Commentary
for the
IBU Autumn Simultaneous Pairs

Wednesday 4th November 2026

Dear Bridge Player,

Thank you very much for participating in the Irish Bridge Union (IBU) Simultaneous Pairs. This will be the last ever IBU Sims, as the IBU will no longer exist after the formation of a new 32-county Irish bridge body next January. Who knows, perhaps these commentaries will end up for sale on eBay as collectors' items!

The funds raised from these tournaments will be handed over to the new body by the IBU, so you are continuing to contribute to the development of Irish bridge, and your support is greatly appreciated.

We hope that you enjoyed the opportunity to test yourself against your fellow players across Ireland (and indeed overseas as well). As always, the deals, prepared randomly with no manual intervention whatsoever, provided plenty of tricky decisions. Thanks to the experts who have provided their commentary to help us to deal with the problems: Brian Senior (Monday), Enda Glynn (Tuesday), Paul Delaney (Wednesday), Enda Muphy (Thursday), and Karel De Raeymaeker (Friday).

Don't forget you check your standings in the overall results on the ECatsBridge Website. You'll find the daily commentaries there too.

We'll be back with the first ever Bridge Ireland Simultaneous Pairs in the first week of March. If your club hasn't played before and would like to sign up, please contact Head Office on 353-1-4929666.

Gordon Lessells,

President, Irish Bridge Union

Introduction from Paul Delaney

The recommended auctions are based on the following system weak no-trump 12-14 pts with transfers, 4 card majors, 3 Weak Twos, RKC 1430 with standard count. Where an opportunity arises I will highlight 5 card major/strong no-trump auctions which are increasingly standard among experienced players.

This commentary will also use the chess-style symbols ! and ? to denote good and bad plays or bids.

?	poor bid or play
??	blunder
!	excellent bid or play
!!	brilliant

Board 1	♠ Q6		Dealer N
	♥ 109532		Vul: None
	♦ KQ2		
	♣ 943		
♠ AK10732		♠ J94	
♥ Q		♥ KJ4	
♦ 74		♦ AJ653	
♣ J876		♣ K5	
	♠ 85		
	♥ A876		
	♦ 1098		
	♣ AQ102		

Weak No Trump

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

4♠ can be defeated with good defence.

East's weak 1NT opening ensures the contract is right sided. I expect the weak NT players will make 4♠ most of the time. If South leads a trump the contract makes easily as declarer establishes hearts to discard a diamond loser. If South leads ♦10 and North plays ♦Q declarer must duck this trick ! (to keep an entry for the later heart winners). Now North must guess to switch to a club otherwise the contract makes.

Strong No Trump

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

Now North on lead must choose between active (♦K) or passive defence (heart or club). The active lead of ♦K creates an immediate crisis for both declarer and the defenders. Declarer ducks ♦K ! A club switch now knocks 4♠ and anything else allows the contract to make.

North's two passive leads result in widely different outcomes – heart lead 4♠ -420 or club lead 4♠-1 +50

Winning Tip: On lead decide whether to lead actively or passively then choose the card.

Active (Attacking) Leads: Lead from honour sequences (like KQJ or QJT) or broken suits when opponents have a strong side suit. A singleton lead is also an attacking lead. The goal is to set up tricks for your side before declarer can discard losers.

Passive Leads: Lead from safe or unpromising holdings (like a trump lead, top-of-nothing or weak suits).The goal is to give declarer nothing and force them to open up the side suits.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 2	♠ Q10952	Dealer E
	♥ KJ3	Vul: N-S
	♦ 7	
	♣ Q843	

♠ 873		♠ 4
♥ 852		♥ A109764
♦ AJ95432		♦ Q6
♣		♣ J762
	♠ AKJ6	
	♥ Q	
	♦ K108	
	♣ AK1095	

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

* West raises partner's weak two opening to take away NS bidding space.

** South cue bids to show slam interest and North declines

Some NS pairs may bid to 5♠ especially if West jumps to 4♥ at their first bid.

East on lead may stumble upon a club lead ! which actually defeats 4♠ when West gets 2 ruffs.

East can still score well when they lead ♥A and West plays ♥2 if this is suit preference for a club switch. Now EW at least get 3 tricks for a better than average board.

