

ECatsBridge Simultaneous Pairs for Children in Need

Thursday 14th November 2024



Together we can ...

... and by competing in this Simultaneous Pairs you have once again certainly shown that **together we can indeed do something to help make a difference** to children who really need our help. Over the past years we (well you) have helped raise an amazing **£1,346,939.83** ... hopefully we will be a good bit more to that this year!

Thank you so so much for coming along and joining in, playing and donating – please don't forget the donating bit though, will you – just go to :

<https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/donations.asp>

and you will see how you can do it – if you haven't already done so of course!

Our thanks, as always, go to our commentators: Brian Senior for his words of wisdom on Monday and Wednesday, Mark Horton did the analysis for the Tuesday and Thursday and session and Julian Pottage completes the crew, writing up the Friday event. It's always interesting to see if they got it right but you will have discovered that by now of course !

With very best wishes

Anna & Mark – the ECatsBridge Team

Board 1	♠ 9	Dealer N
	♥ 106532	Vul: None
	♦ A74	
	♣ K943	
♠ KQ1085		♠ A62
♥ Q		♥ KJ84
♦ QJ103		♦ 962
♣ AQ5		♣ 1086
	♠ J743	
	♥ A97	
	♦ K85	
	♣ J72	

If North can open 2♥ promising that suit and a minor and South raise to 3♥ (perhaps dubious with a flat hand, but space consuming) West has enough to bid 3♠ when it will be difficult for East not to raise to 4♠ or bid 3NT. If South lets 2♥ go, and West bids 2♠ East might try 2NT, when West will probably raise to game.

Where North passes initially, and West opens an Acol style 1♠, East bids INT and must then make a decision over West's 2♦, 2♠ being the likely move.

Playing 5-card majors East will raise 1♠ according to agreements, either directly or via INT.

If West plays in spades and North leads a heart South wins and needs to switch to a club to hold declarer to nine tricks.

If East plays in notrumps South needs to lead a club at trick one, and North must return the suit if the defenders are to collect five tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

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Board 2 ♠ J64 Dealer E
 ♥ K7542 Vul: N-S
 ♦ Q5
 ♣ J106

♠ 109 ♠ AQ53
 ♥ Q10963 ♥ A8
 ♦ AK1064 ♦ 3
 ♣ 7 ♣ A98543

♠ K872
 ♥ J
 ♦ J9872
 ♣ KQ2

If East opens 1♣ West responds 1♥ and then bids INT over East's 1♠. With a six-card suit and three aces, if East decides to raise to 2NT, West might go on to game. If East bids 2♣ West might continue with 2NT when East will certainly consider raising to game.

If East opens with a Precision style 2♣ West responds 2♥ and then bids 2NT over 2♠, leaving East with the final decision.

In West plays in notrumps and North leads a spade (the best move for the defence) South wins with the king and returns the ♠2 for the ten, jack and queen. If declarer cashes the ♥A and continues with the ♥8 North must duck when declarer cannot get up to nine tricks.

If declarer tries ducking a club at trick three and North wins, it will be essential (but nigh on impossible) for North to switch to a heart, destroying declarer's communications. Were North to switch to the ♦Q, declarer could win in dummy, come to hand with the ♥A and play two rounds of clubs. Then the defenders cannot prevent nine tricks being taken.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 3 ♠ A95 Dealer S
 ♥ 10963 Vul: E-W
 ♦ AKJ104
 ♣ J

♠ J1086 ♠ K4
 ♥ Q842 ♥ AKJ7
 ♦ 5 ♦ 8762
 ♣ 10974 ♣ AK8

♠ Q732
 ♥ 5
 ♦ Q93
 ♣ Q6532

If North opens 1♦ East will have a problem which might be solved by overcalling 1♥. If South raises to 2♦ or tries a thin negative double West raises to 2♥, but declines any invitational bid (such as 3♣) from East.

