

♠ A1073 ♥ J104 ♦ K954 ♣ A9 ♠ J86 ♥ K8 ♦ Q32 ♣ QJ863 ♠ 42 ♥ A97652 ♦ AJ7 ♣ 105 ♠ KQ95 ♥ Q3 ♦ 1086 ♣ K742		Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable West North East South Pass 1♦ 1♥ Double Redouble 1♠ 2♥ 2♠ End																																							
<table border="1"> <tr><th>HCP</th><th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><td></td><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> </table>	HCP	Makeable contracts						♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	12	N	-	1	-	2	1	9	S	-	1	-	2	1	10	E	1	-	1	-	-		W	1	-	1	-	-	Third in hand at unfavourable vulnerability, North may well prefer to open a suit rather than 1NT. Doing so happens to make it easy to find the spade fit. Whether South can resist going to 3♠ is another matter. On the auction shown, West's redouble shows a strong doubleton heart honour, enabling East to find the best lead of a low heart. Although declarer can ruff the third heart high in dummy and later finesse against the jack of spades, West can have discarded a diamond on the third heart. If declarer draws all the trumps, East can play a forcing game and make at least one long heart. Declarer may do better to settle for one down, leaving a trump in dummy to deal with heart forces.
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♠ A108 ♥ Q2 ♦ 753 ♣ K9643 ♠ KQ42 ♥ A1096 ♦ A6 ♣ A72 ♠ J9 ♥ 875 ♦ KQJ8 ♣ Q1085 ♠ 7653 ♥ KJ43 ♦ 10942 ♣ J		Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable West North East South 1♥ Pass 1NT Pass 2NT Pass 3NT End																																							
<table border="1"> <tr><th>HCP</th><th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><td></td><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>17</td><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> </table>	HCP	Makeable contracts						♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	9	N	-	-	-	-	17	S	-	-	-	-	5	E	3	3	3	4		W	3	4	3	4	With three tiny hearts, East is likely to prefer a 1NT response to raising hearts. Those are the choices because the hand is not quite good enough for bidding a new suit at the two level. Most routes lead to 3NT in any event. At most tables (if the word most is appropriate on board 32 – I wonder how many clubs actually play 32 boards), the defenders will make exactly three tricks: a spade, a heart and a club. What variations are possible? If the defenders never lead hearts, declarer might make three spade tricks (the finesse works), three clubs, four diamonds and a heart for a second overtrick. If the defenders do switch to hearts but declarer fails to hold up, the defenders might make a second heart trick, giving them four in all.				
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AUTUMN BRITISH SIM PAIRS



11th October 2012

Thursday



Today's writer, who is Julian Pottage, was born and raised on the south coast of England. He studied mathematics at Trinity College Cambridge and later gaining election as an Associate and then Fellow of the Pensions Management Institute.

He learnt bridge at a young age watching his parents, and they remain active players. Julian is a qualified bridge teacher and has been writing for over 18 years. He writes for English Bridge and does the quiz for Tournament Focus.. He has contributed to several other periodicals, including the Bridge Magazine, Bridge Plus and the Daily Bridge Calendar.

His book *Play or Defend?* won the International Bridge Press Association's 2004 Book of the Year award. Achieving a run of success in junior competitions, Julian has also won several National events, notably the Pachabo and Tollemache double in 1999. His contributions to theory include naming and describing the mole squeeze, as well as discovering the compound guard squeeze . . .

♠A54
♥J10542
♦K42
♣84

♠QJ96 ♠K102
♥K763 ♥-
♦763 ♦AQJ9
♣K3 ♣J109652

♠873
♥AQ98
♦1085
♣AQ7

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

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♣	End

Most South players will not overcall on the four-card heart suit, resulting in an auction like the one shown. The cards lie very well for East-West, with finesse positions in the red suits and suit breaks favourable for them. Declarer must just take care to use dummy's entries for playing on diamonds.

A no-trump contract does not play anywhere nearly as well, with four hearts and two aces to lose.

