♠AKJ1042
♥3
♦J2
♣10965

♠96 ♠875
♥98 ♥AQJ1054
♦K97543 ♦A10
♣QJ2 ♣73

♠Q3
♥K762
♦Q86
♣AK84

HCP
9
6 11
14

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

Board 30 : Dealer East : Love all

When East opens 1♥, South has the wrong distribution for a take-out double and is short of what is required to overcall 1NT. Accordingly, he may pass and hear West bid 1NT on his left. North will imagine that the hand belongs to his opponents. Some will overcall 2♠ and some 3♠, and in either case East will be shut out of the auction and South will look towards game.
As the cards lie, there are four losers in a spade contract and easy top tricks in 3NT – whichever red suit is led provides the ninth.
Opposite a simple 2♠ overcall, South may well jump to 3NT or, more subtly, cuebid 3♥ then bid 3NT over 3♠ to express doubt at so which game should be played. While North will certainly pass a jump to 3NT, if given an option he is more likely to choose the unsuccessful spade game.
Facing a 3♠ pre-emptive overcall, South may still bid game, as he has a lot of good cards, but it will be harder for him to bid 3NT as he has less reason to expect good high card values in partner's hand. It is hard to know – facing ♠KJ10xxxx, there may be four top losers, while 3NT will be hopeless. Any of 3NT, 4♠ and Pass could be the winning call.

♠AJ
♥K32
♦9873
♣K984

♠1083 ♠Q6
♥J109 ♥A874
♦106 ♦AQJ2
♣A10652 ♣Q73

♠K97542
♥Q65
♦K54
♣J

HCP
11
5 15
9

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

Board 31 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

Whether South will open 2♠ or not is a matter of style. the hand qualifies in the sense that it contains a 6-card suit and the right point count, but the suit is weak and South is vulnerable against not.
A 2♠ opening is passed around to East, who doubles. West responds 3♣ or better, if playing Lebensohl, bids 2NT, asking partner to bid 3♣. He intends to pass 3♣, of course, but could make the same bid when holding a weak hand with a different suit, the slow route to 3♦ or 3♥ saying exactly that. There are two trump losers in 3♣ so the contract has to fail by a trick.
If South passes, East may get to open in fourth seat. I know, the hand contains 15 HCP, but those unsupported queens and lack of tens and nines makes the hand look more like a weak no trump than a strong one to me. I'd probably open 1NT whether playing 15-17 or 12-14. Sacrilege to some, I suppose.

A spade lead beats 1NT as the suit is cleared immediately and South has red-suit entries to cash the spades. If South passes as dealer then overcalls 2♠, he will play there and probably make exactly for a very good score.

♠K94
♥J94
♦105
♣KJ1052

♠53 ♠AJ72
♥K7532 ♥A10
♦QJ73 ♦A94
♣73 ♣Q984

♠Q1086
♥Q86
♦K862
♣A6

HCP
8
6 15
11

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

Board 32 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

East opens 1NT if playing 15-17 and West transfers to hearts then passes the response. In 2♥, declarer plays three rounds of hearts immediately, and should make exactly.

Where East opens 1♣, he rebids 1NT and may play there or West may rebid 2♦ and get to play in a red suit. East will need to give false preference to the major to score well, as while 2♦ makes +90 is outscored by the +110 available in 2♥.

I think most Wests should judge to play in a red suit after East's 1♣ opening and 1NT rebid. If they choose not to do so, 1NT can be defeated by South's natural low spade lead and a minus score should be very poor for E/W.

And finally, what if East opens 1♠ and West responds 1NT, where he plays. Now North will lead the jack of clubs. The defence should still have time to switch their attention to spades and once again the contract will be defeated.

CLUB STRATIFIED SIM PAIRS

13th March 2013

Wednesday

Welcome to the third 'Club Stratified Sim Pairs'.
Our commentator today is Brian Senior, bridge author, newspaper columnist and player.

You may wonder how the stratification works and which strat you are in. There are four categories of strats. The main strat 'A' is open to everyone but if either member of the pair is a Tournament Master or above you will be in the 'A' strat and can only get master points from the overall ranking. If both of you are below the rank of Tournament Master you will be 'B' strat; both below Master means you will be in 'C' strat and both below District Master will make you 'D' strat.
Blue points and local points will be awarded to the top third of the overall ranking list. In addition the top third of each strat will get blue points and local points.
If you are entitled to overall points and points for your strat, you will only get the higher of the awards – you won't get two lots of points.
Master points cannot be allocated until after the event is finalised, usually about three weeks. Please keep your scorecard for that period. If we find any unusual scores we may need to a contact the club scorer and also the players. Full results can be found at www.ebu.co.uk/sims/

