

The ECatsBridge Summer Pairs Monday 1st July 2024



Thank you so much for joining us for our Summer Charity Pairs in aid of Kidney Research UK and the British Heart Foundation both of which are charities that need as much funding as possible in order to continue their work.

Our thanks go to the commentators for the event – Julian Pottage for the Wednesday commentaries, Mark Horton did the ones for Monday and Friday and Brian Senior for the Tuesday and Thursday ... and by now you will know if they got it right!

We hope you enjoyed the hands and that they weren't too challenging – and whether or not you did well at least you can at least rest assured that you are helping to support two great charities.

The results are at <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/default.asp> and the link to make donations to the charities is : <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/donations.asp> - they are done through JustGiving and you will be able to see how much is raised there.

Board 1	♠ QJ8532	Dealer N
	♥ 85	Vul: None
	♦ K4	
	♣ J108	
♠ AK		♠ 1097
♥ A10942		♥ KJ76
♦ J98532		♦ 6
♣		♣ Q9764
	♠ 64	
	♥ Q3	
	♦ AQ107	
	♣ AK532	

If North starts with a weak 2♠ South has no reason to look for game. West is not strong enough to bid 4♦ (Leaping Michaels) although anyone doing that will come to no harm as East is not going to do more than bid 4♥. If West doubles East is likely to bid 3♥, when West will probably decide to go on to game. Another option for West would be to bid 3♠ (Hearts and a minor) but if you are going to do that you might as well start with 4♦.

If North's opening gambit is a Multi 2♦ South might respond with a 'Pass or correct' 2♠, as opposite a decent heart suit 4♥ might be on. Then West faces a similar dilemma to the one already discussed.

If EW get to the heart game they should record 11 tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 2	♠ 7	Dealer E
	♥ Q94	Vul: N-S
	♦ QJ964	
	♣ 8632	
♠ Q10986		♠ KJ53
♥ A8		♥ K1065
♦ A532		♦ K107
♣ A10		♣ KQ
	♠ A42	
	♥ J732	
	♦ 8	
	♣ J9754	

If East opens 1NT (13-15/14-16/15-17) West transfers to spades and then settles for a jump to 3NT opposite the first two ranges. Facing 15-17 West might continue with 3♦ - if partner has a maximum, a double fit might be enough for a slam. On this occasion, all roads should lead to 4♠.

If East starts with an Acol style 1♥, West responds 1♠ and goes on to game after East's raise.

After a diamond lead from South, declarer wins and plays on spades, eventually ruffing a diamond for 11 tricks. If West is declarer North must avoid leading the ♦Q.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 3

♠ KJ65	Dealer S
♥ 32	Vul: E-W
♦ KJ983	
♣ K8	
♠ Q10972	♠ 83
♥ 108765	♥ KQJ9
♦ J76	♦ Q52
	♣ A542
♠ A4	
♥ A4	
♦ A10764	
♣ Q1093	

If South opens 1♦ the vulnerability should deter West from taking part. If North responds 1♠ East might try doubling and if South passes West bids 2♥. 3♦ is then the obvious looking move for North. With three aces, South is likely to bid game, but NS are unlikely to go beyond that, which is probably just as well, as if East has doubled declarer might go wrong in diamonds.

If South is inclined to open INT (12-14/13-15/14-16) North has enough for at least an invitational sequence via Stayman, and most pairs will finish in 3NT.

If NS play in 3NT a wrong view in diamonds will be a disaster, but if South is declarer and EW have remained silent declarer may decide that as West is marked with length in the suit led that East is more likely to have any diamond length.

Declarer can survive a wrong view in trumps in 5♦ by taking a spade finesse to dispose of a heart.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	6	-	2	3
S	2	6	-	2	3
E	-	-	2	-	-
W	-	-	2	-	-

Board 4

♠ 86	Dealer W
♥ 82	Vul: Both
♦ AQ105	
♣ Q10854	
♠ J743	♠ 52
♥ J10963	♥ 754
♦ K	♦ J432
♣ 963	♣ AJ72
	♠ AKQ109
	♥ AKQ
	♦ 9876
	♣ K

If South opens 1♠ and North responds INT, the practical bid is to raise to 3NT, not least because you know whatever values partner possesses are likely to be in the minor suits.

If South opts for an off-centre 2NT opening, North raises to game.