At tables where South does overcall in hearts, North will raise vigorously. West may find a double of the resulting contract. Even a club lead into the jaws of the tenace suffices to hold a heart contract to seven tricks.

♠AKQ108
♥84
♦9
♣KQ1043

♠J7642 ♠95
♥J76 ♥1032
♦AK108 ♦6532
♣A ♣J976

♠3
♥AKQ95
♦QJ74
♣852

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

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
1♠	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3NT	End	

Although purists may object to an overcall on J-7-6-4-2, I suspect that more or less everyone will make the bid. The vulnerability is wrong for North to think about trying to pick up a penalty. As it happens 800 is available from defending 1♠ doubled, though you would need to take care to extract that big a penalty.

When South rebids in diamonds, North quickly realises that the deal is a misfit and gives up on thoughts of a slam. Possibly, there is a case for taking things more slowly to give South the chance to show a sixth heart. However, even if South had a sixth heart, 3NT might still be the best spot.

With the ace of clubs bare, declarer cannot really go wrong in the club suit.

♠83
♥AQ2
♦J876
♣AQJ4

♠K109 ♠AQJ652
♥9543 ♥K76
♦AKQ95 ♦3
♣9 ♣1065

♠74
♥J108
♦1042
♣K8732

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

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	End

The opening bid and response are straightforward. North is a bit too weak to overcall 1NT, while the shape is wrong for a takeout double, the doubleton spade in particular. West, with three spades and a singleton, should raise spades rather than rebid the diamonds. East, with a seven-loser hand and good trump suit, can then go straight to game.

On this layout, anyone who rebids the diamonds will survive because East's spades are good enough to bid again. With the ace of hearts in front of the king, the defenders just have two aces to take.

A sacrifice in 5♣ doubled would be an expensive affair.

♠J10854
♥Q76
♦K953
♣8

♠A ♠93
♥KJ54 ♥1098
♦AQJ2 ♦1076
♣AKQ2 ♣J10975

♠KQ762
♥A32
♦84
♣643

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

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	End		

Here is another hand that you never seem to find in the textbooks. With better heart spots, West might well prefer to rebid 2♥: with a hand this good, there is a grave danger of missing a slam if partner thinks you have a balanced hand when you do not. Those of you who play Kokish (a 2♥ rebid shows either hearts or a game-forcing balanced hand), may choose that route and reach 3NT.

How does the play go in 2NT on a spade lead? You win performe and play five rounds of clubs. The winning line is to continue with a heart to the king. However, with the prospect of overtricks, not to mention the possibility that someone still has five spade winners to cash, most will prefer to run the ten of diamonds. This may result in a two-trick defeat because South has no reason to discard any spades, indeed every reason to keep them thinking that North started with only four spades.

♠J2
♥Q42
♦KJ1063
♣Q85

♠Q109873 ♠AK54
♥AK ♥103
♦975 ♦82
♣97 ♣J10642

♠6
♥J98765
♦AQ4
♣AK3

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

Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♥
2♠	Double	4♠	Double
End			

You can see here why Michael Byrne and many other experts like the weak jump overcall. For a start, it gives North quite a problem. As a passed hand, North can just about stretch to keep the bidding alive (with a raise to 3♥ if playing five-card majors). Then, even when North does do something, East is sure that it will not be right to defend the heart game. This makes an advance sacrifice, applying maximum pressure, possible. South cannot really do anything but double 4♠.

Whichever side declares, the play should be quick, with claims occurring at many tables. Conceivably the spade game could make if the defenders cash their clubs not their diamonds, thereby allowing West to set up two long clubs via a ruff.

♠AJ5
♥AJ5
♦Q1032
♣973

♠108632 ♠Q
♥3 ♥987642
♦KJ6 ♦87
♣J642 ♣AQ85

♠K974
♥KQ10
♦A954
♣K10

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

Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♦
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
End			

One or two people reading this will have opened a weak two on a nine-high suit. I am not sure how many will admit it, though! South would overcall 2NT anyway. Indeed most reasonable auctions lead to 3NT. The means of getting there will affect the opening lead, which may be critical.

