EBED

English Bridge
Education & Development

Sim Pairs

Commentary by Graham Osborne

Wednesday

15th May 2019

Welcome to the **English Bridge Education & Development** (EBED) Simultaneous Pairs.

The proceeds raised by this event will be used by EBED, **the national charity for the promotion and development of bridge,** in support of its objectives to promote the national learning program "**Bridge for All**" and especially to improve and develop the infrastructure for bridge teaching in England by expanding our support for EBTA – the **English Bridge Teachers Association**

EBED supplies "Bridge for All" teaching materials, organises Minibridge/Duplicate Bridge 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 EBED's activities in the current issue of English Bridge and at www.ebedcio.org.uk. If you wish to know more about EBED or to arrange a donation/legacy in favour of the charity, please contact us via richard@ebedcio.org.uk

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 thank you so much for your support!

Donna Wright
Chief Executive
English Bridge Education & Development, Registered Charity No: 1153543

♠AJ9873
♥AJ86
♦KQ4
♣-

♠106 ♠KQ542
♥Q954 ♥10
♦6532 ♦A987
♣A96 ♣Q32

♠-
♥K732
♦J10
♣KJ108754

HCP	
15	
6	11
8	

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

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

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

An awkward deal to start with. Most pairs are going to reach game in hearts but making it will be another matter. In the auction above 2♥ is forcing (in modern Acol a change of suit by opener is forcing after a 2-level response).
East may try ♦A as a lead for want of anything better and continue with a second round. This doesn't give declarer anything that is not already his. I suspect a popular line will be to win the second diamond in hand, cash the other top diamond and start a cross-ruff. That is not unreasonable but on the actual lie is doomed to failure. The winning line is complicated but the essence of it is to set up a club trick by taking two ruffing finesses and I will be surprised if more than a handful of declarers chalk up their game.

♠J103
♥AJ42
♦Q873
♣A8

♠74 ♠KQ96
♥Q83 ♥765
♦J952 ♦106
♣Q1097 ♣K642

♠A852
♥K109
♦AK4
♣J53

HCP	
12	
5	8
15	

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

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

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

This looks to be everybody's 3NT, despite an extra trick being available double dummy in both majors. A club lead will be a popular start for the defence. Declarer should duck the lead to the king, and then if he believes the defensive carding, it will look like the suit is breaking 4-4 when East returns the ♣2 to trick two. Declarer can pick up ♥Qxxx in either hand (start with the jack from dummy to pick up that holding with East) but I suspect the more natural line, will be to cross to the ♥K and run the ♥10. With diamonds not behaving that looks like nine tricks for the vast majority of declarers and a few doing a trick better or worse.

♠QJ109654
♥Q8
♦1094
♣5

♠872 ♠A3
♥1075 ♥K432
♦Q832 ♦AK75
♣Q103 ♣J82

♠K
♥AJ96
♦J6
♣AK9764

HCP	
5	
4	15
16	

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

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

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

An old-fashioned pre-emptive 3♠ response would be quite descriptive here, if available. It is close as to whether South should raise with his trump honour and quick tricks outside. On a top diamond lead with partner encouraging, the best defence of next cashing the trump ace and then playing two more rounds of diamonds should not be too difficult to find. Other defences either allow declarer to discard one of his diamonds on a club winner or to ruff a diamond with ♠K which is painless for declarer. When North responds 1♠, East will make a take-out double, South will rebid clubs and the bidding is likely to subside in a spade partial.

♠K87
♥10963
♦J62
♣J97

♠Q92 ♠J10543
♥AKQ7 ♥J5
♦K1097 ♦A854
♣103 ♣AQ

♠A6
♥842
♦Q3
♣K86542

HCP	
5	
14	12
9	

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

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

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

It is close as to whether East should drive to game opposite a weak NT opening but the weak main suit, half your points in a doubleton and the form of scoring all suggest the more cautious route. West has an obvious accept of the invite and with a small doubleton suggesting a ruffing value the spade game is the one to go for.
On a likely heart lead, win in dummy and start the trumps. If North wins the first round and switches to a club it is best to finesse, this makes an overtrick if the king is onside and if it is offside you can discard your diamond losers on the hearts. The alternative of rising with the ♣A and discarding the ♣Q on the hearts is worse for two reasons, one you rarely make an overtrick when the ♣K is onside and secondly if hearts break 5-2 South may score a small trump.