3NT is straightforward, declarer being virtually certain to emerge with 10 tricks.

Were NS to find a route to 4♠, declarer would have a chance of recording 11 tricks by playing on clubs, guessing to play dummy's ♣10 on the third round of the suit, pinning West's ♣9.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 5

♠ J632	Dealer N
♥ Q9	Vul: N-S
♦ AKQ32	
♣ 43	
♠ 109	♠ KQ74
♥ A7654	♥ KJ10
♦ 864	♦ 10975
♣ A62	♣ K10
	♠ A85
	♥ 832
	♦ J
	♣ QJ9875

If North opens 1♦ there are players who might double with East's hand. Were that to happen

South bids 2♣ and West's 2♥ will end the auction unless South competes with 3♣.

Where East does not double South responds INT and passes North's likely 2♦ rebid. At that point if West decides to back in with 2♥ it will work like a charm, although South still has the option of bidding 3♣.

If North starts with a 12-14 INT South must choose between passing or transferring to clubs.

If NS play in clubs, eight tricks are possible, declarer overtaking the ♦J to get a couple of discards.

If North plays in INT and East leads a top spade five tricks should be the limit. If South happens to be the declarer a heart lead puts the defenders on course for nine tricks.

If West plays in hearts, it's hard to envisage declarer taking fewer than eight tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 6	♠ AQ52	Dealer E
	♥ 6	Vul: E-W
	♦ Q1053	
	♣ AK94	
♠ J76		♠ 109
♥ J9		♥ Q85432
♦ AJ864		♦ 97
♣ J32		♣ Q85
	♠ K843	
	♥ AK107	
	♦ K2	
	♣ 1076	

With a dodgy suit and at adverse vulnerability East is unlikely to open the bidding. If South starts with INT (12-14/13-15) North responds 2♣. Were South to rebid 2♠ then one option would be to make a splinter jump to jump to 4♥. That would leave South with a decision, but the controls are good and justify a cue bid of 5♦, after which North is would bid 6♠ at some point.

Here South responds 2♥. If North continues with 3NT (promising four spades) South might try 4♦ on route to 4♠, which could encourage North to look for more than game.

If West does open 2♥ South might decide to pass a double from partner which should result in a substantial penalty.

If South opens 1♣ and North responds 1♠ the fit will be located, and after South's raise to 2♠ North has various options, including the 4♥ splinter, and a jump to 4♣, showing excellent support for that suit.

6♠ is not the greatest contract, but with the ♦J onside, trumps 3-2 and clubs 3-3, 12 tricks are available.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	5	4	3	6	5
S	5	4	3	6	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

=====

Board 7	♠ 10852	Dealer S
	♥ KJ932	Vul: Both
	♦ 4	
	♣ A108	
♠ K6		♠ AQ
♥ 106		♥ AQ874
♦ AJ72		♦ KQ86
♣ KQ732		♣ 94
	♠ J9743	
	♥ 5	
	♦ 10953	
	♣ J65	

If West opens 1♣, East responds 1♥. If West rebids INT East can use checkback before settling for 3NT.

If West starts with a Precision style 1♦ East responds 1♥ and must then decide how to continue over a 2♣ rebid (usually at least nine cards in the minors). If East tries a fourth-suit 2♠ and then bids 3♦ over West's 3NT it is by no means impossible that 6♦ will be reached.

If West begins with INT (12-14/13-15) then East will probably settle for the nine-trick game, although bidding 3♦ after transferring to hearts is not out of the question.

3NT is easy enough, but a spade lead leaves declarer to decide which suit to play on. Hearts is best, as running the ♥10 and then playing a heart to the queen if it loses to the jack offers a 32.78% chance of four tricks. That's much better than the 17.76% chance of scoring four club tricks.

In 6♦ declarer can take 12 tricks by playing on clubs, the general plan being to preserve entries in the West hand while establishing the club suit, the heart finesse being taken at the end after trumps have been drawn. However, an initial heart lead from either hand is a mortal blow, as declarer cannot afford to leave any trumps out else South will be able to score a heart ruff.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 8

<p>♠ 65 ♥ 82 ♦ AQJ986 ♣ J98</p> <p>♠ AJ97 ♥ 97543 ♦ ♣ KQ106</p>	<p>♠ Q102 ♥ AKJ6 ♦ 432 ♣ 742</p>	<p>Dealer W Vul: None</p> <p>♠ K843 ♥ Q10 ♦ K1075 ♣ A53</p>
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If West opens 1♥ and North overcalls 2♦ East doubles and then raises West's 2♠ (or 3♠ if South takes a bid) to game.