On the auction illustrated, West will lead a spade. To protect the club position it will then be tempting to take diamond finesses against East. This does not work very well as the cards lie. However, unless West switches to a club when first in, declarer will survive. If North-South have bid spades as well as diamonds (as happens on the 'Standard English' auction 1♠-2♦-2NT-3NT), West leads a club. In this case, declarer may make the percentage play of playing ace and another diamond.

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	End	

Many pairs will be playing a weak no-trump and transfers, thus following the auction I have shown.

With the diamond finesse working, the only losers in a spade contract are three trumps and a club. At a few tables, the defenders will crash trump honours and allow an overtrick. A no-trump contract yields a trick fewer. Declarer lacks the time to set up the spades and has to settle for playing on the red suits.

The vulnerable East-West are unlikely to enter the bidding. If they do buy the contract in 3♣, the opening lead will prove critical. A spade would allow declarer to park a diamond loser on the third round of spades and escape for one down. By contrast, a heart from North or a diamond from South nets the magic 200.

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

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		All pass	

At other vulnerabilities, someone might stretch to open, presumably one of the players with the two tens. Possibly West would open anyway if the suit ranks were such that it is easy to bid both suits.

As you can see from the printout of makeable contracts, the deal does not follow the law of total tricks. One side has a ten-card fit and the other a nine-card fit (nineteen total trumps), yet the sides can make only eight and nine tricks (seventeen total tricks) with their chosen suit as trumps. Why is this so?

There are two factors. The first is that both sides are suffering from close to mirror image distribution. The second is that South's heart honours are not pulling full weight offensively.

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

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

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

If the North-South methods permit a weak two on a five-card suit, the auction will be rather different. For one thing, West's takeout double will mean that East declares a heart contract. For another, East-West might stop in a part score.

I have assumed that West prefers the reverse to a 1NT rebid as the hand looks suit orientated. However, there is a case for bidding 1NT to limit the hand and protect the king of clubs. In that case, East should have the methods to uncover a heart fit.

With both black aces over their kings, the defenders can take the first four tricks. If West has to ruff the third spade high, you will later have to finesse the nine and then the jack of hearts just to get out for one down in the heart game.

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

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♥	Double	Pass	2♣
2♥	Double	Pass	3♣
3♥	End		

Several players face bidding decisions. East might venture 1NT after the double, making it harder for North-South to find a spade fit if they have one. West might jump to 3♥ on the second round. When West bids 2♥, a second double seems to express the North hand well: extra values but no clear direction.

A heart contract plays poorly: a spade lead sets up two tricks for North; then South can come in with the ace of trumps, switch to a diamond and score a ruff. This gives the defenders six tricks.

Despite the 5-0 break, a club contract plays well. If declarer plays spades early, it is possible to make ten tricks.

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

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♦	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♣	End		

There are decisions here too. Few pairs play Ghestem, which means East will have to bid one of the suits. Some will prefer to bid the major even though the clubs are longer.

North would happily rebid 2♦ but cannot really bid 3♦ at this vulnerability with such a horrible heart holding. Pairs who find a way to compete to 3♦ should score well. Indeed West may need to discard a club on a spade, paving the way for an overruff, to stop 10 tricks.

Against a club contract, the defenders have three aces and an overruff to make. A heart contract falls apart on a defensive crossruff.

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

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1♣	1♠
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♥	End		

With almost all the values in the minors, East surely opens 1♣ rather than an off-centre 1NT. Facing a minimum opening bid, West might fail to envisage the slam possibilities. However, with 8 playing tricks (assuming the ace of spades is inside), perhaps you should.

As the cards lie, there are plenty of ways to make 12 tricks. Unless North finds a trump lead, you can ruff a spade in dummy. Even on a trump lead, you can discard a club on the second diamond and ruff down the king of clubs. More likely, you will play to squeeze South in the black suits. Anyone who takes the club finesse and loses a second trick should score poorly.