♠KQ4
♥AQ7
♦K1073
♣543

♠1053 ♠J8762
♥109 ♥8432
♦9642 ♦AJ8
♣AJ107 ♣K

♠A9
♥KJ65
♦Q5
♣Q9862

HCP: 14 / 5 9 / 12

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

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

The almost universal contract will be 3NT, played by North. Probably the most popular auction will see North open 1NT and South use Stayman then jump to 3NT over the 2♦ response.
East will lead a spade. Declarer has seven top tricks and an obvious eighth in diamonds, but the ninth may prove elusive. Playing on clubs rates to mean three club losers to go with the ace of diamonds and a long spade (or two), so declarer is likely to win the spade in hand and play a diamond to the queen then a second diamond to the ten, losing to the jack. The winning play is to win the spade return, cross to hand with a heart, and lead a low diamond, dropping the now bare ace. Thanks to the club blockage, the defence can only get one trick in that suit and declarer scrambles home with nine.

On a bad day, this leads to two down, when East has ♦AJ98 and there are also three clubs to be cashed. However, with East showing the spade length, it is worth hoping he has the shorter diamond holding.

♠KJ103
♥AQ9875
♦J
♣86

♠6 ♠Q872
♥J10 ♥2
♦Q96 ♦75432
♣KQ97543 ♣A102

♠A954
♥K643
♦AK108
♣J

HCP: 11 / 8 6 / 15

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

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

6♥ is worth bidding on the N/S cards as, even without any opposition bidding, it is never worse than the spade guess (unless there is a trick one spade ruff). In practice, the diamond queen ruffs out so the spade position becomes irrelevant.
Playing Acol, South opens 1♥, the middle of three touching four-card suits, and West pre-empts with 3♣. If 4♦ would still be a splinter bid, as is the case for most pairs, this is what North should bid. South may have a lot of strength in diamonds, but he does have very good controls, and the club shortage is particularly encouraging, so he can afford to cuebid 5♦ over East's likely 5♣ sacrifice and North will be able to visualise the club shortage and bid 6♥.

It is actually harder if East does not raise clubs. If South cuebids 4♠ over 4♦, it will be hard for North to co-operate when looking at two small clubs, so someone is going to have to make a brave bid – brave is a term used only for successful bids, of course, foolhardy being the normal designation of exactly the same bid when it proves to be unsuccessful.

♠1093
♥754
♦A85
♣K1065

♠A6 ♠85
♥J10632 ♥KQ8
♦J1094 ♦KQ32
♣Q8 ♣A973

♠KQJ742
♥A9
♦76
♣J42

HCP: 7 / 8 14 / 11

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

Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all

South opens 1♠ and North will raise to 2♠ if playing 5-card majors but respond 1NT in Acol or other four-card major systems. In either case, East doubles for take-out and South rebids his spades, 2♠ over 1NT, 3♠ (not constructive) over 2♠.
Over 2♠, West will be happy to bid 3♥ and now North should compete to 3♠, knowing his partner to hold a 6-card suit for the 2♠ rebid. That should end the auction and make exactly – the defence can get a club ruff but only at the expense of their heart trick, which then disappears on the fourth club.
Where South has rebid 3♠, some Wests will pass while some will refuse to be shut out and bid hearts a level higher than they really wanted to do. Bidding 4♥ will work out just fine as, though it goes down, that will be cheaper than defending against the cold 3♠. Yes, double dummy 4♥ can be doubled for down two, but that requires that North lead a low diamond at trick one to set up the ruff – the defensive spade trick is going nowhere. If anyone finds that lead against you rather than the normal spade, they are either crazy or have information about the board that they should not have.

♠Q7
♥K832
♦10632
♣942

♠AJ1054 ♠832
♥Q96 ♥A754
♦KJ ♦Q754
♣A75 ♣108

♠K96
♥J10
♦A98
♣KQJ63

HCP: 5 / 15 6 / 14

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

Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

West opens 1NT if playing strong and plays there. I would not lead from king-empty-to-four into a strong no trump, preferring to lead either minor.
A club is the killer, but even a diamond does no real harm and avoids giving away a trick.

The play is very awkward in 1NT. Declarer may cross to the ace of hearts to take a spade finesse, hoping to find either honour-doubleton or both honours on his right. Today is not his lucky day and the defence is in control – even if South ducked the first diamond, by the time he gets in with the ♠Q North should have an idea that it is time to switch to clubs as declarer seems happy to play on every other suit.

If West opens 1♠, East may raise to 2♠ even if playing four-card majors – the weak doubleton suggests this choice of action. South can overcall 3♣ and West may try 3♠, which will usually be correct whenever East has a fourth spade. 3♠ can be beaten but it is easy to see how it might be allowed to succeed, while 3♣ should always be defeated.

