



Sim Pairs

Commentary by Julian Pottage

Tuesday 5th September 2023

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. At EBED we focus on two priorities:

- A national bridge education and training framework and,
- Youth bridge initiatives to encourage those still in full time education to learn and play bridge.

EBED supports students and bridge teachers to use the "Bridge for All" syllabus, a coherent framework that takes learners from complete beginner through to competent club player. We provide focussed training for bridge teachers, and make a huge range of teaching materials, available to the hundreds of bridge teachers who are members of EBTA (English Bridge Teaching Association). We support club bridge by providing training of club tournament directors. In 2022 over 100 people qualified with us as club directors and are now helping their clubs to run sessions.

In support of Youth Bridge, we run several events for school level bridge players, including the Schools Cup, Inter-Schools League and Youth Grand Prix. We also run the Junior Summer Camp. We continue to support county organisations and individual volunteers at the local level to run youth events. We provide resources to help schools run bridge clubs.

You can read more about EBED's activities in the current issue of English Bridge and at <u>www.ebedcio.org.uk</u>. If you wish to arrange a donation in favour of the charity, please do so at <u>www.ebedcio.org.uk/donate</u>.

I hope that you enjoy playing these hands and competing against others, I'll be playing these at my club too. We sincerely thank you for your support.

Mark Humphris

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



oard 1 : Dealer North : Love all				
Vest	North	East	South	
	Pass	1	Pass	
*	2 🔶	3♠	Pass	
٨	Pass	4NT	Pass	
*	Pass	6♠	All Pass	

If you play Acol twos or Benjamin, then you will have a suitable strong opening on the East hand. If not, you open 1 and await developments. West, lacking a diamond stopper, has little choice but to raise 3 to 4 a. East can then check on key cards and, assuming there is a way round a possible blockage, can count 12 tricks if West has the A as well as the A. Since West has the A as well as the A making 12 tricks in a spade contract is easy without needing the heart finesse. Indeed, on any lead apart from a diamond, you can make all 13 tricks, still without needing the K onside.

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Board 2	Inerable		
West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	All Pass	

If North opens a weak no-trump, South will find it very difficult to resist inviting game (with a $2 \triangleq$ range enquiry in the example auction). Similarly, if North (playing a strong no-trump) opens $1 \clubsuit$ and rebids 1NT, South is likely to raise.

In practice 2NT is quite likely to make, even with the A offside, because West has both heart entries and East is in danger of falling victim to a squeeze in the minors. If East leads a spade, the defenders should prevail. A-J-x-x is not exactly everyone's favourite lead and I have considerable sympathy for those who lead a heart (South's lack of a Stayman enquiry suggests a major-suit lead).

Board 3 :	Dealer So	uth : EW v	vulnerable
West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	4 🔶	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

East's 4♦ is a splinter raise, showing spade support and a shortage in diamonds. With five trumps and excellent controls, East is quite good for the bid despite holding only 11 HCP.

With West as declarer, North's likely lead of the AQ allows the defenders to score the first two tricks. On a heart lead you can make 12 tricks if you tackle diamonds by cashing the ace and then (rather than trying a ruffing finesse) lead the nine and ruff it. As the K pops up, you can draw two rounds of trumps and cash the QJ. Since you do not have enough trumps to ruff everything, it does not matter whether you discard one or two clubs from dummy on the QJ – you lose one trick regardless.

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable				
West North East South				
1*	1 ♦	1♠	3 🔶	
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass	
3♥	Pass	4 🗸	All Pass	

While there is a case for devaluing the doubleton $\bullet J$ (in which case West would not have enough for a vulnerable opening), many will open the West hand. Holding six spades and four hearts, a two-card length disparity, I much prefer a second-round double on the East hand to $3 \bullet$.

The 3-2 splits in both rounded suits make the play in 4♥ fairly straightforward. After ruffing the second round of diamonds, you will probably duck a heart. This way you would retain control if trumps were 4-1. As the cards lie, playing ace and another is just as effective.