If North overcalls 3♦ the situation is much the same.

If West does not open and North starts with a weak 2♦ a reopening double from West might result in the spade game being reached, but it is by no means guaranteed.

As the cards lie it is hard to imagine that declarer will fail to take 10 tricks in spades

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 9

<p>♠ Q10 ♥ A982 ♦ 10762 ♣ A73</p>	<p>♠ K986 ♥ J73 ♦ ♣ QJ10942</p> <p>♠ A432 ♥ Q64 ♦ KQ84 ♣ 86</p>	<p>Dealer N Vul: E-W</p> <p>♠ J75 ♥ K105 ♦ AJ953 ♣ K5</p>
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If North opens 3♣ (unphased by the potential support for the majors and the void) that should end the auction. If East is bold enough to overcall 3♦, West is likely to try 3NT which is not a great spot, especially if South is tempted to make a speculative double.

Where North passes initially and East opens INT (12-14) that likely to be the contract unless North backs in with something. 2♦ to show spades and another suit would be one option, a Meckwell 2♠ (showing the black suits or the majors) would be another.

If East starts with 1♦ West responds 1♥ and then passes the INT rebid.

If the final contract is INT a low heart lead by South allows declarer to get up to eight tricks (and nine if South fails to switch to spades).

If West declares a notrump contract and North leads a club, the best line is to duck the first round and then play on diamonds, but that should result in no more than seven tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 10 ♠ 8653 Dealer E
 ♥ 97654 Vul: Both
 ♦ K4
 ♣ J10

♠ 4 ♠ QJ72
 ♥ Q103 ♥ AJ8
 ♦ AJ8532 ♦ 96
 ♣ 854 ♣ K962

♠ AK109
 ♥ K2
 ♦ Q107
 ♣ AQ73

A dedicated follower of fashion might open the East hand 1♣, in which case South will double. If West then bids 1♦ North can pass, and if East does the same South might try INT when a Stayman 2♣ from North will locate the spade fit.

Where East passes initially and South opens 1♣ West overcalls 1♦ and if East bids INT South doubles and West probably retreats to 2♦. If South doubles that and North bids 2♥ EW will be off the hook.

If South opens with an Acol style 1♠ and West risks an overcall of 2♦ East might try 2NT. If South doubles EW may be in trouble.

If South starts with a Strong 1♣ West will probably be tempted to overcall – one option being to bid 2♣ to show diamonds or the majors. When East responds with a ‘Pass or correct’ 2♦ South might try 2NT when North will want to be able to enquire about the majors via 3♣.

Although you can take 10 tricks playing in spades, just playing in that denomination should score well, especially if declarer starts on trumps by playing low to the nine.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 11 ♠ 6 Dealer S
 ♥ K107 Vul: None
 ♦ Q
 ♣ AKQ87432

♠ 3 ♠ Q10974
 ♥ AQ964 ♥ J3
 ♦ KJ8742 ♦ A1096
 ♣ 6 ♣ 109

♠ AKJ852
 ♥ 852
 ♦ 53
 ♣ J5

If South opens 2♠ West is not strong enough to bid 4♦ (diamonds and hearts) but nevertheless might try it. If West simply overcalls 3♦ North might bid 5♣ (ambitious facing a weak two bid, but tempting) when East has an easy 5♦, which North could consider doubling.

If South starts with a Multi 2♦ West might be tempted to bid 2♥, but then a bid of 5♣ by North would leave West with a nasty decision. If you subscribe to the maxim ‘6-5 come alive’ then you bid 5♦.

Were South to pass initially, West opens with a red suit (a hackneyed poser for a bidding panel who are always split 50-50 between 1♦ and 1♥) and North bids clubs. Only a near perfect with South would make 3NT a possibility, so the practical move is to bid ignite the firework by bidding 5♣ and then retire to what you hope is a safe distance.

Whatever the final contract, there will be nothing to the play.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

If West starts with INT (14-16/15-17) and North does not have a way into the auction East can use Stayman and should finish in 2♠. Were North to overcall 3♣ East might elect to double for takeout (intending to bid 3♥ over a possible 3♦ from partner) leading to a reasonable penalty.

