

Bill Hughes Simultaneous Pairs

<p>Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 4 2 ♥ Q 10 ♦ 9 7 3 ♣ K Q J 9 8 4</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A K Q 9 3</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ J 10 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ A 8 7 5 4</td> <td>♥ K 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ 8 5</td> <td>♦ Q J 10 6 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ 10</td> <td>♣ A 7 3</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 8 7 6 ♥ J 9 3 2 ♦ A K 4 ♣ 6 5 2</p>	♠ A K Q 9 3	♠ J 10 5	♥ A 8 7 5 4	♥ K 6	♦ 8 5	♦ Q J 10 6 2	♣ 10	♣ A 7 3	<p>Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 8 6 ♥ Q 9 7 3 ♦ A J 6 5 ♣ A 10 8</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A K 10 7</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ Q J 5 4 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ J</td> <td>♥ 10 8 6 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ 10 8 2</td> <td>♦ K 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ K Q 9 7 5</td> <td>♣ J 6</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 9 3 ♥ A K 5 2 ♦ Q 9 4 3 ♣ 4 3 2</p>	♠ A K 10 7	♠ Q J 5 4 2	♥ J	♥ 10 8 6 4	♦ 10 8 2	♦ K 7	♣ K Q 9 7 5	♣ J 6
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<p>4♠ makes easily enough for E/W with 11 tricks available on the lie by setting up either red suit. E/W ought to reach game whether or not East elects to opening the bidding (this hand is better than many 12-counts). If North throws a spanner in the works by opening 3♣, West should protect with 4♣ to show a 2-suiter (it's useful to play 4♦ here as diamonds and a major, to enable 4♣ to be specifically both majors).</p>	<p>E/W can make ten tricks in spades with the friendly lie of the cards, but we'd expect most pairs to stop in a partscore, perhaps starting (uncontested) P-1♣-1♠-2♠. If South finds a protective double of 2♠, it seems normal for West to compete to 3♠ (on the basis that at least one side has a 9-card major suit fit). Any pairs finding the winning action of doubling 3♥ or 3♦ will receive most of the matchpoints.</p>																
<p>Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 6 5 ♥ A J 5 ♦ K J 10 7 5 ♣ Q 6 5</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A 10 8</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ Q 9 7 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ K Q 8</td> <td>♥ 10 7 4 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ 9 6 3 2</td> <td>♦ 8 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ K 9 7</td> <td>♣ A J 2</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ K J 4 3 ♥ 9 6 3 ♦ A Q ♣ 10 8 4 3</p>	♠ A 10 8	♠ Q 9 7 2	♥ K Q 8	♥ 10 7 4 2	♦ 9 6 3 2	♦ 8 4	♣ K 9 7	♣ A J 2	<p>Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ J 9 ♥ Q J 9 4 ♦ Q 10 8 2 ♣ K 8 2</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A K Q 6</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ 10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ 10 5 3</td> <td>♥ A K 8 6 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ J 3</td> <td>♦ 6 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ J 7 5 3</td> <td>♣ A Q 10 6 4</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 8 7 5 4 3 2 ♥ 7 ♦ A K 9 7 4 ♣ 9</p>	♠ A K Q 6	♠ 10	♥ 10 5 3	♥ A K 8 6 2	♦ J 3	♦ 6 5	♣ J 7 5 3	♣ A Q 10 6 4
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<p>The final contract is likely to be 1NT, but the declaring side will be determined by whether or not North opens the bidding. If North is declarer, East has a choice of opening leads between the majors, but is more likely to choose a heart, particularly if South has bid spades, giving scope for 8 tricks if North gets the spade guess right. The overtrick will be huge, beating even those pairs defending 1NT-2 by West (though more Wests will garner six tricks than five).</p>	<p>South's spade suit is too weak for a pre-emptive overcall, but a two-suited overcall such as a Michaels cue bid would be appropriate. West should be nervous about showing a good heart raise with all his points in spades – partners have a habit of competing on the basis of spade shortage in this auction. A more prudent action would be to double 2♥ to show general values. Although neither player can double 3♦, this starts allows E/W to stop in 3♥.</p>																