♠AJ
♥97
♦AK65
♣AQ632

♠1085 ♠KQ642
♥AJ5 ♥KQ108
♦QJ103 ♦72
♣K98 ♣107

♠973
♥6432
♦984
♣J54

HCP: 18 / 11 10 / 1

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

Board 29 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

When North opens 1♣, East overcalls 1♠ and South passes. West has too much for an immediate raise to 2♠ and not enough for a three-level raise, even if that was played as constructive, so cuebids 2♣, constructive raise to at least 2♠. North may double or may prefer to make the slightly more committal bid of 2♦, showing his 5-4 shape and good values as he is inviting preference to the three level.

It is unlikely that South will ever get involved unless forced to do so. East will rebid 2♠ and that may be that.
2♠ makes exactly after a club lead, with an overtrick on any other lead, while clubs is held to eight tricks should North compete further.

in 3♣, declarer must play three rounds of diamonds immediately to guarantee that he can ruff the fourth round should the suit not split 3-3. As the cards lie that proves to be necessary and he comes to four club tricks, two diamonds, a diamond ruff and the ace of spades, for down one – a good result if nobody doubles.

♠Q832
♥Q76
♦1075
♣Q85

♠K1097 ♠AJ5
♥J52 ♥1083
♦9843 ♦K2
♣J7 ♣A10642

♠64
♥AK94
♦AQJ6
♣K93

HCP	
6	
5	12
17	

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

Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all

East opens 1NT after two passes and South doubles. If West stands 1NT doubled perhaps East will run to 2♣. Certainly, that is better than 1NT doubled, against which South has an easy lead of the ace of hearts, sees North encourage, and continues with the king then the nine – that last is the key to the defence, as it is a suit-preference signal asking North to switch to a diamond rather than a club (South cannot want a spade, given dummy's holding). A low diamond switch nets three down for +500, while a club switch would leave South endplayed and cost at least one trick.
Many will be playing a wriggle where West can show two four-card or longer suits and if he uses it the likely outcome is 2♠ doubled, going two down for –300.
If E/W play strong no trump, East will open 1♣ and South overcall 1NT, where he will play. He can always make nine tricks on any lead but, short of entries, is likely to lead the ten of diamonds from the dummy, costing himself a trick in the process.

♠986
♥KQ104
♦K763
♣103

♠72 ♠AKQJ
♥AJ6 ♥853
♦AJ1084 ♦Q
♣AKJ ♣87652

♠10543
♥972
♦952
♣Q94

HCP	
8	
18	12
2	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	7	5	4	4	5
W	7	5	4	5	5

Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

Double dummy, even 7♣ can be made on the E/W cards, though that is of course an extremely fortunate contract and nobody should even be close to bidding it.

I would not open the East hand, vulnerable, with a weak main suit and a bare queen in my 12 HCP. There will be those who do, however: 1♣ – 1♦ – 1♠ – 2♥ – Yuk! Serves East right.

Having said which, whatever East bids now, it is entirely possible that West, with three club honours, 18 HCP and two outside aces, may drive to 6♣, and now justice surely will not be done as normal play brings that contract home quite easily.

Where East passes, the auction will be simpler: Pass – 1♦ – 1♠ – 2NT – 3NT – Pass. North will lead the ♥K, which declarer will duck. He will win any continuation and give up a diamond, making 11 tricks for +660.

♠87
♥KQJ643
♦Q7
♣A53

♠K9532 ♠AQJ
♥85 ♥A972
♦J63 ♦2
♣K76 ♣Q10982

♠1064
♥10
♦AK109854
♣J4

HCP	
12	
7	13
8	

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

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

East opens 1♣ and South overcalls 3♦. Assuming two passes, East has to reopen with a double as he has a small singleton diamond and sound opening values, and West chooses between 3♠ and 4♠.

Even 4♠ may not go badly if North leads his partner's suit, but try it on the lead of the ♥K. Declarer cannot draw trumps while the ace of clubs is still out as he has three diamond losers, so he instead gives up a diamond. Even if South wins this, he can play a club to North and throw a club on the ♥Q and collect a club ruff.
But perhaps North will not pass his partner's 3♦ bid. He may respond 3♥, trading on his useful diamond holding. South will go back to 4♦ and go one down. That may not score badly if enough people are making 3♠ on the E/W cards, though it is rarely good to go minus on deals like this one.

