## The 2024 Charity Challenge Pairs Thursday $14^{\text {th }}$ March

We are raising funds for two support Charities again this year -Mind, that wonderful charity supporting people with mental health problems, and Macmillan Cancer Support ... the work they do is just amazing. Please help us raise lots of lovely funds for them.
Last year you managed to raise over $£ 5,000$ each for them which was just amazing and incredibly generous of everyone. If you haven't already done so, please click here to go to the page that gives you all the information. And if you want to send a cheque or pay by bank transfer please note the change of bank account !

July sees our Summer Charity pairs for Kidney Research UK and the British Heart Foundation and then of course there will be the Children in Need Pairs in November - well we couldn't NOT run that could we!

Do join us for some of these events if you can - it's lovely to see lots of people joining in and we love to have your company.
We do hope you have enjoyed yourselves, and you will know by know whether the commentator has got it right! We are very grateful to Mark Horton for writing the Wednesday and Thursday commentaries, to Julian Pottage who penned the one for Tuesday and to Brian Senior for starting and ending the event with the Monday and Friday commentaries.

Thank you so much for joining us and please do so again in future !

Anna and Mark

| Board I | $\bullet$  <br> + Q632 <br> + 10863 <br> - 104 | Dealer N <br> Vul: None |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - AK653 |  | - Q |
| - A875 |  | - J4 |
| - K4 |  | - Q95 |
| - J6 |  | * AKQ8752 |
|  | - 10742 |  |
|  | - KI09 |  |
|  | - AJ72 |  |
|  | - 93 |  |

If East opens West responds and East might decide to jump to $\mathbf{3 \%}$. That generally promises around seven playing tricks, so West will be able to envisage the possibility of a slam. The simplest option is to ask for keycards (some pairs may be able to bid $4 \boldsymbol{e}$ to do that) and when East shows 2 along with the Q West signs off in $6 \%$ (or tries 6NT).


If West opens INT (14-16/I5-17) that will probably end proceedings.

If West starts with IP and North overcalls Is East raises hearts, South bids 24 and West pushes on to 3 .
All things being equal, the optimum way to play the heart suit is to start with a low card to the queen, offering a $32.78 \%$ chance of avoiding a loser, but after North's overcall declarer might start with the $\geqslant$ Jand subsequently finesse the PIO on the next round of the suit. Then it will be a question of making a winning guess in the club suit for a tenth trick.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | \& | - | $\stackrel{\square}{ }$ | , | NT |
|  | = | = | = | = | = |
| N | - | - | - | - | - |
| S | - | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| E | 3 | - | 4 | - | 2 |
| W | 3 | - | 4 | - | 2 |


| Board 3 | $\stackrel{1}{4}$ | 1043 | Dealer S |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\downarrow$ | Q102 | Vul: E-W |
|  | * | AK74 |  |
|  | $\pm$ | 843 |  |
| - 85 |  |  | - KQJ92 |
| - J743 |  |  | - 986 |
| - 1052 |  |  | - 3 |
| - AKJ6 |  |  | - Q975 |
|  | ¢ | A76 |  |
|  | $\stackrel{\rightharpoonup}{ }$ | AK5 |  |
|  | - | QJ986 |  |
|  | $\pm$ | 102 |  |

If South opens INT (I2-14 etc) North might be tempted to invite game opposite 14-16, but South is unlikely to accept.

If North passes over INT East may overcall using whatever methods are to hand. For example, if East bids 2 to show spades and a minor West responds with a 'pass or correct' 3e, which will probably end the auction unless South tries an aggressive re-opening double or bids 34 .

If South is compelled by system to open 1e North may respond INT promising 5-11 and that is also likely to end the bidding.
If South opens i\$ promising length in the suit North might raise defensively to $3 \downarrow$.

With clubs 4-4 there are nine top tricks in a notrump contract.


If West opens IV East might try responding INT, intending to bid diamonds on the next round. If South overcalls 2s that is likely to end the auction.

