



# Spring British Sims

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> April

Welcome to the Spring British Sim Pairs.

Our writer today is Mark Horton who lives in Bath with his wife Liz.

A powerful chess player he represented England as a junior and subsequently played for Great Britain in the European Team Correspondence Championship, winning the gold medal on his board as the team took the bronze. He penned a series of articles and booklets on opening theory - and American legend Bobby Fischer used one of his suggestions to win a game against Russian Mark Taimanov on his way to the World title.

Despite claiming he has no time to play he has won events in such far-flung places as Australia, France, Germany, Holland, Romania, Portugal, Egypt Malta, and the USA to name a few.

When he is not at his computer you might find him reading (Bernard Cornwell's Richard Sharpe novels and the crime thrillers of Peter James - set in Brighton - are among his favourites) or watching soccer, cricket or baseball. He enjoys restocking his wine cellar, and his latest acquisition is a Margaux 1970.

He recently completed a revision of the *ACBL Encyclopedia of Bridge* and is currently working on a new collection of Victor Moll's Menagerie stories, a history of bridge since 1950 a collection of Double Dummy problems and a book centered on his adventures with the Rabbi Helman.

### Forward Dates

#### 2012

- EBU 75th Anniversary Sims: Tue 8<sup>th</sup> - Fri 11<sup>th</sup> May + Mon 14<sup>th</sup> May 2012
- Summer British Sims: Mon 30<sup>th</sup> - July Fri 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2012
- Autumn EBU Sims: Mon 10<sup>th</sup> - Fri 14<sup>th</sup> September 2012
- Autumn British Sims: Mon 8<sup>th</sup> - Fri 12<sup>th</sup> October 2012

#### 2013

- Winter British Sims: Mon 7<sup>th</sup> - Fri 11<sup>th</sup> January 2013
- Bridge England Sims: Tue 5<sup>th</sup> - Wed 6<sup>th</sup> February 2013
- Stratified EBU Sims: Mon 11<sup>th</sup> - Fri 15<sup>th</sup> March 2013



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Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vul

♠ Q98  
♥ K108532  
♦ -  
♣ QJ94  
♠ J75  
♥ QJ9  
♦ 874  
♣ AK87  
♠ A10642  
♥ 4  
♦ KJ1092  
♣ 103  
♠ K3  
♥ A76  
♦ AQ653  
♣ 652

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

When South opens 1NT North transfers to hearts. Should East come in? If East bids 2♠ should West bid 3♥ to show a decent raise? Playing in spades may be awkward. Suppose South leads a club. Declarer wins in dummy and plays a spade to the ten and king (the best line for 4 spade tricks, although it is only a 37% chance). When a club comes back declarer wins and must avoid playing a diamond – South will win, cash another diamond, give North a ruff, get in with the ace of hearts and lead another diamond enabling North to score the queen of spades as well. Only a trump to the ace followed by a diamond will lead to eight tricks. If N/S are allowed to play in hearts the defenders collect five tricks as long as East scores a club ruff.

Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vul

♠ QJ86  
♥ AK  
♦ K1032  
♣ 953  
♠ 73  
♥ 109643  
♦ QJ95  
♣ 87  
♠ K954  
♥ J82  
♦ A64  
♣ J106  
♠ A102  
♥ Q75  
♦ 87  
♣ AKQ42

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
13		N	5	3	2	5
3	9	S	5	3	2	4
15		E	-	-	-	-
		W	-	-	-	-

We finish with another simple deal as far as the bidding is concerned – 1NT-3NT. With the spade finesse onside there are eleven tricks. Anyone who tries a diamond to the king at an early stage hoping for a twelfth trick will suffer if East wins and simply returns the suit. If East happens to duck (which might be a good play

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Anna Gudge and Mark Newton of ECATs, a commercial company, for providing us with an excellent service over the years. ECATs will still run their Children in Need Sims, the World Bridge Federation and European Bridge League Sims, and the Kidney Research event. [www.ecatsbridge.com](http://www.ecatsbridge.com)

