

To make the commentary simpler to write I have used he/him/his as unisex rather than constantly having to qualify it as he/she, him/her or his/hers. I assume most will play a weak NT and 4 card majors.

1	T74
North	AQJ84
None	KJ
	K92
QJ8	93
K	653
A63	Q9542
AQ8543	J76
	AK652
	T972
	T87
	T

A lot will depend here on how aggressive NS are in the bidding. North will open 1♥ and South has to decide whether to introduce ♠s or just raise ♥s. If he raises ♥s what level should he raise to? If he bids ♠s and partner raises then if he goes back to 3♥ is that forcing? Playing 5 card majors I think the South hand is worth a raise to 3♥, otherwise bidding 1♠ is probably best. Of course West will get a 2♣ bid in but doesn't really have enough to bid again. So I would expect some 4♥ contracts plus some major suit part scores on the sheet. Less likely is the inferior 4♠ but it still makes with the 3-2 trump split. After West bids you should get the ♦ suit right for 10 tricks. So +420 will do well and the rest ought to be +170 – but who knows!

2	K3
East	T95
NS	2
	9876432
82	J654
AKQ763	2
7653	KQJT94
5	QJ
	AQT97
	J84
	A8
	AKT

Should East open and if so what? Some might open 1♦, others 3♦ (yes you are not supposed to have a 4 card major!) and those with a weak 2 available might try 2♦. If East passes then West will overcall in ♥s at the 2 or 3 level which will go back to South who then has a tricky decision. Pass is a reasonable option but many will not be able to resist bidding and will double. This will let NS get to ♣s which is best for them. If East opens then it will be difficult for EW to avoid competing in ♦s to a high level. The outcome is difficult to call but a plus score for either side will be good. Unusually at Pairs, ♣s and ♦s will do better than ♥s or ♠s.

3	85
South	
EW	T76
	AQJT9743
T92	7
T542	AJ873
KJ8	A9432
K86	52
	AKQJ643
	KQ96
	Q5

This one looks set to be played in 4♠ by South – possibly 1♠ P 2♣ 2NT; 4♠. EW may compete but a sacrifice at the vulnerability would not score well, and North should suppress any desire to bid ♣s again! The number of tricks made will depend on the lead. A ♣ lead will let 12 tricks through by throwing 2 ♦s on the ♣Q and ♣A then ruffing 2 small ♥s in dummy. A ♥ lead will give 11 tricks, again ruffing 2 ♥s. A trump or a ♦ lead will hold it to 10 tricks. I can't see many making 12 tricks so +450 ought to score very well. Better will be +500 or more defending a doubled EW contract.

4	53
West	K95
All	JT32
	A832
Q98	AT762
J8742	Q3
K8	A94
K76	JT9
	KJ4
	AT6
	Q765
	Q54

Many Easts will open 1♠ in 3<sup>rd</sup> seat and should then play in 2♠. Some Wests may bid 1NT and play there. Deep Finesse (DF) says 1NT doesn't make but it has chances in real life! 2♠ looks like making 8 or 9 tricks depending on how trumps are played. If East passes then South will open 1NT which will probably win the auction. After a likely ♥ lead from West South should get to 7 tricks by playing on ♦s. Playing a strong NT, South will open 1♦ which is likely to lead to 2♦. This is touch and go and might make or go one off. So, +140 looks like a top for EW and any plus good for NS.

5	T3
North	86
NS	KQ64
	AK874
92	QJ6
AKT7542	QJ3
93	J875
92	J53
	AK8754
	9
	AT2
	QT6

6♣ is a good contract but it's not at all clear how you get to it, especially with West putting a spanner in the works with a ♥ preemptive bid. A few will open the North hand 1NT, some might open 1♦ to make for an easier rebid, but most will open 1♣. South will bid 1♠ and West will get involved with a preemptive 3♥ bid. At the vulnerability East should raise to 4♥ to make life as difficult as possible for NS. South is left guessing whether to double this or perhaps try 4♠ with the latter coming out a clear winner on this hand. 4♥x will get only +500 for NS, 4♠ gets +650 and anyone reaching 6♣ will get a top for +1370.