There is nothing complicated about the play of any of the most likely contracts.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 15	♠ K10976	Dealer S
	♥ A J4	Vul: N-S
	♦ Q	
	♣ AQ42	
♠ Q85		♠ A432
♥ 10632		♥ K97
♦ J43		♦ AK87
♣ K105		♣ 63
	♠ J	
	♥ Q85	
	♦ 109652	
	♣ J987	

If North opens 1♠ East should not stretch to bid INT opposite a passed partner. However, South will do well to respond with an emaciated INT, as 2♣ will be a more comfortable spot.

If North starts with a strong 1♣ South responds 1♦ and then bids INT over North's 1♠.

If North plays in clubs and the defenders start with two rounds of diamonds declarer ruffs and might elect to play a low spade. If East does not play the ♠A West wins and plays a third diamond forcing declarer to ruff. A ruffing spade finesse (discarding a heart from dummy) is followed by another spade, covered and ruffed, and if declarer then decides to play a club to the queen, nine tricks will be in sight as a second heart can be discarded on a spade as West ruffs with a trump trick.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 16	♠ 87	Dealer W
	♥ K8432	Vul: E-W
	♦ J74	
	♣ A103	
♠ K542		♠ 10963
♥ Q97		♥ A6
♦ K1083		♦ 965
♣ 42		♣ KJ85
	♠ AQJ	
	♥ J105	
	♦ AQ2	
	♣ Q976	

If South opens INT (14-16/15-17) North transfers to hearts.

If South opens 1♣ and rebids INT North must choose between passing or rebidding 2♥.

If NS play in hearts, declarer is sure to lose five tricks (the odds play in the trump suit is to run the ♥J and then play the ♥10 on the next round hoping to pin the ♥9, offering a 13.5% chance of four tricks).

If NS play in notrumps then declarer should collect at least eight tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 17 ♠ A8 Dealer N
 ♥ 987 Vul: None
 ♦ QJ108
 ♣ K753

♠ J2 ♠ K963
 ♥ AK42 ♥ J65
 ♦ 7653 ♦ AK
 ♣ J62 ♣ A1084

♠ Q10754
 ♥ Q103
 ♦ 942
 ♣ Q9

Were North to open a 10-12 INT East's double would see South bid 2♠. Then a takeout double by West might see East pass for penalties.

In the more likely event that North passes, and East starts with INT (13-15/14-16/15-17) West will have to decide if it is worth looking for game via 2♣.

If East starts with 1♣ West responds 1♥ and then has a decision over West's rebid, be it 1♠ or INT. In general terms it does not usually pay to press for close games at this form of scoring, but playing in the right denomination is important. Were the auction to start 1♣-1♥-1♠-2♣ East might try 2NT (2♥ would work well, but suggests a 4-3-1-5 hand that is stronger than this one).

If South is minded to overcall 1♠ West doubles and must then take a view on the next round.

If East declares a notrump contract and South leads a spade, North wins and might return the suit. Declarer ducks that to South's queen, wins the diamond switch and could find the play of a low club. That sets up the possibility of scoring three tricks in the suit, even if South follows with the ♣9 and as the play develops South comes under pressure in the majors and will be forced to discard a diamond. Then it will be possible to endplay South with a heart, forcing a lead into the ♠K9.

However, having taken the diamond switch it looks stronger to cross to dummy with a heart and play a club to the eight. If that forces an honour you can go back to dummy and continue with the ♣J, hoping for a 3-3 split. Alas, it fails to deliver on this occasion.

The best defence is for North to switch to a diamond at trick two, which leaves declarer with no hope of nine tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 18 ♠ K953 Dealer E
 ♥ J865 Vul: N-S
 ♦ 2
 ♣ J982

♠ AJ8 ♠ Q107642
 ♥ Q2 ♥ 9
 ♦ AQ65 ♦ K93
 ♣ Q654 ♣ A103

♠
 ♥ AK10743
 ♦ J10874
 ♣ K7

If East opens 2♠ South overcalls 3♥ and North raises to 4♥. At the prevailing vulnerability West will have to consider going on to 4♠, when the best North can do is double.

If East starts with a Multi 2♦ South bids 2♥, West doubles and North raises, South advancing to game over 3♥. West then has the same decision.