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

♠ J76432  
♥ J83  
♦ K643  
♣ -

♠ 1095      ♠ Q  
♥ 752      ♥ K109  
♦ A98      ♦ J10752  
♣ Q843      ♣ KJ62

♠ AK8  
♥ AQ64  
♦ Q  
♣ A10975

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
5		N	1	1	5	6	4
6	10	S	1	1	5	6	4
19		E	-	-	-	-	-
		W	-	-	-	-	-

If North happens to open a weak 2♣. or a Multi then South might get excited and push to 6♣. Where North elects to pass any East who is tempted to try 1♦ will only be helping South to place most of the missing points. Given a free run South opens 1♣ and rebids 2♥ over 1♣. (unless you fancy a game forcing 3♥). The natural move for North is to rebid 2♣. and now South can jump to 4♦, a splinter in support of spades.

With poor trumps and a void in partner's suit North will probably sign off in 4♣.

How should declarer play a spade contract? Say the defenders start with two rounds of diamonds. Declarer can ruff, ruff a club, come to hand with a trump, ruff a club, cross again with a trump and ruff a club. The last trump is drawn and

After cashing the king of diamonds declarer takes the heart finesse.

If East has bid at any point then 6♣ improves, but otherwise it is a poor contract – just consider what you need for it to make – no trump loser, the heart finesse and some good luck in the club suit.

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vul

♠ 32  
♥ A764  
♦ AJ104  
♣ 1073

♠ AK      ♠ Q8  
♥ J1082      ♥ KQ9  
♦ Q873      ♦ K96  
♣ AQ2      ♣ KJ954

♠ J1097654  
♥ 53  
♦ 52  
♣ 86

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
9		N	-	-	1	-
16	14	S	-	-	1	-
1		E	5	3	4	5
		W	5	3	4	5

This may prove to be the damp squib of the event. East has a perfect 1NT and after using Stayman West will raise to 3NT. With North holding both the missing aces declarer has eleven easy tricks.

The only possible variations will be if South introduces the spades – despite the dreadful suit, the poor 7-2-2-2 distribution and the vulnerability. 3♣ costs 500 if West decides to double, but 2♣ doubled down one would prove to be a triumph. It's a funny old game sometimes.

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vul

♠ 5  
♥ K10872  
♦ 95  
♣ AJ652

♠ AQ42      ♠ J108  
♥ 5      ♥ AJ963  
♦ AK8764      ♦ J102  
♣ 94      ♣ Q8

♠ K9763  
♥ Q4  
♦ Q3  
♣ K1073

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
8		N	2	-	-	-	
13	9	S	2	-	-	-	
10		E	-	4	1	2	2
		W	-	4	1	2	2

If South opens 1♣ West has an easy overcall. You can choose between a simple 2♦ and an old fashioned 3♦. In either case North can double or bid hearts (not without risk if the overcall is at the three level). Double finds a club fit when it exists, but risks missing a 5-3 heart fit.

Opening the modest South hand will not be a universal choice but when West opens 1♦ North will have the option of overcalling 1♥ or making a two-suited overcall. After 1♦-2NT for example East does not have an easy bid – perhaps 3♦ is simplest.

Whatever the bidding I expect E/W to end up in diamonds most of the time. On the face of it there are eleven tricks, but if the defenders start with two rounds of clubs and then South switches to the queen of hearts and does not cover the jack of spades then ten tricks are the limit. That is difficult enough to be as rare as a hen's tooth, so my guess is that eleven tricks will be recorded most of the time, giving a handy premium to the few pairs who bid game. That just leaves room to mention that 3NT rolls home absent a club lead – but no one attempted that – did they?

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vul

♠ 85  
♥ K52  
♦ Q105  
♣ AJ763

♠ J743      ♠ 2  
♥ Q1094      ♥ AJ83  
♦ 76      ♦ KJ942  
♣ Q104      ♣ K95

♠ AKQ1096  
♥ 76  
♦ A83  
♣ 82

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
10		N	1	-	-	2	1
5	12	S	-	-	-	1	-
13		E	-	1	2	-	-
		W	-	1	2	-	-

After East opens 1♦ South overcalls 1♠ and rebids 2♠ over North's 1NT. West is very thin for a double of 1♠, but a few might risk it and if that leads to E/W playing in 3♥ they might do well – after two rounds of spades if declarer ruffs and plays the jack of hearts to the queen and king, wins the heart return with the ten and plays a diamond to the jack nine tricks should be made. If declarer ruffs at trick two and plays a club to the queen and ace and whatever North does next will be to declarer's benefit – unless North returns the jack of clubs, locking declarer in the wrong hand. 2♠ should go down on a diamond lead (or for that matter a heart).