♠Q
♥KQ982
♦A5
♣QJ1042

♠A ♠J96
♥AJ6543 ♥107
♦J942 ♦KQ10763
♣K6 ♣97

♠K10875432
♥-
♦8
♣A853

HCP	
14	
13	6
7	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	5	-	-	4	-
S	5	-	-	4	-
E	-	4	1	-	2
W	-	4	1	-	2

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

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

With a void in partner's suit and some gaps in your suit pre-empting to the limit isn't a sure thing but works okay here as not only does the contract make, but the opponents have a cheap save. On a diamond lead, the best shot is to take the club finesse, repeating it if it holds. This costs when East has two black singletons (very unlikely) or a club singleton and three trumps without the ace or ♣K singleton and two trumps without the ace (assuming that the opponents read the position correctly, which is far from certain, for example they may try and cash a diamond trick) and gains or at worst breaks even whenever East has the guarded ♣K. It is hard to see too many pairs finding the 5♦ save, perhaps the simplest route being if East tries a slightly aggressive weak 3♦ over the opening 1♥ bid.

♠84
♥8432
♦AKJ2
♣A94

♠AJ107
♥AK6
♦Q63
♣Q76

♠Q952
♥109
♦94
♣J10853

♠K63
♥QJ75
♦10875
♣K2

HCP	
12	
16	3
9	

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

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

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

On the above auction, West might start with three rounds of trumps, but that doesn't really harm declarer as he will just lose two more tricks in spades to make his contract. If East tries a frisky jump to 3♠ after the double, I would just pass with South as 3♠ is probably favourite to go down and 4♥ is unlikely make unless partner can act again given three of my points are the dubious ♠K.
When West starts with a strong NT his side maybe in trouble as best defence can set this two tricks. South discourages on the top diamond lead and North switches to a heart. Declarer can't stop the defence making eight tricks now whichever black suit he plays on. If the defence slips and allows declarer a sixth trick, he should be on for a great score as now he will beat the heart partials.

♠10973
♥Q65
♦Q32
♣J42

♠K86
♥A974
♦85
♣9763

♠AQJ54
♥10832
♦J7
♣AK

♠2
♥KJ
♦AK10964
♣Q1085

HCP	
5	
7	15
13	

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

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

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

When North passes his partner's opening bid East protects and the auction will get competitive but as is often the case, the spade suit will probably win out. East might think about looking for game after his partner's raise but two is the wrong number of diamonds to have as it is almost certain that partner has at least two as well. There is a small point to the play in spades, after two rounds of diamonds and then say a club switch declarer discovers the 4-1 spade break. After two rounds of trumps he should switch to the heart suit just in case the defence can force him twice in diamonds when they get in with their heart winners. If North tries 1♠ on the first round that may keep East-West out of the auction perhaps with the sequence 1♦-P-1♠-P-2♣-P-2♦-All Pass. 2♦ will make an overtrick unless the defence find their club ruff.