If East plays in hearts and South leads a diamond, North wins and might switch to a club, declarer winning, ruffing a diamond and playing a spade. If North goes up with the ace declarer will have an easy route to ten tricks. Ducking is best, but if declarer wins, ruffs a diamond and plays a spade, whoever wins must switch to a heart to hold declarer to nine tricks. The simplest defence is for North to switch to a trump at trick two, then it is safe to win the first round of spades and play a second trump, restricting declarer to nine tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 4	♠ A84	Dealer W
	♥ J3	Vul: Both
	♦ 108653	
	♣ 1082	
♠ KQ75		♠ 63
♥ Q52		♥ AK84
♦ K92		♦ J74
♣ AQ4		♣ J763
	♠ J1092	
	♥ 10976	
	♦ AQ	
	♣ K95	

If West starts with INT (14-16/15-17) East looks for a heart fit and then invites/bids game.

If West opens 1♣ East responds 1♥ and must then make a decision over a INT rebid.

If 1♣ is strong then East might respond 1♠ to show a balanced positive when West is likely to jump to 3NT.

If West begins with an Acol style 1♠ East responds 2♣ and then raises 2NT to 3NT.

If East is the declarer in a notrump contract then South can hold declarer to eight tricks by leading the ♠J.

If West is declarer the miraculous position in diamonds, combined with the 3-3 club break make declarer a heavy favourite to score nine tricks. A low spade from North is the most testing lead, and if declarer wins, plays a heart to dummy and then takes three rounds of clubs via the finesse, South wins and returns the ♠J. When that holds if South switches to the ♥10 declarer has more than one way to get up to nine tricks. One is to win in hand and duck a spade, another to win in dummy, cash a club and then play a diamond.

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

=====

Board 5	♠ AK106	Dealer N
	♥ AQ107	Vul: N-S
	♦ J3	
	♣ 1073	
♠ J93		♠ Q875
♥ 93		♥ J86
♦ KQ97		♦ 862
♣ A982		♣ K54
	♠ 42	
	♥ K542	
	♦ A1054	
	♣ QJ6	

If North opens INT (12-14/13-15/14-16) South passes opposite 12-14, and uses Stayman facing the other two. Once North shows hearts 4♥ is going to be reached.

If North starts with 1♣ and South responds 1♥ North raises to 2♥. If South then makes a game try with say 3♦, North will accept.

If South responds 1♦ and North bids 1♥ South will raise to 2♥, while if North rebids INT South can look for a heart fit with 2♣.

Although 4♥ might be made it is tricky to find a route to 10 tricks.

If East leads a heart declarer wins in hand and might try a club to the queen, West winning and exiting with a heart. Declarer wins with dummy's king, takes three rounds of spades, ruffing, then plays a club to the ten and king, East exiting with a heart. Declarer wins and cashes the last heart, forcing West, who is down to ♦KQ9 ♣98, to discard a club. Then declarer crosses to the ♣Q and plays a low diamond, endplaying West.

On a diamond lead declarer can play low from dummy, win the likely heart return in

dummy and play the ♣Q. If West wins and plays a second heart, declarer wins, cashes the ♠AK, ruffs a spade, plays a diamond to the ace, ruffs a diamond, ruffs a spade and plays the ♣J.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 6	♠ QJ76	Dealer E
	♥ KJ10	Vul: E-W
	♦ 2	
	♣ J9853	
♠ AK4		♠ 853
♥ 973		♥ Q864
♦ Q654		♦ AK103
♣ AQ6		♣ K7
	♠ 1092	
	♥ A52	
	♦ J987	
	♣ 1042	

If East opens INT West raises to game.

If East starts with 1♣ West bids 1♦ and then raises the INT rebid to game.

If East begins with 1♦ West can make an inverted raise to 2♦ and then bid 3NT over East's 2♥.

If East is declarer in 3NT South must avoid leading a red suit (the modern approach would be to lead the ♠10 or ♠9 according to agreements). It is obvious why a diamond is fatal, but on a heart lead if North wins and switches to a spade declarer wins, and plays a heart, ducking North's card. Then declarer ducks the second round of spades, wins the third and tests the diamonds. When they prove to be 4-1 declarer plays a heart and emerges with nine tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 7	♠ Q76	Dealer S
	♥ J1084	Vul: Both
	♦ K9	
	♣ QJ92	
♠ K93		♠ A842
♥ Q7		♥ 63
♦ Q1064		♦ 8753
♣ A873		♣ 1054
	♠ J105	
	♥ AK952	
	♦ AJ2	
	♣ K6	

If South opens INT (14-16/15-17) North looks for a fit via Stayman and 4♥ is reached.