Whenever declarer avoids the club ruff and gets time to draw trumps they will score 80% for 4♠+1 11 easy tricks.

Winning Tip: When your partner leads an Ace e.g. East's ♥A against 4♠ and must switch (there is a singleton or King in dummy) then the card West plays should be suit preference e.g. ♥2 for a club ruff !

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	5	-	-	3	-
S	5	-	-	4	4
E	-	2	1	-	-
W	-	2	1	-	-

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Board 3 ♠ A105 Dealer S
♥ 653 Vul: E-W
♦ A87632
♣ 10

♠ J2 ♠ Q987643
♥ 82 ♥ 4
♦ KJ105 ♦ Q9
♣ KQJ72 ♣ 843

♠ K
♥ AKQJ1097
♦ 4
♣ A965

West	North	East	South
			2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥*	Pass	3♠**
Pass	4♣**	Pass	4♦**
Pass	4♠**	Pass	4NT***
Pass	5♥	Pass	5NT****
Pass	6♥	Pass	7♥ !!
All Pass			

* North's 3♥ is a strong raise with some slam interest

** NS swap cue bids which are best played as showing A or K, singleton or void

*** 4NT is RKC 1430 and 5♥ in response shows 2 key cards and no Queen trumps

**** 5NT shows all 5 key cards and Queen trumps. In reply a good agreement for North is to bid specific kings.

So North's 6♥ bid denies ♣K so the earlier 4♣ cue bid is now revealed as shortage.

South can count 11 top tricks and two club ruffs in dummy will make 13 tricks. Bid the grand slam.

6♥ will score well about 70%. Very few pairs will reach the grand slam for a 90%+ score.

Brave EW pairs who overcall (West with 2NT for minors or East with 2♠) will prevent the cascade of cue bids and some NS pairs might even miss the small slam.

Winning Tip: Learn advanced Roman Key Card including the follow up trump Queen/Specific king asks.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	3	7	-	4
S	1	3	7	-	4
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

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Board 4 ♠ 102 Dealer W
♥ Q874 Vul: Both
♦ J83
♣ J975

♠ K763 ♠ 4
♥ 1052 ♥ K96
♦ Q954 ♦ AK102
♣ KQ ♣ 108432

♠ AQJ985
♥ AJ3
♦ 76
♣ A6

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl	2♠
3♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl*
All pass			

South will make 2♠ comfortably for a good score.

Aggressive West players may bid 3♦ which looks a good contract but will eventually go one down.

West will score very well for their enterprise 3♦-1 and 80% or so since -100 outscores -110.

This illustrates a key concept of winning pairs bidding. South must double West's 3♦ contract even though they are uncertain it will actually go down. If you believe you are making 2♠ you will get a terrible score if 3♦ makes or goes one down undoubled.

So South makes a cooperative double of 3♦ and consults partner. This is not a pure penalty double. If North prefers spades they can bid 3♠ or they can introduce a long suit of their own. If they have no clear bid, as here, they pass and take their chances on defence.

Winning Tip: If you want to win at pairs you must make more frequent penalty doubles. This is called a pairs double. You would never double a part-score like this at teams.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	1	2	1
S	-	-	1	2	1
E	1	2	-	-	-
W	1	2	-	-	-

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Board 5	♠ 103 ♥ 9852 ♦ QJ82 ♣ J109	Dealer N Vul: N-S
♠ AJ7 ♥ KQ1064 ♦ 95 ♣ A83		♠ 4 ♥ J3 ♦ AK1063 ♣ K7654
	♠ KQ98652 ♥ A7 ♦ 74 ♣ Q2	

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

West in 3NT receives the lead of ♠10 to the ♠Q and ♠A. 9 tricks are available in a straightforward manner but we are playing pairs and must be more ambitious. Simply cashing 9 tricks will score miserably perhaps 20%.

As declarer to begin with we knock out ♥A. Now South may decide not to continue spades (for fear of setting up declarer's ♠J) and instead play a heart back. We win this and cash out hearts as North under pressure discards a spade on the 5th heart. We realise that North is in control of both the minor suits. We run the ♦9 and now make 11 tricks.

Instead if South cashes the ♠K when in with ♥A they fare no better. We now have 10 tricks and once again when we cash our tricks North squirms. They protect both minor suits and must discard a club or diamond from ♦QJ8 and ♣J109 as the last heart is cashed. They are squeezed and forced to unguard a minor suit and we make 11 tricks in 3NT.