♠87
♥J98
♦Q108763
♣A4

♠K543
♥KQ72
♦J2
♣Q98

♠AQ10962
♥654
♦-
♣7532

♠J
♥A103
♦AK954
♣KJ106

HCP	
7	
11	6
16	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	5	-	-	1
S	2	5	-	-	1
E	-	-	1	3	-
W	-	-	1	3	-

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
Pass	Pass	2♠	Dble
3♠	4♦	Pass	5♦
All Pass			

Some North players will be able to open a weak 2♦ which will unearth the fit immediately, but it is far from certain that all pairs will reach the minor suit game. If East-West defend well they could put declarer to the test. The soft defence is two rounds of spades. Now declarer can draw trumps in two rounds and play ♣A and a club to the jack making six if East has Qx or Qxx in the suit. If the finesse loses he can discard his two heart losers on the clubs. The more demanding defence is for East to switch to a heart after winning the first round of spades, declarer finesses and the defence play another spade. From the carding it will probably look like East doesn't have the other heart honour so it will be up to declarer to guess who has the ♣Q. When East shows void in trumps the odds will be very close as to who to play for the queen.

♠KJ
♥AK82
♦QJ83
♣843

♠8
♥1097
♦A10742
♣J975

♠96543
♥QJ
♦96
♣AKQ6

♠AQ1072
♥6543
♦K5
♣102

HCP	
14	
5	12
9	

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

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

The hand with shape should act over 1NT but here 2♠ showing five spades and a minor might not be everyone's choice vulnerable. In the modern game South should not double which would be negative, but he should be very happy if the opponents choose to play a spade partial down two or three tricks vulnerable. It won't come as a great surprise to him that West would rather play in his partner's minor and now South could chance a double which would suggest that he had a penalty double of spade from his inaction on the first round. 3♦ is the call he does not want to hear from partner but maybe partner can pass for penalty or bid 3♥ both of which would be welcome developments. On the actual deal 3♣ doubled would be one down on trump leads for a top for North-South but even 3♥ which should be a comfortable make should be a little above average.

♠K64
♥K863
♦AQ1086
♣J

♠J10532
♥QJ972
♦-
♣AQ2

♠87
♥10
♦K9
♣K9876543

♠AQ9
♥A54
♦J75432
♣10

HCP	
13	
10	6
11	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	5	2	-	-
S	-	5	2	-	-
E	4	-	-	1	1
W	4	-	-	1	1

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
		3♣	Dble
5♣	Dble	All Pass	

Even though the suit is weak, with an eighth club the vulnerable pre-empt is reasonable. South could try 3♦ but it is a bit committal with such a poor suit and relative strength in the majors so double is preferred. West can boost the pre-empt leaving North with the final guess. He can double showing general strength, get greedy by trying his four card major (certainly doesn't work well here) or try his best suit. 5♦ makes if you play well. After a club lead to the ace and queen, heart switch, win the ace in dummy and play a diamond discovering that East has the guarded king. Now you have to eliminate the majors to endplay East. The percentage is play two rounds of your shorter major first, here spades and once you do that on the actual lie you are home. Continue with ♥K and then a third round of spades and if East doesn't ruff throw him in with a diamond to give you a ruff and discard to dispose of your heart loser.

♠Q42
♥963
♦K6
♣109874

♠96
♥72
♦AJ742
♣AQ63

♠AJ105
♥AJ854
♦Q10
♣52

♠K873
♥KQ10
♦9853
♣KJ

HCP	
5	
11	12
12	

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

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

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

In the suggested auction, East's 2♣ shows the majors and 2♦ asks for the longer major. You shouldn't be thinking of higher contracts with the West cards as you have no fitting honours for partner's suits and he may well have been bidding most of your cards for you with his initial action! In 2♥ declarer will lose two trumps and the pointed suit kings for an overtrick.
This hand may turn out to be a minefield for strong no-trumpers, you could imagine an auction that starts 1♦-P-P-X-P-P-P. North with Kx in his partner's suit may not think of running from one 1♦ doubled but as is often the case when a one level contract is doubled it is a good idea to try and find another spot. Here both 1♠ and 2♣ will cost 300 which won't be great but better than the 800 possible in 1♦. If North tries 1NT in response to his partner's opening, then a double by East for take-out converted to penalties by his partner is possible.