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Tuesday 5 June 2018



6	73
East	QJ5
EW	Q75
	AKQJ3
QJ94	A8
A976	T843
A3	KJT62
T76	85
	KT652
	K2
	984
	942

Top players these days open on 11 counts a lot more than those playing in less elevated company. So some may open the West hand even vulnerable, with 1♥ being a reasonable choice planning to pass anything partner says. North would bid 1NT or 2♣ and East has to decide whether to bid a cautious 2♥ (over 1NT this seems best), a more aggressive 3♥ or perhaps bid 3♦ as a Fit Jump. At Pairs a more cautious approach is often best! Good defence will hold ♥s to 8 tricks. If West passes then North will open 1♣ and rebid 1NT where he will play. A ♦ lead from East will soon put this off. So +100 for NS will be good as will +110 for EW.

7	KQJ
South	A973
All	K842
	62
A975	T643
K84	J2
AQ6	JT73
J53	KQT
	82
	QT65
	95
	A9874

An easy one for a change! West will open 1NT and play there. Most leads let NS take this one off but a ♦ lead gives up a tempo and 7 tricks. Those playing a strong NT will open the West hand 1♣, North will double, East will bid 1♠, South 2♥, West 2♠ and NS will either choose to defend or bid 3♥. There are too many variables in play and defence to assess the most likely outcomes but I would think that +120 for EW would be a top and any plus, especially +140, for NS would score well.

8	843
West	AQ
None	98542
	J62
AJ	Q5
KT73	J982
AJ7	QT6
AKT5	Q983
	KT9762
	654
	K3
	74

Another easy one to predict the bidding. Most will bid 2NT 3♣; 3♥ 4♥. With the ♠K and ♦K well placed this looks set to make 11 tricks, but what if North leads a ♦ then another ♦ each time he is in with the ♥Q and ♥A? Then South will get a ruff to hold it to 10 tricks. Any West reaching 3NT rather than 4♥ should get a ♦ lead from North and that lets 11 tricks make for a somewhat lucky top. Those NSs who hold 4♥ to 10 tricks will get a well deserved great score.

9	KQJ42
North	Q9
EW	K74
	863
A876	
A86543	KJT7
T	A86532
Q9	KT4
	T953
	2
	QJ9
	AJ752

Back to the more distributional hands where everyone gets their money's worth! Many Norths will open this 1♠ with a good suit and 11 points. East may bid 2♦ but I think double is better, again even with only 11 points. South will bid 3♠ or perhaps even 4♠ at favourable vulnerability, especially if playing 5 card majors. The West hand is huge on this bidding and might even just bash 6♥. But it's a pound to a penny East is void in ♠ on the bidding, so the ♠A is wasted and 5♥ is possibly the sensible choice. Sensible doesn't win here though and 6♥ romps home easily. Any 6♥ bidders will get a top then those scoring +710 will come next – by avoiding a ♣ lead and setting up the ♦s.

10	KQ2
East	K8
All	Q963
	J976
84	AJ9765
7642	Q93
KT72	A8
Q52	A4
	T3
	AJT5
	J54
	KT83

Who bids on the West hand after partner opens 1♠? Those who bid 1NT will be dummy when East plays 2♠. Those who pass will defend 1NT by North. 2♠ looks to have one too many losers unless you can lose only one trump trick which is tricky, or South leads a ♣ which isn't that unlikely in fact. 1NT by North will get a ♠ lead from East and declarer has to play the ♠10 at trick 1. After that he can make 7 tricks by taking four ♥ tricks and one ♣ trick to go with his two ♠ tricks. In practice though North will take the ♣ finesse losing to the ♣Q and get a ♠ back which puts 1NT one off at least. So +200 and +110 for EW will be good scores. Any plus for NS should score well.