♠J874
♥9763
♦7
♣Q732

♠A3 ♠9
♥QJ ♥A1084
♦KJ984 ♦Q1065
♣AKJ6 ♣9854

♠KQ10652
♥K52
♦A32
♣10

HCP	
3	
19	6
12	

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

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

When South opens 1♠ in front of him, West has an uncomfortable choice of actions. He has 19 HCP, though the heart holding is of questionable value, so will not be happy to make a simple overcall, yet to double and hear partner jump in hearts would not be great news. Still, most will double and now North should make a pre-emptive raise to 3♠. With support for all the unbid suits, East may make a responsive double, though he has only 6 HCP, and now West needs to jump to 5♦ to allow for his substantial extra values. If he bids only 4♦ East will surely pass, while 3NT, gambling on running nine tricks, will not be a success.
Though the heart finesse loses, the heart suit provides two discards for West's clubs so there is no loser there and 5♦ makes exactly. E/W have to do quite well to get to 5♦ so those who manage it should score well. Even when they do get there, N/S can save in 5♠ doubled for only –300.

♠K1062
♥1085
♦QJ42
♣AK

♠753 ♠AQ8
♥K43 ♥A7
♦A73 ♦K10865
♣J983 ♣1076

♠J94
♥QJ962
♦9
♣Q542

HCP	
13	
8	13
6	

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

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

If North opens 1NT, East will pass and South transfer to hearts, passing the 2♥ response. It seems that this auction shuts E/W out of the auction completely and the contract is likely to make most of the time, though it is beatable double dummy. A 1♦ opening from North will also shut out the opposition, though if North rebids 1NT and is left to play there he will be at least two down so E/W will not mind being silenced. South may correct to 2♥, however, and now it is possible that East will make a balancing double in pass-out seat. That offers West an unpalatable choice of actions – the only making contract he can bid is 2NT, but many tournament players would treat that as asking partner to pick a minor.
If North has to open 1♣, East can overcall and West will bid either 1NT or 2♦ over South's 1♥. If it ends the auction, 2♦ makes easily enough, but someone is likely to compete to 2♥.

♠AQ103
♥Q1096
♦A109
♣64

♠654 ♠K9
♥A542 ♥-
♦732 ♦KQJ84
♣Q102 ♣KJ9853

♠J872
♥KJ873
♦65
♣A7

HCP	
12	
6	13
9	

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

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

If North opens 1NT and East passes, South will use scrambling Stayman, intending to bid 2♥ over a 2♦ response or pass 2♥ or 2♠. But East will not normally pass over 1NT, instead overcalling 2NT to show the minors – unless, of course, that bid would show a strong undefined two-suiter as was its traditional meaning. South might double 2NT to look for a major-suit fit and, if so, will find one. However, East's extra minor-suit card may see him go on to 4♣ over 3♥ anyway.
3♥/♠ is the limit for N/S, with a loser in each suit, while E/W can make 4♦.
If North opens 1♣, a style which is becoming more popular at tournament level, East may overcall 1♦, planning to bid clubs next if it seems appropriate. Actually, I think there is a case for still playing a 2NT overcall as the minors here, but that would need prior discussion.
The vulnerability would suggest that E/W will buy the contract more often than not, with +130 a good solid above average score for them.

♠KJ5
♥J10
♦5432
♣Q1075

♠1094 ♠A62
♥KQ9873 ♥A52
♦AK7 ♦86
♣J ♣K9863

♠Q873
♥64
♦QJ109
♣A42

HCP	
7	
13	11
9	

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

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

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

East may have a five-card suit, but the empty 11-count with no honour combinations does not justify an upgrade. When West opens 1♥ in third seat, East will respond 2♣ and West rebid 2♥. Some Easts will raise to game now but we all know partners who open a little bit light in third seat, even vulnerable, so perhaps an invitational 3♥ is sufficient. With a sixth heart and good honour combinations, West can go on to game.
A spade lead will hold the contract to ten tricks but on a red-suit lead declarer can win and lead the jack of clubs. If that goes to the queen, king and ace, South had better switch to a spade, otherwise declarer takes a ruffing finesse against the club ten and gets two spades away, making 11 tricks.

♠J5
♥J43
♦A52
♣AKJ93

♠K10632 ♠Q9874
♥Q987 ♥K2
♦QJ104 ♦K63
♣- ♣1085

♠A
♥A1065
♦987
♣Q7642

HCP	
14	
8	8
10	

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

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

With no wastage in clubs, the E/W combined 16 HCP makes 4♠, while N/S can come to ten tricks in a club contract.
If North upgrades to a strong no trump because of the strong five-card suit, South will use Stayman then bid 3NT and the spade lead should mean down one. A weak no trump opening may be passed around to West, and it is normal for him to bid whatever his system dictates on such a hand. The simplest artificial defence to 1NT, Landy, where 2♣ shows both majors, finds the spade fit very easily. East may jump to 3♠ in response, but West is unlikely to go on to game.
A 1♣ opening from North may see east overcall 1♠, though the weak suit is a good reason not to come in in my view, and now West may jump all the way to 4♠.
Where East passes, South responds 1♥ and West will either overcall 1♠ or double to get both spades and diamonds into the picture. East is worth a jump to 3♠ now and South will compete in clubs.
If N/S get to 5♣, going one down, they will be disappointed to have got too high, until they realise that 4♠ is cold for their opponents.

