful heart combination).</p> <p>If West opens 1NT, whether weak or strong, East will transfer to spades, and some Wests will break the transfer with a jump to 3♣. This will be particularly tempting after opening a weak NT, as West will have a screaming maximum with four-card spade support. That would be unfortunate, because there is not a lot to the play and there should be five losers – two in each major plus the ♦K. A bit unlucky to find spades three-one and the diamond offside, but it will be disappointing to go minus in an uncontested auction.</p> <p>Those who open 1♠ as West will be raised to 2♠, while those who open 1♣ will raise the 1♠ response to 2♠. A few Norths will balance with a double and find the heart fit. If they play 3♥ they may be down two, which would be very bad when vulnerable. On the other hand, if they either escape for down one or, even better, push EW to 3♠ down one, North will be very happy with his enterprise.</p>
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<p>♠ AJ42 ♥ QJ82 ♦ KQ2 ♣ 87</p> <p>♠ Q9876 ♠ K103 ♥ AK73 ♥ 4 ♦ 3 ♦ 109874 ♣ J105 ♣ AK64</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ 10965 ♦ AJ65 ♣ Q932</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="67 1261 188 1447"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>13</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="226 1261 470 1447"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		13		10	10	7		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	1	1	-	-	S	-	1	1	-	-	E	1	-	-	3	-	W	1	-	-	3	-	<p>Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <p>If North opens a weak NT, there will be two passes to West, who can compete in the majors, perhaps via a Landy 2♣ overcall. That works well on this deal, finding the five-three spade fit.</p> <p>Even with spades four-one, declarer can come to nine tricks for a useful +140.</p> <p>If North's systemic opening is 1♥, South can raise and West overcall in spades – he can hope for some spade support from partner, as partner is marked with heart shortage once the opposition bid and support the suit. The NS limit in a heart contract is seven tricks so, being vulnerable, they will have to be careful not to get too high: as always, minus 200 on a partscore deal can be the kiss of death.</p> <p>A 1♠ or 1♦ opening from North also sees South respond in hearts so the fit is found immediately. This time West can overcall at the one level and East may raise to the three level. West, however, will decline any invitation to game.</p>
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<p>♠ Q4 ♥ AK962 ♦ 6 ♣ Q10432</p> <p>♠ AKJ652 ♠ 83 ♥ J87 ♥ 53 ♦ AJ7 ♦ KQ852 ♣ 9 ♣ AKJ6</p> <p>♠ 1097 ♥ Q104 ♦ 10943 ♣ 875</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="67 1937 188 2123"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>11</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="226 1937 470 2123"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <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>1</td><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>2</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		11		14	13	2		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	1	5	1	5	2	W	1	5	1	5	2	<p>Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <p>East opens 1♦ and West responds 1♠. With five-five in the unbid suits, North will either double or make his systemic bid to show at least five-five in clubs and hearts. However, this will not interest South, who has some heart support but is otherwise very weak.</p> <p>When the bidding comes back to West he will drive to game, perhaps via a jump to 3♣ if that is forcing for his partnership, perhaps starting with a cuebid and, finally, perhaps via a take-out double followed by a spade bid.</p> <p>Whatever route West takes to get to game, as EW are wide open in hearts, their game of choice will be 4♠.</p> <p>Eleven tricks can be made in 4♠ by the simple expedient of playing spades from the top to drop the doubleton queen. However, playing this way risks the contract if spades are four-one, as South will have two trump tricks if holding ♠Q10xx, and a four-one split is a big danger if North has shown the two-suiter. Good play, taking a second-round finesse, holds declarer to ten tricks.</p>
