

CBAI Simultaneous Pairs Friday 5th February 2021



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Commentary on the hands

For the sake of this discussion, I will be assuming that we play Weak No-Trump, four-card majors and weak two openings in diamonds, hearts and spades. Strong No-Trump and 5-card majors will be mentioned if relevant.

Fearghal O'Boyle

CBAI Sim Pairs - Friday 5th February 2021

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ 953 ♥ K10 ♦ 107632 ♣ J75</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ K642 ♠ AQJ107 ♥ Q974 ♥ A32 ♦ KJ8 ♦ Q4 ♣ A4 ♣ K103</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 8 ♥ J865 ♦ A95 ♣ Q9862</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">HCP</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">16</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">13</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7</td> </tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: center;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		4	16	13	7	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	2	2	4	5	4	W	2	2	4	5	4	<p style="margin: 0;">Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">2NT</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">3NT</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">4♣</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">4♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">4♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">All Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">A nice hand to start the evening. Do we or don't we bid slam? There will be some E/W pairs in 6♠ but sadly there are 2 tricks to lose (a heart and a diamond). As so often happens, if you make 12 tricks you will get a great score even if you are only in 4♠ so there is no need to bid dodgy slams.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠	All Pass		
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What should West respond to 1♠? If he responds 2♥ he is promising a 5+ heart suit so he cannot do that. Some Wests will simply respond 4♠. That will work on this hand but ideally a 4♠ response should be showing 5+ spades, 7 losers and 11 HCP at most.

The 'Jacoby' 2NT response above (showing 4-card support, a balanced hand and 12+ points) is gaining popularity and comes highly recommended. Opener is being asked whether he too is balanced or not. The 3NT rebid from opener shows a balanced hand.

Tip: If you are going to bid suit slams with less than 33HCP - make sure one of you has a singleton or void.

♠ J76
 ♥ J642
 ♦ 10642
 ♣ Q4
 ♠ AQ54 ♠ K982
 ♥ A108 ♥ 975
 ♦ KJ53 ♦ 97
 ♣ 102 ♣ AJ76
 ♠ 103
 ♥ KQ3
 ♦ AQ8
 ♣ K9853

HCP	
4	
14	8
14	

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

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1NT

All Pass

We will have a variety of partscore contracts here played by both sides. Those Souths who open 1NT (weak or strong) will win the auction and if you get some help from your opponents you might get out for one down and a very good score.

If South does not open 1NT then E/W are going to find their spade fit and if they can make 9 tricks then they will score well. It looks like E/W should lose 2 hearts, 1 diamond and 1 club but some will find a way to lose a 5th trick.

Then there might be a few E/Ws who find themselves in 4♠ and now if poor South leads a club then declarer will be able to setup a second club trick (provided he plays second hand low from dummy at trick one) to allow him discard a losing heart from dummy and actually make 10 tricks.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ J643 ♥ Q107652 ♦ 2 ♣ K7</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 1087 ♠ K5 ♥ J84 ♥ K3 ♦ Q1085 ♦ AJ7643 ♣ Q62 ♣ 1043</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ AQ92 ♥ A9 ♦ K9 ♣ AJ985</p>	<p>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>N/S should have no problem reaching 4♥ or 4♠ having an 8-card fit in both majors and with South showing his extra values with his 2♠ 'reverse bid'.</p> <p>Some South's might double the 2♦ overcall but that might be construed as a 'support' double showing 3-card heart support – but at least it should get you to 4♥. If North just bids 2♥ over South's double can South be so sure that 2♠ won't be passed. If North gets a second chance to pass he might just take it.</p> <p>All in all it looks like South should just 'bid where he lives' and rebid 2♠ or even 3♠.</p>	West	North	East	South				1♣	Pass	1♥	2♦	2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass	
West	North	East	South														
			1♣														
Pass	1♥	2♦	2♠														
Pass	4♠	All Pass															

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

Declarer has a tough guess in the trump suit – if the ♠9 wasn't in the South hand then declarer would just lead a small spade to the queen and avoid a trump loser. The presence of the ♠9 will tempt some declarers to run the ♠J and now declarer has a trump loser - assuming East covers the ♠J.

So 11 tricks will score well for declarer.

Hopefully E/W won't venture higher than 2♦ as to do so will gift 500 or more to N/S. Being vulnerable against not vulnerable is not the time to be sacrificing.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ AJ103 ♥ Q1095 ♦ 10954 ♣ Q</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ KQ5 ♠ 964 ♥ 8 ♥ K4 ♦ AKQ3 ♦ J762 ♣ J9862 ♣ A543</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 872 ♥ AJ7632 ♦ 8 ♣ K107</p>	<p>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: left;">West</td> <td style="text-align: left;">North</td> <td style="text-align: left;">East</td> <td style="text-align: left;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♦</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>A good competitive board and strangely enough it is the weaker side that can make game. N/S can make 10 tricks in hearts but I don't see many N/S pairs getting there. It seems more likely that E/W will end up in 4♦ or 5♦ or 3NT and if they can escape undoubled then they will score very well.</p> <p>3♥+1 will be a common result. Those N/S declarers who only make 9 tricks in a heart contract probably cashed the ♥A rather than taking the heart finesse. Of course the finesse is the correct play with 10 cards missing the king.</p>	West	North	East	South	1♣	Pass	1♦	1♥	3♦	3♥	All Pass	
West	North	East	South										
1♣	Pass	1♦	1♥										
3♦	3♥	All Pass											