♠KJ542
♥J832
♦A65
♣7

♠1097
♥10
♦J92
♣J109863

♠63
♥975
♦743
♣AKQ42

♠AQ8
♥AKQ64
♦KQ108
♣5

HCP	
9	
2	9
20	

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
Pass	Pass	1♣	Dble
3♣	4♣	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

East should definitely be opening in third seat especially if his 1♣ opening is natural for the lead directional benefit. Secondly look at how much more difficult it is for the opponents to bid a slam with confidence. If you pass, South opens 1♥ and his partner can either splinter with 4♣ (particularly attractive opposite a five-card major opening) or go the more cautious route with a three level limit raise. Either route should lead to the small slam being bid. After a 1♣ opening, South has to start with a double and now West can boost the pre-emption with 3♣. The focus is now on North, you are really a bit strong for 3♠ which might be competing on far less values and here would probably lead to the slam being missed. Therefore, you have to go the more aggressive route of either jumping to 4♠ or bidding 4♣, offering partner a choice of games.

♠KQ942
♥Q105
♦98
♣KJ2

♠-
♥K762
♦KQ642
♣Q653

♠J8753
♥3
♦J103
♣A1098

♠A106
♥AJ984
♦A75
♣74

HCP	
11	
10	6
13	

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

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

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

Vulnerable, with only 11 aceless HCP, opening is a little rich for me, especially when you have the boss suit and thus are less likely to be stolen from in the auction. Opening will surely lead to the doomed spade game which if East leads his singleton looks to be at least two off. If South is left to open in third seat an interesting competitive auction could develop. I prefer 1♥ to 1NT opposite a passed hand as it caters to a fit in either major better. West shouldn't even be thinking about overcalling with a five-card suit, minimal points and weak length in the suit opened in front of him. However, he can try to push them when they alight in a fit at a low level which he knows is breaking badly.

♠AJ1052
♥54
♦A104
♣965

♠KQ763
♥AKQ7
♦J
♣A107

♠8
♥J9862
♦Q985
♣432

♠94
♥103
♦K7632
♣KQJ8

HCP	
9	
19	3
9	

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

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

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

The hand illustrates the perils of protecting one of a major without a good holding in the other major. Yes, North won't play South for a good hand if he tries 2♦ but this will give West the chance to make a take-out double and the far superior heart fit will be unearthed. Against 1♠, North leads a club and declarer wins and to escape for one down declarer has to cash his two heart winners before starting on the trump suit.
If he fails to do this, North will be able to discard a heart on the fourth round of clubs when declarer ruffs in, which should lead to down with accurate defence. Holding heart contracts to nine tricks should be easy enough as South has an obvious club lead, whilst if East is declarer North should be able to find the club switch if he starts with the ♦A.

♠763
♥AK765432
♦-
♣Q7

♠Q10852 ♠J
♥J ♥Q8
♦QJ93 ♦K876542
♣J85 ♣AK10

♠AK94
♥109
♦A10
♣96432

HCP	
9	
7	13
11	

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

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

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

The 1♣ opening is marginal at the prevailing vulnerability but you do have a 5-4 shape and crisp honour cards. North may well respond by bidding what he thinks he can make and here he would be right as after two top clubs have been cashed he will have the rest. An aggressive East might try 5♦, but with defensive cards in the opponent's suits that is not clear. If North tries a slower approach and responds at the one level, then East can overcall in diamonds and then, when partner shows some support, the save is much more likely to be found. With only the three aces to take against 5♦ North-South will have to push onto the five level to ensure a reasonable score, and I can see South with his minimum opener and what looks like three quick tricks against the opponents contract doubling, although should he pass North with a partial fit in clubs and no diamonds at all is likely to chance the five level.