If South starts with 1♥ North raises according to agreements. If that raise is to 2♥ North will subsequently accept any game try from South.

If South begins with a Strong 1♣ North has enough for a positive response (1♠ to show a balanced hand is the modern approach) and 4♥ should be bid in short order.

In principle there is nothing to the play, but suppose West has doubled 1♥ (agreed it's unlikely). Might declarer go wrong in the trump suit? Perhaps, but when Westy does not lead a top spade it should be clear that East has one of the honours, making it very likely that West started with the ♥Q.

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

Board 8		Dealer W	
		Vul: None	
♠	K653	♠	Q4
♥	98632	♥	J75
♦	AKQ5	♦	983
♣		♣	A7653
♠	I092	♠	Aj87
♥	KQ	♥	A104
♦	J10	♦	7642
♣	KJ10984	♣	Q2

If West opens 1♣ North must choose between doubling or overcalling 1♥. In either case East can jump to 3♣, but South has enough to bid 3♠ and North is likely to go on to game.

If West starts with a Precision style 2♣ North has the same options. Notice that should East jump to 5♣ South has the option of doubling for a very good score.

It should not be difficult to score 11 tricks in spades (or hearts).

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

Board 9		Dealer N	
		Vul: E-W	
♠	AQ72	♠	3
♥	AK96	♥	Q7542
♦	Q54	♦	Aj9
♣	Q9	♣	8753
♠	I085	♠	Kj964
♥	J103	♥	8
♦	K1083	♦	762
♣	K102	♣	Aj64

If North opens 1NT South transfers to spades and then bids 3♣, North settling for 4♠.

If North starts with an Acol style 1♥ South responds 1♠ and 4♠ is sure to be reached.

If North begins with a Strong 1♣ the spade game is sure to be reached, but if South responds 1NT to show a positive with 5+♠ North will be declarer in 4♠.

If West manages to find a diamond lead 4♠ will be defeated, but if North is the declarer East is never going to find the lead of the ♦9. On a club lead declarer must take dummy's ace, draw trumps, cash two hearts discarding a diamond and then play the ♣Q.

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

Board 10 ♠ J84 Dealer E
 ♥ 9764 Vul: Both
 ♦ J9
 ♣ AK73

♠ 1052 ♠ Q97
 ♥ A85 ♥ KJ1032
 ♦ K432 ♦ 85
 ♣ Q106 ♣ 854

♠ AK63
 ♥ Q
 ♦ AQ1076
 ♣ J92

If South opens 1♦ North responds 1♥ and then bids 1NT over South's 1♠. If South raises to 2NT North will probably bid game.

If South starts with a Strong 1♣ North shows a balanced positive after which it will be difficult for NS to stop out of game.

Does 3NT have any practical chances? If North is declarer (having bid hearts) and East leads a club declarer will try dummy's ♣J, win in hand and run the ♦J. If West wins and returns the ♣10 declarer is home, while the ♣6 leaves declarer to guess the location of the ♣10.

As an aside, imagine West were to switch to an unlikely spade? Declarer could win in dummy and cash four diamonds. Not for the last time Patrick Jourdain's advice of playing off the long suit comes to the rescue, as the defenders are under severe pressure and if declarer reads the position there will always be a route to nine tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 11 ♠ QJ Dealer S
 ♥ A43 Vul: None
 ♦ A9762
 ♣ J87

♠ A1073 ♠ K96
 ♥ QJ1086 ♥ K2
 ♦ Q ♦ 1085
 ♣ KQ4 ♣ A10652

♠ 8542
 ♥ 975
 ♦ KJ43
 ♣ 93

If West opens 1♥ and East responds with an Acol style 2♣ West rebids 2♥ leaving East to choose between continuing with 2NT or 3♥. Over the latter West raises to 4♥, while over 2NT the smart move is to bid 3♣. Then East bids 3♥ and the dubious notrump game is avoided.