HCP	Makeable contracts				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
9	-	-	4	2	1
15 8	-	-	4	2	1
8	2	2	-	-	-
	W	2	2	-	-

Tip: With 10 cards missing the king and with no other information to go on - the finesse is the correct play.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ A 1098542 ♥ K872 ♦ K3 ♣ -</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 63 ♠ KQJ ♥ 96543 ♥ Q ♦ J9 ♦ Q 1087654 ♣ K1032 ♣ J6</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 7 ♥ AJ10 ♦ A2 ♣ AQ98754</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <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>5</td><td>-</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>5</td><td>5</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		10		4	11	15		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	5	-	5	5	4	S	5	-	5	5	4	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-	<p style="margin: 0;">Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">West</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">North</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">East</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">2♦</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">3♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">4♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">All Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">The first question is ‘What should North open’? 3♠ does not really describe the hand for the simple reason that North has a very nice hand whereas pre-emptive bids tend to show very bad hands. Opening 3♠ goes against all the good advice – you have a 4-card major on the side and you have too many points outside of your suit.</p> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">And yet the 3♠ openers will land in 3NT or 4♠ for a good result while those who open the North hand with 1♠ might find themselves in a doomed slam contract.</p>	West	North	East	South		1♠	2♦	3♣	Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass	4♠	All Pass	
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Pass	4♠	All Pass																																																											

There are 11 tricks in 4♠ (declarer loses the inevitable 2 trump tricks) but only 10 in No-Trump provided East switches to a club upon winning his first spade trick.

A few Souths will land in 5♣ - let's agree not to play in 5♣ anymore when we have a combined 25+ HCP. Then there are others who might play in 4♥ – a harder way to share a top but it does show partnership harmony.

Tip: Be careful about getting too high when you have voids or singletons in partner's main suit.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ Q8 ♥ K2 ♦ QJ104 ♣ J9542</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 76 ♠ KJ92 ♥ A1076 ♥ J98543 ♦ AK75 ♦ 96 ♣ K87 ♣ 3</p> <p style="margin: 0;"> ♠ A10543 ♥ Q ♦ 832 ♣ AQ106</p>	<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dbl</td> <td>Rdbl</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">Well done if you got to 4♥ as E/W. The only problem in the play is to guess the spade suit correctly i.e. to play South for the Ace and lead a spade to the Jack rather than to the King on the first round of the suit. You lose only 3 tricks - 2 black aces and a one heart trick. There might be clues to guide declarer as to the location of the ♠A e.g. South might double or better again bid spades.</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	1♠	Dbl	Rdbl	2♥	Pass	Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass	3♥	All Pass		
West	North	East	South																		
		Pass	1♠																		
Dbl	Rdbl	2♥	Pass																		
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass																		
3♥	All Pass																				

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

If South can manage to get his club suit into the auction then there is a good chance he will get to buy the contract in 4♣ and even going 3 down undoubled will be a good board for N/S.

Should East open a weak 2♥? The heart suit isn't great, you have 80% of your strength outside of your suit and you have a side 4-card major and you're vulnerable against not – so 'no' it has nothing going for it – except that it should get you to a good 4♥ contact.

Tip: When you have to guess whether to play Jack or King from K J combinations there are always clues from the opponent's bidding and play – unless you are playing against B.J. O'Brien and then you really are on your own.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ J ♥ AK32 ♦ 109 ♣ KQ8542</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ A2 ♠ K109754 ♥ J1098 ♥ 5 ♦ KQJ2 ♦ A765 ♣ J63 ♣ A9</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ Q863 ♥ Q764 ♦ 843 ♣ 107</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>	HCP		13		12	11	4		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	-	1	-	-	S	2	-	1	-	-	E	-	5	-	4	1	W	-	5	-	4	1	<p>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1NT</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>There are 10 easy tricks for E/W on this deal (5 spades, 4 diamonds and 1 club) so the trick will be to try and bid 4♠.</p> <p>On the other hand I can see how some declarers might lose 2 spade tricks and thereby end up with only 9 tricks and I can also see that if a cunning declarer could tempt South into covering the 10 of spades on the first round of spades that declarer might end up with 11 tricks.</p>	West	North	East	South	1NT	2♣	4♠	Pass				All Pass
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Once West opens the bidding, East should be thinking about a 4♠ contract – East will rarely have a better 11 point hand – 2 aces and a king and a 6-4 shape and the 6 card suit is not completely empty – having 10 9 7.

