



Commentary for the IBU Autumn Simultaneous Pairs Friday 5th November 2021

Dear Bridge Player,

Thank you for playing in the IBU Simultaneous Pairs 2021, and for supporting the Irish Bridge Union.

Some of you will be back playing live at the table again this year, while others will still be online. Wherever you played we hope that you enjoyed the chance to pit your bridge wits against your fellow players across Ireland (and for those online, maybe overseas as well).

As ever, the hands (which are randomly dealt by computer with no manual intervention) provided plenty of challenges. Many thanks to our expert commentator Enda Glynn for his guidance through the maze. I hope that you have picked up some useful tips from his advice. Don't forget to check your standing in the national results at www.ecatsbridge.com/sims

I hope it won't be too much longer before we are ALL able to meet up with our friends at the bridge table as we used to do.

Harold Curran – President, Irish Bridge Union

Board 1. None Vul. Dealer North

<p>♠ Q 10 8 5 4 ♥ 10 ♦ 9 8 ♣ K 9 8 7 3</p> <p>♠ A 9 3 ♥ K Q J 6 ♦ K Q ♣ Q 10 5 2</p> <p>♠ J 7 ♥ 9 7 3 ♦ A J 10 7 2 ♣ J 6 4</p>	<p>♠ K 6 2 ♥ A 8 5 4 2 ♦ 6 5 4 3 ♣ A</p>
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The Bidding

West	North	East	South
	2♠*	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	4♥	All Pass

In the modern game pre-emptive and obstructive bids are popular. North's bid of 2♠ shows two five cards suits and 6 to 9 high-card points. In the pass out position West doubles. East has an easy bid of 4♥. If East had less than eight high-card points he would bid a Lebensohl 2NT. In the context the bid of 2NT will not be natural – rather it will show a weak hand less than eight points. Partner will normally bid 3♣. Responder with clubs will now pass. A bid of 3♦ or 3♥ will show a weak hand and that suit. West depending on values

can choose the best way forward. Of course if West was stronger he could bid a NT or a suit game over Partner's 2NT bid. A bid of 3♥ by East over Partner's original double would show a heart suit and 8 to 11 points. A bid of 3NT would show values for a game and cover in the spade suit. If North chooses not to open, East/West have an easy path to 4♥.

In the play there are eleven tricks for declarer.

Tip: Use the Lebensohl convention of 2NT (showing less than 8 points) after Partner doubles a weak 2♠ bid by opponents.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East

<p>♠ A 6 5 4 3 ♥ A J 6 ♦ K Q 9 5 ♣ 7</p> <p>♠ Q J 9 8 7 ♥ Q 8 3 2 ♦ 6 4 3 ♣ 8</p>	<p>♠ K ♥ K 9 5 ♦ A 8 7 ♣ Q J 10 9 3 2</p> <p>♠ 10 2 ♥ 10 7 4 ♦ J 10 2 ♣ A K 6 5 4</p>
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The Bidding

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

After a 1♣ opening by East and a 1♠ response North has no suitable bid. After East rebids 2♣ followed by two passes North may well re-open with a takeout double showing a strong hand and takeout of clubs, which is the winning option for North/South. South with good clubs will pass.

The best lead for the defence is the diamond Jack and on best defence that will lead to minus two for declarer. The defence must stay away from leading hearts to ensure scoring two tricks in that suit. North's spades are poor but he will be rewarded for his initiative. If West passed on the first round of bidding he might be defending a spade contract. Sometimes silence is golden.

Tip: Before bidding on five counts ask the question am I improving the contract?

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South

	♠ K 8 3		
	♥ 10 3		
	♦ Q 10 5 4 3 2		
	♣ 5 4		
♠ A Q 7 6 4 2		♠ 10 9 5	
♥ 7 6		♥ A 9 8 4 2	
♦ A 7 6		♦ 8	
♣ J 7		♣ Q 9 6 2	
	♠ J		
	♥ K Q J 5		
	♦ K J 9		
	♣ A K 10 8 3		

The Bidding

West	North	East	South
			1♣
2♠*	Pass	3♠	Dbf
Pass	4♦	All Pass	

West with ten high-card points (I discount Club Jack) best describes his hand with a bid of 2♠ – top of the range for a weak jump overcall. East with a suitable hand will raise to 3♠ (the level of the fit). South will not stay silent. A double showing a strong hand with good tolerance for the unbid suits is the ideal bid. North will bid 4♦ and that should close the auction. 4♦ is an easy make. If North/South decide to defend 3♠ doubled they will need to be careful to defeat the contract one. The

spade eight will likely come into play for the setting trick.

