EBED

English Bridge
Education & Development

Sim Pairs

Commentary by Mike Pomfrey

Wednesday

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Welcome to the English Bridge Education & Development (EBED) Simultaneous Pairs. The proceeds raised by this event will go to EBED, the national charity for the promotion and development of duplicate bridge. EBED have worked hard in the past year to improve and develop the infrastructure for bridge teaching in England. This has been achieved through initiatives such as the development of our e-learning portal EBS (English Bridge School) and support to enable our trained EBTA (English Bridge Teaching Association) teachers transition to online lessons. EBED also supplies "Bridge for All" teaching materials, organises teacher training and club director training courses, administers the Junior Award Scheme and supports county organisations and individual volunteers at the local level to run youth events. You can read more about EBED's activities in the current issue of English Bridge and at www.ebedcio.org.uk. If you wish to arrange a donation in favour of the charity, please do so at www.ebedcio.org.uk/donate. Do please encourage your friends to come to play in these events which are open to all and raise vital funds for our work. We sincerely thank you thank you for your support.

Giorgio Provenza
Chief Executive English Bridge Education & Development,
Registered Charity No: 1153543

♠Q65
♥KQ1087
♦Q62
♣A4

♠K72
♥2
♦9875
♣K8732

♠103
♥A43
♦AKJ103
♣965

♠AJ984
♥J965
♦4
♣QJ10

HCP	
13	
6	12
9	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	4	3	-
S	-	-	4	3	-
E	3	3	-	-	-
W	3	4	-	-	-

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

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

What's this you say? I'm recommending an auction that misses a cold game?
Well, it's a very marginal decision whether that North hand is a weak no trump or whether it's too strong. If it's a weak no trump then South certainly hasn't enough to bid on. But, even so, if you treat it as a 1♥ opening, South has no more than an invitational raise, so do you get there anyway?
Game is obviously pretty reasonable; with the club finesse working it's almost cold and, should it fail, you still have a chance of bringing in the spades. A lot of match points ride on very marginal decisions.

♠A92
♥Q5
♦J7
♣A106542

♠QJ63 ♠1087
♥J9 ♥A10876
♦986543 ♦K10
♣8 ♣KJ3

♠K54
♥K432
♦AQ2
♣Q97

HCP	
11	
4	11
14	

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

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

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

Has the computer got a theme in mind for this set? That's two hands out of two where a weak no trump is a sensible choice despite the five card major.

This time East has a clear cut weak no trump. All those intermediates make it worth an opening bid. If your system allows, you could investigate a spade fit as West and then subside in 3♦. Mine doesn't so I have to play in 3♦. That's going to be at least a couple off, which I'm afraid will be a pretty poor score.

You may console yourself by saying that North can make 3NT, so long as one avoids the reasonable, but losing, line of two club finesses. South can't make 3NT, of course, on a heart lead. But not many will get to game anyway, and certainly not from the right side.

♠Q10654
♥A7
♦105
♣KQ75

♠KJ2 ♠973
♥864 ♥532
♦AQ94 ♦73
♣A109 ♣86432

♠A8
♥KQJ109
♦KJ862
♣J

HCP	
11	
14	0
15	

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

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

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

With East-West passing throughout, the first four bids look pretty straightforward. At this point I don't think South has a problem. Although you are 5-5, partner clearly doesn't have a heart fit, your own are solid and you have no intention of playing in diamonds. So where else should you look but 3NT?

West has a horrible lead against 3NT. Funnily enough, a passive heart looks best, otherwise declarer can bring in the spades and probably make ten tricks.

That odd overtrick will make all the difference between a moderate score and a very good one.

♠Q8
♥K87
♦643
♣A10965

♠K1054 ♠A762
♥10 ♥Q63
♦QJ1097 ♦AK5
♣J84 ♣KQ2

♠J93
♥AJ9542
♦82
♣73

HCP	
9	
7	18
6	

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

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

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

This all looks fairly natural, in the old style, but it's not. First, after partner single raises your opening bid, surely nothing could be more obvious than 2NT on a balanced 18 count? This 18 count, however, is pretty ghastly, with seven losers and not much in trick taking potential. I would be strongly tempted to pass at pairs.