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Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable					
North	East	South			
Pass	1♠	Pass			
1NT	Double	Redouble			
2*	Double	2♥			
All Pass					
	Dealer No North Pass 1NT 2 & All Pass	Dealer North : NS vNorthEastPass1 ▲1NTDouble2 ♣DoubleAll Pass			

Having passed as dealer, North probably scrapes up a 1NT overcall when two passes follow East's $1 \triangleq$ opening. With 18 HCP East makes a penalty double. South wants to retreat, and I have assumed that the rescue method I play after a 1NT opening (redouble to show a 5+ card suit somewhere) is in use here. East's second double is for takeout and West's double is for penalties (East suggested some hearts by doubling $2 \clubsuit$.) A black suit lead could defeat $2 \checkmark$ doubled by two tricks.

East might make two overtricks in 1 with good guesswork.

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable				
West	North	East	South	
		1 ♦	Pass	
1♠	Pass	2 🔶	Pass	
2 💙	Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Holding only 14 HCP, East does not need to make a jump rebid but is happy to show extra strength and the good club stopper on the third ound. West's $2 \checkmark$ is forcing these days – no need to jump to $3 \checkmark$.

With the club situation protected, East can make two overtricks in 3NT. After a club lead to the queen and ace, knock out the A and lose just one trick in each minor. Taking the first club is a better play than holding up the A until the third round for a couple of reasons. Firstly, taking the first club is safe either if North holds the A10 or if South holds the A. Secondly, you can hope to make eleven tricks rather than ten.

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable					
West	North	East	South		
			1♥		
Pass	1	Pass	2♠		
Pass	2NT	All Pass			

would not mind a 1NT (weak) opening on the South hand but suspect the najority will open 1♥ (for some a forced action when playing a strong .NT). On the next round South does not want to rebid 2♥ without six nearts if there is any reasonable alternative. With a balanced hand and only four spades North then chooses 2NT as a game try.

You can make an overtrick in 2NT, even on a club lead, by knocking out the A and the A. You want to do it preferably in that order since a second round of clubs will dislodge South's entry, though as the cards lie the J is an entry too. Declarer can make nine tricks before the defenders get to run the clubs.



W 1

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Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all				
West	North	East	South	
1♥	1♠	2*	Pass	
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass	
4 💙	All Pass			

Playing a weak no-trump and 4-card majors, West opens 1♥ and rebids in no-trumps. East then bids 3♥ to offer a choice of games. Holding five hearts West chooses the suit contract.

If West opens a strong no-trump, North's likely overcall will make it difficult for East-West to find their 5-3 heart fit.

In a heart contract it seems logical to finesse South for the $\mathbf{v}Q$ because this avoids a potentially damaging spade switch through the king. North might lead a trump anyway.

In 3NT on a spade lead, you need to guess very well to make it.

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable					
West	North	East	South		
	1 ♦	1♥	Pass		
1 🔺	Pass	Pass	2 🔶		
3*	Pass	3♠	Pass		
1 💙	All Pass				

With several honours in short suits, it is not clear-cut to open the North hand – but the vulnerability is favourable and the diamonds are good. South might make a negative double of the $1 \checkmark$ overcall or raise to $2 \diamondsuit$, but nothing will keep West out of the auction. West might reasonably decide to insist on game facing a vulnerable overcall, particularly as a partial heart fit exists.

The cards lie really well for declarer in a heart contract. If the defenders start with two rounds of diamonds, declarer has no choice but to get the trumps right – and if they fail to force dummy then declarer should be suspicious.

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable				
Nest	North	East	South	
		Pass	1♥	
Pass	1NT	Pass	2 🔶	
Pass	3 🔶	All Pass		
Pass	3 🔶	All Pass		

If North does not raise $2 \diamond$ to $3 \diamond$, East can protect with a double. The raise to $3 \diamond$ does not show strength – North would bid $2 \diamond$ or maybe 2NT to show a constructive raise. As it happens, with hearts 3-3 and diamonds 2-2, North-South cannot get too high.

In a diamond contract declarer can make five trump tricks, four heart tricks (ruffing the third round in dummy) and two club ruffs for eleven in all. The frozen spade suit and friendly breaks in the red suits leave the defenders powerless.

In a heart contract, so long as they leave spades alone, the defenders will come to four tricks: two in each major.