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<p>♠ J8742 ♥ KJ ♦ Q3 ♣ A983</p> <p>♠ Q965 ♠ A10 ♥ AQ864 ♥ 10752 ♦ - ♦ AJ95 ♣ Q765 ♣ K104</p> <p>♠ K3 ♥ 93 ♦ K1087642 ♣ J2</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="67 683 470 869"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>11</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td> <td>12</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>7</td> <td>W</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		11		N	-	2	-	-	-	10	12	S	-	2	-	-	-			E	3	-	4	1	2		7	W	3	-	4	1	2	<p>Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <p>The main suit is not great, and the side-suit 2-2-2 shape is also a negative, so I could forgive some Souths opening a weak 2♦ rather than the full-blooded 3♦ pre-empt when vulnerable. Say that South does open 2♦: West has only 10 HCP but also has the perfect shape for a take-out double so should make one. Looking at opening values, East can cuebid 3♦ to force to game, intending to raise hearts but bid 3NT over spades. Sure enough, West responds 3♥ and East raises to game. There is a heart to be lost and one spade. Playing on spades creates a discard for one of East's clubs, so now there is only one club loser, and the contract is just made. Well, probably. Suppose that declarer convinces himself that the pre-empt probably means that North has the ♠K. If he therefore plays spades by leading the queen from hand, he will not have a second spade winner so will need to guess the club position to make his game. If South opens 3♦, West should again double – the hand short in the pre-empting suit must strain to come in, since partner is unlikely to be able to do so. Now East will not want to commit to 4♥ on ten to four. He will either respond 3NT, which may make but is more likely to fail by a trick, or may leave in the double. The latter could easily be the winner on another day, but today it collects only +200 for down one, which will not be sufficient if most EWs are making game.</p>
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<p>♠ 9 ♥ 10632 ♦ KQJ76 ♣ K105</p> <p>♠ AJ105 ♠ 8642 ♥ A85 ♥ J7 ♦ 43 ♦ 1092 ♣ AJ83 ♣ Q764</p> <p>♠ KQ73 ♥ KQ94 ♦ A85 ♣ 92</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="67 1321 470 1507"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>9</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td>3</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>14</td> <td>W</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		9		N	-	3	4	-	2	14	3	S	-	3	4	-	2			E	1	-	-	1	-		14	W	1	-	-	1	-	<p>Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <p>If West opens a weak NT, he will sometimes play there and make probably four tricks. South may make a penalty double on his borderline hand, but EW can wriggle into 2♣ or 2♠, either of which can be held to just one down (doubled) for -100. South would have done better to pass and collect +150. Alternatively, South might use Landy to compete in the majors, and that will find the heart fit. With the cards lying kindly for NS, ten tricks cannot be prevented. The top score will go to pairs who bid to 4♥ and make it, but +170 should also score OK.</p> <p>If West opens 1♣, North can overcall 1♦ and South respond 1♥ – no, a one-level new suit response to an overcall does not promise a five-card suit, just four, and is a one-round force. North will raise to 2♥, and then it will be up to South how high NS get. Of course, to get to 4♥, South will have to confirm that partner does hold four hearts, as the raise in this auction will often deliver only three-card support.</p>
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<p>♠ 1096 ♥ AKQ ♦ Q109754 ♣ Q</p> <p>♠ 53 ♠ AK7 ♥ 109872 ♥ J63 ♦ AJ8 ♦ K63 ♣ K109 ♣ 8752</p> <p>♠ QJ842 ♥ 54 ♦ 2 ♣ AJ643</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="67 1960 470 2145"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> <th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>13</td> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>11</td> <td>S</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>8</td> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		13		N	1	2	-	3	-	8	11	S	1	2	-	3	-			E	-	-	1	-	1		8	W	-	-	1	-	1	<p>Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <p>North opens 1♦, South responds 1♠, and North has the age-old decision to make with six-three in the bid suits – is it better to rebid the six-card suit, or raise with three-card support? I don't have a definite answer that will be right every time, I'm afraid, but it is easy to see which works out better on this particular deal. Rebid 2♦ and that will normally end the auction. There are three trump losers and two top spades, or two trump losers, two spades and a spade ruff, coming to the same thing for +90.</p> <p>Raise to 2♠ and, assuming that partner does not try for game, which he might with five-five, there should be nine tricks for +140. If South does try for game, probably via 3♣, North will not accept the invitation and, hopefully, the partnership can stop just in time in 3♣.</p> <p>Would I rebid 2♦ or 2♠? I confess that I am inclined to decide differently on different days of the week with the same hand. I would probably rebid 2♦ more often than not. Sigh – wrong again.</p>