So is 2♠ the right response? I think not, with a good side suit, much better playing potential than your point count suggests, not to mention little in defence. If your system allows, it looks more like a semi pre-emptive 3♠ response to me. That gets you to the solid game by an easier route.

♠A98653
♥J
♦K74
♣AJ8

♠KQ10
♥10754
♦J5
♣Q973

♠J42
♥K9863
♦832
♣105

♠7
♥AQ2
♦AQ1096
♣K642

HCP		
	13	
8		4
	15	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	6	7	2	5	5
S	6	7	2	5	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

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

Sorry, but I'm not going to be a results merchant. The first three bids are completely obvious and now what is South expected to do? You have more than enough for game, a singleton in partner's suit; your own hasn't been supported. What else are you supposed to bid other than 3NT?

Yeah, you can make 7♦. That's with a 3-2 break in trumps, a 3-3 break in spades, a club finesse, even a heart finesse if necessary. I'm happy with my 660, and if any mad so-and-sos can get more, good luck to them.

♠KQ1063
♥5
♦A104
♣A974

♠J2
♥Q92
♦Q873
♣Q853

♠A5
♥AK10764
♦KJ
♣K62

♠9874
♥J83
♦9652
♣J10

HCP		
	13	
7		18
	2	

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

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

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

At this vulnerability I'm afraid this is fairly inevitable. West should certainly raise hearts and North is pretty much obliged to stick his oar in with 2♠. East is worth game and South is bound to take the save. That looks an automatic 300 against a vulnerable game, clearly a good sacrifice. It would of course be suicidal for East to accept the push to 5♥.

As East you know this is going to happen. Is there anything you can do to prevent it?

Not a lot, I'm afraid. You might muddy the waters, perhaps with a spurious game try of 3♣, or perhaps a game try double, and then bid game anyway when partner signs off. But against experienced opposition that's a bit of a giveaway.

♠K8743
♥-
♦AQJ82
♣K106

♠J65
♥1062
♦964
♣A972

♠10
♥AJ987543
♦K103
♣Q

♠AQ92
♥KQ
♦75
♣J8543

HCP		
	13	
5		10
	12	

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

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
			1♣
Pass	1♠	3♥	3♠
4♥	4♠	?	

This is definitely a hand where fortune favours the brave. Whether South starts with 1♣ or an off-centre 1NT (not for me when you have the boss suit), East will overcall, South will support spades and North will bid game.

4♠ is obviously cold, but will East-West sacrifice? With an eight card suit East has a good case, though those honours in the side suits might make you feel uneasy that you are being bounced into the dreaded phantom.

Should North-South accept the push to 5♠, a club lead will definitely beat it. Anything else and you have a slim chance.

♠10753
♥QJ108
♦Q106
♣84

♠86 ♠AKQ4
♥K432 ♥A75
♦AK52 ♦9743
♣A102 ♣65

♠J92
♥96
♦J8
♣KQJ973

HCP	
5	
14	13
8	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	3	5	3	3	4
W	3	5	3	3	4

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

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

First of all, what do you think of that West hand? To my mind, with seven losers and excellent controls, it's too good for a weak no trump, so I'd start with 1♥. East makes the obvious response and South decides to get busy. West has nothing more to say, East's next action is equally clear, and West is at the crossroads.

Actually, you can get really rich by passing. Your side has seven top tricks in defence and can engineer an eighth on a trump promotion if you time it right. That'll teach South to mess us about!

But most of the time West will play in 3NT. On a club lead you duck and there's a straightforward squeeze for ten tricks, whether or not you rectify the count by ducking twice. With no opposition bidding it would be harder to read.

♠AKQJ10862
♥5
♦10
♣853

♠- ♠75
♥KQ96 ♥AJ742
♦AK654 ♦Q932
♣KJ109 ♣A7

♠943
♥1083
♦J87
♣Q642

HCP	
10	
16	11
3	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	2	-
S	-	-	-	2	-
E	4	7	7	-	-
W	4	7	7	-	-

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
	4♦	Pass	4♠
Dbl	Pass	?	