Tip: When a suit is bid and supported a double by opener is takeout usually showing a strong hand.

Board 4. All Vul. Dealer West

	♠ K J 10		
	♥ Q 10 5 3 2		
	♦ 8 7 3		
	♣ K 6		
♠ Q 8 7 5 4		♠ 2	
♥ K		♥ 8 7 4	
♦ Q J 6 2		♦ A 10 4	
♣ Q 8 2		♣ A 10 9 7 4 3	
	♠ A 9 6 3		
	♥ A J 9 6		
	♦ K 9 5		
	♣ J 5		

The Bidding

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

Some East players might make a light 1♣ opening in third position. If so South will double and North/South will end up in a heart partscore. If East passes on the first round he may bid 3♣ later in the balancing position. This is really a North/South hand and there is a danger that East/West might shovel North/South into a making heart game. If there is no East/West bidding and South is declarer West may lead the diamond Queen. A diamond lead is preferred to a lead from a poor spade suit. Unless South divines the trump position nine tricks are the limit. If declarer cashes heart Ace first he has the entries to successfully finesse twice in spades and later discard a losing club coming to ten tricks.

Tip: Use the shovel sparingly at the bridge table.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North

	♠ A K 9 5 3		
	♥ K J 8 4 2		
	♦ J 8 2		
	♣ —		
♠ J 10 6 2		♠ Q 4	
♥ A Q		♥ 10 9 7 6 3	
♦ A K 10 6		♦ 9 5 4	
♣ K Q 4		♣ J 7 6	
	♠ 8 7		
	♥ 5		
	♦ Q 7 3		
	♣ A 10 9 8 5 3 2		

The Bidding

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

With 19 high-card points West will need to practice restraint and take a vow of silence. South will give preference to spades and the spotlight turns on East who has a difficult opening lead. After a diamond lead and a trump switch declarer can play the diamond Jack. Even if West ducks the diamond in the later play he will be endplayed to play a heart or a club. If West plays the thirteenth diamond declarer can discard a heart and will eventually scramble seven tricks. West may double the original 1NT response and this might lead him to declare a 2NT contract. There are eight tricks available which will be a great result for East/West.

Tip: Sometimes the wisdom of Solomon is required to decide whether to declare or defend.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East

	♠ J 4 3		
	♥ A K 10 6		
	♦ J 6 5		
	♣ A 8 6		
♠ K 10		♠ Q 8 7 6	
♥ Q 7 5		♥ J 9 3	
♦ 10 8 3 2		♦ A Q 9	
♣ K J 10 3		♣ 9 5 4	
	♠ A 9 5 2		
	♥ 8 4 2		
	♦ K 7 4		
	♣ Q 7 2		

The Bidding

West	North	East	South
	1NT	All Pass	

It will probably take the unlikely initial lead of the Club 9 to defeat this contract. On the

more normal spade lead declarer will score 2 spades, three hearts and a trick in each minor suit. If a spade is led West will win and does best to switch the diamond 8 – the second highest from a poor suit. East plays the 9 but declarer can win and play on hearts. It is too late now for East to switch a club. Declarer can play spade Jack, pin the ten and score seven tricks.

Tip: Lead 2nd highest from poor 4 or 5 card suits – not the 4th highest..

Board 7. All Vul. Dealer South

	♠ 4		
	♥ A K 8		
	♦ A K J 9 6 5 2		
	♣ 10 2		
♠ 9 8 6 3 2		♠ K Q 10 5	
♥ 9 6		♥ J 5 4 3 2	
♦ Q 7		♦ 4 3	
♣ K Q J 4		♣ 9 8	
	♠ A J 7		
	♥ Q 10 7		
	♦ 10 8		
	♣ A 7 6 5 3		

The Bidding

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2♥*
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♦*
Pass	4♠*	Pass	6♦*
All Pass			

I would like to be able to open the North hand with an Acol 2 in diamonds. Even if you play Multi, that is also possible if your Multi can also show an Acol 2 bid in addition to a weak 2 in a major. After a 2♦ opening you can bid 3♦ over South's likely 2♥ response. South, who is close to an opening bid, has wonderful support with three trumps and two outside aces and should bid 4♦ which is Roman Key Card Blackwood in diamonds (also known as "Minorwood"). After North shows three keycards South will advance to a small slam. The favourable position of the diamond Queen means the slam cannot be defeated. Any North/South pair who get to 6NT will score top marks. Pessimists who stay out of slams because they are afraid the cards will lie unfavourably will rarely win the day.