With trumps 3-3 declarer will take 11 tricks in the heart game.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 12 ♠ K10852 Dealer W
 ♥ Q9 Vul: N-S
 ♦ 9865
 ♣ 52

♠ AJ4 ♠ 73
 ♥ K75432 ♥ AJ86
 ♦ K ♦ J10
 ♣ AK3 ♣ Q10864

♠ Q96
 ♥ 10
 ♦ AQ7432
 ♣ J97

If West opens 1♥ a few intrepid souls might overcall 1♠. When East raises to 2♥ South's options will be to bid 2♠ or try a fit non-jump of 3♦. Although EW have an easy slam, there is no particular reason why

they should bid it in this situation. Things would be different if East bids 3♣ over North's 1♠! This fit jump (as proposed by Robson and Segal) shows a reasonable club suit and a fit for hearts, making West's hand look tremendous. Asking for keycards will lead to the almost laydown 6♥ (notice the ♦K is worthless).

Where North does not overcall and East raises to 2♥ West has enough to bid game, but loses nothing by continuing with 3♣. If East raises to 4♣ West should be able to envisage the possibility of taking 12 tricks.

If West starts with a Strong 1♣ and East responds 2♣ a slam is sure to be reached after West bids 2♥ and East raises, even if South bids diamonds along the way.

There is nothing to the play.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	3	-	2	-
S	-	3	-	2	-
E	6	-	6	-	1
W	6	-	6	-	1

=====

Board 13	♠ Q853	Dealer N
	♥ 65	Vul: Both
	♦ AJ82	
	♣ 965	
♠ 72		♠ AK96
♥ K1097		♥ AQJ2
♦ 763		♦ 4
♣ Q843		♣ AJ102
	♠ J104	
	♥ 843	
	♦ KQ1095	
	♣ K7	

If East opens 1♣ and South overcalls 1♦ North raises to 2♦ or 3♦ and East doubles. When West bids 3♥ it is a reasonable shot for East to go on to game (perhaps trying 4♦ along the way).

If 1♣ is strong South might overcall but 4♥ should still be reached. For example, after

a natural 1♦ overcall West passes and when North raises to 2♦/3♦ East doubles and sees West bid 3♥.

If East begins with an Acol style 1♥ West raises and East might jump to 4♦.

With the ♣K offside, 11 tricks should be the limit in hearts.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 14	♠ 972	Dealer E
	♥ 986	Vul: None
	♦ A32	
	♣ K962	
♠ AQ843		♠ J5
♥ J		♥ AK52
♦ J876		♦ Q95
♣ 1085		♣ AJ74
	♠ K106	
	♥ Q10743	
	♦ K104	
	♣ Q3	

If East opens INT (13-15/14-16/15-17) West transfers to spades and might then make a try opposite a strong notrump.

If East starts with an Acol style 1♥ West responds 1♠ and then bids 2♦ over the INT rebid, East correcting to 2♠.

Say North leads a trump against a spade contract. Declarer wins with the ♠Q and plays two more rounds of the suit. At this point South is not well placed, as the only card to give declarer a problem about securing an overtrick is the ♥Q.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 15	♠ KQ754	Dealer S
	♥ KQ65	Vul: N-S
	♦ A5	
	♣ 82	
♠ 1063		♠ J8
♥ AJ9		♥ 10874
♦ Q76		♦ 2
♣ KJ63		♣ AQ10754
	♠ A92	
	♥ 32	
	♦ KJ109843	
	♣ 9	

If South opens 3♦ that is likely to leave everyone short of breath.

If South passes and North opens 1♠ East will probably overcall 2♣ (3♣ would be a fair alternative) West raising over South's 2♦, either directly via 3♣, or indirectly with 2♠. If North then passes, South bids 3♠ facing a known five-card suit, or 3♦ if 1♠ could be based on four cards.

If West leads a spade against a diamond contract, declarer wins, cashes the top diamonds and then plays spades, disposing of the ♣9 for 11 tricks.

If North plays in spades and East leads a diamond declarer puts in dummy's ♦J and can score 12 tricks, even if West withholds the ♦Q.