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South

Pass

Double

All Pass

South

South

Double

Pass

3♠



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	West	North	East	South			
	2NT	Pass	4NT	All Pass			
	Although there is a case for downgrading the West hand (flat shape and no tens or nines) bridge players are like airline passengers – much happier to upgrade than to downgrade! If 2NT is 20-22, East dredges up a 4NT invitational raise. Barring a significant defensive error, 4NT makes exactly. With the club finesse wrong, the defenders make the &K as well as the A and should score the AQ too. 6NT would be a terrible contract, requiring the &K onside and the AQ to drop doubleton or singleton.						
-	Board 24	: Dealer	West : Lov	ve all			
	West	North	East	South			
	Pass	Pass	1	2♦			
	Pass	Pass	2 💙	3*			
	Pass	Pass	3 💙	Pass			
	3♠	4*	All Pass				
	As neither side is vulnerable, this deal will be quite competitive. With only nine cards in the minors, South might choose to double 2♥ rather than bidding 3♣ – but the clubs are chunky, as are the diamonds as well. North should perhaps sell out to 3♠. The 4-1 club split, albeit a layout declarer should anticipate when the bidding suggests that East is 6-5 in the majors, makes the play tricky in 4♣. You need to ruff the third round of spades high, draw East's trump and then play on diamonds. 3♠ fails by a trick if the defenders get in an early trump switch and lead a second trump when in with the ♥A.						
	Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable						
	West	North	East	South			
		Pass	Pass	Pass			
	1	Pass	1NT	Pass			
	2♥ All Pass						
	After West rebids in hearts, East will feel vaguely tempted to raise – but						

pushing for thin games tends not be a good idea at matchpoints, and the king-jack of clubs could be almost useless if West has a singleton club.

To stop the overtrick in 2, North needs to take the A on the first round of clubs and, if the defenders have not already cashed their three diamond winners, switch to a diamond. Since North has both the AA and the AQ and can therefore work out that declarer has no losing guess in the club suit, taking the A should be routine.



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Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable				
West	North	East	South	
		2♠	Pass	
Pass	3NT	All Pass		

While the bare queen-jack makes the East hand less than ideal for a weak two, this will deter few. Especially in the protective seat, North is too strong for a simple 2NT and so jumps to 3NT.

A heart lead works best against 3NT, though East surely leads the AQ. After the spade lead, declarer is in with a chance of making 11 tricks if West (understandably) fails to dump the A. The unblock would create an entry for East to clear the spades and thus prevent declarer from taking repeated club finesses to generate a third club winner.

With trumps 2-2, $5 \blacklozenge$ makes by taking repeated club finesses to set up a winner on which to discard a spade loser.

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all			
North	East	South	
		4 💙	
Pass	5 🛧	All Pass	
	: Dealer <i>North</i> Pass	: Dealer South : L North East Pass 5♠	

Holding an 8-card suit and two singletons, South opens with a full-blooded four-level pre-empt. West, with a sound opening bid and preparedness for a $4 \clubsuit$ bid from partner, has just enough to double. East has a really good hand in context but expects there to be a heart loser and that any club finesse is likely to lose. A jump to $5 \clubsuit$ certainly invites a slam, though if you play that this asks for a heart control, it might not be the best way.

With the AQ offside as expected, 6A surely fails. If South did not lead a heart, North switches to a heart after gaining the lead.

4♥ fails by two tricks for sure if West scores a diamond ruff, but might actually make if West tries leading out two top clubs.

Board 28	: Dealer V	۷est : NS ۱	/ulnerable
West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

If West opens a weak no-trump, it will be awfully tempting for East, with 12 points and a 5-card suit, to raise to 3NT. Perhaps one should downgrade the unsupported jacks, thus countering the upgrade for the five-card suit, and only invite game. The issue would be similar if, playing a strong no-trump, West opens 1& and rebids 1NT.

North's normal club lead should allow the defenders an easy route to 5 tricks against a no-trump contract, by means of four tricks in clubs and one in hearts.

If West opened 1*, North might lead something else against a no-trump contract – but, so long as the something else is not a suicidal $\forall K$, the defenders should still manage 5 tricks.

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