*Our thanks to George Cuthbertson for preparing this commentary*



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<u>11</u>	T
South	754
None	8762
	KQJ95
KQJ42	93
A96	QT832
J4	KQT3
A42	83
	A8765
	KJ
	A95
	T76

Some may pass the South hand but I bet most will open 1♠. This will silence West and North will no doubt bid 1NT. This will be the final contract and East will lead a ♥. The good guessers will play the ♥J and win the ♥K at trick 2. The contract now needs the ♣A to be singleton or doubleton or to persuade the defence to win the ♣A too early. Assuming West ducks twice there are no more than 5 tricks for declarer. For the very few Souths who pass, West will open 1♠ and pass East's 1NT. So long as South leads a ♣ at some stage this will make 8 tricks with the lucky ♥ position. There should be a lot of +100 for EW and anything better than that will score a bundle.

<u>12</u>	52
West	A8
NS	KT9
	AJT932
JT96	KQ4
32	JT9
AQ84	7532
Q64	K87
	A873
	KQ7654
	J6
	5

EW won't get involved in the bidding on this one. North will open 1♣ and rebid them over South's 1♥. South then has to decide whether to bid just 2♥ or push a bit with 3♥. The ♥ suit isn't great and the singleton ♣ doesn't look good either. So I would hold back and bid 2♥. North will pass 2♥ but may go for game over 3♥. Those who don't play fourth suit as forcing to game might bid 2♠ which will probably get 3♣ from North which South should pass. Played in ♥s there are 10 tricks there either by ruffing a ♠ on a non-trump lead or by finessing against the ♦Q. So I expect plenty of +170 scores and a handful of +620. Anything less than +170 won't do well.

<u>13</u>	J743
North	KT93
All	AJ72
	9
K985	Q62
AQ62	J54
Q8	T95
K72	QT53
	AT
	87
	K643
	AJ864

Most will open the South hand 1♣. With both majors West will probably double and hope East doesn't bid ♦s. North will bid and 1♦ or 1♥ look to be the options, although 1NT is possible also. East will be happy not to have to bid and South will either raise ♦s or bid 2♣ over 1♥ or pass 1NT. No one has any reason to bid on so South will play 2♣ or 2♦, or North will play 1NT. As with many part score hands the play is hard to predict, but 8 tricks in ♣s or NT look to be the best you can do, and ♦s will provide 9 tricks or possibly even 10. Any plus for EW will be great and anything above +90 for NS should do OK.

<u>14</u>	98762
East	63
None	J
	KJT72
KQJ3	AT5
K875	QJ92
KQ4	AT72
A9	Q4
	4
	AT4
	98653
	8653

A combination of bidding methods and luck come into play on this one. East will open 1NT, West will Stayman and find the ♥ fit. What then? West knows slam is possible but is 4NT asking or quantitative? Most play it as quantitative so what can West do? 2♠ would be non-forcing showing 4 ♠s and a raise to 2NT. So some play that a bid of 3♠ is artificial with a ♥ fit and slam interest. Over this East would definitely push to slam with 2 aces and a good hand. If EW play a strong NT and 5 card majors then he will open 1♦ and West will bid 1♥, placing the contract with West rather than East. Some will get to slam which will make played by West but can go off on a ♣ lead played by East. So +980 (or +990 for 6NT!) for EW will be a top, and +50 will be huge for NS.

<u>15</u>	72
South	KQJT8
NS	7
	AQJ43
KT98	AQ4
96542	73
QJT	AK964
T	965
	J653
	A
	8532
	K872

North will open 1♥ and it will depend on what East does what happens next. If he passes or doubles then South bids 1♠ and NS find their ♣ fit. I think most Easts will bid 2♦ though and South is on the spot. Double looks OK but some will pass. So a lot of variations in the bidding which may end up with NS in ♣s or EW in ♦s. 10 tricks are easy for NS and 10 are also possible for EW, so there will be 130 scores for both sides.

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16	K73
West	K7542
EW	KT64
	5
QJ854	T92
Q83	JT9
J5	Q983
KQ9	743
	A6
	A6
	A72
	AJT862

The West hand has a scrappy 11 count and is vulnerable, so most will pass but some brave (or foolish?) souls will place 1♠ on the table. Most Souths will open 1♣ after 3 passes, West will overcall 1♠, North will do something (double no doubt but I suppose there will be some 2♥ bidders?) and NS will most often pitch up in 3NT. After a ♠ lead the only successful route to 9 tricks is to play for a 3-3 ♥ break. The only other option I can see is to play West for ♣K9 or ♣Q9 which is a really long shot. As it happens 5♣ also makes with careful play, and if anyone gets there 4♥ can make as many as 12 tricks!