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<p>Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ Q J 8 7 6 ♥ A 10 6 ♦ K Q 4 2 ♣ 8</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ K 2</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A 9 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ Q 7</td> <td>♥ J 4 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ 10 8 5</td> <td>♦ J 7 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ K Q J 10 3 2</td> <td>♣ 9 7 6 5</td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ 10 5 3 ♥ K 9 8 5 3 ♦ A 9 3 ♣ A 4</p> </div>	♠ K 2	♠ A 9 4	♥ Q 7	♥ J 4 2	♦ 10 8 5	♦ J 7 6	♣ K Q J 10 3 2	♣ 9 7 6 5	<p>Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ K Q J 8 ♥ J 10 8 ♦ A 10 6 ♣ A Q 8</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ 10 9 4 2</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ —</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ A 5</td> <td>♥ K Q 7 4 3 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ K Q 9 3 2</td> <td>♦ J 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ 10 9</td> <td>♣ K 6 5 4 2</td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ A 7 6 5 3 ♥ 9 6 ♦ 8 5 4 ♣ J 7 3</p> </div>	♠ 10 9 4 2	♠ —	♥ A 5	♥ K Q 7 4 3 2	♦ K Q 9 3 2	♦ J 7	♣ 10 9	♣ K 6 5 4 2
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<p>South has a borderline opening bid and the aggressive action works this time, steering N/S to four of a major, which is likely to make. Viewing the heart suit in isolation a second round finesse guards against a 4-1 break. However, this would not be such a safe play in 4♥ as it enables the defence to organise a spade ruff and defeat the contract when the hearts are 3-2 all along. After a club lead, declarer can also see he is likely to get forced off anyway if hearts are 4-1.</p>	<p>If North opens a strong NT, East will overcall 2♥ and compete to 3♣ over South's likely 2♠. North should take the push to 3♠, but this contract has five losers. If North opens 1♣ or 1♠, N/S are still likely to alight in 3♠. It is always possible for E/W to make ten tricks in hearts, with both minors, it is hard to find a sensible sequence to 4♥. It is more likely that E/W get a good score from N/S over-bidding to 4♠ and going two off (although we can't see anyone doubling).</p>																
<p>Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ A Q J 10 7 2 ♥ 9 8 ♦ Q 9 8 2 ♣ 4</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ K 8 4</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ 9 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ Q J 10 5 3</td> <td>♥ 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ 10 4 3</td> <td>♦ A K 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ K 9</td> <td>♣ A Q J 10 8 5 3</td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ 6 3 ♥ A K 7 4 2 ♦ J 7 6 ♣ 7 6 2</p> </div>	♠ K 8 4	♠ 9 5	♥ Q J 10 5 3	♥ 6	♦ 10 4 3	♦ A K 5	♣ K 9	♣ A Q J 10 8 5 3	<p>Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ 6 ♥ A K Q ♦ A K J 10 8 5 ♣ J 10 8</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ J 7 5</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ K Q 9 8 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ 10 9 7 2</td> <td>♥ J 4 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ Q 7 4 3 2</td> <td>♦ —</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ 4</td> <td>♣ A Q 9 5 3</td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ A 10 4 2 ♥ 8 6 5 ♦ 9 6 ♣ K 7 6 2</p> </div>	♠ J 7 5	♠ K Q 9 8 3	♥ 10 9 7 2	♥ J 4 3	♦ Q 7 4 3 2	♦ —	♣ 4	♣ A Q 9 5 3
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<p>If North opens 1♠ or 2♠ in third seat, East is likely to buy the contract in 3♣ making the obvious nine tricks. If North finds the more aggressive 3♠ opening this gives East a problem. A natural 4♣ will be chosen where available but some pairs play 4♣ as 'Non Leaping Michaels' giving them an unenviable choice between Pass, 5♣ and 3NT (risky without a stop, but it might make in practice – will North find a heart switch after a spade lead to the ten?). In fact, going minus in 4♣ will probably not score well.</p>	<p>After P-1♦-1♠-1NT-P, North has an interesting choice of call. The practical bid is 3NT, but the scientific alternative is to cue bid the opponents' suit to indicate shortage and investigate alternative strains. Either way South will be declarer in 3NT. The best way to tackle the diamond suit is to run the nine on the first round but South has a decision on the first round of spades: here he needs to take the first round, then the spade suit will be blocked later so South can afford to knock out ♦Q or lead towards ♣K.</p>																