If you play Texas, North can show a strong 4♠ opening; if not, a 4♠ opening bid will give East-West the same problem. This time I believe South does best not to muddy the waters; if East-West think they're being talked out of something they might react aggressively.

As it has gone should East force to slam? I think it's a really tough decision; if you do, West will be really excited. As we see, seven of either red suit is cold, but how many will get there? Not many, I suspect. 6♥ plus one should score well enough.

Here's an idea. Over the double of 4♠ how about 4NT from East (two places to play). Whatever West responds, you continue with 5♥. Will West get the message?

♠984
♥KQ1082
♦875
♣K7

♠KQJ1065 ♠A732
♥AJ63 ♥4
♦K6 ♦AQJ10
♣2 ♣Q643

♠-
♥975
♦9432
♣AJ10985

HCP	
8	
14	13
5	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	-	-	-	-
S	1	-	-	-	-
E	-	5	-	6	4
W	-	4	-	6	4

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
		1♦	3♣
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass
6♠	All pass		

Hmm. As West you definitely can't be sure a slam is on but it should be a good bet. I can't think of any way of investigating, other than the "Old Black". There's nothing in the play, of course.

I'm not changing my philosophy about being aggressive as South, but suppose you go quietly. West will respond 1♠, East will raise to 2♠ (almost worth a double raise, but not quite) and now what? I think West should make another move with 3♥, ostensibly a game try, East will accept and you're in much the same position as the other auction.

♠KQ64
♥65
♦KQ3
♣QJ73

♠J82 ♠A1095
♥AKQ107 ♥93
♦42 ♦AJ7
♣A102 ♣K865

♠73
♥J842
♦109865
♣94

HCP	
13	
14	12
1	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	3	5	5	5
W	4	3	5	5	5

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
			Pass
1♥	Dbl	Redbl	2♦
Pass	Pass	?	

Without North's double, East-West will get to the obvious 3NT in quick time. With the diamonds lying kindly, there's an easy ten tricks, and eleven if you guess the hearts right.
But North does have a clear double. There's nothing for East to say for now but redouble; South bids the obvious 2♦, and now what? The key thing is that West's pass should show a decent hand, otherwise you would warn partner off seeking a penalty. All roads should lead to 3NT and now there's a reasonable case for getting the hearts right, with North favourite to be short.

♠Q2
♥109
♦A1082
♣Q9632

♠A1094 ♠K53
♥QJ765 ♥A843
♦K654 ♦J
♣- ♣K10754

♠J876
♥K2
♦Q973
♣AJ8

HCP	
8	
10	11
11	

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

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

How many hearts is East worth? It's only seven losers so I'd be inclined to bid game. Are you worth a Splinter then? Why not, I suppose, apart from the issue of helping the defence.
If East does Splinter, surely North will lead a trump; quite probably, that's the best choice anyway.
Although hearts are 2-2, and the spades are OK for declarer, the ace of diamonds is wrong and there are only nine obvious tricks. But, hey presto, the ace of clubs comes down in three and there's your tenth.

♠KJ962
♥1076
♦64
♣J106

♠Q87 ♠4
♥K9852 ♥QJ
♦J ♦AQ108532
♣KQ52 ♣A87

♠A1053
♥A43
♦K97
♣943

HCP	
5	
11	13
11	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	4	3	-	-
W	4	4	3	-	-

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	3♦	Pass
?			

This is a tricky one. The first question is whether East should upgrade that hand to a jump rebid. Well, it's only six losers, even without counting those good cards in partner's suit, so I think it's worth it.
It's a bad time this time though. West will surely drive to game and no game stands any chance. West may test the water with a forcing 3♥ but many of us would just bash the most likely game, 3NT. 3NT, of course, is by far the worst of all the likely games.
So the prizes go to caution this time. If East rebids only 2♦ I hope West isn't tempted to bid on with a hand with no aces and no real fit.