17	
North	QT32
None	K872
	AKQT6
JT	AKQ9754
AJ8	97
AQT3	J954
9843	
	8632
	K654
	6
	J752

Another competitive monster! North will open 1♣ and 4♠ from East will come back to him. Is the North hand worth another bid? The void ♠ and good ♣ suit are tempting so I'm sure some will not sell out. Double is most descriptive which will prise a 5♣ bid from South. But West isn't done yet! With four ♣s and two aces double may enter his thinking, but 5♠ will no doubt win the day. In fact 5♠ is cold and 6♣ is actually a good save as the cards lie, but I doubt many if any will sacrifice at the 6 level. +450 for EW is the winner (unless NS double?! ) and any NS who saves in ♣s will do very well.

18	AT84
East	9
NS	J8763
	Q98
7	K932
KJT2	A8754
A94	KQT
AKT52	J
	QJ65
	Q63
	52
	7643

East opens 1♥ and West gets excited! If a splinter bid of 3♠ is available then that is an option, otherwise a quiet 2♣ will do. After 2♣ East will bid 2♥ and then West can bid 3♠ as a splinter. Whatever West does East is unlikely to cooperate with any slam ambition, so I would expect most to stay in 4♥. Anyone venturing 6♥ will have to guess trumps and with nothing to guide you that isn't likely, the odds favouring playing for the drop rather than the finesse with a combined 9 cards. Lots of +450 and a couple of -50 on the scoresheet I would guess. Any +980 would be a surprise!

19	A
South	QJ542
EW	KJT53
	54
K752	JT843
K6	98
	A8642
AKQ8632	7
	Q96
	AT73
	Q97
	JT9

Another tricky one. West opens 1♣ and North bids 2NT, unusual showing the lowest 2 remaining suits. East has nothing to say and South has a great fit for the red suit plus a concern that EW have a good ♠ fit. So at the vulnerability a leap to 4♥ looks a good choice. West isn't happy to leave it at that and wants to keep ♠s as an option, so double is best and is competitive rather than penalty. East is happy to bid 4♠ and there matters probably rest. DF says you can make 11 tricks, but only if you can see all the hands! Unless you play specifically for a bare ♠A you will make only 10, either playing small to the ♠K (catches a bare ♠Q or ♠Ax onside) or running the ♠J (catches a bare ♠9 or ♠Qx onside).

20	KQ4
West	T6
All	Q87
	J9652
A73	J9652
J85	Q973
AT9543	6
3	QT7
	T8
	AK42
	KJ2
	AK84

West will pass unless he has a weak 2♦ available. I suppose some of the more adventurous might try 3♦! So South will open and West will then bid ♦s at some level (2♦ over 1♣ or 3♦ over 1♥?). Over 2♦ North will stretch to 3♣ and South will try 3NT. Over 3♦ the North hand is awkward and he might double or more likely pass. If he passes then South will probably reopen with a double? NS may still get to 3NT – otherwise they will be defending 3♦ undoubled. West will lead a ♦ to the ♦K (to leave an entry to dummy in ♦s), ♣AK and another ♣ to ♣Q. East will lead a ♥ to ♥A, ♠ to ♠K and 9 tricks are there with a 2<sup>nd</sup> ♦ trick. If West discards badly an overtrick might just be possible. If declarer plays badly 3NT might go off.