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<p>Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>♠ Q 9 6 5 ♥ J 4 2 ♦ K Q 10 7 ♣ 9 2</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A 7 3 2</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ K 8 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ A 8 6 5</td> <td>♥ K 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ 5</td> <td>♦ 9 6 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ K 10 8 3</td> <td>♣ A J 7 5 4</td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ J 10 ♥ Q 10 9 3 ♦ A J 8 4 3 ♣ Q 6</p> </div>	♠ A 7 3 2	♠ K 8 4	♥ A 8 6 5	♥ K 7	♦ 5	♦ 9 6 2	♣ K 10 8 3	♣ A J 7 5 4	<p>Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>♠ 6 5 ♥ A 8 6 4 2 ♦ Q J 5 ♣ K 9 8</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ J 10</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A Q 7 4 3 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ 10 3</td> <td>♥ K J 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ A K 9 8 4</td> <td>♦ 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ Q 10 7 5</td> <td>♣ A 6 3</td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ K 9 8 ♥ Q 9 7 ♦ 10 7 6 3 ♣ J 4 2</p> </div>	♠ J 10	♠ A Q 7 4 3 2	♥ 10 3	♥ K J 5	♦ A K 9 8 4	♦ 2	♣ Q 10 7 5	♣ A 6 3
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<p>At some tables this hand will be passed out because nobody has 12 HCP, but an inspection of all four hands shows why it is wrong to rely purely on high card points: E/W can make eleven tricks in clubs. If East opens, the auction might go P-1♣-1♦-dbl-3♦-P-P-dbl-P-4♣-P-5♣. South might choose to open 1♦ but if not West should open in fourth seat: with support for both majors he should expect his side usually to win the part score battle. Any N/S pairs who buy the hand in diamonds will find they have a lot of losers.</p>	<p>E/W might stop in a spade partscore (if East makes a simple 2♠ rebid), although at a different form of scoring they would want to be in game. On a diamond lead, declarer has to guess which of the many available finesses to take. The winning line is to discard a heart on the second diamond, draw trumps (with a losing finesse) and then guess both clubs and hearts correctly. Some declarers might be treated to an aggressive heart or club lead which makes the play much easier.</p>																
<p>Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>♠ K 9 7 4 2 ♥ Q J ♦ 8 6 ♣ A Q J 6</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A J</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ Q 10 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ 10 9 5 2</td> <td>♥ K 8 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ Q 4 2</td> <td>♦ A J 7 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ 9 8 5 4</td> <td>♣ K 10 2</td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ 8 6 5 ♥ A 7 4 3 ♦ K 10 9 5 ♣ 7 3</p> </div>	♠ A J	♠ Q 10 3	♥ 10 9 5 2	♥ K 8 6	♦ Q 4 2	♦ A J 7 3	♣ 9 8 5 4	♣ K 10 2	<p>Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>♠ Q 7 ♥ A 7 6 3 ♦ 9 7 3 2 ♣ A Q J</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ K J 10 5 2</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A 6 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ Q 4</td> <td>♥ K 9 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ Q J 4</td> <td>♦ A K 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ 6 4 3</td> <td>♣ 10 9 7 5</td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ 9 8 4 ♥ J 10 8 2 ♦ 10 8 6 ♣ K 8 2</p> </div>	♠ K J 10 5 2	♠ A 6 3	♥ Q 4	♥ K 9 5	♦ Q J 4	♦ A K 5	♣ 6 4 3	♣ 10 9 7 5
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<p>N/S should end in 2♠ via the auction 1♠ – 2♠ or 1♠-1NT-2♣-2♠. East has quite a few high cards but the wrong shape and definitely the wrong vulnerability to act. With both red suit top cards onside, it takes a trump lead to hold declarer to eight tricks; East can play a 3rd round of trumps later, preventing a club ruff. East has a truly horrible lead problem with every suit extremely dangerous so perhaps a trump is possible to find.</p>	<p>After a weak 1NT opening, West will transfer to spades and the normal line will make eight tricks (Ace of spades then low to the jack picks up Qx, Qxx and Qxxx with South while King then run the Jack can't pick up Qxxx with North). Playing strong NT, West might well choose to pass the 1NT rebid after 1♣-1♠-1NT with such 'soft' cards (queens and jacks) and maximum HCP in context. That would be a great board if spades played for five tricks, but here on a heart lead it's not a success.</p>																

