

LBC Training
Pairs Tactics - Number 1

Fighting for the part-score

Every hand is equally important at pairs whether it is a slam hand, a game hand or a part-score hand.

You should devote particular attention to part-score hands because:

- they occur more frequently
- your actions are more likely to affect the outcome.

Examples

Auction 1: Acol Weak NT 4 card majors

	S: 10 8 5 3 2 H: Q 10 4 3 D: 10 8 C: J 7		
S: A 4 H: 6 5 D: J 7 5 4 C: Q 10 6 3 2	Love All Dealer: South	S: Q J 7 6 H: K 9 7 D: K Q 3 C: K 9 8	
	S: K 9 H: A J 8 2 D: A 9 6 2 C: A 5 4		
Bidding:			
South	West	North	East
1H Pass (3) X (6)	Pass 2NT (4) All Pass	2H (1) Pass	Pass (2) 3C (5)

- (1) Raise to the level of the fit rather than passing and giving EW room to explore.
- (2) Flat hand with opening points. Pass because NS may be bidding on so don't help them by showing where all the points are.
- (3) 16 HCP but 7 losers, no reason to get excited opposite a weak bid.
- (4) The 'pass out' seat but think carefully. They have a fit, then so do you. Partner must have some points, otherwise NS would have bid on. Bid 2NT for the minors does not promise 5-5 as it would have bid on the first round and your minors are the right way round - C longer than D.
- (5) With equal length, E bids the lower suit and finds the 5-3 fit.
- (6) S feels robbed and doubles. But at this vulnerability, it's not enough. 2H would have made for 110 for NS but 3C down 1 only earns NS 100 even if they double. Note that if EW were vulnerable, 3CX down 1 costs 200 for a top for NS.

Auction 2: (same hand, different bidding system) Strong NT 5 card majors

		S: 10 8 5 3 2 H: Q 10 4 3 D: 10 8 C: J 7	
S: A 4 H: 6 5 D: J 7 5 4 C: Q 10 6 3 2		Love All Dealer: South	S: Q J 7 6 H: K 9 7 D: K Q 3 C: K 9 8
		S: K 9 H: A J 8 2 D: A 9 6 2 C: A 5 4	
Bidding:			
South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2C (1)	Pass (2)
2H (3)	Pass	Pass	X (4)
Pass	3C (5)	Pass	Pass
X (6)	All pass		

- (1) Two places to play - don't just guess and transfer to S, look for 4-4 H fit. You can always bid 2S (weak and 5 card suit) if partner denies a major with 2D.
- (2) They are in a forcing situation, you can wait and listen.
- (3) Showing the 4 card major.
- (4) The 'pass out' seat. They have a fit, so do you, but where? It is unlikely to be in spades but by doubling you show 4 cards in spades and let partner choose his best suit.
- (5) West makes the obvious choice.
- (6) Very dangerous especially at love all, partner's hand could be even worse! Leave it to partner to double (or not). Even if you beat 3CX by one you only get 100 for a poor score and if they make 3CX you lose 570 for an absolute bottom.

Results:

2H by NS makes **NS +110**

2S by NS down 1 **NS -50**

3C by EW down 1 **NS +50 or +100 (if doubled)**

Points to remember:

- Part scores hands count for just as much as games and slams in pairs.
- Bid to the level of the fit. The “Law of Total Tricks” says the total number of tricks available on a deal is equal to the total number of trump cards both sides hold in their respective best suits. In particular, a pair with half the high card points and an 8 card fit will normal be able to make a contract at the two level.
- If they have a fit, you have a fit.
- (Corollary: If they don’t have a fit, you don’t either.)
- In the ‘pass out’ seat, think hard rather than just automatically passing.
- Two places to play? Don’t guess, ask partner for help in deciding.
- If they have robbed you of your contract, you could double them. This is likely to be successful if they are vulnerable but if they make their contract your result will go from bad to worse.

Two further examples follow:

- in the first, the person in the “pass-out” seat (me) should have doubled but didn’t
- in the second the person in the “pass-out” seat (well-known international) probably shouldn’t have doubled but did.

From Leeds Bridge Club Thursday, 10th October 2024

		S: K 8 5 H: K Q 7 D: J 9 6 C: 9 7 5 4	
S: A 10 9 6 3 H: 8 4 3 D: K 10 C: K 6 2		EW Game Dealer: South	S: Q J 4 H: A 10 9 6 D: 7 4 3 2 C: Q 8
		S: 7 2 H: J 5 2 D: A Q 8 5 C: A J 10 3	
Bidding:			
South	West	North	East
1D (1) Pass 3C (6)	1S (2) Pass All pass	1NT (3) X (5)	2S (4) Pass

- (1) Shows 4 card suit
- (2) Obvious overcall
- (3) Values, spade stop but no 4 card heart suit, otherwise would double
- (4) Level of the fit
- (5) They have a fit, bid something, partner! (The bid I should have made, instead I guessed by bidding 3D)
- (6) I have 4 clubs

Results:

NS make 1NT and 3C

EW make 2S

From the Great Northern Swiss Pairs 2024

Should east double on the second round?

		S: Q 5 4 H: Q 10 6 4 3 D: 9 7 C: K 10 6	
S: 10 6 3 H: A 9 7 D: A J 3 C: J 7 5 4		EW Game Dealer: South	S: K 8 7 2 H: K J 8 5 D: 8 6 C: A 8 3
		S: A J 9 H: 2 D: K Q 10 5 4 2 C: Q 9 2	
Bidding:			
South	West	North	East
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
2D	Pass	Pass	X
Pass	2S	Pass	Pass
X	3C	Pass	Pass
X	All Pass		

East hopes partner has a spade suit and can bid 2S or, failing that, a decent diamond suit and can let the double stand.

But East may be wrong because:

- NS haven't necessarily found a fit so EW may not have a fit.
- NS are vulnerable, if they go one down it will cost 100, more than EW get for making 2D.
- E is asking W to choose between spades and clubs but only has support for spades.

Result:

NS can make 2D **61% to EW**

Some NS made 2D + 1 **22% to EW**

EW goes 2 off in 3Cx **0% to EW**

East was a top ranked Yorkshire player and a regular in the England team.

Even the gods have feet of clay!