Even if East finds the defence of starting with two rounds of clubs forcing dummy to ruff, declarer can get up to 10 tricks by playing a heart to the king followed by a spade to dummy's ace and a second heart.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 16	♠ AQJ764	Dealer W
	♥ 87	Vul: E-W
	♦ 532	
	♣ 62	
♠ K53		♠ 109
♥ AQJ532		♥ K96
♦ 10		♦ QJ9874
♣ 983		♣ J5
	♠ 82	
	♥ 104	
	♦ AK6	
	♣ AKQ1074	

If West opens 1♥ and North overcalls 2♠ South might decide to take a shot at 4♠. Were North to overcall 1♠ East might raise to 2♥ when South would not be certain that partner has a six-card suit. The simple move would be to bid 3♥ and then bid either 4♣ or 4♠ if partner does no more than bid 3♠.

With the ♠K inside there are 11 tricks in spades and clubs – even more if the defenders do not cash their hearts.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 17	♠ A	Dealer N
	♥ J652	Vul: None
	♦ A10752	
	♣ AQ2	
♠ 3		♠ J10954
♥ K94		♥ Q1087
♦ J9843		♦ 6
♣ 10543		♣ K98
	♠ KQ8762	
	♥ A3	
	♦ KQ	
	♣ J76	

If North opens 1♦ South responds 1♠ and must then find a rebid over North's 2♦. 4♠ shows a six-card suit and opening values while a new suit (3♣ for example) would be forcing. 3♣ is the more flexible approach and when North bids 3NT there is a good case for South to let matters rest.

There are always at least nine tricks in 3NT, but 4♠ might go down. On a club lead declarer wins with dummy's ace and plays the ♦KQ, East ruffing and switching to a heart. Declarer takes the ace, crosses to the ♠A and plays the ♦A, discarding a heart as East ruffs with a trump trick. On an unlikely diamond lead, declarer wins, crosses to the ♠A and must then play a diamond, the play developing along similar lines. Only a heart lead put the defenders one step ahead.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 18	♠ 10	Dealer E
	♥ AJ95	Vul: N-S
	♦ 10653	
	♣ AQ42	
♠ 9863		♠ J42
♥ K3		♥ Q106
♦ Q9		♦ KJ874
♣ J10953		♣ 86
	♠ AKQ75	
	♥ 8742	
	♦ A2	
	♣ K7	

If South opens 1♠ and North responds 2♣ a 2♥ rebid will see North raise to game. At this point South might be tempted to bid on (although the trumps are woeful) perhaps trying 4♠ and then bidding 5♦ over North's 5♣. When North then bids 5♥ it will be time to call it a day.

If South starts with a Strong 1♣ Precision pairs employing the somewhat antiquated 'Impossible Negative' will see North respond 1♦ and then jump to 2NT over South's 1♠. Another method, usually described as the 'Unusual Positive', allows North to respond 3♣ indicating a singleton spade or club with 8-13. With 14+ North responds 3♥, the suit below the singleton. There are numerous variations on this theme.

There should always be 11 tricks playing in hearts, as on a diamond lead declarer can win and play three rounds of clubs. If East ruffs in with the ♥10 declarer can pitch the losing diamond.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 21 ♠ AQJ85 Dealer N
 ♥ KQ Vul: N-S
 ♦ A5
 ♣ A642

♠ 42 ♠ K763
 ♥ AJ2 ♥ 86543
 ♦ KJ74 ♦ Q83
 ♣ 10873 ♣ 9

♠ 109
 ♥ 1097
 ♦ 10962
 ♣ KQJ5

If North opens 2NT South can look for a 5-3 heart fit before settling for 3NT.

If North starts with a Strong 1♣ East might overcall to show the majors (1♠ promising two suits of the same rank), West bidding 2♥ over South's double. If North rebids 2NT South raises to game.