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<p>Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 2 ♥ A K Q ♦ K J 7 6 3 ♣ K Q J 9</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ K 8 5</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ 9 8 7 2</td> <td>♥ J 10 6 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ A 10 9</td> <td>♦ Q 5 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ 8 7 2</td> <td>♣ A 10 6 5 4</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ A Q J 10 9 6 4 3 ♥ 4 3 ♦ 8 2 ♣ 3</p>	♠ K 8 5	♠ 7	♥ 9 8 7 2	♥ J 10 6 5	♦ A 10 9	♦ Q 5 4	♣ 8 7 2	♣ A 10 6 5 4	<p>Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 6 ♥ Q 8 7 ♦ A K 6 2 ♣ A 8 7 6 4</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A 10 7 2</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ Q 8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ A 6</td> <td>♥ J 10 9 3 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ J 7 5 3</td> <td>♦ Q 8 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ J 9 2</td> <td>♣ K Q 5</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ K J 9 5 4 3 ♥ K 5 4 ♦ 10 9 ♣ 10 3</p>	♠ A 10 7 2	♠ Q 8	♥ A 6	♥ J 10 9 3 2	♦ J 7 5 3	♦ Q 8 4	♣ J 9 2	♣ K Q 5
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<p>After South's 4♠ opening North has to be disciplined and pass. You need more aces to think of looking for slam, not just high cards. It's often right to lead an ace against a high-level pre-empt, because it can be a good idea to cash tricks quickly and honours are more likely to be in dummy. Here a passive-looking heart lead gives declarer the chance to make eleven tricks by discarding the club and guessing diamonds; the ace of diamonds lead will hold it to 10 as the club switch is now obvious.</p>	<p>A minimum 1-3-4-5 shape can be awkward to bid as after 1♣-1♠ there is no good rebid. 2♣ is the systemic Acol rebid, but with such a weak suit that risks playing in a poor fit. For that reason, some people like to open 1♦ planning to rebid 2♣ which also has problems. Playing a strong 1NT opening, there is something to be said for rebidding 1NT. Whatever the auction, the challenge will be to make 2♠, which is possible by leading towards ♥Q and subsequently ducking out the doubleton ♥A.</p>																
<p>Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ J 9 7 5 ♥ Q 5 ♦ J 9 3 ♣ Q 10 8 5</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ K Q 10 6</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ 8 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ K 8 2</td> <td>♥ A J 9 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ Q 7 6</td> <td>♦ A 10 8 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ 4 3 2</td> <td>♣ J 7 6</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ A 4 3 ♥ 10 7 6 3 ♦ K 5 4 ♣ A K 9</p>	♠ K Q 10 6	♠ 8 2	♥ K 8 2	♥ A J 9 4	♦ Q 7 6	♦ A 10 8 2	♣ 4 3 2	♣ J 7 6	<p>Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 5 3 ♥ 8 3 ♦ 5 4 3 ♣ A K Q 9 5 4</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ K 6</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A Q J 9 7 4 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ 7 6 5 4 2</td> <td>♥ J 10 9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ A 10 8 7 6</td> <td>♦ Q</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ 6</td> <td>♣ 8 3</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 10 8 ♥ A K Q ♦ K J 9 2 ♣ J 10 7 2</p>	♠ K 6	♠ A Q J 9 7 4 2	♥ 7 6 5 4 2	♥ J 10 9	♦ A 10 8 7 6	♦ Q	♣ 6	♣ 8 3
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<p>A delicate 1NT contract for South. A weak (or 14-16) 1NT opening will work well, as West is likely to lead a disastrous top spade, giving eight tricks. A diamond lead is best for the defence, setting up their seventh trick. It's also beatable on a tempting passive club lead, although the defence will need to switch to diamonds: a heart lead or switch risks giving declarer his seventh trick with the 10 coming into the game.</p>	<p>Even vulnerable against not, East should open 3♠ in third seat. If South finds an aggressive double, the auction will not go well as after 4♠ from West, North will bid 5♣ and the defence can take the first five tricks including two diamond ruffs. North should probably open in second seat, either 1♣ or 3♣ (or, best, a Precision-style 2♣ if available) but the matchpoints will go to those N/S pairs who defend a spade contract going off, particularly if they find the trump lead or trick two switch.</p>																