♠QJ1065
♥Q63
♦K3
♣1053

♠K92 ♠A
♥K1075 ♥AJ82
♦AJ864 ♦10972
♣9 ♣AQ86

♠8743
♥94
♦Q5
♣KJ742

HCP	
8	
11	15
6	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	2	6	6	1	5
W	1	6	6	1	5

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

Though his suits are in the wrong order to show comfortably, most Wests will open 1♦ – Love All is the best vulnerability at which to declare on a competitive partscore deal and opening borderline hands helps to achieve that. If North overcalls 1♠ East will make a negative double. South has a pre-emptive raise to 3♠ and that silences West. However, when 3♠ comes around, East will double again, and now West can bid 4♥, having limited his hand by the previous pass.
Slam is making for E/W, but 6♦/♥ are both against the odds, requiring both that there be only one diamond loser and that declarer pick up the hearts without loss. While someone will no doubt bid and make 6♥ for a huge score, +480 for E/W should be above average as not everyone will get the hearts right.

♠J
♥Q982
♦K1098
♣AK73

♠K972 ♠Q104
♥753 ♥AJ104
♦Q543 ♦A6
♣J10 ♣9852

♠A8653
♥K6
♦J72
♣Q64

HCP	
13	
6	11
10	

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

Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable

North opens 1♦, once again choosing the middle of the three touching suits to give the best chance of having a sensible rebid. Some aggressive Easts will double, though I would prefer to have both majors to do so with only 11 HCP and a doubleton diamond. With or without a double, South bids 1♠ and West has nothing to say. If playing strong no trump, I would rebid 1NT now, 12-14, and that might well end the auction. With the queen of diamonds onside, declarer should make eight tricks without too much difficulty for a handy +120.
The reason for rebidding 1NT where available is what happens when you are forced to rebid 2♣ because 1NT would be strong. Partner knows that you could be 1-4-4-4, but always bids on the assumption that you have five diamonds. Ten HCP with three-card support and decent honours is worth a jump to 3♦, natural and invitational, and the defence can always hold a diamond contract to eight tricks so this will fail more often than not. It is just unfortunate that nobody has really done anything wrong yet a bad result has been achieved.

♠10976
♥A642
♦K108
♣K8

♠A ♠KQJ843
♥KJ3 ♥10985
♦A53 ♦62
♣A109432 ♣7

♠52
♥Q7
♦QJ974
♣QJ65

HCP	
10	
16	6
8	

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

Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

I don't care about the traditional wisdom which states that it is wrong to pre-empt when holding a four-card major on the side. For me, the East hand is a 2♠ opener. After all, with six strong spades and four much weaker hearts, how often will we actually belong in a heart contract?
Now it becomes simply a matter of system. West may bid 3♣, natural and forcing, over which East can bid either 3♥ or 3♠ as takes his fancy, or West can inquire by bidding 2NT. There are several schemes of rebids over the 2NT bid – some bid 3♠ with a minimum, and a stopper with a non-minimum; some show a shortage, and some say whether they are maximum or minimum and whether their suit is good or bad. My own methods even include a bid to say that now partner has turned up with a good hand I wish I hadn't opened – that helps to stop out of game when I have opened a really filthy hand, though we may still go down at the three level, of course.
Here, East is above minimum because of the 6-4 shape and strong trumps, and when he says this West should settle for 4♠ – 3NT would be an error as he can see a potential problem getting to the East hand.

♠KQ42
♥62
♦KQ84
♣KJ5

♠AJ98 ♠653
♥1075 ♥KJ8
♦973 ♦A62
♣Q43 ♣A1096

♠107
♥AQ943
♦J105
♣872

HCP	
14	
7	12
7	

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

Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

North has a weak no trump opener and South transfers then passes the 2♥ completion. It is not clear that either East or West can find a way into this auction, particularly being vulnerable – and just as well too, as E/W cannot even make anything at the one level, let alone higher, so bidding earns at least –200 and a very poor score.
Even if North opens 1♣/♦, I don't think East has enough to come in with that shape, so it is only a question of 1NT or 2♥ by N/S. 1NT can be held to seven tricks, while the defence has to lead clubs reasonably early in the play to hold 2♥ to eight tricks, else a club could go away on a spade or diamond, so 2♥ is definitely the place to be.