Board 29 : Dealer North : All vul

♠ Q7  
♥ KJ62  
♦ Q54  
♣ J1097

♠ 9654      ♠ KJ83  
♥ Q953      ♥ 1074  
♦ KJ106      ♦ 83  
♣ 3      ♣ 8542

♠ A102  
♥ A8  
♦ A972  
♣ AKQ6

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
9		N	5	4	4	2	5
6	4	S	5	4	4	3	5
21		E	-	-	-	-	-
		W	-	-	-	-	-

This is one of the easier deals to predict – at least as far as the bidding is concerned. N/S will find a route to 3NT – the simplest way is 2NT-3♣\*-3♦\*-3NT.

What should West lead? A diamond looks very dangerous, so the choice lies between the majors. I think the general view is gradually moving towards passive leads against no trump contracts, so perhaps one should try a spade, but this time nothing does any damage. On a spade lead declarer plays low from dummy and takes East's jack with the ace. A low diamond sees West go in with the king and the defenders clear the spades. The defenders have two tricks but now declarer cashes four club tricks, which is more than West can stand.

Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all

♠ AK762  
♥ A6  
♦ AJ2  
♣ 742

♠ 853      ♠ QJ4  
♥ KQ9543      ♥ 87  
♦ 8      ♦ K10764  
♣ A93      ♣ 1086

♠ 109  
♥ J102  
♦ Q953  
♣ KQJ5

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

If N/S had a free run they might well bid 1♠-2♣-2NT-3NT, a contract that would make most of the time, not least because East would usually lead a diamond. However, when West starts with a weak 2♥ or a Multi the situation changes dramatically. Now 3NT played by North is hopeless on a heart lead and although it can be made if South is the declarer it is not exactly obvious how that might come about.

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vul

♠AKQ764  
♥1087  
♦Q3  
♣Q2

♠5                   ♠J10982  
♥A65               ♥QJ3  
♦8742              ♦J109  
♣J8643           ♣109

♠3  
♥K942  
♦AK65  
♣AK75

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

This should be one of the easier hands of the night (often the case when you get a free run in the bidding).  
After 1♠-2♣-2♠ the obvious bid for South is 3NT. Say West leads a minor suit – how should South play? The natural line is to win in dummy and try two rounds of spades. When West shows out declarer can play a heart from dummy, planning to run it. As the cards lie that will deliver eleven tricks.

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vul

♠AQ7652  
♥J105  
♦AJ  
♣109

♠J3                   ♠K9  
♥AQ83              ♥K642  
♦Q952              ♦873  
♣K52               ♣Q764

♠1084  
♥97  
♦K1064  
♣AJ83

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
12		N	1	1	-	3	1
12	8	S	1	1	-	3	1
		E	-	-	1	-	-
8		W	-	-	1	-	-

When West opens 1NT North overcalls 2♠, which should end the auction.  
There might be a few variations where West starts with one of a minor, but North will overcall and when East makes a negative double South has a comfortable raise to 2♠. Declarer will score nine tricks in comfort, but if East happens to lead a diamond then declarer will be able to get rid of a losing club for a more than useful overtrick.

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

♠Q7  
♥853  
♦AJ105  
♣A1064

♠A10842           ♠K9  
♥KJ9               ♥7642  
♦Q9               ♦K83  
♣J75               ♣KQ32

♠J653  
♥AQ10  
♦7642  
♣98

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

If you open the West hand 1♠ you have to rebid 2♠ over East's response of 2♣ and then pass East's next bid of 2NT. Opening a sub standard 1NT should lead to the same contract.  
If West decides to pass and North is not interested in opening (although third in hand most players will use that as their excuse) then the deal might be passed out.  
One possibility is for North to open 1♣ and raise a response of 1♦ to 2♦. Then West will probably re-open with 2♠.  
Playing in no trumps should produce eight tricks as long as declarer plays on hearts and the same number should be achieved in spades.