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<p>Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 10 4 ♥ Q 5 3 ♦ A K J 10 5 2 ♣ 8 6</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A 7 2</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ Q 8 6 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ A 7 6 2</td> <td>♥ K J 8 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ 7 6 3</td> <td>♦ 8 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ J 10 4</td> <td>♣ 9 7 2</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ K J 9 3 ♥ 10 9 ♦ Q 9 ♣ A K Q 5 3</p>	♠ A 7 2	♠ Q 8 6 5	♥ A 7 6 2	♥ K J 8 4	♦ 7 6 3	♦ 8 4	♣ J 10 4	♣ 9 7 2	<p>Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 8 ♥ K J 9 8 4 ♦ Q J 9 8 3 ♣ 10 4</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ Q 10 9 3 2</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ 7 6 5 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ A Q 2</td> <td>♥ 10 6 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ A 10 4</td> <td>♦ 6 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ K 5</td> <td>♣ Q J 6 2</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ A K J ♥ 7 5 ♦ K 7 2 ♣ A 9 8 7 3</p>	♠ Q 10 9 3 2	♠ 7 6 5 4	♥ A Q 2	♥ 10 6 3	♦ A 10 4	♦ 6 5	♣ K 5	♣ Q J 6 2
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♥ A Q 2	♥ 10 6 3																
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♣ K 5	♣ Q J 6 2																
<p>N/S are likely to go minus here, as it's probably hard to avoid 3NT (or maybe 5♦) if North opens 1♦. The North hand is worth opening at the 1-level, even if that isn't a success on this occasion. While an agricultural jump to 3NT after 1♦-2♣-2♦ might be successful if West opts to go for a passive club lead (trying to restrict overtricks), a more scientific auction will pinpoint the heart lead.</p>	<p>With South and West both having strong NTs, this will turn into a part-score battle. With North holding most of the outstanding points, N/S are the pair that can make 3NT (by establishing one of the red suits and using an entry in the other red suit). They will not get there under their own steam as the North hand looks more suitable for suit play. However, 1♣-1♠-dbl and a pre-emptive raise to 3♠ by East could tempt South into 3NT.</p>																
<p>Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 7 ♥ A Q J 10 9 5 ♦ 7 3 ♣ A 9 7 2</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ 9</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A K Q J 6 5 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ 8 6 4 2</td> <td>♥ 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ A Q 5</td> <td>♦ 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ J 10 8 6 5</td> <td>♣ K Q 4 3</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 10 8 4 2 ♥ K 3 ♦ K J 10 9 8 6 4 ♣ —</p>	♠ 9	♠ A K Q J 6 5 3	♥ 8 6 4 2	♥ 7	♦ A Q 5	♦ 2	♣ J 10 8 6 5	♣ K Q 4 3	<p>Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ K J 10 ♥ A J 9 2 ♦ A 10 3 ♣ 7 3 2</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A 9 7 6 4 3</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ 8 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ 8 4</td> <td>♥ Q 7 6 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ 6 4</td> <td>♦ K Q J 5 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ K 9 4</td> <td>♣ A Q</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q 2 ♥ K 10 5 ♦ 9 8 7 ♣ J 10 8 6 5</p>	♠ A 9 7 6 4 3	♠ 8 5	♥ 8 4	♥ Q 7 6 3	♦ 6 4	♦ K Q J 5 2	♣ K 9 4	♣ A Q
♠ 9	♠ A K Q J 6 5 3																
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♣ J 10 8 6 5	♣ K Q 4 3																
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♦ 6 4	♦ K Q J 5 2																
♣ K 9 4	♣ A Q																