Winning Tip: As declarer at pairs you must seek overtricks aggressively. On many hands overtricks are much more important to your score than making the contract.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	5	5	5	1	5
W	5	5	5	1	5

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Board 6 ♠ J8 Dealer E
♥ AQJ6 Vul: E-W
♦ AK1094
♣ A9

♠ K103 ♠ AQ7
♥ K75 ♥ 103
♦ J3 ♦ 87652
♣ K6543 ♣ J82

♠ 96542
♥ 9842
♦ Q
♣ Q107

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♦	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West has an interesting decision when 1♦ is surprisingly passed around to them. West has only 3 cards in each major. Partner has some points and did not overcall in a major suit. Therefore it is highly likely that NS have a major suit fit.

A 2♣ bid is unattractive vulnerable with such a weak club suit. If West bids this allows North to rebid 2♥ and NS will now make 10 tricks in a heart contract for a top score.

So West does best to pass out 1♦ and defend. North makes 9 tricks +110 for a top score for EW.

Many expert players will respond to the 1♦ opening with the South hand. This is necessary especially for those playing 5-card majors – the rule is to respond light with major values.

Winning Tip: Listen to the bidding and as each bid is made try to visualise the other hands at the table. Revise this picture during the auction and later play.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 7	♠ K10 ♥ Q942 ♦ AJ ♣ KJ653	Dealer S Vul: Both
♠ AJ872 ♥ A6 ♦ Q942 ♣ A4		♠ Q543 ♥ J10875 ♦ 1065 ♣ 2
	♠ 96 ♥ K3 ♦ K873 ♣ Q10987	

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

* Help suit game try

** South judges well and with10+ clubs in both hands bids to the 4 level

Most Easts will raise to 2♠ although I recommend an immediate 3♠ ! raise (if played as a weak)

In this typical competitive auction West makes a natural game try showing at least 3 diamonds and asking partner to upgrade their hand if they can cover diamond losers.

East signs off and the spotlight turns to South. A good rule of competitive bidding is to bid to the same trick level as the number of your combined trumps. Here NS have 10 trumps and bid the 10 trick level in clubs.

On this deal both contracts make easily – EW 3♠ (9 trumps) and NS 4♣ (10 trumps).

Winning Tip: Bid to the level of your fit in competitive auctions. Watch your results improve.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 8 ♠ 976 Dealer W
♥ AJ74 Vul: None
♦ AKQ94
♣ 3

♠ KQ53 ♠ 104
♥ 832 ♥ KQ965
♦ 1032 ♦ J75
♣ KJ2 ♣ Q65

♠ AJ82
♥ 10
♦ 86
♣ A109874

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

* Negative double – takeout showing 6+ points and the other two suits

** West's 2♥ raise shows 5-9 points and 3 hearts. Holding 10+ points they would bid 2♦ (UCB Unassuming Cue Bid) showing a good raise.

South's sequence here is non forcing and shows a hand with long clubs and 4 spades.

If South were stronger they would bid 2♣ immediately over 1♥.

North guesses to play 3♦ which makes an amazing 12 tricks +170 with best play.

12 tricks are made in diamonds by ruffing out the clubs with the ♠A as a late entry. If EW decide to attack this spade entry with the ♠10 lead simply cover with the ♠J and West is helpless.

Winning Tip: Play the bid of a negative double followed by a new suit as natural and nonforcing.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	3	6	2	4	2
S	3	6	2	4	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

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Board 9 ♠ Q7 Dealer N
♥ AQJ62 Vul: E-W
♦ J10764
♣ 5

♠ 98 ♠ A106543
♥ K843 ♥ 107
♦ 83 ♦ Q9
♣ J9862 ♣ AK7

♠ KJ2
♥ 95
♦ AK52
♣ Q1043

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

* Many NS pairs will have a 2♥ opening available to show hearts and a minor, 5-10 pts

** Michaels showing 5+ hearts and a 5+ minor

*** Pass or correct to play in North's minor. South could try for game but elects to play a safe part-score.

On this deal 3NT and 5♦ are both lucky contracts (♦Q falls doubleton and ♥K onside)