So long as East declares, 6NT is makeable on a squeeze or strip squeeze.

HCP	Makeable contracts
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT
1	N - - - - -
13	S - - - - -
14	E 5 2 6 2 6
12	W 5 2 6 1 5

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♣	1♥	1♠	2♥
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
2♠	End		

Some South players will bravely make a jump raise simply on the nine-card heart fit. Vulnerable, with poor trumps and a lousy spade holding, the single raise seems more circumspect.

East has a tricky choice of rebid. The hand has a heart stopper, yes, but 2NT does not figure to play well with the stopper removed early. If you double (as illustrated) and then pull 3♣ to 3♦, does that show a stronger hand than the one held? This will be a grey area for quite a few partnerships.

West has a tricky decision too after the double. There is case for all three suits!

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

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	5♣	End

A few pairs will be playing a two-level response as game forcing, allowing East to rebid a simple 3♣. Most of you will not have that option and have to guess – or you could try to postpone the decision for one round with a fourth-suit-forcing bid. The extreme shape suggests playing in the suit to me, the matchpoint scoring method notwithstanding.

In a club contract, declarer can easily make 11 tricks by overtaking the queen of spades to gain access to dummy.

A no-trump contract is potentially more lucrative. The defenders will need to cash their four heart tricks straight away, which they ought to with the other three suits bid, to prevent any overtricks. 400 will be a common score.

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♠	2♣
Double	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	3♥	Pass
Pass	4♣	End	

1♠ will be a common choice of opening – though sometimes by North! Assuming East opens it, some South players will be reluctant to overcall without a six-card suit. East-West would then buy the contract in a heart partial.

After the 2♣ overcall, West scrapes up a negative double. North then cue bids, showing a sound club raise. East could bid hearts straight away but prefers to wait a round to indicate the minimum opening. North surely competes once more.

4♣ fails by a trick because declarer cannot simultaneously avoid a spade ruff and take two diamond ruffs in dummy.

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1♠	4♥
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
4♠	5♥	Double	End

West should not bid directly over South's pre-empt. You can bid one level more than you would without the intervention, not two more. East has far too good a hand to let South play undoubled. West then shows the spade support.

Whether North goes on is a moot point. The spade holding looks more useful in defence. In addition, the hand is rather flat. Then again, the vulnerability is ideal for sacrificing and the three-card heart support provides a safety margin.

In a heart contract, declarer should just lose a trick in each suit. East's strong bidding provides a clue on how to play the diamonds. Game in spades should make because declarer can arrive at a marked finesse in the club suit.

HCP	Makeable contracts
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT
6	N - - 3 - -
5 19	S - - 3 - -
10	E 4 1 - 4 -
	W 4 1 - 4 -

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
1♦	Pass	3♦	Pass
5♦	End		

One thing is for sure: East is too strong to reopen with a simple overcall. Possibly a jump to 2♦ fits the bill. There is no point in playing weak jump overcalls in fourth seat! Without anything close to a club stopper between the hands, the players ought to avoid 3NT. Perhaps if North-South are playing a prepared club, West may take a chance on the club position...

The diamond game is an easy make: you do not need to guess the spades because a spade goes from the West hand on the third round of hearts. 3NT fails on the club lead that looks obvious from either hand but yields an overtrick if someone views to lead something else.

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

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Double	2♦
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
3♣	End		

The bidding calls for delicate judgement. With a good five-card suit and a singleton, North surely overcalls. When South cue bids to show a value raise, West is too weak to introduce the clubs at the three level. South will be doing well to stop at the two level. The clues to doing so are (i) the fact that both opponents are bidding means that North must be minimum and (ii) the king of diamonds could be waste paper.

West, of course, does not want to let North-South play quietly at the two level in a known fit. Perhaps someone will double 3♣; perhaps not. On any lead other than a trump, West might make 3♣ by ruffing a couple of diamonds in dummy.

A diamond ruff in the East hand spells certain defeat if North-South push on to 3♠.