<p>If the auction starts 1♥-4♠, it looks right for South to compete to 5♦. It is unusual for a pre-empter to act again, but East has too much playing strength to pass and has to choose between an action double (giving partner the option to defend or bid on) or the unilateral 5♠ (reasonable enough with eleven cards in two suits and a self-supporting trump suit). Double is right in theory but perhaps not in practice. Defending 5♠, many Norths will overtake ♥K lead and continue the suit. On deeper analysis, he should conclude that East must have a club side suit and so find ♣A switch.</p>	<p>If East/West play strong NT, East should rebid 1NT after 1♦-1♠, a far better description of the hand than rebidding diamonds and potentially right-siding NT by protecting the club tenace. If East/West play weak NT, it is better to open 1NT for the same reason. On this deal, all roads should lead to 2♠ but East or West could be declarer depending on the opening bid. If North leads a club at trick one and dummy wins with the ace, an attitude signal would be helpful for the defence: North needs to know what to play on winning ♦A. If East declares, South will lead ♣J at trick 1 and now the heart switch is clearer.</p>																

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<p>Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>♠ K Q 7 6 3 2 ♥ J 3 ♦ K 2 ♣ 10 4 3</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A 10 9 8 5</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ A 5</td> <td>♥ K 9 8 7 4 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ A 6 5 4</td> <td>♦ 10 9 8 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ A 6</td> <td>♣ 8 2</td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>♠ J ♥ Q 10 6 ♦ Q J 3 ♣ K Q J 9 7 5</p> </div>	♠ A 10 9 8 5	♠ 4	♥ A 5	♥ K 9 8 7 4 2	♦ A 6 5 4	♦ 10 9 8 7	♣ A 6	♣ 8 2	<p>Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>♠ K 7 5 ♥ A 10 9 6 2 ♦ A 3 ♣ 10 4 3</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ —</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A J 10 9 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ J 7 5 4</td> <td>♥ 8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ J 6 4 2</td> <td>♦ K 10 8 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ K 9 8 5 2</td> <td>♣ A J 7</td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>♠ Q 8 6 4 3 ♥ K Q 3 ♦ Q 9 7 ♣ Q 6</p> </div>	♠ —	♠ A J 10 9 2	♥ J 7 5 4	♥ 8	♦ J 6 4 2	♦ K 10 8 5	♣ K 9 8 5 2	♣ A J 7
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♥ A 5	♥ K 9 8 7 4 2																
♦ A 6 5 4	♦ 10 9 8 7																
♣ A 6	♣ 8 2																
♠ —	♠ A J 10 9 2																
♥ J 7 5 4	♥ 8																
♦ J 6 4 2	♦ K 10 8 5																
♣ K 9 8 5 2	♣ A J 7																
<p>A difficult hand to bid: the auction may start 1♣ 1♠ P P dbl P P 2♥? This could end the auction, but if South views to compete with 3♣ now (giving up on a penalty) E/W will do well do get to the making 3♥ contract. If instead of a double, South protects with 2♣ it will be easier for E/W to bid, but they may end up in diamonds making 10 tricks (+130) instead of hearts making 9 (+140).</p>	<p>After West's pass, North is worth an opening bid with AAK and good heart pips. Whether that is 1♥ or 1NT, E/W will eventually find a minor suit fit. At game all, the challenge for both sides is not to get too high as in practice eight tricks are likely to be the limit for N/S in hearts or E/W in either minor. Any N/S who find their spade fit (perhaps after 1NT from North and an artificial overcall) will regret it.</p>																
<p>Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>♠ K 10 7 5 4 ♥ J 3 ♦ 9 3 ♣ K 9 6 2</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ Q J 9 2</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ 8 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ 9 6</td> <td>♥ K Q 10 7 5 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ 8 7 4</td> <td>♦ A K J 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ Q 10 5 3</td> <td>♣ A</td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>♠ A 3 ♥ A 8 4 ♦ Q 10 5 2 ♣ J 8 7 4</p> </div>	♠ Q J 9 2	♠ 8 6	♥ 9 6	♥ K Q 10 7 5 2	♦ 8 7 4	♦ A K J 6	♣ Q 10 5 3	♣ A	<p>Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>♠ A 8 7 6 ♥ 5 4 2 ♦ J 5 2 ♣ A J 8</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ 10 9</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ K 5 4 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ K J 7 6</td> <td>♥ 10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ Q 8 3</td> <td>♦ K 10 9 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ K 9 5 2</td> <td>♣ Q 7 4 3</td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>♠ Q J 2 ♥ A Q 9 8 3 ♦ A 6 4 ♣ 10 6</p> </div>	♠ 10 9	♠ K 5 4 3	♥ K J 7 6	♥ 10	♦ Q 8 3	♦ K 10 9 7	♣ K 9 5 2	♣ Q 7 4 3
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♥ K J 7 6	♥ 10																
♦ Q 8 3	♦ K 10 9 7																