Winning Tip: The Michaels cue bid is a valuable convention to show two-suited hands. You cue bid your opponents major suit opening to show 55 in the other major and a minor. You cue bid their minor suit opening to show both majors.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	5	4	1	4
S	1	5	4	1	4
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

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Board 10	♠ 3	Dealer E
	♥ KQ1064	Vul: Both
	♦ 107532	
	♣ AQ	
♠ QJ84		♠ AK1092
♥ AJ3		♥ 87
♦ 8		♦ KQ4
♣ KJ1082		♣ 765
	♠ 765	
	♥ 952	
	♦ AJ96	
	♣ 943	

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

4♠ fails against accurate defence when the ♣Q is badly placed. This should be a fairly average score.

North's decision to bid 2♥ rather than make a take out double is noteworthy. It is a close choice between X and 2♥. In such cases select the bid that is lead directing.

Winning Tip: Don't complain about your partner's poor leads. Improve their leads by making lead directing bids.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 11	♠ AKQ	Dealer S
	♥ J1095	Vul: None
	♦ A5	
	♣ AQ94	
♠ J9862		♠ 754
♥ K43		♥ Q87
♦ KQ7		♦ J9862
♣ K8		♣ J10
	♠ 103	
	♥ A62	
	♦ 1043	
	♣ 76532	

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

East leads the 4th best ♦6 and the contract seems doomed.

This is a personality test for declarer.

The pessimists will play ♣A and another and go one down when the diamonds are 5-3.

The optimists will cross to ♥A and finesse the club queen and make 10 tricks when the club suit runs for 5 tricks.

A good declarer will take the second diamond when East may follow with the ♦2 indicating a lead from a 5 card suit. Now these declarers will realise they are down unless the club finesse works and they will follow the optimist line.

Winning Tip: As declarer gather all information before making your key decisions.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	5	2	5	2	4
S	5	2	5	2	4
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

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Board 12 ♠ KJ84 Dealer W
♥ Q86 Vul: N-S
♦ AQ106
♣ 104

♠ Q9763 ♠ 1052
♥ A43 ♥ 1052
♦ K97 ♦ J532
♣ Q9 ♣ AK8

♠ A
♥ KJ97
♦ 84
♣ J76532

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

East leads the 4th best ♦2. Now declarer plays on hearts and has 7 tricks and can make 8 tricks if they pay attention to the diamond spots and notice that their ♦6 becomes a late winner.

1NT making scores below average and 1NT+1 should score 80%

Winning Tip: It is good practice as declarer to inspect each suit closely including the spot cards to fully assess your assets. Only then make a plan to play the hand.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 13	♠ KQ852		Dealer N
	♥ KJ2		Vul: Both
	♦ A		
	♣ A975		
♠ J6			♠ A104
♥ Q94			♥ 5
♦ KQJ862			♦ 1097543
♣ 106			♣ QJ4
	♠ 973		
	♥ A108763		
	♦		
	♣ K832		

4-card major auction

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♠
All pass			

North aggressively upgrades their hand to 18 pts to simplify the auction. This is justified by the strong controls with Aces/Kings. The heart fit is difficult to find.

5-card major auction

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

The 5-card major auction gives away no information about North's hand.

The 'expert lead' of the singleton heart by East while holding a trump control is unlucky on this hand. Declarer loses only 2 trumps for 11 tricks and a top score.

On a diamond lead declarer will make 10 tricks if they play to drop the ♥Q

Winning Tip: Despite the result on this board lead shortage to look for a ruff when you have a trump control.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	5	-	5	4	3
S	5	-	5	4	3
E	-	2	-	-	-
W	-	2	-	-	-

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Board 14 ♠ 653 Dealer E
♥ AJ92 Vul: None
♦ 65
♣ Q962

♠ KQ94 ♠ 87
♥ K54 ♥ 10763
♦ AK10 ♦ QJ932
♣ A105 ♣ K4

♠ AJ102
♥ Q8
♦ 874
♣ J873

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

* 2NT shows 18-19. You should agree this approach regardless of whether you are playing weak or strong no trump.

North leads ♣2 and now declarer does best to rise with ♣K ! Now play a spade immediately to locate the ♠A. South plays low as ♠K wins. Now declarer cashes their diamond suit and plays another spade. This makes 9 tricks comfortably with chances for a 10th trick if NS misdefend.