If East does not respond to IV South is too strong for a simple is overcall and will probably double. North's trumps are not strong, but he does have five of them, so the options are to play for a penalty and pass, or respond INT.
If North opts to pass, East will run to 24 . Do you know in your partnership what a double by South at this point would be? If it is for takeout it is hardly obvious for North to convert it. If

North prefers 2NT then South is likely to raise to game.

Although the play is slightly complicated, declarer is likely to secure nine tricks in 3NT. Because East has no guaranteed entry, declarer can afford to play on spades which ensures three tricks in that suit, along with two hearts, two diamonds and a club. That's eight tricks and a ninth will come from either the club suit (declarer playing a club towards the queen) or via dummy's $\uparrow 10$.

If NS end up defending a diamond contract South will need to lead a trump at an early stage (perhaps after cashing the $\mathbf{~ K}$ ).

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | \% | $\checkmark$ | $\varphi$ | 4 | NT |
|  | = | $=$ | $=$ | $=$ | $=$ |
| N | 3 | - | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| S | 3 | - | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| E | - | I | - | - | - |
| W | - | I | - | - | - |


| Board 5 | 4 | 105 | Dealer N |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\downarrow$ | A65 | Vul: N-S |
|  | $\checkmark$ | J76 |  |
|  | \% | A7632 |  |
| - AQ42 |  |  | ¢ J86 |
| - 94 |  |  | - QJ32 |
| - 8 |  |  | - AK943 |
| \% KJI0954 |  |  | \% 8 |
|  | $\pm$ | K973 |  |
|  | $\downarrow$ | K1087 |  |
|  | $\checkmark$ | Q1052 |  |
|  | 8 | Q |  |

If East opens 1 West is not strong enough to respond $2 \%$ and then bid 24 over East's $2 \downarrow$. Responding 14 works well if East raises to 24 (or bids INT) if West is not overly ambitious.

INT is a good spot, as unless South leads an unlikely diamond declarer should be able to take advantage of the favourable club position. For example, on a heart lead declarer wins the third round of the suit and plays a club. With North turning up with both the missing aces it is highly likely that the spade king will be onside giving declarer eight tricks.
24 is also a good place to play - if North fails to lead a trump declarer will have every chance of securing nine tricks.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 8 | $\checkmark$ | $\varphi$ | 4 | NT |
|  | $=$ | $=$ | $=$ | = | = |
| N | - | - | - | - | - |
| S | - | - | - | - | - |
| E | 2 | I | 1 | 2 | I |
| W | 2 | - | - | I | I |



Were East to open with a weak $2 \checkmark$ that might end proceedings unless North decides to bid $2 \boldsymbol{2 9}$. In that scenario South would probably try 2NT or 3NT.

Where East does not open the bidding and South tries $1 \%$ North responds IV and South rebids $2 \boldsymbol{2}$, which should end proceedings.

If South starts with a Precision style 2\& North responds $2 \vee$ and then passes South's $3 \%$.
The friendly layout means that there are 10 tricks in clubs, and nine in 3NT, although declarer must avoid blocking the club suit, making sure to lead the jack (or eight) from dummy on the first round of the suit.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | \% | $\checkmark$ | $\varphi$ | 4 | NT |
|  | $=$ | $=$ | $=$ | $=$ | $=$ |
| N | 4 | - | 2 | - | 3 |
| S | 4 | - | 2 | - | 3 |
| E | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| W | - | - | - | 1 | - |



If South opens IV West might overcall IS (2 to show the two-suiter is a possibility, but the suits are dreadful given the vulnerability) when it is difficult to see East stopping short of game.

Where West passes North could pass, but the modern approach is to respond in the style of Flanders and Swann - 'at the drop of a hat'. A response of 14 will see East join in with $2 \downarrow$, but South's $2 \boldsymbol{\nabla}$ is likely to leave everyone else short of breath.