♠K109765
♥AQ6
♦105
♣J4

♠AQ3 ♠J8
♥- ♥10987432
♦8632 ♦97
♣AKQ873 ♣106

♠42
♥KJ5
♦AKQJ4
♣952

HCP	
10	
15	1
14	

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

Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

Having said that the North hand on the previous deal was a routine 2♥ opener, what about East on this deal, at favourable vulnerability? East may have zero HCP, but he does have a seventh heart.
This may be too rich for many, but I would open 2♥. Feel free to pass while shaking your head about Senior's insanity if you wish. If East did open 2♥, I would overcall 2NT as South, double with the West hand, and jump to 4♠ as North. Finally, West may double 4♠ and a heart lead for a ruff followed by three rounds of clubs results in three down and a very nice +500 for E/W.

Of course, there will be many different outcomes, whether or not East opens. If South opens 1♦, West overcalls 2♣ and North bids 2♠. South can only rebid 3♦ and North is a bit stuck so bids 3♠. South may judge that there is no game now, hating his three low clubs and weak spade doubleton. If he passes 3♠, he may not score too badly, given what is happening to N/S at other tables around the room.

♠2
♥J2
♦10952
♣AQJ864

♠AKQ7 ♠8653
♥AK65 ♥Q984
♦QJ83 ♦6
♣3 ♣K952

♠J1094
♥1073
♦AK74
♣107

HCP	
8	
19	5
8	

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

Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

Unless playing five-card majors, West opens 1♥, the middle of three touching four-card suits. I would make a weak jump overcall of 3♣ as North. With good clubs I would do so even if 6-3-2-2, but here the four-card side-suit adds to the playing strength and increases the likelihood that the opposition have a major-suit contract – all the more reason to pre-empt and make life difficult for them.
If East now stretches to bid 3♥, there is a real danger that West will get over-excited and look for slam. As long as that try is a 3♠ cuebid and he trusts East's 4♥ sign-off, everything will be OK, but if he just launches into Blackwood he will get too high as ten tricks is the limit on accurate defence.
If East does not bid 3♥, West will make a reopening double. With fewer than four of partner's bid suit, east might pass for penalties with king-to-four clubs. On his actual hand, however, he will not only remove to hearts, but jump to the heart game. Having passed over 3♣, four trumps to an honour, a singleton and a well-position king should be enough to give the heart game decent play.

♠AJ987
♥9
♦A108
♣AQ63

♠642 ♠K3
♥K106542 ♥AQ87
♦5 ♦J9732
♣J42 ♣107

♠Q105
♥J3
♦KQ64
♣K985

HCP	
15	
4	10
11	

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

Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

Vulnerability makes cowards of us all. Playing normal style weak two bids, I would not open the West hand when vulnerable. North will therefore get to open 1♠ and N/S bid easily to 4♠. Indeed, I have been in worse slams than this one, which requires the trumps to come in without loss and seven tricks in the minors, with either suit providing four tricks or a possible squeeze.
It wouldn't surprise me to find a few pairs getting to the five- or even six-level, and 5/6♠ is too high – on a diamond lead there is a ruff to hold declarer to ten tricks. Meanwhile, 6♣ is only one down as trumps can be drawn before taking the losing spade finesse.
If South responds 2♣, North may jump to 3♥, splinter agreeing clubs, and South's lack of wasted heart values could easily see him co-operate despite his otherwise mediocre balanced hand. Over 3♥ he will bid 3♠ and if North cuebids 4♣ or 4♦ South will feel that he is too good to sign-off. He has an easy 4♦ over the more likely 4♣.

♠65
♥AJ1073
♦4
♣K10643

♠KQ1098 ♠742
♥K95 ♥84
♦K63 ♦AQJ9872
♣75 ♣2

♠AJ3
♥Q62
♦105
♣AQJ98

HCP	
8	
11	7
14	

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

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

Unless you use the two-suited weak openings, Lucas Twos or the like, you will normally pass the North hand – though I confess to sometimes opening these hands with 2♥ non-vulnerable even when playing simple weak two bids. East has a normal 3♦ opening, even at this vulnerability.
South has a borderline decision, whether to double or to pass. 14 HCP and some support for all the unbid suits suggests doubling, while the doubleton diamond, lack of either four-card major, and fact that partner is a passed hand, suggest passing. It is close but I suspect that most will double and that gets 4♥ from North, whether or not West raises to 4♦, as he should.
The vulnerability will prevent E/W from going on to 5♦ over 4♥, and 11 tricks can be made in the heart game. Yes, even on a club lead, an obvious singleton, I would take the trump finesse. After the pre-empt, the heart king will be onside far more often than not, and if West has king-doubleton and East three low, playing ace and another heart to try to avoid a club ruff could actually prove to be the only way to concede one.