♠A86
♥AK42
♦862
♣J86

♠10432
♥J
♦A1043
♣Q1053

♠KQJ5
♥108765
♦KQ
♣92

♠97
♥Q93
♦J975
♣AK74

HCP	
12	
7	11
10	

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

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1NT	2♦	2♠
?			

Some very odd things could happen here. First, has East an opening bid? It's a seven loser hand, which argues yes, but one tends to downgrade an aceless hand. Moreover, if you open 1♥ and partner doesn't bid spades you find yourself rebidding an anaemic five card suit. Ugh!
So it's passed round to North, who has not much of a weak no trump but I suppose we all do at pairs. East can enter the fray now with an Aspro bid and South has a problem. It would be cowardly to pass so you bid the opponent's suit, for takeout. However, once you bid your side is in trouble. West must realise that partner's other suit is favourite to be hearts. Can you wield the axe?
I bet North regrets not passing the hand out!

♠109872
♥Q10
♦A4
♣J542

♠Q63
♥9832
♦J7
♣K1087

♠AKJ
♥765
♦108653
♣Q6

♠54
♥AKJ4
♦KQ92
♣A93

HCP	
7	
6	10
17	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	2	3	2	3
S	2	2	2	2	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
			1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	?		

We seem to have a succession of really tough decisions. If you play your no trump rebids as 15-17 I suppose most will do so here, but it's a really tasty 17. If you settle for 1NT it's close whether North should play in spades or no trumps. On the one hand your suit has plenty of losers, on the other it'll take some establishing at no trumps. This time no trumps clearly works better.
If you upgrade the South hand then North will push to game. The computer says North can make 3NT but South can't. To beat 3NT I think West has to make an unlikely start with the ten of clubs! Well, that won't happen, so all you upgraders win this time. Just keep plugging away with spades and they can't hurt you.

♠KQ7
♥7653
♦A5
♣9762

♠1032
♥KJ4
♦9642
♣A108

♠86
♥Q1098
♦KQ108
♣J43

♠AJ954
♥A2
♦J73
♣KQ5

HCP	
9	
8	8
15	

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

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	All pass	

Not another close bidding decision! Well, what do you respond as North? With three good spades and a doubleton it's clearly unsuitable for 1NT. But if you bid 2♣ you will be in game opposite a flat 15 count. Do you want to be, with no trick making potential in your long suits?
2♠ is the right spot this time. However, virtually all you need to make game is the ace of clubs right. A lot of match points hang on that card.

♠Q862
♥J976
♦K63
♣87

♠A75
♥Q2
♦1092
♣QJ964

♠KJ4
♥84
♦AQ84
♣AK105

♠1093
♥AK1053
♦J75
♣32

HCP	
6	
9	17
8	

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

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
	Pass	1♣	1♥
3♣	3♥	?	

As usual I think one should open the lower of two four card minors, just as you would with the majors in an otherwise balanced hand. I guess South has to overcall, if only to help partner with the defence. West's 3♣ is more pre-emptive than constructive and North is certainly entitled to raise hearts.

3♥ is actually too high on a part score hand if East-West can defend it doubled. It's a reasonable shot for East to double, if it just shows values, but for many of us it's a game try, which would be a gross overstatement. And if East does double, will West leave it in? I doubt it.

4♣ is a comfortable make; you have time to test the diamonds and don't even need the spade finesse.

♠Q3
♥86
♦AJ54
♣AQ1063

♠J2
♥AKJ102
♦K107
♣972

♠AK104
♥Q73
♦Q9832
♣J

♠98765
♥954
♦6
♣K854

HCP	
13	
12	12
3	

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

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

Vulnerable against not, that's a marginal overcall by North. At teams I'd be inclined to silence. Even with a minimum opening East makes a support double, showing three card heart support. South is happy to raise (at any other score you might bid 4♣). With good fitting cards in partner's suit West is happy to bid game.

4♥ can be defeated, though it's likely to make against any lead but the ace of diamonds, resulting in two defensive ruffs. Next best is a trump; declarer has to go after club ruffs. You only get one but the happy spade position means you only have to find the jack of diamonds to succeed.