Winning Tip: Look for your extra tricks as early as possible even before you cash your long suit.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 15	♠ AKQJ1082		Dealer S
	♥ 8		Vul: N-S
	♦ 964		
	♣ AK		
♠ 94		♠ 7	
♥ KQ10954		♥ A7632	
♦ Q3		♦ KJ102	
♣ J72		♣ Q98	
	♠ 653		
	♥ J		
	♦ A875		
	♣ 106543		

West	North	East	South
			Pass
2♥	Dbl*	4♥	Pass
Pass	4♠	5♥	Dbl
All Pass			

* North decides they are too strong for an immediate 4♠ bid.

Once again the number of trumps provides guidance about how high to bid in a competitive auction.

East holds 5 hearts opposite partner's known 6-card suit. Therefore East realises that North's bidding is strong. So East takes the push to 5♥. 11 trumps held so bid to the 5-level in competition.

To extract the maximum on defence NS have a chance to show off their skills.

♣K ! lead followed by ♣A ! conventionally shows a doubleton and requests partner to use suit preference to show their entry.

On the ♣K South plays ♣3 (count) !

On the ♣A South plays ♣4 (suit preference) !

North plays ♦9 and South wins and gives North a club ruff.

Now finally we cash the spade for a hard earned 5♥x-3 +500.

Winning Tip: Play suit preference when giving a ruff.

Add in more suit preference agreements as your partnership develops

When your count in a suit is known now the card you next play is suit preference.

Another excellent area for the use of suit preference is using your small trumps.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 16	♠ Q9		Dealer W
	♥ 752		Vul: E-W
	♦ K8754		
	♣ A62		
♠ 107642		♠	
♥ Q43		♥ KJ8	
♦ A10		♦ QJ63	
♣ KQ3		♣ J109874	
	♠ AKJ853		
	♥ A1096		
	♦ 92		
	♣ 5		

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

Once East makes a delayed entry into the auction West will compete to 3♣ which makes 10 tricks in comfort. While 3♠ makes for NS, South has not confirmed a 6-card suit and NS may miss this contract.

Winning Tip: Active bidders win at pairs.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 17 ♠ A953 Dealer N
♥ 86 Vul: None
♦ AJ8
♣ J865

♠ Q42 ♠ J876
♥ AKJ95 ♥ 103
♦ K ♦ Q1042
♣ AQ109 ♣ 743

♠ K10
♥ Q742
♦ 97653
♣ K2

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	Pass	Pass*

* In the passout seat South uses the number of hearts they hold to decide whether to bid.

South has 4 hearts, so partner is short in hearts and took no action. Therefore West has a strong hand. Pass is easily the best bid.

Winning Tip: Rules for bidding in the pass out seat

Pass with length in opener's suit.

Bid with shortage in opener's suit.

'Borrow a King' from partner and you bid in 4th seat as second hand does.

	2nd hand	***4th hand***
Take out double	11+ pts	8+ pts
1NT overcall	15-17 pts	10-14 pts

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	1	-	2	2	2
W	1	-	2	2	2

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Board 18	♠ 42 ♥ Q963 ♦ KQ1042 ♣ J2	Dealer E Vul: N-S
♠ KQ7 ♥ J842 ♦ 973 ♣ A103		♠ 10983 ♥ K1075 ♦ A5 ♣ 974
	♠ AJ65 ♥ A ♦ J86 ♣ KQ865	

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

* If your hand is worth only one bid as responder bid your major suit first.

** A 1♠ rebid is the best technical bid. However the 1NT rebid is simpler and shows the values accurately.

Against South's 3NT a heart lead from West is devastating and defeats 3NT by 3 tricks.

♠K lead also defeats 3NT (by 2 tricks) once the defenders switch to hearts immediately they can.

Cautious Norths who only invite game will be rewarded on this board when the defenders find the heart switch.

Winning Tip: MAFIA is an acronym for Majors Always First in Answering. Bid your major suit even before a longer minor unless you have a strong hand.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 19

	♠ A108 ♥ 42 ♦ AQJ108 ♣ 632	Dealer S Vul: E-W
♠ K92 ♥ 1087 ♦ 963 ♣ Q987		♠ J7 ♥ KQ653 ♦ K754 ♣ 105
	♠ Q6543 ♥ AJ9 ♦ 2 ♣ AKJ4	

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

* 15-17 the alternative bid is 3♣ but South selects NT to protect against a heart lead in 3NT.