Even if you have some ‘Lebensohl’ way to show an invitational hand, this hand is way too strong for that.

Tip: Aces and Kings are undervalued assets and we should especially adjust their value upwards when they are coupled with 6-4 shapes.

♠ 42
 ♥ A1062
 ♦ 102
 ♣ Q9876
 ♠ AK86 ♠ Q75
 ♥ K93 ♥ J8754
 ♦ KQ764 ♦ J95
 ♣ 4 ♣ K10
 ♠ J1093
 ♥ Q
 ♦ A83
 ♣ AJ532

HCP	
6	
15	7
12	

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

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♦	Pass	1♥	Dbl
Rdbl	2♣	2♥	3♣
4♥	All Pass		

West's 'redouble' is another example of a support double showing 3-card heart support and when East shows a 5-card suit West is worth a raise to 4♥ with his 5-loser hand and with all his points in aces and kings.

On another day 4♥ would roll home and on another day 5♣ would be a good sacrifice. However tonight 4♥ might be a good sacrifice against N/S's 4♣ contract. Of course if South is tempted to lead his ♣A then 4♥ will make but when the dealing machine deals you ♠J109x then you are meant to lead the ♠J.

If South plays the hand in clubs I hope he has learned from board 4 that he should finesse with 10 cards missing the king.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ 652 ♥ 7 ♦ KJ10 ♣ AQJ1062</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 93 ♠ AKQ104 ♥ AKJ1094 ♥ Q62 ♦ A52 ♦ Q64 ♣ K5 ♣ 73</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ J87 ♥ 853 ♦ 9873 ♣ 984</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>6</td><td>6</td></tr> </table>	HCP		11		15	13	1		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	-	1	5	5	1	W	1	3	6	6	6	<p style="margin: 0;">Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">West</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">North</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">East</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1♣</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">3♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">4♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">West can make 12 tricks in hearts, spades or no-trump because his CK is protected from attack on the opening lead. Indeed if North does not lead his ♣A then he might have to guess well at trick 12 if he is to get a trick with it at all.</p> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">It will be a brave pair who bid 6♥. Most will not be sure just how forcing a 2♥ bid by West will be. Some might have the agreement that it is constructive not completely forcing. There will be more pairs who fail to bid game than pairs who bid slam.</p>	West	North	East	South		1♣	1♠	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass
HCP																																																									
11																																																									
15	13																																																								
1																																																									
Makeable contracts																																																									
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																				
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S	-	-	-	-	-																																																				
E	-	1	5	5	1																																																				
W	1	3	6	6	6																																																				
West	North	East	South																																																						
	1♣	1♠	Pass																																																						
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass																																																						

West has an interesting decision to make on the first round - fearing that partner might pass a simple 2♥ response, most will bid 3♥ or 4♥. Those West's who bid 3NT will score a lucky 95+%.

No matter how forcing 2♥ is, East is unlikely to pass on this particular occasion holding 3-card heart support so West will get another shot at bidding game.

Tip: In the modern era of bridge where every opponent you meet thinks they have an opening bid, it might be a good idea to agree with your partner that a change of suit response to his overcall is at least forcing for one round.

♠ 7
 ♥ A94
 ♦ J108654
 ♣ AQ5
 ♠ A 1082 ♠ KQ3
 ♥ K10532 ♥ Q8
 ♦ 9 ♦ Q732
 ♣ J74 ♣ 10963
 ♠ J9654
 ♥ J76
 ♦ AK
 ♣ K82

HCP	
11	
8	9
12	

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

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	All Pass	

It seems that the only contract that can be made by either side on this board is 3♦ by N/S. However most N/S pairs will find other contracts such as 2NT, 2♠ or 3NT and then the spotlight will turn on the defenders.

If declarer gets half a chance he will make the same 9 tricks in 3NT as he would in 3♦ i.e. 5 diamonds, 3 clubs and the ace of hearts.

On the other hand the defence can cash 4 spade tricks and at least one other winner whenever they get in – but it won't be completely obvious to East that he needs to find a spade switch rather than a heart switch when he gets back in with ♦Q.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ KQ83 ♥ AK5 ♦ Q976 ♣ J7</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ J6 ♠ 1072 ♥ 863 ♥ J109 ♦ A5 ♦ K842 ♣ AQ9853 ♣ 642</p> <p style="margin: 0;"> ♠ A954 ♥ Q742 ♦ J103 ♣ K10</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">15</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">11</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">10</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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 style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		15		11	4	10		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	2	2	2	-	S	-	3	3	3	-	E	1	-	-	-	-	W	1	-	-	-	-	<p style="margin: 0;">Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">West</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">North</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">East</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">1♣</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Dbl</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">4♠</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin: 10px 0 0 0;">West is certainly worth an opening bid with his 11 HCP and his good 6-card club suit. North should 'double' – he does not have the required stopper in clubs for a 1NT overcall. South has a number of options and levels available to him e.g. 1NT, 2NT, 1♥, 1♠, 2♥, 2♠ and maybe even 2♣.</p> <p style="margin: 10px 0 0 0;">South should bid 2♥ or 2♠ (2♠ is better as it allows South to get Hearts into the picture later) showing an invitational hand with 9-11 points He has to decide whether to play quietly in a partscore or whether to invite or even force to game.</p>	West	North	East	South	1♣	Dbl	Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass	
HCP																																																									
15																																																									
11	4																																																								
10																																																									
Makeable contracts																																																									
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																																																				
N	-	2	2	2	-																																																				
S	-	3	3	3	-																																																				
E	1	-	-	-	-																																																				
W	1	-	-	-	-																																																				
West	North	East	South																																																						
1♣	Dbl	Pass	2♠																																																						
Pass	4♠	All Pass																																																							