Tip: Use 4 of your agreed minor as Roman Key Card Blackwood in the minors ("Minorwood") if there is a sniff of a slam – if you find you are missing two keycards you can stop early.

Board 8. None Vul. Dealer West

<p>♠ K J 7 ♥ 9 8 3 2 ♦ Q 10 7 ♣ K Q 5</p> <p>♠ Q 9 8 5 3 2 ♥ K 4 ♦ K 4 ♣ A 6 3</p>	<p>♠ 6 4 ♥ Q 10 7 6 ♦ J 8 6 ♣ 10 8 7 4</p> <p>♠ A 10 ♥ A J 5 ♦ A 9 5 3 2 ♣ J 9 2</p>
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The Bidding

West	North	East	South
1♠	Db1	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

North is minimum for his takeout double but at nil all the roof will hardly cave in. South (the Ace 10 is a good holding) bids a hopeful 3NT. As West is placed with most of the high-card points he is favourite to hold the diamond King. Declarer should score an easy ten tricks. The secret of these type of hands is to get to the optimum contract. If North does not double on the first round of bidding North/South are in danger of playing in a diamond partscore. If South responds 3♦ over Partner's double North with minimum values is likely to pass. South has good values and good controls – nine tricks are easier than eleven.

Tip: Take courage in your hand and make a takeout double with the right shape.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North

<p>♠ A 6 5 3 ♥ A 9 6 3 ♦ A J 9 ♣ 6 5</p> <p>♠ K Q 9 8 ♥ J 8 5 2 ♦ 6 5 4 ♣ 9 7</p>	<p>♠ 7 4 ♥ K Q 7 4 ♦ K Q 10 3 2 ♣ K 10</p> <p>♠ J 10 2 ♥ 10 ♦ 8 7 ♣ A Q J 8 4 3 2</p>
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The Bidding

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

The 2♠ bid is a transfer to clubs and the 2NT bid denies good clubs. With a club honour

North would accept Partner's transfer bid by bidding the suit – 3♣. East takes his life in his hands with a balancing bid of 3♦. South has a good seven-card suit and if the finesse succeeds the contract will likely make. He realises that he will not become a genius defending 3♦. In addition it will deal a psychological blow to East if his balancing bid helps the opponents to reach a vulnerable game. A diamond lead ducked followed by a heart switch will not cause declarer difficulty. The club finesse succeeds and declarer will usually make ten tricks. The optimist wins again

Tip Be careful balancing – often you will balance opponents into a making game.

Board 10. All Vul. Dealer East

<p>♠ J ♥ A 8 5 2 ♦ 8 7 6 4 ♣ J 5 4 3</p> <p>♠ A 10 9 5 3 2 ♥ Q 7 ♦ A 10 5 3 ♣ 6</p>	<p>♠ Q 8 7 ♥ K J 6 4 ♦ Q 2 ♣ A 10 7 2</p> <p>♠ K 6 4 ♥ 10 9 3 ♦ K J 9 ♣ K Q 9 8</p>
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The Bidding

West	North	East	South
4♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
		4♠	All Pass

With a nice 6/4 distribution West transfers to the spade game at the first time of asking with a transfer bid of 4♥. South will likely lead the club King. Declarer will win and knock out heart Ace. He can ruff a likely club return. He needs a diamond ruff in his hand so a diamond to Queen will lose to the King. Declarer can win any return and that is the end of the defence. After returning to hand with a diamond ruff declarer can apply the coup de grace by leading the trump Queen. There are just two tricks for the defence – heart Ace and diamond King.

Tip: With 6/4 distribution and two aces in your long suits, you can afford to be aggressive.