HCP	Makeable contracts
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT
9	N - 1 - 2 1
10 7	S - 1 - 2 1
14	E 2 - - - -
	W 2 - - - -

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♥	Double	2♥	2♠
4♥	4♠	Pass	Pass
Double	End		

Whether East has enough to raise hearts is debateable. However, it is generally safer to bid at a low level than passing first and guessing what to do later. West has enough to bid game when East shows any sign of encouragement.

The vulnerability makes it likely that someone will sacrifice. The defenders lack the time to make a heart trick as well as a club ruff, which explains why 4♠ doubled is down only two.

The heart game is an easy make. Declarer can ruff one club in dummy and discard another on the queen of diamonds.

HCP	Makeable contracts
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT
12	N - - - 2 -
19 5	S - - - 2 -
4	E 1 3 4 - 1
	W 1 3 4 - 1

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	5NT
Pass	6♦	Pass	7NT
End			

Whatever your methods, South should be able to find out that North has opening values with two aces and a king. I like to play specific king replies to a 5NT enquiry. Knowing that North's king is in diamonds, South can count 12 certain tricks, with 13 laydown if North has the jack of diamonds or the queen of hearts and chances even without those cards.

If North's king might be in spades, it is more tempting to bid 7♣ because there would be options of ruffing out the spades or taking a heart ruff in the North hand.

HCP	Makeable contracts
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT
14	N 7 7 2 5 7
1 5	S 7 7 2 5 7
20	E - - - - -
	W - - - - -

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♣	End	

You pay your money and make your choice. The modern style is to open the lowest suit on the North hand because this maximises your choice of a fit. Unfortunately, North's lowest suit coincides with South's shortest suit. Good defence restricts declarer to seven tricks, though some will no doubt slip and allow an eighth.

The traditional rule was to open the suit below the singleton with 4441 hands. Those who still believe in that strike lucky today. If North opened 1♦, that might end the bidding too. Even if West scraped up a reopening double, North-South would know about their diamond fit.

Actually, a 2NT opening would not be terrible. When your singleton is the king and you are minimum, your hand is not so suitable for a slam. However, you would not be so happy if your partner transferred into hearts, would you?

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

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Double	2♦	Pass
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
2♠	Double	Pass	3♥
End			

North is too strong for an overcall and so starts with a double. East's rebid is clear. West might remove 2♦ to 2♠ with an eye on the pairs scoring. The temptation to bid 2♠ will prove too much to resist if it comes a second time, as it does in the auction shown. East would no doubt bid 3♦ over 2♥ if non-vulnerable. Some will bid it anyway. When eventually forced to do so, South owns up to having heart support.

A heart contract is straightforward, with two clubs, a spade and a diamond to lose. The bidding warns declarer not to finesse in diamonds. In practice, 3♦ is likely to make too: North needs to score a spade ruff to beat it.

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

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♥
End			

Only one side should be bidding this time. Since South might raise with three-card heart support, North should offer a choice of games. With four trumps and a possible ruffing value, South prefers the suit game.

If you play five-card majors, South will declare, potentially exposing North's black-suit holdings to the opening lead. As it happens, everything sits well and 11 tricks roll in no matter who declares and whether you take two diamond ruffs or finesse.

Those who play in 3NT in the hope of scoring an extra 10 points will be out of luck with just 10 tricks available.

HCP	Makeable contracts
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT
19	N 5 4 5 2 4
7 6	S 5 4 5 2 4
8	E - - - - -
	W - - - - -

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	End	

South has a close decision between a single raise and a jump raise. It all seems to depend on how much you think the singleton king is worth. Finding the jump raise is easier if you are playing five-card majors.

North faces a rather similar decision. Without the singleton king, the hand would be a minimum opening. As it is, I think you should go on. I suspect that a significant minority of pairs will stay out of game.

Even if East leads ace and another diamond, you can make 10 tricks because West cannot profitably gain the lead. You could in any event mitigate the risk of a ruff by throwing one diamond on the ace of spades. In real life, East has attractive leads in the black suits and the problem will not arise.