South should do more than just respond 1♥ or 1♠ to his partner's take-out-double as those forced responses could be made with zero points. On hands like this, South really wants to bid – he is not forced to bid – and he shares this good news with his partner by making a jump response of 2♥ or 2♠. If South merely responds 1♥ or 1♠ then North should pass.

Of course if the defence do everything correctly then all N/S will make is a partscore in spades. If South is declarer then the defenders can win 4 tricks by way of 2 diamonds and 2 clubs or by way of 2 diamonds, a diamond ruff and 1 club. However defenders are only human and it will not be obvious to West that he has to lead a diamond.

If North is declarer then any minor suit lead from East will defeat the 4♥ or 4♠.

♠ A98743
 ♥ Q8432
 ♦ 9
 ♣ 9
 ♠ Q ♠ KJ2
 ♥ 97 ♥ A1065
 ♦ K1085 ♦ AQ4
 ♣ AJ10873 ♣ 652
 ♠ 1065
 ♥ KJ
 ♦ J7632
 ♣ KQ4

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

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

Quite a few West players will view that West hand worth an opening bid and this may goad N/S into bidding too high. North will be torn between two adages '6-5 come alive' and 'don't bid with 6 HCP vulnerable against not'. Most East's will just respond a practical 3NT with their 4-3-3-3 shape and chunky major suit stoppers.

N/S have 6 inescapable losers in a spade contract and for sure if they bid 4♠ they will be doubled and even if the defence blow a few tricks they will still score a zero for their minus 500.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ AK10862 ♥ J ♦ 432 ♣ K86</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ J ♠ 74 ♥ Q75 ♥ A1098632 ♦ KQJ985 ♦ 106 ♣ Q52 ♣ 73</p> <p style="margin: 0;"> ♠ Q953 ♥ K4 ♦ A7 ♣ AJ1094</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <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>-</td><td>-</td><td>6</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>6</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>6</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		11		11	4	14		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	6	-	-	6	6	S	6	-	-	6	6	E	-	1	2	-	-	W	-	1	2	-	-	<p>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">North will open 1♠ - he might briefly consider opening a weak 2♠ but that North hand is closer to a 'strong' two opening than a 'weak' two opening. 6 cards suits headed by ace king are worth a lot more than 7 HCP.</p> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">Some Easts will consider bidding 2♥ or 3♥ but they really shouldn't bid because partner will be expecting a better heart suit. 7-2-2-2 shapes are bad and you are vulnerable. As it turns out, if East bids he might get a nice surprise in defence when declarer mis-guesses the location of the club queen.</p>	West	North	East	South		1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass	3♣	Pass	4♠	All Pass			
HCP																																																													
11																																																													
11	4																																																												
14																																																													
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	1♠	Pass	2♣																																																										
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♠																																																										
All Pass																																																													

South has a choice of responses e.g. 4♠, 2♣ or a 'Jacoby' 2NT. 4♠ shows a much weaker hand so the choice is between 2♣ and 'Jacoby'. I think this hand is perfectly described by going the natural 'Delayed Game Raise' route i.e. responding 2♣ and then raising to 4♠ on the next round. Indeed it is very close to a 3♣ jump shift response. Responding 2♣ or 3♣ seems to be the only way to get this borderline slam.

While N/S can make slam in clubs, spades or No-Trump, they are unlikely to get past 4♠. As usual in these borderline slam hands, you don't need to bid slam in order to get a good score – making 12 tricks will earn you a great score whether you are in slam or game. To make 12 tricks declarer needs to guess which opponent holds the club queen and there don't seem to be any clues to guide declarer - so if East did decide to bid during the auction then it will more than likely lead declarer to place the club queen in East's hand.