Board 11. None Vul. Dealer South

<p>♠ K Q 4 2 ♥ A Q 9 7 5 3 ♦ Q J 4 ♣ —</p> <p>♠ A 9 7 ♥ J 10 2 ♦ A 10 2 ♣ A 10 6 4</p> <p>♠ 10 6 ♥ 8 6 4 ♦ 9 8 7 3 ♣ K Q 9 5</p>	<p>♠ J 8 5 3 ♥ K ♦ K 6 5 ♣ J 8 7 3 2</p>
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The Bidding

West	North	East	South
			Pass
INT	2♦*	Pass	2♥*
Pass	Pass	Dbl*	Pass
3♣	All Pass		

North's bid of 2♦ shows a single major. It is true that North has both majors but there is a major discrepancy between the two suits. In such situations it is usually best to pinpoint the six-card suit. Even with a likely nine-card heart fit South is happy to defend 3♣. North has a choice of leads and may settle on diamond Queen. To make the contract, declarer will need to make a number of careful plays. A heart can be played at trick 2 and North is in a quandary. A diamond continuation will sacrifice a trick so the spade King may be switched. Declarer can win and lead heart Jack. If that is covered and ruffed, there is now a diamond discard for declarer and he will lose a heart, a spade and two clubs.

There are eight tricks for North/South in a heart contract. Even on a heart lead declarer can win with the Ace and play spade Queen. He will obtain one spade ruff in dummy and can force a diamond trick by leading diamond 9 from dummy. A positive score on either side will likely lead to a good result

Tip: Another example with a nine-card trump fit – bid to the level of the fit. (8 to the two-level, 9 to the three-level).

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West

<p>♠ J 9 7 ♥ K J 6 3 ♦ 8 ♣ A Q J 10 2</p> <p>♠ K 3 ♥ A Q 2 ♦ J 10 7 6 2 ♣ 6 4 3</p> <p>♠ A 5 4 2 ♥ 8 7 5 4 ♦ A 9 5 ♣ 9 7</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 8 6 ♥ 10 9 ♦ K Q 4 3 ♣ K 8 5</p>
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The Bidding

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Dbl	Pass
3♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

East does not have a hand suitable to get involved on the first round of bidding. But once the opponents find their heart fit he comes alive with a double showing the two unbid suits. With only an eight-card fit North/South have no reason to advance to the three-level so often 3♦ will become the final contract. As long as North avoids a heart lead the defence can prevail – scoring two clubs and one trick in the other three suits. In a heart contract after a diamond lead declarer might try a club. East will now switch a spade and that sets up a fifth trick for the defence. Once again not advancing beyond the two-level with an eight-card fit is the winning option.

Tip: If possible try and push opponents beyond the two-level when they have only eight trumps.

Board 13. All Vul. Dealer North

<p>♠ Q J 8 7 6 ♥ 10 8 2 ♦ A 2 ♣ A 5 2</p> <p>♠ K 5 4 3 ♥ K 7 3 ♦ 9 6 5 4 ♣ 6 4</p> <p>♠ 10 ♥ Q J 9 6 5 4 ♦ K J 7 ♣ K J 7</p>	<p>♠ A 9 2 ♥ A ♦ Q 10 8 3 ♣ Q 10 9 8 3</p>
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The Bidding

West	North	East	South
	1♠		2♥
Pass	3♥		4♥
All Pass			

With a reasonable five-card suit and two outside aces North is worth a 1♠ opening. South introduces his six-card heart suit and the heart game is reached. West has a difficult lead. A diamond gives a trick; a club clarifies the club suit. There are only three losers – two trumps and a spade. If necessary a diamond can be ruffed in dummy and declarer has the necessary trump spots. The club finesse if required is also available.

Tip: Open with a distributional 11 high-card points especially with good controls.

Board 14. None Vul. Dealer East

	♠ K 6		
	♥ K Q 6 5 4		
	♦ 10 8 5 4		
	♣ 8 4		
♠ J 9 7 4		♠ Q 10 8 5 2	
♥ J 8		♥ A 7 2	
♦ J 9 7 6 2		♦ K 3	
♣ 9 5		♣ A K 2	
	♠ A 3		
	♥ 10 9 3		
	♦ A Q		
	♣ Q J 10 7 6 3		

The Bidding

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

South with a reasonable six-card suit overcalls 2♣. West has minimum values but with four trumps bids 2♠ rather than leave the gate open. Undaunted North introduces his heart suit. East, who has the best hand at the table, competes to 3♠. South with three hearts keeps going and the heart game is reached. East has three options – Pass, Double or bid 4♠. Over a double West will regret bidding and will do well to take out the double to 4♠. The favourable lie of the heart suit means that 4♥ cannot be beaten. There are eight tricks in a spade contract. This hand is one where optimism is rewarded but it will not always be so.

Tip: After Partner overcalls a suit if you introduce a new suit you will have a good hand and will usually have a fallback position in the suit Partner overcalled (so your bid is said to be “constructive”).