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<p>♠ AQ74 ♥ KQ ♦ KJ ♣ AQ976</p> <p>♠ - ♠ KJ85 ♥ J8654 ♥ A93 ♦ A10542 ♦ 9863 ♣ 843 ♣ K5</p> <p>♠ 109632 ♥ 1072 ♦ Q7 ♣ J102</p>	<p>Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</p> <p>Unless West has the option of opening 2♥ to show a weak two-suiter, there will be three passes to North. With weaker short suits and correspondingly stronger long suits, there would be more case for opening 1♣, as that may be best even if it gets passed out, but with the actual hand I expect a big majority to open 2NT and play there – transferring on that South hand looks a long-term loser to me.</p> <p>Should we stick to the old fourth highest of your longest and strongest when leading round to a 2NT opener? Well, a diamond lead beats 2NT, while a spade lead lets it through. Personally, I would lead from king-jack to five, but not king-jack to four, the point being that, even if I give away a trick with the lead, having a five-card suit means I may eventually get a better return on my investment. On this deal I would be delighted with how well a diamond works.</p> <p>If North opens 1♣, he may play there and come to seven or eight tricks. I'm not sure how sound this is, vulnerable and facing a passed partner, but East may double 1♣. As West is so shapely, EW can make nine tricks in a heart contract, or ten in diamonds, so the take-out double works very well.</p>																																																
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<p>♠ 73 ♥ K2 ♦ 1096543 ♣ Q54</p> <p>♠ 2 ♠ AQ1065 ♥ AQ1098653 ♥ J ♦ 7 ♦ AKJ ♣ KJ8 ♣ A1062</p> <p>♠ KJ984 ♥ 74 ♦ Q82 ♣ 973</p>	<p>Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <p>After a pass from South, West has a clear 4♥ opening.</p> <p>I tend to give my partners a lot of leeway when they open 4♥/♠, but even I could not bring myself to pass 4♥ with the East hand, and just as well too, as slam is making despite the ♥K being offside.</p> <p>West might also open 4♥ if the ace of hearts was turned into the ♥2, so to just blast Six would be premature. Blackwood, in all its manifestations, exists for a reason, and hands like this one are a case in point. East can respond 4NT, asking for key-cards, and at least avoid slam missing ace and king of trumps. Here, West will show one key-card. Now, if he does so by bidding 5♦, East has to guess whether to bid 6♥ or sign-off in 5♥. If, however, EW play the 1430 variety of key-card, East will have the option, over West's 5♣ response, of bidding 5♦ to ask for the trump queen. That gets to slam this time, when West shows the queen, but allows East to stay out of slam when West denies it and there is also a key-card missing. Of course, East could still bid slam anyway and hope to get lucky.</p>																																																
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<p>♠ AK ♥ K10 ♦ 762 ♣ AKJ1096</p> <p>♠ QJ1062 ♠ 985 ♥ J62 ♥ AQ943 ♦ J95 ♦ Q8 ♣ 53 ♣ 872</p> <p>♠ 743 ♥ 875 ♦ AK1043 ♣ Q4</p>	<p>Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <p>1♣ from North, and 1♦ from South, assuming a pass from East. Now North may think that the club suit, coupled to 18 HCP, makes the hand too good for a 3♣ invitational rebid. That's fine, I agree, and a 3NT rebid says exactly that. It does not show 19 HCP in a balanced hand, but is always based on a long and strong main suit. A heart lead gives an eleventh trick, but eleven are also possible, double dummy, after a passive lead. The eleventh trick comes from playing on diamonds and ducking whichever of the first two rounds sees East play the queen. All East can do now is to cash the ace of hearts, otherwise he won't get it, declarer claiming six clubs, four diamonds and two spades.</p> <p>But NS will not always have the auction to themselves. What does South do if East overcalls 1♥? Those who play double as showing four spades will be a bit stuck, as the hand is not strong enough to bid 2♦, but passing doesn't look great either. If South does pass, North can rebid 2NT, again showing a strong hand based around long and strong clubs – a strong balanced hand would rebid only 1NT here. Now South can raise to 3NT.</p>																																																
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