It is easy to see that 4♥ cannot be defeated, declarer losing at most a club and two diamonds. 4♠ can be defeated, but only after a diamond lead (easy for North to find, virtually impossible for South) which will ensure that North gets a diamond ruff.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 19 ♠ KQJ92 Dealer S
 ♥ 983 Vul: E-W
 ♦ 4
 ♣ AQJ8

♠ 7653 ♠ 108
 ♥ 1065 ♥ QJ4
 ♦ Q108 ♦ AK95
 ♣ K109 ♣ 7432

♠ A4
 ♥ AK72
 ♦ J7632
 ♣ 65

If South opens 1♦ North responds 1♠ and then bids 3♣ over South's 2♦ rebid, which results in a final contract of 3NT.

Were South to start with INT (10-12/12-14) North transfers to spades and then invites/bids game, depending on partner's range.

The club position is such that unless West leads a diamond there will be 11 tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 20 ♠ 2 Dealer W
 ♥ AJ1098 Vul: Both
 ♦ A963
 ♣ J105

♠ KQ853 ♠ J1074
 ♥ Q ♥ 42
 ♦ KJ5 ♦ Q2
 ♣ 9763 ♣ KQ842

♠ A96
 ♥ K7653
 ♦ 10874
 ♣ A

If West opens 1♠ and North doubles East raises to 2♠ or 3♠ or makes a fit jump of 3♣. Over the latter, if South bids 4♥ West might be tempted to save in 4♠. Another option for South is to bid 4♣, which will help the defenders should EW bid on to 4♠ and South doubles rather than advancing to 5♥.

With 11 tricks cast-iron in hearts, the defenders will need to collect 800 from 4♠ doubled. After a black suit lead North has two entries, both of which must be used to give South club ruffs. The fit jump auction makes it possible for North to envisage a club shortage in the South hand and start with a club, but a spade lead also works as South wins, cashes the ♣A and then plays a red suit, North winning and returning an appropriate suit-preference club.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 21 ♠ K108 Dealer N
 ♥ K105 Vul: N-S
 ♦ A7
 ♣ KJ1084

♠ 97 ♠ J65
 ♥ A7632 ♥ 98
 ♦ J94 ♦ KQ6
 ♣ A62 ♣ Q9753

♠ AQ432
 ♥ QJ4
 ♦ 108532
 ♣

If North opens INT (12-14/13-15/14-16) South transfers to spades and then bids 3♦, North jumping to 4♠.

If North starts with 1♣ South responds 1♠. If North then rebids INT South might investigate via a checkback 2♣/2♦ when 4♠ is likely to be reached.

If West leads a trump against 4♠ declarer can win and play two rounds of diamonds, the 3-3 break leading to 11 tricks. It transpires that the only way to hold declarer to 10 tricks is to lead an unlikely heart, the defenders either securing a ruff, or collecting two diamonds and a heart.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 22

♠ 2	Dealer E
♥ K74	Vul: E-W
♦ KQJ972	
♣ 965	
♠ 7	♠ KQ10543
♥ A10963	♥ Q85
♦ A8	♦ 654
♣ AKJ73	♣ 8
♠ AJ986	
♥ J2	
♦ 103	
♣ Q1042	

If East opens 2♠ West will be doing well to make a move. Bidding 3♥ will work as East can raise to game, while if West tries 2NT and East bids 3♥ to indicate a feature West can continue with 4♥.

If East starts with a Multi 2♦ West has a tougher task. In *The Mysterious Multi* Jan van Cleeff and I suggest that responding 2♥ and then bidding again over 2♠ shows support for partner's suit, so that is not a possibility here. If West tries 2NT the heart suit gets lost and bidding 3♥ immediately is 'Pass or correct'. Perhaps the answer is to play that the sequence 2♦-2♥-2♠-3♥ shows either hearts, or hearts and spade support. Then East could bid 4♥ secure in the knowledge that West can always go back to spades.

4♥ is not an easy contract to play. If North starts with the ♦K declarer wins, and must not release the ♥A as North would win a second heart, cash a diamond and then exit with a heart.

The winning line is to play a low heart to the queen followed by a club to the jack, playing to establish the club suit.