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vul

♠987  
♥J4  
♦A642  
♣A542

♠Q65               ♠AKJ10  
♥A65               ♥Q1082  
♦KJ85              ♦109  
♣J63               ♣Q87

♠432  
♥K973  
♦Q73  
♣K109

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
9		N	-	-	-	-	-
11	12	S	-	-	-	-	-
		E	2	3	2	3	3
8		W	2	3	2	3	3

If West passes (opening will see East drive to game) East will open 1NT. With a flat 11 points West is worth no more than an invitation but it is one that East will turn down.  
Playing in no trumps declarer will have an easy time thanks to the way the diamond suit is distributed, combined with the fact that it is impossible to go wrong in hearts.  
Barring an accident declarer should record nine tricks, so aggressive bidders will reap a rich harvest of matchpoints.

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vul

♠K106  
♥A8654  
♦74  
♣1082

♠AJ87              ♠932  
♥Q32              ♥J109  
♦QJ93             ♦K852  
♣J5               ♣Q63

♠Q54  
♥K7  
♦A106  
♣AK974

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
7		N	4	2	3	2	2
11	6	S	4	2	3	2	2
		E	-	-	-	-	-
16		W	-	-	-	-	-

When South opens 1♣ North responds 1♥ and will then to decide what to do when South rebids 1NT. Facing a weak no trump it is usually right to go back to the major, but it is not so clear when partner has a strong hand. On this occasion with hearts 3-3 it is (not unluckily) better to play in the major, as in no trumps a diamond lead from West should see the defenders record five tricks.

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vul

♠AQ1075  
♥KQ106  
♦1095  
♣5

♠K862              ♠3  
♥542              ♥A9873  
♦J876              ♦A2  
♣93               ♣AQJ82

♠J94  
♥J  
♦KQ43  
♣K10764

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
11		N	1	2	1	4	3
4	15	S	1	2	1	4	3
		E	-	-	-	-	-
10		W	-	-	-	-	-

Despite the modest nature of the West hand (and the vulnerability) a response of 1♠ to East's opening bid of 1♥ is a possibility. When East rebids 2♣ West gives preference to 2♥ and that should end the bidding.  
In theory 2♥ should go two down, but it is quite easy to go wrong. Say South leads the king of diamonds. Declarer wins and plays a spade to the king and ace. If North switches to a club and South wins with the king, a club return will play into declarer's hands and he will emerge with seven tricks.  
Where West passes over 1♥ North comes in with 1♠ and East bids 2♣. If South bids 2♠ that should see his side buy the part score. The cards are lying well, and ten tricks should be easy enough. It is unlikely that game will be reached, so those losing 200 on the E/W cards will get a poor result.



Board 7 : Dealer South : All vul

♠A965  
♥103  
♦9  
♣Q108632  
♠Q872 ♠KJ3  
♥AJ2 ♥94  
♦KQ654 ♦AJ1032  
♣J ♠AK4  
♠104  
♥KQ8765  
♦87  
♣975

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
6		N	-	-	-	-
13	16	S	-	-	-	-
		E	1	5	1	4
5		W	1	5	1	4

If South opens the bidding 2♥ West can only pass. If South starts with a Multi you might risk a double (assuming that was around 13-15 balanced) given that you have a stopper in both majors. In either case E/W should be able to find a route to 3NT. For instance, 2♥-pass-pass-dbl -pass-3NT or 2♦\*-dbl-2♥\*-3♥\*-3NT. If South passes then E/W might get excited about their diamond fit. On a heart lead it is clear that eleven tricks are the limit in diamonds, but even without one declarer has to take a very good view, drawing trumps, eliminating the clubs (discarding a heart) and then playing a spade towards the ♠KJ3. North has to duck and then a diamond entry allows declarer to play another spade. North has to duck for a second time and when South's ten falls declarer can get home by applying the theory of restricted choice, assuming that spades are 4-2 and exiting with the ace of hearts and a heart. Luckily that endplays South, who has to offer up a ruff and discard.