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South

	♠ Q 8 7 4 2		
	♥ K 6		
	♦ K 6		
	♣ J 7 4 3		
♠ A K 9		♠ J 10 5	
♥ J 10 5 3		♥ A 9 8 2	
♦ J 9 8 4		♦ 10 5	
♣ A 9		♣ Q 8 6 2	
	♠ 6 3		
	♥ Q 7 4		
	♦ A Q 7 3 2		
	♣ K 10 5		

The Bidding

West	North	East	South
			Pass
INT	All Pass		

At unfavourable vulnerability South is unlikely to open INT with an 11-count, and opening 1♦ may well lead to a difficult rebid. The most likely scenario is West opening a weak NT which will probably end the auction. A low spade lead can be won with the 9 and the heart Jack will be advanced. When South gets in with heart Queen he most likely will switch to a low diamond hoping Partner has three to the King. That will lead to eight tricks for declarer. The unlikely lead of the diamond King will hold declarer to seven tricks.

Tip: Opening INT vulnerable with eleven high-card points and no great shape is not recommended.

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West

	♠ K 8 6 5 2		
	♥ A 8 7 5 2		
	♦ 8 4		
	♣ 10		
♠ J 10 9 3		♠ 4	
♥ K 6		♥ Q J 10	
♦ 10 5 3 2		♦ Q 9 6	
♣ A 7 3		♣ K Q 9 8 5 2	
	♠ A Q 7		
	♥ 9 4 3		
	♦ A K J 7		
	♣ J 6 4		

The Bidding

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♠	3♣	4♠

The 2♠ opening will show spades and another – 6 to 9 points. Personally, I prefer if the second suit also has five cards. East will enter the fray with 3♣ but an optimistic South will bid 4♠. It appears there are four losers in that contract – one spade, two hearts, and a club.

The 4/1 trump divide seems to destine the contract to fail. But if declarer manages to divine that because of his singleton and East's bidding that there is likely to be an unfavourable trump break he can bring home 4♠. At trick three he cashes the spade King. He can now take a diamond finesse. He follows by ruffing a club in hand, cashing two top diamonds and ruffing a diamond. He has scored the trump king and three ruffs in his hand, three diamonds, the heart Ace and two top spades in dummy bringing his total to ten tricks. Declarer needs to divine the trump position and plan this sequence of plays to see the contract home.

Tip: Plan your way to ten tricks taking account of an unfavourable trump divide.

Board 17. None Vul. Dealer North

♠ A 10 8 7 5	♠ 6
♥ J 7 5 4	♥ 10
♦ J 4 2	♦ A K 10 8 7 6
♣ 3	♣ A K Q 9 2
	♠ K Q 3
	♥ Q 9 2
	♦ Q 9 5 3
	♣ 8 7 5

The Bidding

West	North	East	South
	1♥	2NT*	3♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl*	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

Applying the rule of 19 (add your two longest suits to your high-card points and if they come to 19 open) North is one short of a legitimate opening bid. But with good shape many North players will set the ball rolling anyway with a bid of 1♥. East will introduce Ghestem with a bid of 2NT showing the minors. Playing Ghestem all that is required is to remember the three principles: a cue bid shows the extremes (the two suits furthest from each other), a bid of 2NT shows the lowest two suits and a jump in the minors shows the exclusives. It is the application of the third principle that people frequently get wrong; e.g. 1♥ 3♣*. 3♣ is not clubs it is the exclusive suits diamonds and spades. On the first round of bidding West may not bid but when his Partner doubles 3♥ to show a strong Ghestem he rises to the occasion with a bid of 5♦. Holding three

diamonds and the spade Ace he is well worth that bid.

In 5♦ declarer will win the likely spade switch at trick two and play to the club Ace and ruff a club. There are eleven tricks available. South with nine points and a trump trick should refrain from a trigger-happy penalty double and take his medicine.

In defence before deciding on a penalty double South should ask the question "Where are my certain three tricks". They don't exist.