If North decides to lead the ♠2 at trick one South wins and returns a spade, when one option for declarer is to discard the ♦8. North ruffs and exits with the ♦K, but declarer ruffs, cashes a top club, ruffs a club, comes to hand

with the ♥A and ruffs another club, losing only one more trick to the ♥K.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 23

♠ KJ9752	Dealer S
♥ J95	Vul: Both
♦ AJ6	
♣ 10	
♠ A1086	♠ Q
♥ K42	♥ 1073
♦ 8	♦ K10942
♣ KQ876	♣ 5432
♠ 43	
♥ AQ86	
♦ Q753	
♣ AJ9	

If South opens INT (12-14/13-15) West will want to join in, one possibility being to bid 2♦ to show spades and another suit, another (referenced earlier) being to bid a Meckwell 2♣, promising the black suits or the majors. If West uses the former, North passes and when East bids 2♥ to deny three spades West tries 3♣.

If West does not come in over INT North transfers to spades.

If West is on lead against 2♠ and opts for a diamond declarer will probably play low from dummy, East winning and returning a diamond for West to ruff. A top club exit is taken by declarer's ace and is followed by a spade. When West plays the ♠8 declarer should go up with dummy's king, appreciating that if East has the spade ace you can't avoid another diamond ruff. When you collect East's ♠Q there are several ways to ensure nine tricks – best is to play a heart to the queen, as if it holds you can take the ruffing club finesse, so you don't lose a heart and would finish up with 10 tricks.

If West plays in clubs and North leads a heart South takes the ace and returns the ♥6, West winning and playing a diamond. North takes the ace and continues with the ♥J, South overtaking

and playing the ♥8. Whatever declarer does the defenders will score two trump tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 24	♠ 97654	Dealer W
	♥ 3	Vul: None
	♦ Q1076	
	♣ 762	
♠ 8		♠ AJ2
♥ K9542		♥ J106
♦ J92		♦ K54
♣ K954		♣ QJ83
	♠ KQ103	
	♥ AQ87	
	♦ A83	
	♣ A10	

If East opens INT (10-12/12-14) South doubles and West uses whatever methods are at hand to escape. If West simply bids 2♥ South doubles again and North will probably try 2♠ which will be raised to game.

If East starts with 1♣ South doubles and West bids 1♥. If East rebids INT South doubles again and West bids 2♣. Assuming that gets back to South, the choice will be between a third double or 2NT. Over the latter North will want to be able to transfer to spades, but is unlikely to go on to game.

If East leads the ♥J against 4♠ declarer must win with dummy's ace. Provided declarer can negotiate both spades and diamonds there will be 10 tricks, but it is not straightforward. If declarer ruffs a heart at trick two and plays a spade to the king it would then be a mistake to ruff another heart to play a spade as East would win and switch to the ♣Q when declarer cannot avoid four losers. Declarer might try playing the ♠K at trick two, win the likely club return, ruff a heart and play a spade, putting in the ♠10. Then a winning view in diamonds will get declarer up to 10 tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 25	♠ 5432	Dealer N
	♥ KQJ7	Vul: E-W
	♦ J862	
	♣ 7	
♠ 8		♠ KJ1096
♥ 942		♥ 10853
♦ K9754		♦ 3
♣ KJ92		♣ A103
	♠ AQ7	
	♥ A6	
	♦ AQ10	
	♣ Q8654	

Assuming East does not open the bidding, South starts the ball rolling with 1♣ and North responds in a red suit. I suspect many will prefer to introduce the hearts. If East now enters from the wings with 1♠ South bids 2NT and North raises to game.

If South's 1♣ is strong the vulnerability will deter West from bidding but if North responds 1♦ East is likely to bid 1♠. If South rebids INT North will look for a heart fit and then go back to notrumps.

The significance of East's spade overcall is that it should prevent West from leading a diamond. Were that to happen declarer could put up dummy's jack, take the spade finesse, cash four hearts pitching a club and a spade and then play a club, planning to cover East's card. West would win, but there would be no way to avoid the impending endplay that will force a diamond lead into declarer's ♦AQ. If East tries going up with the ♣A and returning a spade, declarer wins and will be able to endplay West. If West has kept three diamonds and two clubs exiting with a club results in 10 tricks, while if West is down to two diamonds and three clubs declarer can play two rounds of diamonds and score the ♣Q at the end for nine tricks.

On a spade lead, declarer wins and might try the ♦Q or ♦10. To be sure of defeating 3NT

West must go up with the $\heartsuit K$ and switch to the $\clubsuit 2$.