♠K8
♥Q983
♦96543
♣Q8

♠53 ♠AQ
♥K7652 ♥104
♦K872 ♦AQJ
♣65 ♣AK10732

♠J1097642
♥AJ
♦10
♣J94

HCP	
7	
6	20
7	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	5	3	4	1	5
W	5	3	4	-	5

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
Pass	Pass	2NT	3♠
Dble	Pass	3NT	All Pass

At favourable vulnerability South may well poke his nose into the auction leaving little room for East-West to explore for the best contract. Left to his own devices West can transfer to hearts and then bid 3NT leaving partner to decide. After the overcall, double, (in the modern style for take-out) the most flexible choice, leaving all of 4♥, 3NT and 3♠ doubled in play. Here East should try 3NT, with a double stop in the suit overcalled and a source of tricks in clubs that looks much more attractive than trying to defeat South by four tricks to show a profit against a vulnerable game making. Indeed, against the best lead of a trump versus 3♠ declarer still has six easy tricks and if West leads anything else, declarer can do a trick better. A 3NT contract is likely to make 10 tricks after a spade lead, the double dummy route required to make 11 tricks is rather incredible to say the least, as you will appreciate if you take the time to work out what you have to do.

♠KJ1074
♥K74
♦Q
♣Q432

♠AQ ♠3
♥93 ♥AJ1062
♦KJ864 ♦A532
♣KJ65 ♣A98

♠98652
♥Q85
♦1097
♣107

HCP	
11	
14	13
2	

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

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

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

The 1♠ opening is not something to be proud of but at least we are not vulnerable, however, after the overcall and pre-emptive raise by South, West will be left few options other than 3NT, which happens to be the best strain for his side, despite the best efforts of the opposition to push him around. After a spade lead to queen, South tries a heart finesse, when this loses North is marked with the remainder of his points for the opening bid, so declarer should have no trouble coming to twelve tricks. 6♦ makes but isn't a great spot with a certain heart loser and a hole in the trump suit and some more work to do. I can't see more than a handful of pairs reaching it since either if North passes initially 1♥-P-2♦-2♠-3♦ doesn't feel like an auction that is going to finish at the six level.

♠AKJ3
♥J532
♦AQ6
♣43

♠76
♥74
♦1074
♣KQJ765

♠Q10984
♥8
♦KJ98
♣A98

♠52
♥AKQ1096
♦532
♣102

HCP	
15	
6	10
9	

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
		Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

4♥ is a good contract requiring either the spade finesse or the diamond finesse at worst. There seem to be a few ways the defence could slip-up here, perhaps conceding a ruff and discard in clubs as West plays East for a doubleton club and a trump honour, if East overtakes the ♣K lead and returns one (you shouldn't overtake for this exact reason). After two rounds of clubs, West needs to switch to a diamond, otherwise on a spade switch declarer can draw trumps in hand and then play ace, king and ruff a spade, cross to the ♥ J, and then discard a diamond on the fourth round of spades endplaying East.

An aggressive East may double in the auction above which will lead to 5♦ doubled.

How good -300 is will depend on how many pairs slip in the defence to 4♥.

♠KJ65
♥J4
♦8752
♣J82

♠A732
♥KQ3
♦93
♣AQ97

♠4
♥A987652
♦106
♣K53

♠Q1098
♥10
♦AKQJ4
♣1064

HCP	
6	
15	7
12	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	1	-
S	-	-	-	1	-
E	5	-	5	-	2
W	5	-	5	-	2

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

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

Most tables are going to end up with East declaring a heart game leaving South to cash his two diamond winners and move on the next board. However, perhaps some North-South pairs seduced by the vulnerability will try a save in one of their fits. When East-West push onto the five level they will achieve the same result as most other tables but if 5♦ gets doubled and the defence get all their tricks they will end with a top score. After ♥K lead, East should overtake (knowing that a second round is not cashing) and switch to his singleton to collect two ruffs. 4♠ is a much better prospect for North-South, with only five top losers but with trumps 4-1, declarer can be held to seven tricks (for instance two rounds of hearts forcing South and then the first two rounds of trumps ducked) but -500 is still a great result on the board.