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# Warwickshire Charity Simultaneous Pairs – In aid of Warwickshire Air Ambulance

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21	T9763
North	62
NS	Q752
	A3
AJ8	KQ542
KQ8754	3
A3	T98
QT	KJ96
	AJT9
	KJ64
	87542

This isn't an easy hand to bid. West should see 3 passes and open 1♥, East will reply with 1♠ and it's back to West to decide what to bid next. 2♥ and 2♠ are both a bit heavy with a good 16 point hand, but 3♥ doesn't feel ideal with a relatively weak suit. Those playing a strong NT would no doubt still open 1♥ but would be better placed on this hand opening 1NT. The sting in the tail is that those who reach the excellent 4♠ contract look certain to go down with the foul trump split. My prediction is that there will be very few plus scores for EW and NS will be well advised to stay silent throughout unless they want to double a high level contract.

22	QJ83
East	Q
EW	T84
	T8652
9762	AKT54
873	T96
KQJ6	93
93	AQJ
	AKJ542
	A752
	K74

Are ♠s always going to break badly?! East will open 1♠, South 2♥, West 2♠ which should go back to South. South can double for takeout although some may just bid 3♥, North will bid ♣s over a double and the most likely end result is that East will end the bidding with 3♠. NS will enjoy the defence, starting with 3♥s letting North discard two ♦s, ♦A, ♦ ruff, ♣. There is still the ♣K and a trump to come holding it to 6 tricks. If NS play anything, best will be a ♣ contract where DF says you can make 10 tricks. A ♥ contract can be held to 8 tricks but the ♦K lead gives a small chance of a 9<sup>th</sup>. So NS should have the bulk of the plus scores for undertricks and any plus for EW will be a great score.

23	AJ87
South	QJ85
All	AQJ
	K3
Q43	KT2
K7	AT643
K7543	T
J62	T954
	965
	92
	9862
	AQ87

NS will bid uninterrupted to either 2NT or 3NT by South I expect. West will no doubt lead a ♦ and when the ♦J wins, assuming West has the ♦K, declarer has 7 tricks. So the challenge is to find the 8<sup>th</sup> with a difficult entry position. The majors are the only source of tricks – in ♥s you can force a trick by giving up 3 to the ♥K, ♥A and ♥10. In ♠s there are choices – play to pin the ♠10 or play East to have ♠Kx or ♠Qx. So ♠A then ♠J or ♠A then ♠7. Here there is no guarantee of an extra trick but you get one with the 3-3 split. So ♥s looks the best option. Coming out with 8 tricks should score pretty well with anything better than that getting a top. There will be some plus scores for EW here too.

24	KJ754
West	QJ
None	J85
	A82
8	A962
76	K85432
KT964	
KQJ76	T53
	QT3
	AT9
	AQ732
	94

Here NS are likely to buy the contract either in ♠ or NT. 4♠ is on a knife edge and will probably go off. The only chance I can see to make is to eventually endplay West in ♣s to lead away from the ♦K. The alternative source of the 10<sup>th</sup> trick would be to ruff a ♣ but with the bad trump split that looks doomed to fail because of entry problems to the North hand. There are a lot of different play options in 4♠ but most won't come to 10 tricks. 3NT on the other hand has 9 easy tricks with the ♥ finesse, holding up in ♣s if necessary. Of course West may play a part in the bidding which will give some clues to the best play. EW certainly don't want to get too involved since they could give away a sizeable penalty.

25	K942
North	K6
EW	A9753
	A8
85	AJ3
AJT9743	8
T6	K842
T3	KJ742
	QT76
	Q52
	QJ
	Q965

North will open 1♦, East should pass, South 1♠ and West has to decide whether to bid 3♥ or not. Having found their ♠ fit, however, NS just have to decide on the level. If West passes 1♠ then the North hand is a good 2♠ raise. If West bids 3♥ then North has to bid 3♠ and won't be unhappy about it! The South hand is very quacky (all queens and jacks) and the ♥Q is pretty worthless if West has bid ♥s, so he should pass whatever North says. East will lead his ♥ and get a ruff, then will play ♠A and ♠J to avoid losing a minor suit trick. Winning the ♠Q, declarer will run the ♦Q to ♦K and the ♦ back will see the ♦10 drop. This lets South throw 3 ♣s on winning ♦s for 9 tricks. I'm sure some NSs will get to 4♠ and some EWs will rue the day they got involved!