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

♠K5  
♥8653  
♦J2  
♣AK872  
♠AJ8 ♠Q1072  
♥K42 ♥A7  
♦9753 ♦AQ1064  
♣1043 ♣96  
♠9643  
♥QJ109  
♦K8  
♣QJ5

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
11		N	2	-	3	-
8	12	S	2	-	3	-
		E	-	3	-	2
9		W	-	3	-	2

The modern style is to open the North hand 1♣ and when East overcalls 1♦ South has a classic negative double. West raises to 2♦ and North bids 2♥. Now it is just a question of who ends up buying the contract. In diamonds there are four obvious losers, a spade, a trump and two clubs. In hearts declarer should lose a spade, two trumps and a diamond. With both contracts making on the nose this looks like one of those deals where there will be results on both sides of the traveller.

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vul

♠73  
♥AK1094  
♦K32  
♣986  
♠2 ♠AKQ  
♥Q2 ♥J876  
♦AJ7 ♦Q1085  
♣AKJ7542 ♣Q10  
♠J1098654  
♥53  
♦964  
♣3

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
10		N	-	-	-	1
15	14	S	-	-	-	1
		E	5	3	2	-
1		W	5	3	2	-

East has a solid 1NT opening and assuming South (as on Board 2) goes quietly then West has a hand that might produce a slam facing the right cards. The trouble is that partner tends never to have the hand you are hoping for, so there is a lot to be said for a direct jump to 3NT. If you do want to investigate the normal move is to jump to 3♣. In the *Acol Index* Eric Crowhurst suggests that a new suit now should be natural, while a jump is a cue bid in support of partner. Some partnerships have decided that it is better to cue bid at a low level as partner will not have a two suited hand (they use transfers with those) so they would bid 3♣, placing full value on the ♣Q10. Armed with the information that East has no heart control West can give up on slam. At matchpoints five of a minor is not a popular spot, and avoiding 3NT here will lead to a very poor score. Suppose South leads a spade against 3NT? If declarer wins and takes a diamond finesse N/S should get three tricks. Those who elect to cash out for eleven tricks will score very well – this time. (At double dummy there are twelve tricks if declarer cashes the spade and club winners, as North is strip squeezed.)

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vul

♠10  
♥Q64  
♦986532  
♣J109  
♠7652 ♠J8  
♥K ♥J10982  
♦KJ10 ♦A74  
♣K6542 ♣AQ7  
♠AKQ943  
♥A753  
♦Q  
♣83

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
3		N	-	-	-	2
10	12	S	-	-	-	2
		E	3	-	-	-
15		W	3	-	-	-

If East opens 1♥ then South overcalls 1♠ and West bids 2♣. If East rebids 2♥ then South is sure to try 2♠. Then it is a question of whether East will be deterred from trying 3♣ by the vulnerability. Another possibility is for East to open 1NT. Then if South overcalls West can get clubs into the picture. The sequence 1NT-2♠-2NT\* (transfer to clubs with at least invitational values)-3♣ works well on this deal. As you can see, there are eight easy tricks in spades, but nine can be made in clubs – the simple line being for declarer to play to ruff a spade in hand.

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vul

♠K87  
♥AQ2  
♦102  
♣AKQJ2  
♠543 ♠109  
♥KJ54 ♥10983  
♦43 ♦KQ65  
♣8753 ♣964  
♠AQJ62  
♥76  
♦AJ987  
♣10

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
19		N	7	6	3	7
4	5	S	7	6	3	7
		E	-	-	-	-
12		W	-	-	-	-

When South opens 1♠ there is no reason why North should not bid a game forcing 3♣. Then over South's 3♦ North can bid a simple 3♠ and a slam is sure to be reached. If North decides the spades are not good enough to be treated as 'primary support' then the bidding might start 1♠-2♣-2♦-2♥\*-3♦. The trouble with this is that many pairs still play that 'fourth-suit' at the two level is not game forcing, so North will have to do more than simply bid 3♠. Still, I expect every pair to reach a slam, and some may try for all the tricks. Those who stop in six will generally score an overtrick, but suppose North is in 6NT and East leads a top diamond. Now declarer may refuse the heart finesse, which would be the right play if East had started with the ♥K and ♦KQ.