<p>♠ Q9862 ♥ AJ9 ♦ Q2 ♣ Q62</p> <p>♠ K4 ♠ AJ103 ♥ 10874 ♥ 63 ♦ AJ1095 ♦ K7 ♣ J8 ♣ K10953</p> <p>♠ 75 ♥ KQ52 ♦ 8643 ♣ A74</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr> </table>	HCP		11		9	11	9		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	3	3	2	2	2	W	3	3	2	2	2	<p>Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> </table> <p>Another 'Nil All' board and the golden tip on these 'Nil All' boards is to 'Get your Bidding Boots on'.</p> <p>The points are 20-20 and there is a good chance that whoever opens will win the auction and as the cards lie it looks like whoever wins the auction will get a good score.</p> <p>There are many possible auctions on this board – for instance East might decide to open 1♣, North might overcall 1♠ at his turn and then East might rebid 2♣ (or maybe 1NT if EW play strong NT).</p> <p>After 2 passes, West might decide to open 1♦ or even a weak 2♦ if they play weak two's in diamonds.</p> <p>N/S do not want to be in 2♠ and indeed there is no reason why they should be - North's spade suit is anaemic and so should not be bid at the 2 level and South with only 2-card spade support should not be supporting spades.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass	All Pass		Pass	1NT
HCP																																																									
11																																																									
9	11																																																								
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E	3	3	2	2	2																																																				
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West	North	East	South																																																						
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass																																																						
All Pass		Pass	1NT																																																						

There are 6 boards in each session where neither side is vulnerable i.e. boards 1, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 24 – and on these if the points are roughly 20-20 between the two sides then we don't mind losing 50 or even 100.

TIP:

On the 'Nil All' boards, Andrew Robson says '**Get Your Bidding Boots on!**'

<p>♠ 96 ♥ AK1092 ♦ 104 ♣ K754</p> <p>♠ 8742 ♠ AKQ105 ♥ QJ ♥ 763 ♦ Q86 ♦ K732 ♣ A963 ♣ 8</p> <p>♠ J3 ♥ 854 ♦ AJ95 ♣ QJ102</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">10</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">9</td><td style="text-align: center;">12</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">9</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		10		9	12	9		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	3	-	2	-	-	S	3	-	2	-	-	E	-	1	-	3	-	W	-	1	-	3	-	<p>Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>Some Norths might even open a weak 2♥ in third seat – the ‘Anything Goes’ seat. Regardless of what North opens, East will overcall in spades.</p> <p>West has a nice hand in support of his partner’s 1♠ overcall and if his ♥QJ were the ♣QJ instead he would be responding 3♥ (showing a good raise to 3♠ inviting partner to bid 4♠ with extras) rather than 3♠ (showing a weak raise to 3♠ asking partner to pass).</p> <p>West’s doubleton ♥QJ in a suit that has been bid and supported by his opponents is certainly not worth a full 3 HCP.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠	2♥	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass
HCP																																																													
10																																																													
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3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass																																																										

Nevertheless some East’s will read West’s raise to 3♠ as an invitation and they will accept the invite. Now the spotlight shines on the defenders – they have 4 tricks in defence by way of 2 hearts and 2 diamonds but they will only get 2 diamond tricks if South gets full value for his ♦A by beating declarer’s ♦K. If South wastes his ♦A on thin air then declarer will win 10 tricks by way of 2 diamond tricks, 1 club trick, a heart ruff, a diamond ruff and 5 spade tricks. The fancier declarers might come to 10 tricks by reversing the dummy and taking 3 club tricks in declarer’s hand.

As ever if you manage to make 10 tricks then you are getting a great score whether you are in 3♠ or 4♠.

♠ J5
 ♥ KQ7
 ♦ KQ87643
 ♣ 3
 ♠ AQ4 ♠ 10983
 ♥ A954 ♥ 10863
 ♦ 1095 ♦ J
 ♣ Q109 ♣ A765
 ♠ K762
 ♥ J2
 ♦ A2
 ♣ KJ842

HCP	
11	
12	5
12	

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

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1NT	2♦	All Pass	

If West opens 1NT then North will want to bid 2♦ - but how many of us will have a natural 2♦ call available to us? Most of us use 2♣ and 2♦ here as conventional bids such as 'Landy'. I suspect there will be a few improvisations along the lines of 2♦ followed by 3♦.

If the auction starts 1NT - 3♦ by North then South may as well bid 3NT on the principle that if we're going to make 9 tricks then we as well make them in 3NT as in 3♦. The only way to defeat 3NT is for West to find an inspired top spade lead – thereby setting up 3 spade tricks and 2 side aces for the defence.