♠76
♥10
♦AKQ964
♣QJ105

♠Q95 ♠KJ108
♥654 ♥J82
♦103 ♦J7
♣K9742 ♣A863

♠A432
♥AKQ973
♦852
♣-

HCP	
12	
5	10
13	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	7	7	3	5
S	2	7	7	3	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

If you are going to play in a heart slam you may as well play in seven, as a spade lead will beat six unless trumps play for no loser. 7♦ is good on a club lead – ruff, draw trumps and play on hearts – making unless a red suit breaks very badly. But a spade lead is more challenging, though 13 tricks are still there on the actual layout.
In 6♦, declarer might win the spade lead and play two top hearts for a spade discard then try to crossruff his way to 12 tricks. On a different layout, that requires some good card-reading or good fortune to avoid being over-ruffed by East if declarer tries to ruff the wrong suit back to hand. The alternative is just to draw trumps then hope either hearts are 3-3 or, if they are 4-2, that trumps are 2-2 so that there is an entry to dummy after ruffing out the hearts. The latter line has the advantage of being far more likely to produce the overtrick when the cards lie well – as on the actual deal.

♠J953
♥98642
♦102
♣82

♠AK10 ♠86
♥AKJ5 ♥1073
♦K84 ♦AJ3
♣K73 ♣J10965

♠Q742
♥Q
♦Q9765
♣AQ4

HCP	
1	
21	6
12	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	6	2	4	2	4
W	6	2	4	1	4

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

At most tables South will pass, discounting the bare queen and not liking the lack of intermediates in his long suits. That sees West open 2NT and East raise to game. North has no reason to do other than fish out a heart and that usually goes three, queen and ace, giving declarer four heart tricks and an extra entry to dummy to lead the jack of clubs. However, with only one other sure entry, he will still give up two club tricks and come to 11.
If North leads a small heart rather than the normal top-of-nothing or second from a bad suit, declarer might go wrong by calling for the ten, expecting the queen to be on his left and wanting to ensure a dummy entry for the club play. That costs a heart trick and declarer will be forced to play clubs from hand.
Careful defence now holds the contract to ten tricks for a good score for N/S.

If South opens 1♦, the auction is a little more complicated, but West will double then bid 2NT over the 2♣ response and East should bid game.

♠K2
♥Q10
♦J7643
♣K542

♠73 ♠J10
♥97652 ♥KJ4
♦1098 ♦AQ52
♣QJ7 ♣A1096

♠AQ98654
♥A83
♦K
♣83

HCP		
	9	
3		15
	13	

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

Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable

The favourable lie of the cards means that E/W can make nine tricks in a heart contract, at least double dummy, but they will surely never get to play there, instead defending against a spade partscore at most tables.

The deal is all about the battle for the ninth trick in spades. Played by South, a club lead sees the defence prevail, taking two club tricks then switching to a trump to prevent the heart ruff. It might seem that a diamond lead to the ace and a trump switch would also be OK for E/W, and that may often prove to be good enough. However, if declarer reads the complex ending just right, he can squeeze then endplay East for the ninth trick.

Facing a passed partner and with a bare king as part of his 13 HCP, South may jump to 3♠ over any opening from East, trying to shut out a possible contract the other way. If instead he bids 1♠ over 1♣/♦, North could do worse than to raise to 2♠, even with a doubleton. This would be routine with three low spades, and king-doubleton will often prove to be just as useful facing a vulnerable overcall, and it has the benefit of making a heart contract harder to reach for E/W.

♠76
♥10
♦QJ632
♣109652

♠K ♠AQ109832
♥862 ♥AKJ5
♦1054 ♦-
♣QJ8743 ♣AK

♠J54
♥Q9743
♦AK987
♣-

HCP		
	3	
6		21
	10	

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

Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable

East has a 2♣ opener and that will often earn his side a free run. He will rebid 2♠ over the 2♦ response and 3♠ over West's next bid of 3♣ – a 7-4 hand should normally bid the seven-card suit twice before introducing the second suit. West may raise 3♠ to game and East will be very tempted to go on. If he just bids slam, he will go down on the normal diamond lead. If, on the other hand, he invites West to decide, West will probably not think that the bare king is enough on its own and will sign off in 5♠, just making.

South may come in over 2♣, particularly if he has a two-suited defence available to him. If he can show either the red suits or hearts and a minor, North can pre-empt to the five level, and East can only bid 5♠ under pressure. Will West bid six on the strength of his one good card?

Actually, 6♣/♠ are both decent contracts in theory – just not in practice – so anyone who gets there can consider themselves to be a little unlucky.