If South plays in hearts, nine tricks are guaranteed.

If West plays in spades and North leads a heart declarer wins in dummy. There is a way to arrive at 10 tricks, but it is far from obvious. Declarer must cash a top diamond before ruffing a heart and then playing a second diamond. If North ruffs and exits with a club declarer wins in dummy and must now ruff a diamond with the $\$ 8$. North can overruff, but South's $\boldsymbol{4}$ A will be the last trick for the defence.

If North does not ruff the second diamond declarer wins in dummy and ruffs a diamond. North overruffs, but declarer wins the club exit with dummy's king and ruffs another diamond, again arriving at 10 tricks.

The only winning defence is for North to lead a club at trick one, removing a vital entry to dummy.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\underline{8}$ | - | $\varphi$ | ¢ | NT |
|  | = | = | = | = | $=$ |
| N | - | - | 3 | - | - |
| S | - | - | 3 | - | - |
| E | 2 | 4 | - | 3 | - |
| W | 2 | 4 | - | 3 | - |



When North opens 14 South responds $2 \checkmark$ and sees partner rebid $2 \boldsymbol{} 7$. A void in partner's main suit is not necessarily an asset, but even so South is virtually certain to drive to at least 6P. Perhaps the simplest way to continue (where $2 \downarrow$ was game forcing) is to raise to $3 \vee$. If North then bids 4 (cue bidding a shortage in partner's suit is sometimes frowned on) South will know the 2 K is missing but might play partner for the $\$ \mathrm{~K}$ and push on to $7 \mathbb{V}$.

With the K onside and both major suits behaving declarer should emerge with all the tricks in a heart contract, either via a diamond finesse, or by ruffing two diamonds.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | \% | - | $\varphi$ | 4 | NT |
|  | = | $=$ | = | $=$ | == |
| N | 5 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| S | 5 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 5 |
| E | - | - | - | - | - |
| W | - | - | - | - | - |


| Board 9 | 4 | Q3 | Dealer N |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\stackrel{\square}{ }$ | Q1087 | Vul: E-W |
|  | $\checkmark$ | Q7 |  |
|  | 8 | AQJ32 |  |
| - KIO |  |  | ¢ A874 |
| - A9542 |  |  | - K63 |
| - K96 |  |  | - J108 |
| \& 1097 |  |  | - K85 |
|  | 4 | J9652 |  |
|  | $\stackrel{\square}{ }$ | J |  |
|  | $\checkmark$ | A5432 |  |
|  | 9 | 64 |  |

If North opens I South responds I 4 and then bids $2 \checkmark$ over North's INT rebid, finishing in 24.

Were North to start with 2 (there are pairs who are happy to do so with only 5 but then partner cannot bid quite so freely) South can only pass and West might bid 24 which will turn out badly.
If North is happy to open INT (5422 is not everyone's cup of tea) South transfers to spades and if West doubles $2 \varphi$ East will probably bid 3 \%.
If NS play in spades the defence is not clear cut. If West leads the 10 East wins and will probably switch to a spade. West wins with the king, but returning the 10 puts declarer one step ahead and at least eight tricks will be scored. As the cards lie West would need to switch to a low heart, East winning with the king and returning a heart. If declarer ruffs and plays a spade, East wins and plays a third heart and the defenders must prevail.
$3 V$ is an uncomfortable spot for EW - if North leads the $₫ \mathrm{Q}$ and declarer wins and plays two rounds of hearts seven tricks are likely to be the limit.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\pm$ | - | $\stackrel{\rightharpoonup}{ }$ | 1 | NT |
|  | = | $=$ | $=$ | $=$ | = |
| N | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| S | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| E | I | - | 2 | - | 1 |
| W | I | - | 2 | - | I |


| Board 10 | $\begin{aligned} & 9 \\ & \text { A10963 } \\ & \text { K943 } \\ & \text { AJ6 } \end{aligned}$ | Dealer E <br> Vul: Both |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - QJ10832 |  | - 74 |
| - 874 |  | - KJ5 |
| - 5 |  | - AQJ8 |
| - 753 |  | - K1094 |
| $\pm$ | AK65 |  |
| $\stackrel{\rightharpoonup}{ }$ | Q2 |  |
| - | 10762 |  |
| $\pm$ | Q82 |  |

If East opens INT (12-14, 13-15, 14-16) West transfers to spades. North could double to show hearts, but bidding 2s as the equivalent of a takeout double is best. With a decent number of points and a solid spade stopper South bids 2NT, which should be the final contract.