Those E/W playing Strong NT will most likely start off with 1♣ and now North will bid some number of diamonds and N/S will either play in diamonds or in No-Trump making 9 tricks.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ J1083 ♥ 86 ♦ J852 ♣ J42</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ A2 ♠ KQ964 ♥ AK109532 ♥ Q7 ♦ Q9 ♦ A73 ♣ A8 ♣ Q97</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 75 ♥ J4 ♦ K1064 ♣ K10653</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>17</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>7</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>7</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr> </table>	HCP		3		17	13	7		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	2	2	7	6	7	W	2	2	7	5	6	<p style="margin: 0;">Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">3♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">4♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">4NT</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">5♣</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">5♦</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">5♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">7♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">All Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">5♣ = 1 key card. 5♦ = have you ♥Q. 5♠ = yes and ♠K.</p> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">Most E/W pairs will reach 6♥ on this board and some who reach 6 might decide to bid 7 on the basis that if there are 12 tricks then there must surely be a good chance of 13 with my 7 card heart suit and partner's likely 5 card spade suit.</p> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">There are 13 easy tricks in a heart contract by simply ruffing a spade and setting up dummy's 5th spade as the 13th trick.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>		Pass	1♠	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass	5♦	Pass	5♠	Pass	7♥	All Pass		
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For sure if West knew that his partner held 5 spades to the ♠KQ, the ♥Q and the ♦A he would definitely bid the Grand Slam. Those who still have a good old fashioned 'jump shift' response available should at least be able to find out about three of those cards as per the auction above. Maybe another cunning plan to help you find out about these cards is for West to temporarily agree spades as trumps and then use 'Key Card' to find out about these nice cards and then bid 7♥? But then if West tried that clever route - East might convert 7♥ to 7♠ and that would not be a pretty sight!

If for some reason you decide to bid 6NT or 7NT then you have 12 top tricks and to make 13 you will need to find that most beautiful and rarest of plays the 'Vienna Coup' - cash ♦A, then cash the hearts followed by the spades to squeeze South out of his two minor suit kings.

Tip: Do yourself a favour and learn 'Key Card Blackwood' or 'Key Card Gerber'.

♠ K3
 ♥ 1084
 ♦ 1092
 ♣ AKJ84
 ♠ QJ1072 ♠ 85
 ♥ 75 ♥ KQJ62
 ♦ KQ5 ♦ J873
 ♣ 975 ♣ Q2
 ♠ A964
 ♥ A93
 ♦ A64
 ♣ 1063

HCP	
11	
8	9
12	

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	All Pass	

It looks like most tables will finish in 2NT making exactly 8 tricks because there really isn't anything better to do than just take the club finesse. So declarer makes 4 clubs, 2 spades and 2 red aces.

Even if North plays 3NT on a heart lead, there is no better line than the simple club finesse – an avoidance plan trying to keep East off lead shouldn't appeal because the only chance of a 9th trick is in the club suit itself.

Some E/W pairs might decide to enter the auction either by opening some sort of weak two bid with the East hand or by overcalling in spades or hearts later on. If E/W can get out for only 2 down undoubled then they should score above average on the board.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ K1082 ♥ QJ73 ♦ 72 ♣ AJ10</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ Q73 ♠ 54 ♥ A96 ♥ 54 ♦ KQJ83 ♦ 10954 ♣ 42 ♣ K9865</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ AJ96 ♥ K1082 ♦ A6 ♣ Q73</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">11</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">12</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">14</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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 style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		11		12	3	14		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	4	4	2	S	-	-	4	4	2	E	-	2	-	-	-	W	-	2	-	-	-	<p>Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥ All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>N/S have 25 HCP and a fit in both majors so all tables should land in 4♥.</p> <p>To make 10 tricks however, declarer has to guess the location of the ♠Q. If West overcalls in diamonds then maybe that will give declarer a clue.</p> <p>If N/S are playing Strong NT then South might open 1♣ and now when West overcalls 1♦ North can wheel out a negative double which shows 4 cards in both majors.</p>	West	North	East	South				1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥ All Pass
HCP																																																													
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3NT by South has no chance on the obvious diamond lead but you're never down til the 'fat lady sings' – some E/W players might block their diamonds – East needs to win the third round of diamonds – not an easy position to divine but thankfully most declarers will be playing in one of their 8-card major suit fits so E/W will be spared any embarrassment.

If East overcalls 2♦ over South's 1NT then it will cause a few headaches for N/S - firstly because 2♦ can make and secondly because very few N/S will know how to handle the interference. A 'negative double' will work well here while a 'penalty double' won't. Those playing 'Lebensohl' will have '3♦' available as 'Stayman' but does North really want to force to game on what is really only an invitational hand?

Tip: It pays to make a nuisance of yourself – especially non-vulnerable.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ 8 ♥ K9865 ♦ Q1072 ♣ AQ5</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ AKQ64 ♠ J107 ♥ 743 ♥ AQJ ♦ 864 ♦ AJ93 ♣ 107 ♣ J64</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 9532 ♥ 102 ♦ K5 ♣ K9832</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>2</td></tr> </table>	HCP		11		9	14	6		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	-	1	-	4	2	W	-	1	-	4	2	<p style="margin: 0;">Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right; padding-right: 10px;">West</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding-right: 10px;">North</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding-right: 10px;">East</td> <td style="text-align: right;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">There are many possible permutations of this auction because East, North and West have opportunities to use their judgement while South waits patiently for the board to end.</p> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">West's hand is worth more than 9 HCP because sequences of honour cards are worth more than isolated honour cards and East's hand is worth less than 14 HCP because of its 4-3-3-3 shape.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass	4♠	All Pass		
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4♠	All Pass																																																																

Some West's might open 1♠ or even 2♠. Some Norths might open 1♥ or some sort of weak 2♥. Some East's will open a 'weak NT' (I was taught never to open a weak NT in third seat so I don't).