Tip: Ghestem is a good convention and worth adding to your armoury.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East

♠ 9 8 4 3	♠ K 2
♥ A K 4 2	♥ Q J
♦ K J 7	♦ A 8 6 2
♣ Q 9	♣ J 10 8 6 2
	♠ A Q J 5
	♥ 10 9 8 6 3
	♦ Q 10 9
	♣ 3
	♠ 10 7 6
	♥ 7 5
	♦ 5 4 3
	♣ A K 7 5 4

The Bidding

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
INT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

It will take optimistic bidding to reach the vulnerable heart game. The hands fit well and with trumps 2/2 and the spade finesse working eleven tricks are available. An optimistic East might invite game after the heart fit is found but even then West may not accept the invitation as his doubleton Queen of clubs does not look a valuable card. With everything favourable there is little to the play. Any North/South players defending a heart game can consider themselves unlucky. East's hand improves once the heart fit is discovered. He has an extra trump and a side suit singleton, so bidding the heart game is not unreasonable.

Tip: In bridge as in life the optimist will always win over the pessimist. Forget the false prophets of doom.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South

<p>♠ A Q 7 ♥ K Q J 10 ♦ A Q 9 5 2 ♣ 6</p> <p>♠ 6 2 ♥ A 7 6 4 ♦ 10 7 4 3 ♣ Q 10 5</p>	<p>♠ K J 10 9 8 3 ♥ 3 ♦ J 8 ♣ J 9 3 2</p> <p>♠ 5 4 ♥ 9 8 5 2 ♦ K 6 ♣ A K 8 7 4</p>
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The Bidding

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	2♠	Pass
Pass	4♥	All Pass	Dbl

With 6/4 distribution, East is worth a bid of 2♠ even at unfavourable vulnerability. His suit is good and is unlikely to run into a penalty double. South will double showing the other two suits. That should not be done on minimal values. North will close his eyes and bid 4♥. In the unlikely event of South not having four hearts he will have a fall-back position in clubs. Despite the 4/1 trump break declarer will have little difficulty in making eleven tricks. After drawing two rounds of trumps declarer can turn his attention to the diamond suit. The losing spade can be discarded and there only two tricks for the defence.

Tip: After Partner opens and there is a two-level overcall a double by you should always show reasonable values.

Board 20. All Vul. Dealer West

<p>♠ K J 6 5 ♥ A 10 8 6 4 2 ♦ 3 2 ♣ 5</p> <p>♠ 7 2 ♥ Q 9 7 5 ♦ J ♣ A K J 10 9 4</p>	<p>♠ Q 9 3 ♥ K 3 ♦ A K Q 10 8 6 ♣ 7 3</p> <p>♠ A 10 8 4 ♥ J ♦ 9 7 5 4 ♣ Q 8 6 2</p>
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The Bidding

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

East's bid of 2♦ is forcing for one round. West rebids 3♣ and with a heart stopper in addition to a good diamond suit East bids a confident 3NT. With only one heart South may try a spade lead (his best suit) and the defence have a quick five tricks. If South leads the heart Jack with an ominous club suit in dummy North must rise with the heart Ace and switch a spade to enable the defence to score five tricks. If North plays low East might well make all thirteen tricks. If North looks back on the bidding playing low on the first heart is a poor option. East obviously has a good diamond suit and North should realise that if a club finesse is required it is working. Urgent action is therefore essential. North must be wide awake to find the winning defence.

Tip: Survey the likely lay out of the hand and take a winner early to make the critical switch.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North

<p>♠ J 4 ♥ K J 6 2 ♦ K 7 3 2 ♣ 10 5 4</p> <p>♠ K 7 6 3 2 ♥ 10 8 5 4 ♦ 9 ♣ A J 3</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 9 8 5 ♥ 9 ♦ A Q 6 5 ♣ Q 8 6</p> <p>♠ A ♥ A Q 7 3 ♦ J 10 8 4 ♣ K 9 7 2</p>
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The Bidding

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♠	Dbl
4♦	Dbl	4♠*	All Pass

With nice shape and applying the rule of nineteen East opens 1♠. The points are concentrated in the suits which is always positive. West's bid of 4♦ is a splinter showing one diamond (at most) and guaranteeing four trumps. The splinter also guarantees the values for game and if East has a suitable hand a slam can be explored. North doubles the splinter to show diamonds and some points. Here East with a minimum hand simply bids 4♠. South has a minimum and the vulnerability is unfavourable for a sacrifice. After a likely diamond lead declarer will score eleven tricks.