If East leads a heart against 3NT West wins with the ace, and must resist the temptation to return the ♥2, as after winning declarer can cross to dummy with a club and run the ♠10, finishing with 10 tricks thanks to the heart blockage. The winning defence is for West to switch to a low diamond, East winning and returning the ♦8 which West must duck.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 22 ♠ AQJ92 Dealer E
 ♥ A2 Vul: E-W
 ♦ J1092
 ♣ A8

♠ 86 ♠
 ♥ QJ5 ♥ K8643
 ♦ K653 ♦ AQ74
 ♣ J1062 ♣ Q953

♠ K107543
 ♥ 1097
 ♦ 8
 ♣ K74

If East opens 1♥ and South overcalls in spades (2♠ looks down the middle) North will not stop below game. Facing a 1♠ overcall North may want to explore the possibilities of slam, perhaps starting with the increasingly popular 2NT response. Add the ♣Q to South's hand and 12 tricks would be on toast.

Barring something unforeseen declarer should take 11 tricks in spades.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 23 ♠ Q5 Dealer S
 ♥ Q1064 Vul: Both
 ♦ Q972
 ♣ 432

♠ 4 ♠ K987
 ♥ K9872 ♥ A
 ♦ KJ84 ♦ A1063
 ♣ K87 ♣ AQJ5

♠ AJ10632
 ♥ J53
 ♦ 5
 ♣ 1096

If South opens 2♠ East is awkwardly placed, perhaps falling back on 2NT, which should pass off peacefully as West will transfer to hearts and then bid 3NT.

If South starts with a Multi 2♦ and North responds with a 'Pass or correct 2♥' East may be able to double for takeout. When South bids 2♠ what happens next will depend on agreements. If West can double for takeout East might, with an eye to the vulnerability, elect to pass.

If South does not open and East starts with 1♣, a 1♠ overcall will see West double or bid 2♥, and 3NT should be reached.

If 1♣ is strong then South might decide to overcall, but that might not be risk free.

If East plays in 3NT and South leads a spade declarer wins with the king and will be able to score 10 tricks with a winning view in diamonds. That should not be too difficult, as if South has led a low spade it will be vital to avoid North getting the lead. Were South to lead the ♠J/♠10 and North play the ♠Q declarer could win and play back a spade, with excellent prospects of taking 11 tricks.

If South plays in a doubled spade contract, it is possible for the defenders to restrict declarer to five tricks. Ouch!

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	5	5	4	2	3
W	5	5	4	1	3

=====

Board 24 ♠ 762 Dealer W
 ♥ 986 Vul: None
 ♦ QJ9
 ♣ 10932

♠ K10	♠ A5
♥ K4	♥ AQ32
♦ 7642	♦ K103
♣ J8754	♣ AQ

♠ Q9843
 ♥ 1075
 ♦ A85
 ♣ K6

If East opens 2NT West raises to game.

If East starts with a Strong 1♣ 3NT will again be reached.

If South leads a spade declarer wins with dummy's ♠10, takes a losing club finesse, wins the spade return with dummy's king, comes to hand with a club, goes back to dummy with the ♥K and cashes the ♣J, taking 10 tricks.

A passive heart lead is more testing, as if declarer wins in hand and plays two rounds of clubs South wins and exits with a heart to dummy's king. If declarer now cashes the ♣J, nine tricks will be the limit.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 25 ♠ J9 Dealer N
 ♥ Q10964 Vul: E-W
 ♦ K4
 ♣ KQJ10

♠ K843	♠ AQ76
♥ 83	♥ 752
♦ Q752	♦ 1086
♣ 983	♣ A74

♠ 1052
 ♥ AKJ
 ♦ AJ93
 ♣ 652

If North opens 1♥ and South responds 2♦, a 2♥ rebid will see South jump to game.

If North plays in hearts and East leads a diamond declarer has good chances of securing 11 tricks. Putting in the ♦9 works, while playing the ♦J still leave declarer with the possibility of ruffing down the ♦10 (cashing two top trumps in dummy first, in case hearts are 4-1) or risking a finesse of the ♦9.