♣ K 9 5 2	♣ Q 7 4 3																
<p>South's hand is much worse than North's on Board 20 but many will open it anyway – even at game all. East has easily the best hand but without a diamond lead can't do better than 8 tricks in hearts or the same in NT. If South does open N/S are likely to get to 2♠ which sharp defence should beat by two for +200 (or even +500 if East gets to make a take-out double). After an auction starting 1NT P 2♥ (transfer), against a weak NT it's probably best to play double by the next hand as strong rather than hearts, but either treatment will work here.</p>	<p>Unless West opens a mini 1NT, South is likely to get to open in fourth seat. A 1NT opening may end the auction; a five-card 1♥ will get a raise from North and possibly (at love all!) a take-out double from East. The matchpoints will go to whichever side manages a plus score. 2♥ looks to be one off as long as E/W attack the minors before South gets the spades going (although they must attack diamonds before clubs), but it's easy to see eight tricks slipping through. If E/W compete to 3♣ that is a fairly comfortable one off assuming that declarer plays North for ♦J.</p>																

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<p>Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>♠ A K 8 5 ♥ Q J 6 3 ♦ Q ♣ A Q 5 4</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>♠ 7 4 3 2 ♥ K 4 2 ♦ J 10 9 3 ♣ 10 8</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>♠ Q J 6 ♥ 9 5 ♦ A K 8 5 ♣ K 7 6 2</p> </td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ 10 9 ♥ A 10 8 7 ♦ 7 6 4 2 ♣ J 9 3</p> </div>	<p>♠ 7 4 3 2 ♥ K 4 2 ♦ J 10 9 3 ♣ 10 8</p>	<p>♠ Q J 6 ♥ 9 5 ♦ A K 8 5 ♣ K 7 6 2</p>	<p>Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>♠ A K 10 9 ♥ 10 9 8 ♦ 7 4 ♣ K Q 9 6</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>♠ Q 4 ♥ A 6 2 ♦ A 10 6 5 3 ♣ J 10 5</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>♠ J 8 6 3 2 ♥ K Q J 5 3 ♦ 9 8 ♣ 7</p> </td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ 7 5 ♥ 7 4 ♦ K Q J 2 ♣ A 8 4 3 2</p> </div>	<p>♠ Q 4 ♥ A 6 2 ♦ A 10 6 5 3 ♣ J 10 5</p>	<p>♠ J 8 6 3 2 ♥ K Q J 5 3 ♦ 9 8 ♣ 7</p>
<p>♠ 7 4 3 2 ♥ K 4 2 ♦ J 10 9 3 ♣ 10 8</p>	<p>♠ Q J 6 ♥ 9 5 ♦ A K 8 5 ♣ K 7 6 2</p>				
<p>♠ Q 4 ♥ A 6 2 ♦ A 10 6 5 3 ♣ J 10 5</p>	<p>♠ J 8 6 3 2 ♥ K Q J 5 3 ♦ 9 8 ♣ 7</p>				
<p>How should South respond to a 1♣ opening? The traditional Acol action is to pass, but there are several advantages in responding: you might steal the declarership when it's really the opponents' hand, it helps your side to compete the part-score, or your side could be making 4♥. On this occasion, 4♥ is a decent contract N/S and can only be defeated if West finds an opening club lead to set up a ruff. In practice, it seems natural for West (or East) to lead a top diamond severing the defensive communications, and now careful play will lead to ten tricks.</p>	<p>A partscore battle. If North opens 1♣ or 1NT in fourth seat, then East should show both majors. If West opens then after P-P-1♦-dbl-1♠, South has to choose between 1NT, 2NT and 3♣. East should now compete to 3♥. If South chose to bid clubs rather than NT then that should make it possible for North to compete to 4♣, which cannot be defeated. If N/S choose to defend 3♥, they need to double it to obtain a decent matchpoint score as East is likely to be able to scramble eight tricks and a score of +100 will not be enough to beat the +130 available in clubs.</p>				
<p>Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>♠ K 6 4 2 ♥ 3 2 ♦ J 8 ♣ A K Q 10 3</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>♠ 9 7 5 ♥ 9 ♦ A K Q 7 2 ♣ 9 8 6 4</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>♠ Q J 10 3 ♥ K Q 10 4 ♦ 6 5 ♣ J 7 2</p> </td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ A 8 ♥ A J 8 7 6 5 ♦ 10 9 4 3 ♣ 5</p> </div>	<p>♠ 9 7 5 ♥ 9 ♦ A K Q 7 2 ♣ 9 8 6 4</p>	<p>♠ Q J 10 3 ♥ K Q 10 4 ♦ 6 5 ♣ J 7 2</p>	<p>Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>♠ 9 5 3 ♥ 10 4 ♦ A 10 5 2 ♣ A J 7 3</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>♠ K 4 ♥ 9 8 6 ♦ K Q J 4 3 ♣ 10 6 5</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>♠ A Q J 8 7 6 ♥ A 7 3 ♦ 9 ♣ K Q 9</p> </td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>♠ 10 2 ♥ K Q J 5 2 ♦ 8 7 6 ♣ 8 4 2</p> </div>	<p>♠ K 4 ♥ 9 8 6 ♦ K Q J 4 3 ♣ 10 6 5</p>	<p>♠ A Q J 8 7 6 ♥ A 7 3 ♦ 9 ♣ K Q 9</p>
<p>♠ 9 7 5 ♥ 9 ♦ A K Q 7 2 ♣ 9 8 6 4</p>	<p>♠ Q J 10 3 ♥ K Q 10 4 ♦ 6 5 ♣ J 7 2</p>				