♠K63
♥2
♦AJ76532
♣K8

♠A842
♥A9754
♦K8
♣95

♠Q1097
♥KJ10
♦-
♣AQ10763

♠J5
♥Q863
♦Q1094
♣J42

HCP	
11	
11	12
6	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	2	-	-	-
S	-	2	-	-	-
E	5	-	5	6	-
W	5	-	6	6	3

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

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

West might pass on his first turn in the auction but having opened, 3♠ does have the merit of simplifying the auction and protecting the ♦K from attack. Making six requires finding the ♥Q, playing the spades successfully (North may be threatening a heart ruff if he has led his singleton) as well as the club finesse.

Any pairs that try 5♦ should come unstuck despite the eleven card fit. If only there were more entries to the South hand declarer would be able to try finesses in diamonds, and both black suits. The defence does have to be accurate though to stop declarer getting to table, ♥J lead and two rounds of clubs followed by the ♥K will do the job, but an initial spade lead will allow declarer to escape for two down and 500 if he guesses diamonds successfully.

♠Q2
♥AKQJ1093
♦J
♣QJ5

♠A10653 ♠KJ
♥7 ♥8542
♦K3 ♦8762
♣AK964 ♣1083

♠9874
♥6
♦AQ10954
♣72

HCP	
16	
14	4
6	

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

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

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

It is not a great 4♥ opening vulnerable against not. The suit is strong but you only have seven cards and soft defensive cards in the other suits. It may well work out here though since West will be railroaded into 4♠. After two top hearts with South discarding a club, if declarer decides to work on his side-suit first by cashing ♣ AK the hand will collapse, and he will finish at least down three. +150 for North/South will be more than they can score by going positive in a heart contract their way. An auction if North opens at the one level might be 1♥-P-1♠-2♣-3♥-All Pass. Even nine tricks in hearts isn't a sure thing, declarer might well choose to finesse in diamonds at some point rather than lead up towards the ♣QJ hoping for ♣AK onside, although at many tables, declarer will probably benefit from some defensive help.

♠K8
♥10
♦J10742
♣QJ1065

♠J43 ♠Q1065
♥8642 ♥QJ53
♦K93 ♦Q86
♣K84 ♣32

♠A972
♥AK97
♦A5
♣A97

HCP	
7	
7	7
19	

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

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

The suggested auction will likely receive a spade lead from East. Declarer has to win in dummy to preserve his entry to the long clubs. The defence can then play a second round of the suit when they are in with the ♣K and that should hold declarer to nine tricks. At some tables South will open 2NT, either because he is in range or, due to an upgrade because of the excellent controls. North will raise to three and West will lead a heart. The lead of the ♥8 would give declarer a tenth trick immediately, but you can see West continuing the heart suit after they get in with the ♣K even if they have initially led a lower pip leading to a vital overtrick for declarer.

♠A94
♥Q1076
♦QJ5
♣Q72

♠Q1082 ♠K75
♥J9 ♥AK42
♦A1094 ♦832
♣AK6 ♣J85

♠J63
♥853
♦K76
♣10943

HCP	
11	
14	11
4	

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

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
			Pass
1NT	All Pass		

There is a good case at match-points for not inviting with the East hand after partner opens with a weak NT. You have 4-3-3-3 shape and a couple of unsupported honours and poor secondary pips. Here, of course, the inviters will come up smelling of roses, since they find partner with a huge maximum, and the spade suit lies very well for the declaring side. Even allowing for that declarer is still short of a trick (3 spades, 2 hearts, a diamond and 2 clubs) but those that have reached game without using Stayman will probably get a heart lead, gifting a trick. Those that have implied hearts in the dummy will be okay as well because a minor suit lead from North won't fare any better, with a club yielding a trick immediately and a diamond eventually leading to the thirteenth card in that suit being established.