♠98
♥QJ74
♦K87
♣J643

♠QJ52
♥A6
♦A95432
♣10

♠643
♥1032
♦106
♣AQ952

♠AK107
♥K985
♦QJ
♣K87

HCP	
7	
11	6
16	

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

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
			1♥
2♦	3♥	All pass	

A pre-emptive 3♥ is a bit of a stretch, but at the vulnerability it's a possible choice. Having seen partner's bidding before, and with apparently useless cards in diamonds, South has had enough.

So long as you don't take any odd views in clubs, hearts looks to make an easy nine tricks.

In an odd way North's aggressive bid has backfired. If you bid only 2♥ maybe West will back in again and concede rather more than 140 in a spade or diamond part score.

♠QJ103
♥K1083
♦KQ7
♣65

♠K2 ♠9864
♥AQ5 ♥962
♦J54 ♦108632
♣AKJ107 ♣Q

♠A75
♥J74
♦A9
♣98432

HCP	
11	
18	2
9	

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

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1NT
?			

I really have no idea how this will go. With four cards in both majors I think it's right to scrape up a double as North. South doesn't have much choice but 1NT; you haven't actually got a club stop, but may in practice get one if West leads a top one against 1NT.
But will East-West go quietly? West has rather a lot, even though some of it looks badly placed. You might double, even opposite a passed partner. I doubt East will stand a double and will run to 2♦. That's probably wise, as 1NT will often get through.
Over 2♦, will South give up? Tough choice but you probably can't do better than minus 90 if you bid.

♠Q984
♥-
♦J864
♣K10876

♠5 ♠732
♥9853 ♥K764
♦Q10752 ♦3
♣AQ2 ♣J9543

♠AKJ106
♥AQJ102
♦AK9
♣-

HCP	
6	
8	4
22	

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

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
	Pass	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	Wow!		

I sometimes have misgivings about opening 2♣ on very distributional hands; you can be vulnerable to pre-emptive bidding. Not this time though.
Some players use the same obstructive methods against 2♣ as they do to strong 1♣ openings. You might catch an expensive cold this time, losing a huge score in a heart contract.
Assuming no opposition bidding I'm sure most North-Souths will reach 6♠. North does best just to make a simple raise and after a series of cue bids someone will just run out of things to say. A trump lead works best and suddenly 6♠ is no gimme. You probably start with a ruffing heart finesse; it loses and now you must discard all but one of dummy's diamonds before taking your diamond ruff.

♠864
♥AKJ
♦KQJ7
♣Q54

♠J7 ♠AQ932
♥75432 ♥Q10
♦A54 ♦1092
♣J86 ♣K109

♠K105
♥986
♦863
♣A732

HCP	
16	
6	11
7	

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

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

Yes, I really would open 1NT at pairs, even vulnerable against not. All those intermediates and five card suit make it far better than eleven points.
It could work badly here, if North-South know their stuff. To pass a transfer bid (or Stayman) and then back in with a double is best played as a hand that would have doubled 1NT, usually balanced. Now, what is South to do? You don't have any attractive choices and the percentage action is surely to hope it goes off.
And the percentages win. South may elect to lead a trump but North will lose no time in attacking diamonds and paving the way for a tasty penalty of 500.

♠A2
♥A10854
♦K6
♣AJ43

♠Q743 ♠986
♥9 ♥QJ732
♦1097542 ♦8
♣Q10 ♣K762

♠KJ105
♥K6
♦AQJ3
♣985

HCP		
	16	
4		6
	14	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	5	4	4	5	5
S	5	4	4	5	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

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

I would definitely consider South's hand too good for a weak no trump, with two good suits and plenty of playing strength. Expecting 15-19, North has visions of slam, but calls it a day in time.
Ten tricks are easy but you need an eleventh for a good score. There's no future in hearts, as it happens, and you're likely to lose a spade trick. Where does that elusive trick come from?
Surprisingly, it's clubs. Lead a low one from hand at some stage and the power of your 98 takes advantage of a very lucky distribution. Who will find that line"