♠AQ98
♥Q1064
♦95
♣A76

♠K5 ♠74
♥K2 ♥9853
♦J10873 ♦Q6
♣J1043 ♣KQ952

♠J10632
♥AJ7
♦AK42
♣8

HCP		
	12	
8		7
	13	

Makeable contracts	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	2	5	6	4
S	-	2	5	6	4
E	1	-	-	-	-
W	1	-	-	-	-

Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all

There are 12 tricks available on this perfect-fit hand but very few will bid to slam as it is hard to realise how good a contract 6♠ is. After all, it is only possession of the major-suit tens that makes it good.

South will open 1♠ and North respond 2NT, if playing some version of Jacoby and not the inferior Baron 2NT. It is much better to bid naturally at the three level and show splinters at the four level than vice-versa – this way around makes the splinters rather specific as they deny a second suit, and one can often show the side-suit at the three level then the splinter at opener's next turn. Anyway, that means that South rebids 3♦. With a minimum game raise and no fitting diamond honour, North may just jump to game now, ending the auction. If he rebids 3♠ instead, South has room to show his singleton by bidding 4♣ (this should be specifically a shortage as South can bid 3NT to invite the start of cuebidding). That improves the North hand a lot, ace-to-three being almost the perfect holding facing a singleton. Still, having already bid 2NT and 3♠, he will be hard-pressed to find another forward-going bid, particularly as any cuebid would have to be beyond game.

♠AKJ8
♥Q10
♦K982
♣A105

♠Q752 ♠64
♥K73 ♥AJ92
♦AJ6 ♦Q75
♣QJ2 ♣9843

♠1093
♥8654
♦1043
♣K76

HCP		
	17	
13		7
	3	

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

Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable

West will open a weak no trump if that is his system and North will double. With seven HCP and no long suit, East will pass and the spotlight turns to South. He is weak and might run if he had a long suit or even at a different vulnerability. On this deal, however, he should pass and pray. Even if 1NT doubled makes, that may be cheaper than bidding and going down, possibly doubled, on the N/S cards. And, who knows, maybe partner can beat 1NT doubled?

Actually, double dummy neither side can make 1NT. North will lead the ace of spades and get a discouraging signal so will switch, perhaps to the queen of hearts as that gives nothing away and avoids a fatal misguess. North's hope is that by the time he gets in again he will know what to do.

From here the defence has to be careful but it can always prevail for a sweaty one down.

Meanwhile, N/S can make nothing at the two level and if South runs to his four-card suit he is two down for a bad score even if not doubled.

♠A84
♥K652
♦K83
♣K87

♠QJ975 ♠103
♥QJ8 ♥A974
♦A ♦Q962
♣10964 ♣J53

♠K62
♥103
♦J10754
♣AQ2

HCP		
	13	
10		7
	10	

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

Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable

Vulnerable, and with a bare ace as part of his 10 HCP, West has no reason to open the bidding so North gets to open 1NT, if playing weak. That normally runs around to West who now overcalls 2♠ or perhaps something to show spades and another. 2♠ may end the auction as South may not risk a take-out double with short hearts, and is likely to be down one.

Alternatively, South may compete with 2NT or 3♦, and I suspect that this will be more common, as with 10 HCP and a five-card suit South will hate to go quietly, knowing that his side has the balance of power . Even supposing that 2NT is read as natural and not some minor-suited take-out, it can be defeated easily enough, while 3♦ has two trump losers and must also go down.

A 1♣ opening may work out rather better for North, as South will respond 1♦ and West overcall 1NT. Now either a simple 1NT or a support double, showing three diamonds, allows N/S to stop at a safe level, while E/W have neither the values nor the distribution to compete further.

♠986
♥QJ9432
♦9
♣Q98

♠10432 ♠AKQJ
♥K6 ♥8
♦A83 ♦K52
♣AK102 ♣J7543

♠75
♥A1075
♦QJ10764
♣6

HCP		
	5	
14		14
	7	

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

Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all

That North hand looks like a routine weak 2♥ opener to me and South can raise to 4♥ over East's double. Will West be confident enough to bid 4♠ on that emaciated suit, or will he prefer a responsive double?

The latter works better in theory as 4♥ can be beaten by three tricks for –500, but in practice East will not leave it in. Now the question is, will East bid 4♠, or will he assume that partner has fewer than four as he failed to bid 4♠ himself, in which case there is a case for bidding 5♣ instead? After all, East expects to get forced at the start, which could be awkward if partner does not have four spades.

Despite these worries, most E/Ws will get to 4♠ and make 11 tricks for a solid +450, while +400 in 5♣ will score poorly. For the record, I would make the responsive double as West and bid 4♠ as East, being willing on the East cards to discard at trick two rather than ruff if necessary to retain trump control.