♠AK32
♥109863
♦976
♣3

♠9765 ♠J84
♥7542 ♥KQJ
♦QJ32 ♦AK105
♣2 ♣1087

♠Q10
♥A
♦84
♣AKQJ9654

HCP	
7	
3	14
16	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	5	-	2	1	3
S	5	-	2	1	3
E	-	1	-	-	-
W	-	1	-	-	-

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
Pass	Pass	1NT	Dble
2♦	2♥	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	5♣
All Pass			

If East-West aren't playing an escape mechanism after 1NT gets doubled, they might have a rethink after this hand, since the defence will take the first 12 tricks and maybe all 13 if declarer discards a spade from dummy at some point. The remainder of the field will have to work harder for their match-points. Reaching 3NT will be tricky if West has shown diamonds when he ran, so club contracts will be much more common, but clearly not everybody is going to reach game. Virtually everyone will be held to 11 tricks as surely the auction will have made the ♦Q a standout lead. If East opens 1♦ playing a strong no-trump, then you could try 3♦ asking partner for a stop for 3NT. Here he can't oblige so again a club contract will be reached.

♠1042
♥532
♦9652
♣J65

♠AQ63 ♠KJ975
♥QJ ♥A8
♦J ♦Q73
♣KQ10874 ♣A92

♠8
♥K109764
♦AK1084
♣3

HCP	
1	
15	14
10	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	1	3	-	-
S	-	1	3	-	-
E	6	-	-	6	5
W	6	-	-	6	5

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
	Pass	1♠	2♠
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

A tricky bidding test here with a low point count virtually cold slam for East-West. A 1NT opening (weak) will kill off slam chances but those that open 1♠ either reasoning that a maximum with a five-card suit is worth more than a weak NT or playing strong no-trump have a chance. South will make a nuisance of himself, probably with Michaels, which will at least leave room for a splinter from West. East with three key cards and some length in the splinter suit would judge well to try 4♥, which is below game and need not show a great hand but at least some suitability. An initial 4♥ overcall or further intervention by South on the second round will make life very difficult for the opponents. I don't expect anyone to reach the double dummy par of 7♥ doubled (use the ♥5 as an entry to pick up the diamond suit after cashing a top honour) down four.

♠973
♥AQ875
♦Q105
♣105

♠AK ♠Q6
♥93 ♥K42
♦AJ62 ♦K98
♣Q9632 ♣AKJ74

♠J108542
♥J106
♦743
♣8

HCP	
8	
14	16
2	

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

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

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

An inverted minor suit sequence for weak no-trumpers and a more prosaic 1NT-3NT for strong no-trumpers should see virtually everyone finishing in 3NT by East.

On a spade lead by South declarer will have to decide how aggressive he is in looking for overtricks. There are nine on top of course, and five rounds of clubs will probably produce some useful clues as to how to proceed. One possibility would be to try the ♦K and ♦A next hoping for a doubleton queen and if no luck, then try a heart towards the king.

Incidentally, there is a reasonable case for South to lead ♥J initially, trying to find partner's suit as with such a weak hand it is unlikely that he will get to run his spade suit.

♠A107
♥AK108752
♦J
♣Q6

♠KJ2
♥J63
♦AQ3
♣J1032

♠Q98653
♥-
♦K10762
♣K5

♠4
♥Q94
♦9854
♣A9874

HCP	
14	
12	8
6	

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

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
			Pass
1NT	4♥	4♠	5♥
5♠	All Pass		

This looks to be one of those hands where both sides carry on bidding with nobody being sure about who is saving against who. West doesn't have much of a hand having opened a weak no-trump but as the auction progresses, he can picture the heart shortage in partner's hand and, he has very strong trump support to justify his push to the five level.
A heart lead gives declarer a chance to make 5♠ if he can guess the club suit correctly. Once North turns up with two heart honours and the ♠A you may well reason that South has the other ace to justify his five-level competition. Spade contracts can be held to ten tricks by an initial diamond lead to set up a ruff, but, you would be rightly suspicious of anyone that found that defence.