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# Warwickshire Charity Simultaneous Pairs – In aid of Warwickshire Air Ambulance

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26	7653
East	T2
All	AJ87
	AQT
K84	QJ2
Q874	AKJ5
432	T5
J43	K876
	AT9
	963
	KQ96
	952

This looks like a standard 1NT passed out. If the defence is on form it will go down – starting off with ♦s. At some point South plays a ♣ to ♣10/K which gives the defence 7 tricks. Alternatively North might switch to the ♣Q letting South play another ♣ when in to the ♣10. Yet another option is for North to switch to a ♠ and South to duck this – if another ♠ is played then South wins and plays a 3<sup>rd</sup> round to set up North's long ♠ for the 7<sup>th</sup> trick. So careful defence will prevail. Playing a strong NT, East will open 1♣ and raise West's 1♥ to 2♥. North might protect with a double to get to 3♦ by South. 2♥ will make quite easily, losing a ♠ and 2 tricks in each minor. 3♦ will just go one off.

27	T
South	AT9
None	86
	AQ98764
Q642	K9873
6	KQ75
T532	QJ7
KJT3	5
	AJ5
	J8432
	AK94
	2

Best here for NS to play in ♥s – perhaps 1♥-2♣-2♦-3♥- followed by Pass or 4♥ from South. The play is interesting. On a non trump lead, say a ♠, win and ruff a ♠, ♦A, ruff a ♠, ♣A, ♣. If East ruffs high (you throw a ♦) and plays a trump to ♥A, win ♦K and play the ♥J, so you will lose only 2 trumps and a ♦. If East discards on the ♣ then ruff, ♦K, ♦ ruff with the ♥A and a ♣ off dummy guarantees 2 more trump tricks. 4♥ making will be an excellent result and 3♥ making should also do pretty well.

28	5
West	K95
NS	KQJ
	AKQ754
632	AQJ9
Q42	AT63
943	T62
J832	96
	KT874
	J87
	A875
	T

NS will surely get to 3NT. Perhaps 1♣-1♠-3NT which many play as showing a good long ♣ suit in a strong hand. Or maybe 1♣-1♠-3♣-3NT. A ♠ lead will hold it to 9 tricks, a ♥ lead lets 10 tricks through, and a minor suit lead will probably let 10 through as well. So I can see a bunch of 600 and 630 scores with little else.

29	J8
North	K8764
All	Q932
	74
9752	T6
JT5	93
64	JT875
Q832	JT65
	AKQ43
	AQ2
	AK
	AK9

I can't remember ever holding a 29 count! How do you go about bidding this monster? A possible auction might start 2♣-2♦-2♠-3♥ where 3♥ shows some values if a 2<sup>nd</sup> negative is available. But is 4NT by South then quantitative with 25-26 or asking for aces/key cards? Would 5NT by South be Josephine, ie asking for top trumps? If it is Josephine can you remember the responses?! Those playing a strong ♣ or relay methods or Kokish will have other options, but the key to this hand is having good methods agreed and remembering them since they come up so infrequently. I think everyone will be able to cope with the play of the hand! Those bidding the grand will be chuffed and score well. Best play is to cash ♣AK, ♦AK, ♠J, ♦Q to squeeze the player with 5 ♠s and 4 ♥s!!!

30	52
East	AQT
None	AJ843
	KJ8
Q9843	JT76
7432	95
92	KQ76
64	T75
	AK
	KJ86
	T5
	AQ932

Slams are like buses - you wait for ages then 2 turn up! There are 12 tricks guaranteed for NS (by cashing the ♣K or ♣J first you can pick up a 5-0 split in either hand) and the question is can you bid it. The bidding should start with 1♣-1♦-1♥ then 1♠ by North would be fourth suit forcing, some playing it as game forcing others not. If it is game forcing then South can bid 2NT to show a strong hand and ♠ stop. North can then picture South hands where slam is on with great cards in both of South's suits. Rather than bash slam North can bid a quantitative 4NT to invite and South I think has enough to accept the invitation. There will be plenty of different auctions and some of them will get there! The slam bidders will get the tops with 6NT doing better than 6♣.

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