Tip: Use a splinter bid with at least a game-going hand showing singleton or void in that suit – it will always guarantee four trumps.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East

<p>♠ 9 7 ♥ A K 2 ♦ 5 4 ♣ A 10 9 8 7 4</p>	<p>♠ A K 8 4 3 2 ♥ 7 5 ♦ 8 6 3 ♣ J 3</p>
<p>♠ — ♥ J 10 9 8 6 4 3 ♦ K Q 10 2 ♣ Q 2</p>	<p>♠ Q J 10 6 5 ♥ Q ♦ A J 9 7 ♣ K 6 5</p>

The Bidding

West	North	East	South
4♥	4♠	3♥	3♠
5♥	5♠	All Pass	Pass

A spirited auction will see North/South arrive in 5♠ which is a great save against 5♥. West might be tempted to double. To double in these situations I like to have three certain tricks. The club Ace is one but two others can't be guaranteed. North knows the Partnership has at least an eleven-card fit so judges it appropriate to bid on. It is not clear who is saving against who. Playing in a spade contract the diamond suit lies favourably for declarer and East cannot open the club suit without conceding a trick. Some Easts may not like to pre-empt with a suit headed by the Jack but if you don't open with these type of hands you will be left behind. There are eleven tricks in hearts losing just two tricks in the minors.

Tip: With good distribution in contested auctions be prepared to bid one for the road.

Board 23. All Vul. Dealer South

<p>♠ K J 9 3 ♥ Q J 9 2 ♦ Q 9 ♣ 7 6 3</p>	<p>♠ 10 5 4 ♥ K 10 7 6 4 ♦ A J 10 6 ♣ 8</p>
<p>♠ 8 6 2 ♥ — ♦ K 8 7 4 ♣ A K J 10 4 2</p>	<p>♠ A Q 7 ♥ A 8 5 3 ♦ 5 3 2 ♣ Q 9 5</p>

The Bidding

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

Attacking leads are recommended. Here a trump lead may look innocuous, but not alone does it lose a tempo, it also picks up Partner's Queen, and declarer could end up with eleven tricks. North/South have stayed off 3NT so it looks like they don't have a spade stop. East should start off with spade Ace and after three spade tricks are cashed the heart Queen can be switched. To score ten tricks declarer will need to guess correctly in the trump suit. There is little point in East/West leading a trump at trick one or at trick four. Your job as defender is not to become another declarer with dummy looking on admiringly.

Tip: Rather than leading trumps which will usually lose a tempo try and figure out a more constructive lead.

Board 24. None Vul. Dealer West

<p>♠ Q 6 2 ♥ 7 4 ♦ A Q J 10 5 ♣ K 9 3</p>	<p>♠ K J 4 ♥ K J 8 ♦ 9 8 7 6 3 2 ♣ 10</p>
<p>♠ 10 9 8 3 ♥ A Q 9 5 3 ♦ — ♣ Q J 6 4</p>	<p>♠ A 7 5 ♥ 10 6 2 ♦ K 4 ♣ A 8 7 5 2</p>

The Bidding

West	North	East	South
INT	Pass	2♣*	Pass
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The 2♣ bid is non-promising Stayman. Playing 4-way transfers, a bid of 2NT by East will show a transfer to diamonds (generally 6), so we need to go through Stayman to effect the invitational 2NT. After 2NT by East on the second round West has no more to say. On any lead there are eight tricks for East/West and no more.

Some South players with nice distribution may not stay silent over East's bid of 2♣ and may contribute 2♥. A heart contract plays well. There is a singleton club in dummy and the

spades lie favourably. North/South pairs who reach 3♥ will score well and a red card from East/West will improve matters for North/South. South has good distribution and his intervention will be rewarded.

Tip: With good distribution enter the fray and disrupt the auction.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North

<p>♠ 9 8 6 4 ♥ J 10 8 7 6 ♦ K ♣ K 3 2</p>	<p>♠ 10 3 ♥ A K 9 3 2 ♦ Q 3 2 ♣ A J 6</p>
<p>♠ A 7 ♥ 4 ♦ A 10 9 5 4 ♣ Q 10 8 5 4</p>	<p>♠ K Q J 5 2 ♥ Q 5 ♦ J 8 7 6 ♣ 9 7</p>

The Bidding

West	North	East	South	
	1♥		1♠	Dbl
3♠	Pass		Pass	Dbl
All Pass				

South's first double is negative showing the other two suits. West's jump to 3♠ is preemptive showing four spades. North's pass shows a minimum opening. East has nothing further to add. South's second double indicates that he is the upper range for his initial takeout double. With East/West vulnerable and holding three quick tricks (likely) North decides to pass. Two top hearts are cashed and a diamond is switched. A club switch from South sets up two club tricks. With a trump to come that results in plus 500 for North/South. It is true that North/South can make 6♣ but that contract is unlikely to be reached. 3NT is also a lucky make with the favourable location of the minor suit honours. East/West have done little wrong but if they concede 500 they will not score well.