<p>♠ K 4 ♥ 9 8 6 ♦ K Q J 4 3 ♣ 10 6 5</p>	<p>♠ A Q J 8 7 6 ♥ A 7 3 ♦ 9 ♣ K Q 9</p>				
<p>At many tables, South will buy the contract in 2♥, perhaps after a 2♦ overcall from West. The matchpoint interest centres on whether declarer can find a ninth trick. The overtrick can be prevented if West leads out three top diamonds (a plausible defence if East has shown an even number after failing to raise diamonds) as dummy can be over-ruffed cheaply and then East can split when dummy's last trump is led. Declarer has too many trumps for a trump coup.</p>	<p>3NT looks like the best contract E/W but is not so easy to reach. Playing natural methods, East will usually rebid 3♠ over a 1NT or 2♦ response and then West will be inclined to raise to 4♠ with two unstopped suits. A 2NT rebid by East would work well here but not opposite hands with weaker diamonds. 4♠ can be made on the actual layout by ducking ♥K lead, winning the next heart or trump switch in hand, then playing a diamond, using ♠K as an entry.</p>				

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<p>Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 10 ♥ 8 4 ♦ A K J 10 9 6 4 ♣ J 10 5</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ J 6 5</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A Q 9 8 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ J 6 3</td> <td>♥ A 7 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ 8 5 3 2</td> <td>♦ 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ A 8 7</td> <td>♣ K Q 3 2</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ K 4 3 2 ♥ K Q 10 9 2 ♦ Q ♣ 9 6 4</p>	♠ J 6 5	♠ A Q 9 8 7	♥ J 6 3	♥ A 7 5	♦ 8 5 3 2	♦ 7	♣ A 8 7	♣ K Q 3 2	<p>Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 9 5 4 2 ♥ 7 4 3 ♦ J 10 7 6 2 ♣ 9</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A K 8</td> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ J 7 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ 6 2</td> <td>♥ A Q J 10 8 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ A 9 8 5 3</td> <td>♦ K Q</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ J 8 7</td> <td>♣ 6 5</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q 10 3 ♥ K 9 ♦ 4 ♣ A K Q 10 4 3 2</p>	♠ A K 8	♠ J 7 6	♥ 6 2	♥ A Q J 10 8 5	♦ A 9 8 5 3	♦ K Q	♣ J 8 7	♣ 6 5
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♥ 6 2	♥ A Q J 10 8 5																
♦ A 9 8 5 3	♦ K Q																
♣ J 8 7	♣ 6 5																
<p>If North gets to open in third seat, he has various amusing possibilities (3NT? 1NT?) but a more normal 3♦ opening will give West a horrible problem after 3♦ – dbl – Pass. West has nowhere to go other than pass and hope for the best, which here is a relieved +100 from one off. A 3♠ overcall from East will do better, as E/W are likely to come to ten tricks because South gets endplayed – he can't avoid being made to give away two heart tricks as all his other cards will get stripped.</p>	<p>After West opens, East will drive to game in hearts whatever South tries with clubs. There is some risk for E/W if South leads a diamond, or switches to one at trick two. It may be tempting to cross in spades to take the heart finesse, but that allows N/S to take a club ruff followed by a diamond ruff. It's also a little delicate if N/S attack spades (e.g. top club, club ruff, spade switch). Declarer has to decide whether to take the heart finesse and risk getting cut off from the ace of diamonds, or play ace and another heart (which might give up on an overtrick).</p>																
<p>There was no choice of hands, just a straight deal. The commentary is by Jeffrey Allerton and Frances Hinden.</p> <p>Holdes: Ilse Porritt & Robynne Owen <i>from Paynesville Bridge Club in Australia</i></p> <p>Organisation by David Stevenson David Stevenson 63 Slingsby Drive WIRRAL CH49 0TY England UK</p> <p>Email: hughes@blakjak.uk Web site: www.blakjak.org Telephone: 0151 677 7412 Mobile: 07778 409 955 (+44 not 0 outside UK) Skype: bluejak666</p>	<p>Scoring by ECats scoring system developed by Anna Gudge and Mark Newton.</p> <p>To see your scores look at the ECats website at http://www.simpairs.com/default.asp?session=004566 They will be updated as more scores come in. Full details including frequencies will appear from Saturday night onwards.</p> <p>Anna Gudge Mill Cottage, Voy STROMNESS, Orkney KW16 3HX Scotland UK</p> <p>Email: anna@ecats.co.uk Web site: www.ecatsbridge.com Telephone: 01787 881 920 (+44 not 0 outside UK)</p>																