HCP	Makeable contracts
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT
14	N - 3 4 - 1
8 9	S - 3 4 - 1
9	E - - - 1 -
	W - - - 1 -

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♦	2NT
4♠	4♥	Pass	Pass
End	Pass	Pass	5♥

The first decision falls to South. With the six-card suit a poor one and North a passed hand, showing both suits seems right. West would then like to bid a non-forcing 3♠. For those whose methods do not allow that, West passes with the plan to bid 3♠ on the next round to convey the message of spades but moderate values.

North likes both of South's suits and prefers hearts as game is lower in hearts. West may then guess that the other side has a good fit and so ventures 4♠. South has little choice but to go on, more expecting 5♥ to be a cheap sacrifice than a make.

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

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

West	North	East	South
3♣	3♥	3♠	4♥
4♠	End		

South's overcall is a thin one that not everyone will make. There is a case for West just to blast 4♠ over this; I have had West cue bid to show a value raise. North may then take the opportunity to show the hearts, after which East can choose to show the spades again. Whether South raises is debatable because an opposing 4♠ bid is all too likely to come. At some point, somebody has to produce a pass card, which may then become contagious!

A five-level contract for North-South would need a lot right – both minor suit kings onside and no adverse ruff. 10 tricks are the limit as you would expect.

East-West cannot do as well as that; their almost mirror image shape is crippling.

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

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♦	Double	3♠	Pass
4♥	End		

One of my pet hates is opening 2NT with a singleton. If you have a fit, your hand will contain more playing strength than partner expects. There is also that the danger that the singleton will be a weakness if you play in 3NT. Here, with the singleton the ace and the long suit poor, I can live with it. When West transfers into hearts, East makes a cue bid or some other sort of transfer break to indicate a hand suitable for a heart slam. Some people play retransfers (West would bid 4♦) but that is not mainstream I believe.

The heart slam has good play (see what I mean about the 2NT opening). Indeed, without a minor-suit lead, you can actually make it despite the foul club split.

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
8	N	-	1	-	-
7	S	-	1	-	-
21	E	4	-	5	3
4	W	4	-	5	3

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	End	

Nobody can make very much and nobody should bid very much. With three spades and a singleton, North might decide to pass South's rebid and take the chance on missing game. A few players will raise the spades – not such a good idea if seven tricks are the limit or partner assumes you have four spades.

1NT should make exactly. Even though a club lead is likely to take out West's entry, thereby restricting the defenders to two heart tricks, declarer is short of entries and tricks to take full advantage.

If South plays in spades, the only sure way to hold declarer to seven tricks is for West to lead a trump and East to duck – tough to find.

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

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♦	2♣
Pass	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♦	End

East has a tricky hand to bid, short of high cards for a 2♣ opening but with more playing strength than partner will expect for a one-level opening. On the next round, not wishing to risk defending 2♣ doubled (a void in trumps is bad news defensively), East reverses rather than doubles. If the hand is worth a further try when West gives preference, there is a case for bidding 3♠ (rather than 4♦ as shown) in case West has five spades. Logically it should show only three spades since with a 4-4-5-0 shape East would surely double 2♣ despite the void.

11 tricks are makeable in a diamond contract because you can duck a spade to set up a long spade and later finesse the ten of hearts. The play in a spade contract is messier, though you should manage to scramble 9 tricks.

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	3♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	6NT	End	3NT

Whether South should reverse into spades or rebid 2NT is a matter of style. Two factors in favour of 2NT are (i) the Q-x in clubs looks like it might be good to have the lead coming up to it (ii) the poor heart suit makes a slam unlikely and may mean that 3NT is safer than the heart game.

The play in 6♦ is easy: ruff a club in the South hand. If trumps were 3-3, you could try setting up a long heart for an overtrick.

In 6NT, you might try playing towards the ten of spades. West will be doing well to duck. A squeeze against West is another possible route to 12 tricks.

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
17	N	5	6	3	5
7	S	5	6	4	5
1	E	-	-	-	-
15	W	-	-	-	-