Tip: When Partner opens and opponents overcall and support, a second double while primarily takeout will always show good values.

Board 26. All Vul. Dealer East

<p>♠ 7 ♥ K 9 7 2 ♦ A 5 4 3 ♣ J 9 5 4</p>	<p>♠ 10 8 3 ♥ Q J 8 4 3 ♦ 10 8 2 ♣ Q 2</p>
<p>♠ A Q 5 4 ♥ 10 5 ♦ K Q 9 7 6 ♣ 8 6</p>	<p>♠ K J 9 6 2 ♥ A 6 ♦ J ♣ A K 10 7 3</p>

The Bidding

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
2♦	Dbl	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♣	Pass	5♣
All Pass			

With his spade holding well placed West overcalls 2♦. The double from North is negative showing the other two suits. The diamond spots are poor and if North passes there is a danger that the auction could die as South has only 2♥. After the negative double South introduces his club suit. A jump in clubs is also a possibility. Over 3♣ North might go to the well once more and South will raise to the 5♣ game. The favourable trump position and a good guess in spades (spade to the nine) will see declarer make twelve tricks. North's diamond Ace is a valuable card and if Partner had opened a club he would surely bid twice. If South jumps to 4♣ over the initial double it will work in this hand but on another hand 3NT may be the best contract. If North/South get to a club game they will score well. The favourable lie of the cards allow declarer to make twelve tricks

Tip: Interfere in bidding if you can – the opponents may find it difficult to get to best spot.

Board 27. None Vul. Dealer South

<p>♠ 8 ♥ 5 4 ♦ A K J 10 8 3 2 ♣ Q 9 7</p>	<p>♠ 9 7 5 4 ♥ K 9 7 6 ♦ 6 4 ♣ K 6 3</p>
<p>♠ Q J 10 2 ♥ Q J 10 8 3 ♦ 5 ♣ J 8 2</p>	<p>♠ A K 6 3 ♥ A 2 ♦ Q 9 7 ♣ A 10 5 4</p>

The Bidding

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♦*	Pass
4NT*	Pass	6♦	All Pass

East has a difficult bid going forward over 2♦. He temporizes with a bid of 3♣. West emphasizes his diamond values by bidding the suit for the third time. 4♦ by East is Roman Key Card Blackwood (Minorwood) and the 4NT response shows two keycards and no trump Queen. East knows they are in possession of all the keycards but has no great source of tricks outside the trump suit and therefore settles for the small slam. The success of the slam depends on the play of the club suit. Missing just the King and Jack the double finesse is the correct and also the winning play. Good technique is rewarded.

Tip: Another example of using 4 of your agreed minor suit as Roman Key Card Blackwood (Minorwood) – it is a good tool to get into (and stay out of) minor suit slams.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West

	♠ 8 4		
	♥ Q 8 5 4 2		
	♦ J 8 5 4		
	♣ Q J		
♠ J 9 2		♠ A K 10	
♥ 10 7		♥ A 6	
♦ K 9 2		♦ A 10 6 3	
♣ A 9 5 3 2		♣ K 8 7 6	
	♠ Q 7 6 5 3		
	♥ K J 9 3		
	♦ Q 7		
	♣ 10 4		

The Bidding

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
3♣*	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The South hand is not worth a 1♠ overcall. It is a poor suit and unlikely to be the winning action. West's bid of 3♣ is weak showing 5 clubs. Most Partnerships in the modern game play 2♣ as inverted showing 10 plus points and at least five clubs. The 3♣ bid also denies a four-card major. East is worth a bid of 3NT with good all round values and stoppers in every suit. The spotlight now turns on South to find the best opening lead knowing that opponents have likely a running club suit. It is a difficult choice – but with such a poor spade suit, the heart suit offers more potential. If Partner has either the Queen or the Ace you will strike gold. After a heart lead declarer makes just ten tricks, whereas on a spade lead declarer will make twelve tricks. The moral is – lead your best suit. For a spade lead to be successful you need your Partner to have two honours in the suit. The heart lead only requires Partner to have one honour.

Tip: When opponents play in NT with a running minor lead your best suit.