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

♠4  
♥K98652  
♦Q42  
♣QJ3  
♠J10853 ♠A972  
♥J74 ♥AQ10  
♦6 ♦KJ93  
♣AK82 ♣74  
♠KQ6  
♥3  
♦A10875  
♣10965

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

When North opens 2♥ East will probably stretch a point and overcall 2NT. Now West bids 3♥, a transfer, and over East's 3♠ goes on with 3NT, converted to 4♠. Over a Multi East starts with a double which means West will end up in spades. On a heart lead declarer wins and plays ace of spades and a spade. South wins, draws a third round and exits with a club. Going wrong in diamonds will not matter as long as declarer subsequently plays to ruff out North's queen.

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vul

♠K9432  
♥7532  
♦10  
♣J94

♠8 ♠QJ6  
♥QJ84 ♥109  
♦J2 ♦K7654  
♣K106532 ♣AQ8

♠A1075  
♥AK6  
♦AQ983  
♣7

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
4		N	-	2	2	5	-
7	12	S	-	2	2	5	-
		E	2	-	-	-	1
17		W	1	-	-	-	1

When South opens 1♦ West will have to choose between 2♣ and Pass. Without an overcall N/S will bid 1♦-1♠-4♣\*-4♠. If West does bid the auction immediately gets more complicated. If North does not fancy a thin negative double then East might try 2NT and it is not clear how N/S will reach a spade contract. Those pairs who do reach 4♠ should have little difficulty in making ten tricks, but some may make an overtrick. Say East leads a heart. Declarer wins, cashes the ace of diamonds and ruffs a diamond before giving up a club. Then a minor suit cross ruff leads to eleven tricks.

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vul

♠KJ2  
♥KQJ9  
♦972  
♣K75

♠54 ♠Q763  
♥752 ♥10863  
♦KQ64 ♦853  
♣Q643 ♣109

♠A1098  
♥A4  
♦AJ10  
♣AJ82

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
13		N	6	4	7	7	7
7	2	S	6	4	7	7	7
		E	-	-	-	-	-
18		W	-	-	-	-	-

What should South do when North opens 1NT? If you start with 2♣ and North responds 2♥ how do you continue? The South hand has excellent intermediates, but with no five card suit a slam requires partner to have a good hand. If you bid 4NT at this point is that asking for aces (or key cards) or quantitative? There is a lot to be said for simply accepting that a slam might be worse than a finesse even if partner has a maximum and settling for 3NT. Still, I expect a lot of pairs will get to 6NT, so how should declarer set about it? Suppose East leads a diamond? West wins and switches to a heart. Even if declarer gets the spades right there is still work to be done. It is possible to get home by squeezing West in the minors and given that East will be known to have started with four cards in both majors declarer might well do the right thing.

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vul

♠J10  
♥96  
♦J1064  
♣KQ864

♠7 ♠AQ984  
♥KQ43 ♥AJ75  
♦KQ973 ♦A8  
♣J103 ♣72

♠K6532  
♥1082  
♦52  
♣A95

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
7		N	-	-	-	-	-
11	15	S	-	-	-	-	-
		E	1	4	5	3	2
7		W	1	4	5	3	2

After 1♠-2♦-2♥ E/W will get to game. Even if West only raises to 3♥ East will go on to 4♥. How should declarer play on a trump lead? One possibility is to win and immediately play three rounds of diamonds, throwing a club. South ruffs, cashes the ace of clubs and exits with a heart. Declarer wins, cashes the ace of spades, ruffs a spade, ruffs a diamond and plays a spade. Ten tricks are already secure and if declarer decides to take the ruffing finesse an all important overtrick will be secured.

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vul

♠J10752  
♥-  
♦K97  
♣J9432

♠83 ♠AKQ9  
♥KJ85432 ♥Q107  
♦2 ♦A865  
♣Q108 ♣AK

♠64  
♥A96  
♦QJ1043  
♣765

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
5		N	-	-	-	-	-
6	22	S	-	-	-	-	-
		E	1	1	6	3	2
7		W	1	1	6	3	2

When East opens 2NT the old fashioned way to treat the West hand is to jump to 4♥, promising a six card or longer suit and fair values. Another possibility is to jump to 4♣, showing hearts (4♦ would promise spades). If you transfer to hearts by bidding 3♦ then your partnership needs to know the meaning of the sequence 2NT-3♦\*-3♥-4♥ – is that a mild slam try or a sign off? If responder does start with 3♦ then East might consider breaking the transfer by bidding 4♣ (a fourth trump would be better, but the controls are so good it is a possibility). When West is able to cue bid 4♦ the laydown slam is sure to be reached.