** Choice of game - 3♠ is forcing

West leads a passive small heart. This avoids leading from an honour into the strong hand shown by South.

4♠ is a tricky contract and many declarers will go down.

A club lead into ♣AKJ is a great start. Without a club lead one way to make the contract is to play East for ♦K and play a ruffing finesse. Diamond to Ace then ♦Q throwing a loser if it is not covered.

Winning Tip: The ruffing finesse is a valuable weapon for declarer.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	4	4	2	5	4
S	4	4	2	5	4
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

==========

Board 20	♠ AQ9753		Dealer W
	♥ K		Vul: Both
	♦ KJ9		
	♣ 854		
♠ KJ106		♠	
♥ 32		♥ 10764	
♦ A843		♦ Q7652	
♣ KQ2		♣ J1076	
	♠ 842		
	♥ AQJ985		
	♦ 10		
	♣ A93		

West	North	East	South
1NT*	2♠**	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

* 1NT is 12-14

** North bids a natural 2♠

This is yet another tricky 4♠ contract. To succeed declarer needs to postpone drawing trumps until the last possible moment.

On the ♣J lead declarer wins ♣A. Then ♥A unblocking ♥K. Then ♥Q to discard a club. Then a third heart as West ruffs and North overruffs. Now exit with a small diamond and ruff diamonds back to hand. At the very end finesse the ♠Q.

Winning Tip: Make a plan to play the whole hand before calling for a card from dummy.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 21 ♠ 10872 Dealer N
♥ K9 Vul: N-S
♦ KQ4
♣ K1085

♠ 5 ♠ Q963
♥ AQJ765 ♥ 83
♦ 1087 ♦ A532
♣ 763 ♣ AQ2

♠ AKJ4
♥ 1042
♦ J96
♣ J94

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

* a balancing takeout double

Sharp competitive bidding is rewarded tonight. Both EW 2♥ and NS 2♠ contracts are due to make. Who dares wins.

EW have 8 trumps in 2♥ and NS have 8 trumps in 2♠.

In fact the non vulnerable West hand should bid 3♥ over 2♠. 3♥-1 will salvage some matchpoints.

Winning Tip: At pairs it pays to compete aggressively for the part-score.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	-	-	2	-
S	1	-	-	2	-
E	-	-	2	-	-
W	-	-	2	-	-

==========

Board 22	♠ K10952		Dealer E
	♥ K3		Vul: E-W
	♦ J108		
	♣ A92		
♠ AQ		♠ J743	
♥ Q		♥ A10842	
♦ A9632		♦ 54	
♣ QJ1087		♣ 54	
	♠ 86		
	♥ J9765		
	♦ KQ7		
	♣ K63		

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

With a shapely hand West bids both minors and wins the auction.

The favourable breaks in the minors allow EW to make 2♣ for +90.

However 2♦ is defeated if the defenders play a third round of spades or hearts enabling a trump uppercut.

South would have made 1NT when the singleton ♥Q helps NS to 7 tricks.

Winning Tip: With a shapely hand strive to bid again as West does on this board.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	1	-	1
S	-	-	1	-	1
E	2	1	-	-	-
W	2	1	-	-	-

==========

Board 23

	♠ Q10974	Dealer S
	♥	Vul: Both
	♦ K10962	
	♣ 632	
♠ 853		♠ K
♥ AK3		♥ 7642
♦ Q75		♦ 843
♣ QJ84		♣ K10975
	♠ AJ62	
	♥ QJ10985	
	♦ AJ	
	♣ A	

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	4♣*
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

* 4♣ is a splinter bid and shows a raise to 4♠ with a shortage usually a singleton

NS make 12 or 13 tricks in 4♠ with all the cards lying well but no slam is biddable. An unlucky diamond from East will help declarer to 13 tricks when the ♠K is singleton and the lead picks up the diamond suit.