♠K6
♥J432
♦Q82
♣J432

♠Q10 ♠AJ987
♥AK1087 ♥Q9
♦A104 ♦J76
♣KQ5 ♣1087

♠5432
♥65
♦K953
♣A96

HCP		
	7	
18		8
	7	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	3	5	5	5
W	4	3	5	5	5

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

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

East may search for a 5-3 spade fit; I'm not sure I'd bother with that shape and minor holdings that suggest we'll lose as many tricks in a trump contract. Anyway, all roads lead to what should be a universally popular contract.
And I suspect it will be a very common eleven tricks. I don't see why North shouldn't lead a club, less than dynamic though it looks. South has no obvious reason to switch, declarer finesses in spades and has visions of twelve tricks. However, have you any reason not to play hearts from the top? I can't see it.
If at any time the defenders lead diamonds, you get eleven tricks without bothering with a heart view.

♠9854
♥43
♦A542
♣Q105

♠KJ10 ♠32
♥K2 ♥QJ8765
♦KJ9 ♦83
♣J7432 ♣986

♠AQ76
♥A109
♦Q1076
♣AK

HCP		
	6	
12		3
	19	

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

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

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

This hand requires a good deal of discipline. South has a very good hand, to be sure, but after a single raise it's by no means a foregone conclusion that there's a game on. AK doubleton is not an efficient use of seven points, so a game try is enough. With four trumps and a minimum North reverts to a suit contract and South is well advised to call it a day.
On a neutral defence even 3♠ is quite enough. You'll need all your skill to amass nine tricks. An endplay on West, hard to visualise, is called for.

♠53
♥8642
♦J83
♣A864

♠A62 ♠K1087
♥10 ♥K5
♦AQ109765 ♦K
♣J2 ♣KQ9753

♠QJ94
♥AQJ973
♦42
♣10

HCP	
5	
11	14
10	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	3	-	-
S	-	-	3	-	-
E	5	4	-	3	-
W	5	4	-	3	-

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
		1♣	1♥
2♦	2♥	2♠	3♥
Dbl	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	?	

I don't know who dealt these hands but they're really tough. Most of the auction is fairly logical, with each side showing its values. West's double suggests doubt as to the final outcome. It would not be at all unreasonable for East to decide to play in game. The problem is, which one? You expect partner to have a good diamond suit and a bit of club support, so where should we play?

If the defence is razor-sharp then 5♦ goes down; heart lead, club return and club ruff. 5♣ is OK, but it's pretty lucky. On a high spade lead you win with the king, unblock the king of diamonds and play trumps. The fortunate lie of the minors sees you home.

♠8
♥865
♦KJ52
♣K8763

♠Q97532 ♠J4
♥974 ♥KJ2
♦109 ♦A743
♣94 ♣AQ105

♠AK106
♥AQ103
♦Q86
♣J2

HCP	
7	
2	15
16	

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

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

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

This matchpoint lark really puts you under pressure, doesn't it? West is too weak for a WJO, even by my standards. North makes the obvious raise and now West can't resist temptation. North's double suggests a decent hand (well, whatever) and South has little choice but to go for blood. Meanwhile, East wonders why it seems to be a sixty point pack!

So how will 2♠ doubled get on? Heart lead, diamond return and declarer is feeling unhappy. Two down looks about the right result and North-South will be very pleased. East won't.

♠K1096
♥K
♦874
♣AQ975

♠A842 ♠QJ73
♥Q6 ♥J109843
♦AJ9 ♦Q
♣10843 ♣J2

♠5
♥A752
♦K106532
♣K6

HCP	
12	
11	7
10	

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

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

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

That frivolous looking weak jump overcall by East is a real game changer. Without it, North-South would bid quietly to a part score in no trumps or diamonds. The uncontested auction would go 1♣ -1♦ -1♠- 1NT or 2♦. But now the whole thing has got out of hand.

Even 3♦ would be a struggle, anything more is hopeless. It just goes to show that an innocent looking intervention can change the whole complexion of a hand.

East's overcall is technically unsound. In principle, you don't get busy when you may have a better fit elsewhere. However, once West has passed as dealer, East has a free rein to mess around.

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