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

♠J84  
♥743  
♦K76  
♣9742

♠K102 ♠Q7653  
♥Q10852 ♥-  
♦AJ3 ♦Q109842  
♣A3 ♣J8

♠A9  
♥AKJ96  
♦5  
♣KQ1065

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
4		N	3	-	1	-	1
14	5	S	3	-	2	-	1
		E	-	4	-	3	-
17		W	-	4	-	3	-

If the bidding starts 1♥-pass-pass East will probably want to bid. 2♥, showing spades and a minor is fine, as long as you have the agreement that this can be a weak hand as well as a strong one. Otherwise East is left with a number of poor choices, pass, 1♠, 2♦ or double. Anything that suggests high card values will see West getting very enthusiastic. With so many variations possible in the bidding it is tough to predict the final outcome, but spades will be trumps at a lot of tables. Imagine a heart is led. Declarer ruffs and now needs to guess to play a spade to the king and duck a spade to South's ace. The club switch is taken by the ace and the king of diamonds forced out. That leads to ten tricks. On a club lead, dislodging the ace, declarer should never take more than nine tricks.

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vul

♠Q105  
♥104  
♦K1065  
♣A532

♠86 ♠KJ943  
♥K82 ♥AQ965  
♦QJ842 ♦9  
♣J109 ♣K8

♠A72  
♥J73  
♦A73  
♣Q764

HCP		Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
9		N	1	-	-	-	-
7	13	S	1	-	-	-	-
		E	-	-	3	2	1
11		W	-	-	3	2	1

This does not look very exciting, at least as far as the bidding is concerned. At just about every table one can expect the sequence to be 1♠-1NT-2♥-all pass. If South leads a trump declarer should go up with dummy's king and play a spade to the jack. He can then establish the spades with one ruff and a winning guess in clubs will deliver a tenth trick. There is a way to hold declarer to nine tricks, but it would take an imaginative lead in the style of Sweden's Peter Fredin. A low diamond to North, followed by another diamond, and a third round when South gets in with the ace of spades is just enough to thwart declarer.

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vul

♠ J96  
♥ 743  
♦ A73  
♣ K532

♠ 74                      ♠ AKQ1083  
♥ QJ95                    ♥ K862  
♦ J                            ♦ 108  
♣ AQJ1084                ♣ 9

♠ 52  
♥ A10  
♦ KQ96542  
♣ 76

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

When East opens 1♠ South will overcall in diamonds. With the poor 2-2-7-2 shape and facing a passed partner 2♦ is the safest option, but there will be some who try 3♦. In either case a negative double by West will locate the heart fit and 4♥ should be reached. If South bids 2♦ and West prefers 3♣ then all is well if East bids 3♥. However, if East rebids 3♠ then the heart fit may be lost. At match points the difference between playing in hearts and spades is potentially a whole trick – but only if South leads a trump at trick one against 4♠, preventing the diamond ruff.

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

♠ 73  
♥ A72  
♦ K32  
♣ AQ542

♠ 5                            ♠ 1082  
♥ QJ108643                ♥ K95  
♦ AJ10                        ♦ 97654  
♣ J7                            ♣ 83

♠ AKQJ964  
♥ -  
♦ Q8  
♣ K1096

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
13		N	6	1	-	6
9	3	S	6	1	-	6
		E	-	-	2	-
15		W	-	-	2	-

It is out of fashion to use Acol strong two bids, so South will generally start with 1♠. West has a routine weak jump overcall of 3♥, which might prove to be quite a triumph if North bids 3NT. If North prefers 4♣ then South (if East does not muddy the waters by bidding 4♥) can cue bid 4♥. That might be enough for North to decide a slam is a possibility. If he does push on to 6♣ there is a good case for South converting to 6♠ given the form of scoring. Life will be much tougher after 1♠-3♥-4♣-4♥, as North will have to take another bid if South bids 4♠ or 5♣.