It's possible that some pairs might play in 3NT. That looks doomed, but were East to lead a diamond declarer could put in the ♦9, and then play the ♣Q, when East would need to win and switch to spades. It should be easy enough, especially for the pairs who employ Smith Peters.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 26	♠	Q9854	Dealer E
	♥	63	Vul: Both
	♦	QJ65	
	♣	K7	
	♠	62	♠ KJ73
	♥	A854	♥ KJ92
	♦	K42	♦ A9
	♣	8652	♣ AQ9
	♠	A10	
	♥	Q107	
	♦	10873	
	♣	J1043	

If East opens 1♣ West responds 1♥ and East jumps to game.

If East starts with a Strong 1♣ West responds 1♦ then looks for a heart fit over East's 1NT rebid.

If East begins with an Acol style 1♥ West raises and East goes on to game.

If West is in 4♥ and North leads the ♦Q declarer wins in dummy, comes to hand with the ♥A and plays a spade to the jack and ace. If South continues with a diamond declarer wins and takes the club finesse. When it holds declarer cashes the ♠K and plays a spade. If South pitches a diamond, declarer ruffs, crosses to the ♣A, cashes the ♥K and plays a spade, ensuring 10 tricks. If South discards a club on the third spade declarer ruffs, ruffs a diamond and plays a spade. If South discards another

diamond declarer ruffs, crosses to the ♣A and exits with a club. Then North must be careful to ruff partner's winner!

If East is declarer and South leads a club declarer wins, plays a heart to the ace and a spade for the jack and ace. South exits with the ♣J and having won the queen declarer must avoid the trap of cashing the ♠K and playing another spade, as South can ruff, play a club for North to ruff and then ruff another spade. One of several winning lines is to play two rounds of diamonds ending in dummy and then take the heart finesse.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 27	♠	743	Dealer S
	♥	A732	Vul: None
	♦	KQ5	
	♣	K97	
	♠	106	♠ KJ82
	♥	J4	♥ K6
	♦	J742	♦ A63
	♣	QJ1084	♣ 6532
	♠	AQ95	
	♥	Q10985	
	♦	1098	
	♣	A	

If South opens 1♥ North will frequently respond 2NT, which should result in a final contract of 4♥.

If West leads the ♣Q declarer wins, plays the ♥10 to dummy's ace and a heart, unblocking the ♥9 under East's king (not at all necessary, but good technique). The club return is taken by dummy's king as a diamond goes away and now declarer can play a spade to the nine, subsequently finessing against the ♠K for 10 tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 28	♠	AJ62	Dealer W
	♥	A9	Vul: N-S
	♦	A52	
	♣	AQ104	
♠	Q1095		♠ 73
♥	753		♥ QJ1086
♦	QJ73		♦ 10964
♣	J3		♣ 76
	♠	K84	
	♥	K42	
	♦	K8	
	♣	K9852	

If North opens 1♣ will anyone try bidding 2♥ with East's cards? It would leave South to determine the best move – probably 2NT is about right. How easy would it be to reach 6♣ after that?

After 2NT (suggesting 11-12 points) North might continue with 3♠, confirming that 1♣ was based on 4+♣. If South then bids 4♣ North can continue with 4♦ and when partner bids 4♥ the club slam will become an attractive proposition.

Were South to bid 3♣ North is unlikely to do more than bid 3NT. Were North to try 3♥ South could consider bidding 4♣, but going past 3NT is never an easy decision.

Where NS have a free run the bidding might start 1♣-2♣, the popular inverted minor suit raise. How the bidding continues will depend on agreements, but North will certainly be thinking in terms of a slam.

If North's 1♣ is strong South responds 2♣, when North's simplest option is to raise, and some pairs may be able to use a variety of asking bids. In Precision, 3♣ would be a trump ask, Responder bidding 3♥ to show a five-card suit with one top honour. Then North could start looking for controls, bidding 3♠, the response of 4♦ promising the king or a singleton. Then over 4♥ South would bid 5♣ to show the ♥K or a singleton. At this point North could ask about the diamond situation by bidding 5♦, South responding 5NT to show the ♦K or a singleton. Now North knows that the grand slam is probably at worst on a finesse of the ♠J, but might be better than that (South could have the ♠Q for example).

7♣ is a 'Dirty Harry' grand slam!

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	7	3	3	6	7
S	7	3	3	6	7
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

=====