The most likely auction will see E/W land in 2♠ and the most likely result will see 2♠ make 9 tricks.

If you bid to 4♠ then you will have to bring your 'A' game with you in the card play. In theory there are 10 tricks to be had (5 spades, 3 hearts and 2 diamonds) but 'timing' is crucial. You will need to finesse diamonds twice (leading to the 9) and finesse Hearts at least once – which means that every time you are in the West hand you better use that visit to do something useful. On top of that the 4-1 spade break means that you need to take the diamond finesse before the heart finesse and that is all a bit 'hindsightish' so those who stayed in 2♠ will probably be the happier group at the end of the board.

As ever, if you make 10 tricks you will get a good matchpoint score whether you are in 2♠ or 4♠.

Tip: No need to push for thin games in these matchpointed events.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ A7 ♥ Q86 ♦ Q875 ♣ AQ42</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 96432 ♠ KQJ85 ♥ AK3 ♥ 42 ♦ K9 ♦ 643 ♣ K97 ♣ 1085</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 10 ♥ J10975 ♦ AJ102 ♣ J63</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">14</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">13</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">7</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		14		13	6	7		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	3	3	-	-	S	2	3	3	-	-	E	-	-	-	3	-	W	-	-	-	3	-	<p>Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">Another competitive battle with both sides wanting to get into the auction. Both sides have 4 tricks to lose – although E/W need to be careful not to lose 5 tricks.</p> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">The trick will be knowing when to stop – for instance you don't want to bid 4♠ as E/W over N/S's 4♥ and then discover that 4♥ was going down. For sure if N/S want to play in 2♥ and you subsequently push them to 4♥ then there is no point in you 'sacrificing' in 4♠. Still 4♠-1 might be close to average as a lot of N/S will get to play uninterrupted in 2♥.</p>	West	North	East	South		1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass	2♠	3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass	Pass	3♠	All Pass
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Sometimes the easiest way to a good session is just to avoid doing silly things. For instance if you are West defending a N/S heart contract you need to be ready to cover the ♣J when it hits the table. If you don't then declarer will make 4 club tricks instead of just 3.

The club suit also provides an interesting position for the E/W declarers playing in a spade contract. If they simply play a club to the king they will lose 3 club tricks but because the spot cards are so good i.e. 10,9,8 and 7 declarer has a much better chance of winning a club trick by simply running the 10 or playing a club to the 9 and doing it again on the second round of the suit.

Tip: Getting the basics consistently right hand after hand is better than being 'flamboyant' on one or two boards and messing up the other 20 boards.

♠ J92
 ♥ 72
 ♦ 654
 ♣ AKQ107
 ♠ 753 ♠ AKQ1064
 ♥ AJ96 ♥ K43
 ♦ KQJ3 ♦ 987
 ♣ 53 ♣ 4
 ♠ 8
 ♥ Q1085
 ♦ A102
 ♣ J9862

HCP	
10	
11	12
7	

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

There will be many E/W pairs who will want to bid more with their hands but even if they do get the inclination to bid more, nothing bad will happen because when they check for aces they will realise that they are missing two.

It looks like if the defenders do not take their ♣A at trick 1 or trick 2 then they won't get it at all – especially if South leads a small heart at trick 1 or trick 2 instead.

If West used 'Gerber' during the auction, maybe North remembered to double 'for a club lead'.

♠ AQ752
 ♥ KQ
 ♦ KJ32
 ♣ 74
 ♠ 64 ♠ -
 ♥ AJ975 ♥ 108432
 ♦ Q8 ♦ 754
 ♣ A953 ♣ KQJ102
 ♠ KJ10983
 ♥ 6
 ♦ A1096
 ♣ 86

HCP	
15	
11	6
8	

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

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			2♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

East-West have a great sacrifice in 5♥ and yet very few E/Ws will manage to get into the auction. On the other hand if N/S are playing a 'multi 2♦' (showing a weak 2 in hearts or spades) then that might open the door for E/W to enter the auction. Of course declarer in 4♠ will have to find the ♦Q but I suspect most will find even if only by accident.

In a spade contract N/S should lose one heart and 2 club tricks but if E/W don't take their 3 tricks when they get in with the ace of hearts then one of the club losers will disappear on a winning heart.

Similarly, E/W should lose 3 tricks in a heart contract (1 heart and 2 diamonds) but if N/S don't cash their 3 tricks before trumps are drawn then one of the diamond losers will disappear on the good club suit.

Bridge is a wonderful game.