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vul

♠ 43  
♥ 96  
♦ KJ52  
♣ AK852

♠ J10                        ♠ K52  
♥ 52                        ♥ K108743  
♦ Q10964                ♦ A83  
♣ QJ109                ♣ 7

♠ AQ9876  
♥ AQJ  
♦ 7  
♣ 643

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
11		N	4	1	2	5
6	10	S	4	1	2	5
		E	-	-	-	-
13		W	-	-	-	-

As we approach the half way point have you noticed how few uncontested auctions there are? This deal is no exception as after 1♠-pass-2♣ East can come in with 2♥. However, after South rebids 2♠ any sort of noise from North will see South bid game. In 4♠ after winning the heart lead declarer might cross to dummy with a club and take the spade finesse. Then a diamond to the jack sets up a discard for the losing club and results in eleven tricks. It is probably even better to play a diamond at trick two. Anyone who plays in 3NT will have a chance of eleven tricks as long as West does not elect to lead a diamond, which should hold declarer to ten – and a poor score.

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vul

♠ 98  
♥ A754  
♦ 5  
♣ Q96542

♠ K6532                    ♠ AJ10  
♥ 108                        ♥ J932  
♦ AQ642                    ♦ K7  
♣ 3                            ♣ AJ107

♠ Q74  
♥ KQ6  
♦ J10983  
♣ K8

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

If West is able to start with a two-suited 2♠ (as described in *The Mysterious Multi*) then reaching 4♠ will be routine, but even when West passes the sequence 1NT-2♥\*-2♠-3♦-4♠ gets E/W to the same spot. However, making ten tricks might prove to be a struggle. The toughest defence when East is declarer is three rounds of hearts. Now if declarer gets the spades wrong there are only nine tricks. If West is declarer North will probably lead a minor suit. On a diamond lead declarer might well win with the king and then face a nasty guess in the trump suit. If you decide a shortage in diamonds indicates length in spades you will go down.

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

♠ AK872  
♥ KJ4  
♦ 932  
♣ J2

♠ 643                        ♠ QJ5  
♥ A103                        ♥ Q76  
♦ J8                            ♦ A6  
♣ AKQ64                    ♣ 109873

♠ 109  
♥ 9852  
♦ KQ10754  
♣ 5

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

After 1♠-pass-1NT should West bid 2♣? A sixth club would be nice but with a suit headed by three top honours I suspect 2♣ will be the popular choice. However, if East raises to 3♣ three rounds of spades will give N/S a plus score. Expecting West to have a good hand when both opponents have bid, East might try 2NT. If the defenders don't attack the diamond suit quickly enough declarer will easily score eight tricks. The final possibility is that if E/W get together in clubs South might try 3♦ – and that should make in comfort.

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vul

♠ AK652  
♥ -  
♦ 932  
♣ AQ653

♠ 3                            ♠ Q94  
♥ A94                        ♥ QJ107652  
♦ AKQJ54                ♦ -  
♣ J98                        ♣ K72

♠ J1087  
♥ K83  
♦ 10876  
♣ 104

HCP		Makeable contracts				
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
13		N	-	-	-	3
15	8	S	-	-	-	2
		E	1	2	4	-
4		W	1	2	4	-

With a void on the side, three cards in the other major and a second round control some players may consider the East hand too good for 3♥. Still, I expect the majority will be happy to preempt and West will raise to game. North should not go quietly and the choice lies between 4♠ and Double. On this deal at least the former has the advantage that East does not have a diamond to lead. Even so, 4♠ is no picnic. On a heart lead declares ruffs and cashes a top spade. Trying for a miracle by laying down a second top trump, hoping for 2-2 spades and clubs 3-3 with the king onside leads to two down, but if East drops the nine of spades declarer might be tempted. Playing on clubs is better, but after cashing the ace a low club allows West to get in and play diamonds. Not easy, but playing the queen forces East to win and now declarer emerges with nine tricks. If E/W push on to 5♥ the winning defence is for North to cash a spade and a club and then force the West hand with a second top spade, ensuring a trump trick for South.