Winning Tip: Opening leads are one of the most difficult aspects of bridge. Study how successful your leads are. Consider introducing more passive leads.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	7	3	7	5
S	2	7	3	7	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

==========

Board 24	♠ AQ2		Dealer W
	♥ AJ		Vul: None
	♦ KJ1098		
	♣ Q95		
♠ KJ6			♠ 1087
♥ Q974			♥ 10653
♦ Q52			♦ 763
♣ J108			♣ K76
	♠ 9543		
	♥ K82		
	♦ A4		
	♣ A432		

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

* 18-19 This North hand is too strong to show as 17 points – Upgrade it to 18-19

A heart lead from East propels declarer to an easy 11 tricks when the diamonds and spades behave.

Winning Tip: Upgrade hands with extra strength and length (add extra points to your hand evaluation).

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	5	5	3	6	5
S	5	5	3	5	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

==========

Board 25 ♠ 7 Dealer N
♥ KQ1076 Vul: E-W
♦ Q85
♣ K1042

♠ J10954	♠ KQ82
♥ 93	♥ J54
♦ K	♦ J10432
♣ AJ983	♣ 7

♠ A63
♥ A82
♦ A976
♣ Q65

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

* 2♠ shows spades and a minor (Multi-Landy)

East leads their singleton club and gets an early ruff. East returns a diamond and South rises with the ♦A and makes 10 tricks.

Winning Tip: Multi-Landy is a good system to combat 1NT. The full system is

2♣ Both majors

2♦ single suited major (usually 6 hearts or 6 spades)

2♥ 5 hearts and a 4+ minor

2♠ 5 spades and a 4+ minor

2NT both minors 55

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 26 ♠ 642 Dealer E
♥ AJ83 Vul: Both
♦ 105
♣ J963

♠ Q10873 ♠ AJ9
♥ Q765 ♥ 942
♦ A ♦ QJ872
♣ A102 ♣ 74

♠ K5
♥ K10
♦ K9643
♣ KQ85

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

* 2♣ both majors (Multi-Landy)

** 2♦ shows equal length in the majors

On lead against a two-suited auction it is likely that declarer will be looking for ruffs in dummy. The best lead therefore is often a trump.

On this hand a spade lead ! and later repeated trump leads knock 2♠ when declarer gets no club ruff in dummy.

In contrast a club lead (?) assists declarer, and they now get their club ruff to make 2♠

Winning Tip: Consider a trump lead when the auction suggests declarer will need ruffs in the shorter trump hand.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 27 ♠ 62 Dealer S
♥ 10873 Vul: None
♦ J1094
♣ 763

	♠ 9	
♠ AQ10875		♠ KJ43
♥ K96		♥ 42
♦ 5		♦ 8632
♣ QJ8		♣ 1052
	♥ AQJ5	
	♦ AKQ7	
	♣ AK94	

West	North	East	South
			1♦
1♠	Pass	3♠*	Dbl
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

* weak raise 4+ spades

North is forced to bid and lands in a precarious 4♥ contract that is due to make 10 tricks on the normal spade lead.

There is an unlikely double dummy line to get 4 tricks for the defence.

East can knock 4♥ by leading a diamond ! When West wins the ♥K they underlead their ♠A !! to get a diamond ruff. The 4th trick arrives in the endgame on the 3rd round of clubs.

Perhaps West is unwise to allow NS to play in 4♥. After all they know partner has a weak hand with 4 card spade support so 4♠ is sensible and practical (the level of the fit again - 10 trumps so 10 tricks)

4♠x-1 is only -100 for a top score for EW

Winning Tip: An opening bid of 1♣ or 1♦ may contain a very strong hand (here 23 points !) that is otherwise unbiddable.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 28	♠ K82		Dealer W
	♥ QJ10965		Vul: N-S
	♦ 10654		
	♣		
♠ 754			♠ AQJ1063
♥ 73			♥ K2
♦ QJ2			♦ A97
♣ AQJ87			♣ 43
	♠ 9		
	♥ A84		
	♦ K83		
	♣ K109652		

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

There have been quite a few opportunities to give ruffs on the opening lead tonight. Here is another. A club lead by South (!!) knocks 4♠ by 2 tricks when North gets 2 club ruffs. The first ruff is taken with ♠8 and the second ruff with ♠2

Winning Tip: An excellent partnership agreement is to show count in trumps in reverse.

Low High	two or 4 trumps
High Low	3 trumps

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	1	4	-	-
S	-	1	3	-	-
E	3	-	-	2	5
W	2	-	-	2	1

==========