Makeable Contracts

	\clubsuit	\heartsuit	\spadesuit	NT
	=	=	=	==
N	1	2	2	2
S	1	2	3	2
E	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-

=====

Board 26	\spadesuit A7	Dealer E
	\heartsuit J762	Vul: Both
	\heartsuit KQJ10954	
	\clubsuit	
\spadesuit QJ9	\spadesuit 8652	
\heartsuit AQ4	\heartsuit K108	
\heartsuit 7	\heartsuit A3	
\clubsuit KQJ965	\clubsuit 10732	
	\spadesuit K1043	
	\heartsuit 953	
	\heartsuit 862	
	\clubsuit A84	

If West opens $1\clubsuit$ North overcalls in diamonds, the level being a matter of individual taste. After $1\clubsuit$ -($1\heartsuit$) East is a heart short of a negative double, and can only support clubs if West has promised at least four. East is no better off if North overcalls $2\heartsuit$ or $3\heartsuit$. After a one-level overcall West can rebid clubs and can also do that after $1\clubsuit$ -($2\heartsuit$). After $1\clubsuit$ -($3\heartsuit$) West might risk a double – it will pass off peacefully if East bids $4\clubsuit$.

If West starts with a Precision style $2\clubsuit$ East can raise clubs.

North's void means that there will always be 10 tricks in clubs.

Makeable Contracts

	\clubsuit	\heartsuit	\spadesuit	NT
	=	=	=	==
N	-	3	1	-
S	-	3	1	-
E	4	-	1	-
W	4	-	1	-

=====

Board 27	\spadesuit 103	Dealer S
	\heartsuit 943	Vul: None
	\heartsuit 984	
	\clubsuit AK852	
\spadesuit KQ62	\spadesuit A84	
\heartsuit Q6	\heartsuit A752	
\heartsuit AKQJ73	\heartsuit 102	
\clubsuit 4	\clubsuit QJ63	
	\spadesuit J975	
	\heartsuit KJ108	
	\heartsuit 65	
	\clubsuit 1097	

If West opens $1\heartsuit$ East responds $1\heartsuit$ and then bids $2NT$ over West's $1\spadesuit$, West raising to game.

If West starts with a Strong $1\clubsuit$ East responds according to system ($1\spadesuit$ to show a balanced positive is the current fashion) and $3NT$ should be reached in short order. North might be tempted to overcall, but if EW play for a penalty it might prove costly.

$3NT$ is straightforward, the only point being that if South leads a club, North must win and switch to a heart to hold declarer to 10 tricks.

If North happens to be in $2\clubsuit$ doubled East leads a diamond and West will probably win and switch to a club, declarer winning and playing back a diamond. West wins, plays the $\spadesuit K$ and should then appreciate that it cannot cost to play a third diamond. East ruffs high in front of dummy and must then lead a low heart. That should ensure the defenders collect eight tricks along with -500.

Makeable Contracts

	\clubsuit	\heartsuit	\spadesuit	NT
	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-
E	2	5	3	4
W	2	5	3	4

=====

Board 28 ♠ KJ94 Dealer W
 ♥ Q53 Vul: N-S
 ♦ K543
 ♣ KJ

♠ Q763 ♠ A852
 ♥ AK74 ♥ 862
 ♦ A7 ♦ 1092
 ♣ 985 ♣ Q64

♠ 10
 ♥ J109
 ♦ QJ86
 ♣ A10732

If West opens INT (12-14/13-15) that is likely to end the auction.

If West starts with 1♣ North might double. Were South to pass that, West will do something, perhaps bidding 1♥ to suggest both majors. 1♠ is a reasonable spot, even if North finds a double.

South's alternatives to passing the double are to bid 1♦ or INT.

If West plays in INT North has a horrible hand to lead from. Starting with a spade looks reasonable but gives declarer an easy route to six tricks by ducking a heart. A diamond is best, giving the defenders a shot at nine tricks, as long as North finds the club switch while South still has a diamond entry.

There should be nine tricks for NS in diamonds, but playing in INT declarer will need to make eight tricks to be ahead of the game. If West starts with a low heart declarer can win in hand but playing a club to the jack will then result in only seven tricks being taken. Instead, playing on diamonds commits declarer to playing East for the ♣Q – in this case that turns out to be the winning view.

Makeable Contracts

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