♠ AKQ973
 ♥ Q10
 ♦ A108
 ♣ 95
 ♠ - ♠ 654
 ♥ 8762 ♥ J954
 ♦ KJ9 ♦ 763
 ♣ AQJ1086 ♣ K43
 ♠ J1082
 ♥ AK3
 ♦ Q542
 ♣ 72

HCP	
15	
11	4
10	

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

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dbl	Pass	2♠
3♣	4♠	All Pass	

When West opens 1♣, North will need to check his convention card to see what a jump to 2♠ would mean i.e. is it weak? Intermediate or strong? If it's strong then this is a perfect hand for it but if N/S have agreed to play weak or intermediate jump overcalls then North will have to start with a double on the first round.

As it turns out it won't matter what North bids because either South or West will bid again and North will get a second chance. So all roads lead to 4♠ by N/S.

To hold N/S to 10 tricks, E/W need to win the first 2 club tricks and then sit back and wait for their diamond trick. If South plays 4♠ then he may escape the club lead and make 11 tricks.

E/W should not be bidding 5♣ as this will cost them 500 when N/S were only destined to receive 420 in their 4♠ contract.

♠ K102
 ♥ AK9
 ♦ Q106
 ♣ AK94
 ♠ J7653 ♠ A84
 ♥ Q753 ♥ J10
 ♦ K72 ♦ AJ943
 ♣ 3 ♣ Q87
 ♠ Q9
 ♥ 8642
 ♦ 85
 ♣ J10652

HCP	
19	
6	12
	3

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

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

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

There will be a wide variety of results here: Clubs by N/S, Spades or Diamonds by E/W and No-Trump contracts most likely played N/S. If South decides to raise to 2♣ on the first round then North is likely to rebid 3NT. This is a doomed contract as declarer has no source of tricks even if he avoids a diamond lead.

It looks like the only chance of a plus score for N/S is to play in a club partscore. They even look destined to get a minus score if they choose to defend as 2♦ and 2♠ are unbeatable for E/W.

Making 9 tricks in a club contract requires a bit of double dummy play in that declarer cannot draw trumps, has to play West for the ♠J and then has to continually endplay East.

♠ K8
 ♥ 1076
 ♦ AJ104
 ♣ 9842
 ♠ J107 ♠ A65
 ♥ QJ8 ♥ AK42
 ♦ 8532 ♦ 976
 ♣ Q106 ♣ AK7
 ♠ Q9432
 ♥ 953
 ♦ KQ
 ♣ J53

HCP	
8	
6	18
	8

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

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

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

2NT will be the most likely contract at every table but there will be a few in 3NT and now the spotlight turns on the defence.

Declarer has only 8 top tricks, 1 spade, 4 hearts and 3 clubs. It looks like the defence will come to 4 diamonds and a spade. However if North decides to lead the natural looking ♦J then there will be no way for the defence to untangle their 4 diamond tricks – declarer's ♦8 will grow up if N/S try to overtake one another.

A small diamond lead or a non-diamond will hold declarer to 8 tricks but I have every sympathy for any North who leads ♦J. I have nothing but respect for the budding 'Tom Hanlons' out there who try to create an entry to the North hand by switching to the ♠Q (Deschappelles Coup) and I bow to the budding 'Gay Keaveney's' who find the counter move of ducking the ♠Q.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ Q9542 ♥ K1073 ♦ A8 ♣ 106</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ A63 ♠ K107 ♥ 85 ♥ Q4 ♦ 1053 ♦ KQ92 ♣ AQ954 ♣ KJ83</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ J8 ♥ AJ962 ♦ J764 ♣ 72</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">9</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">10</td><td style="text-align: center;">14</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">7</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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 style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> </table>	HCP		9		10	14	7		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	2	2	-	S	-	-	2	2	-	E	3	2	-	-	1	W	3	2	-	-	1	<p>Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>If East opens a 'weak NT' then he will probably buy the contract there. Declarer can make 5 club tricks and 2 spade tricks. Some declarers might 'steal' an 8th trick in diamonds if North does not rise with his ♦A on the first round of the suit.</p> <p>There is also the very live possibility that N/S will 'block' their heart suit and only win 4 heart tricks instead of 5. It is very easy to get it right afterwards but it's a much different story in 'real' time.</p> <p>If E/W are playing a 'strong NT' then N/S might find their Heart fit. On the other hand it should also help E/W to find their club fit.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT	All Pass
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<p style="margin: 0;">♠ 982 ♥ A1063 ♦ KQ10 ♣ Q98</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 754 ♠ AJ10 ♥ KJ972 ♥ Q8 ♦ 742 ♦ 8653 ♣ K10 ♣ A654</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ KQ63 ♥ 54 ♦ AJ9 ♣ J732</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">11</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">7</td><td style="text-align: center;">11</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">11</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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 style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		11		7	11	11		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	1	-	2	2	S	2	1	-	2	1	E	-	-	1	-	-	W	-	-	1	-	-	<p>Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>South is vulnerable and when 3 passes come around to him it is understandable that he might want to pass – so there will be a few passed out results. For sure you do not want to open in 4th position and earn yourself a 'minus' result.</p> <p>The 'Rule of 15' suggests that South should open (his HCP added to the number of spades he holds comes to 15 or more).</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT	All Pass	
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