♠KQ8752
♥Q54
♦A5
♣A4

♠94
♥J82
♦QJ82
♣J962

♠J1063
♥AK73
♦64
♣KQ5

♠A
♥1096
♦K10973
♣10873

HCP	
15	
5	13
7	

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

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

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

North is maximum for a 2♠ rebid, but the uninspiring shape and, in context, weak spades suggest the more cautious rebid. Even though dummy has the ♠A and a fitting king, the three level looks too high. Here the aggressive rebidders will survive, providing partner does not carry on to game, since the likely initial lead of a top heart will allow declarer to later take a successful finesse of West's jack.

♠Q98
♥82
♦AQJ96
♣762

♠K42
♥A1043
♦83
♣AKJ8

♠J10
♥975
♦107542
♣Q53

♠A7653
♥KQJ6
♦K
♣1094

HCP	
9	
15	3
13	

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

Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

West	***North***	***East***	***South***
	Pass	Pass	1♠
1NT	Dble	All Pass	

Trouble is lurking for the unwary on this hand. If East pulls to his five-card suit after 1NT gets doubled, then a bad situation will get a whole lot worse. 2♦ will be down two or three. There are a few indications to pass 1NT doubled. Firstly, you have help in the suit opened, secondly the soft honours and finally the five-card suit is very weak. In contrast 1NT has six fairly straightforward tricks for one down.
If West starts with a double and North finds a thinnish redouble, again there is a case for East not immediately running to 2♦, indeed here after a pass by partner, West might try 2♣ which it will be difficult for North-South to double.

♠A73
♥-
♦AKQ73
♣K9842

♠KJ942 ♠Q5
♥103 ♥AJ542
♦J8 ♦954
♣QJ107 ♣A65

♠1086
♥KQ9876
♦1062
♣3

HCP	
16	
8	11
5	

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

Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all

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

If East opens either a weak no-trump or 1♥, then the likely result is that South will end up declaring 3♦ after his partner has shown the minors with an unusual no-trump bid. The best lead for the defence is a trump (often the case when one hand has shown a big two suiter). Declarer just about survives, he wins and ducks a club. The defence plays a second trump, declarer ruffs a club but the ♣A drops on the third round for nine tricks. On a non-trump lead declarer should make ten tricks by ruffing two clubs. If East passes, then South will open a weak 2♥, over which nobody will bid. Curiously this may be okay for South, as to defeat 2♥ the defence need to lead an unlikely diamond. After the normal looking ♣Q lead, declarer will be a tempo ahead of the defence.

♠K1097
♥742
♦6543
♣73

♠J8642 ♠3
♥AQJ9 ♥10653
♦72 ♦Q109
♣A2 ♣KQ654

♠AQ5
♥K8
♦AKJ8
♣J1098

HCP	
3	
12	7
18	

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

Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

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

The age-old question whether to double or overcall in the long suit with 5-4 in the majors rears its head here. In this instance with the hearts being so strong relative to the spades, I think the double is clear. This could pave the way to an interesting competitive auction, with South rebidding 1NT (a good 17-19 HCP and making incidentally unless the defence starts with an unlikely three rounds of clubs). West can compete in hearts and maybe North will judge well to compete with his diamond fit and well placed king opposite his partner once he has shown strength.

♠Q865
♥6
♦AJ984
♣KJ8

♠107 ♠K932
♥9832 ♥K54
♦Q72 ♦K1063
♣A1073 ♣94

♠AJ4
♥AQJ107
♦5
♣Q652

HCP	
11	
6	9
14	

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

Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

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

South's club stop isn't so wonderful so he should use fourth suit forcing to check whether his partner has three hearts before committing to no-trumps. If North passes initially then it is possible that some pairs miss game especially if North responds to 2♦ to his partner's 1♥ opening.
The cards lie very well for declarer, and where East is on lead, only a heart lead doesn't present declarer with another trick immediately. You could imagine for instance ♣9 to the ace followed by a diamond to the 10 and another diamond which gives declarer three tricks in each minor and two in each major with the aid of a finesse. Indeed, you could imagine nine tricks in no-trumps being below average.