If West leads the Q declarer wins, and might be tempted to play a club to the ace followed by a low heart. However, the lack of entries to the dummy allows East to hop up with the PK and play two rounds of clubs, when seven tricks will be the limit.
Playing a club to the jack is a possibility, East winning and returning a spade. Declarer must win that (trusting that the spades are 6-2) and can run the P , East winning and exiting with a club. Declarer wins, and now needs to resist the temptation to take a second heart finesse, instead cashing the ace, taking the A and exiting with a heart, which will endplay East.

Perhaps the strongest line is to run the PQ at trick two, East winning and returning a spade. Declarer wins and can now take a second heart finesse, East winning and exiting with a heart. Declarer cashes three tricks in the suit reaching a six-card ending where dummy, declarer and East all have three cards in both minors. There are many ways in which declarer can now ensure another three tricks are scored. One is to play two rounds of clubs, win the club return in hand and then play a diamond, ducking the trick to East, who has to surrender a trick to dummy's $\$ K$.


If South opens INT (12-14 and so on) North can respond 24 , planning to bid 24 over a response of $2 \downarrow$.


If West starts with INT (13-15/I4-16/15-17) East can look for a spade fit via 2e. Another possibility is to transfer to clubs (going via 24 is popular) intending to bid 3s on the next round as a slam try.

That's aggressive, but a good six-card suit is worth its weight in gold opposite a strong balanced hand (it rates 15.45 on the KaplanRubens Hand Evaluator). With a fit in both suits, that might see West drive to a slam. If West has responded $3 \boldsymbol{2}$ to , then playing in clubs ostensibly protects the $\$ \mathrm{~K}$.
If West has responded 2 NT and East bids 34 then West again has the option of playing in either suit.

If nothing else, this deal demonstrates the advantage of playing in a $4-4$ trump fit -64 cannot be defeated, while 6\% and 6NT founder if the defenders lead a heart.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\stackrel{1}{6}$ | - | $\stackrel{\rightharpoonup}{*}$ | 4 | NT |
|  | = | $=$ | $=$ | $=$ | == |
| N | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| S | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| E | 5 | - | 3 | 6 | 5 |
| W | 5 | - | 3 | 6 | 5 |



If North opens I South responds Is and then jumps to 4s over North's 2e rebid.

If West leads a diamond against declarer will have an easy route to 10 tricks. On a club lead declarer wins in dummy and plays a diamond, needing to play the $\downarrow \mathrm{K}$ if East follows with the eight.

If declarer prefers to play a spade at trick two, the odds line for one loser is to put in the 10 (a $33.91 \%$ chance). When that passes off peacefully declarer needs one diamond trick and has time to start with a low diamond towards dummy's nine. With East holding the doubleton ace that is one way to solve the problem.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\stackrel{1}{6}$ | * | $\stackrel{\square}{ }$ | ¢ | NT |
|  | = | = | = | = | = |
| N | 1 | 1 | - | 4 | 2 |
| S | 1 | 1 | - | 4 | 2 |
| E | - | - | - | - | - |
| W | - | - | - | - | - |


| Board 14 | $\stackrel{9}{9}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 9753 \\ & \text { A9754 } \\ & \text { K3 } \\ & 72 \end{aligned}$ | Dealer E <br> Vul: None |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| ¢ Q82 |  |  | ¢ KI06 |
| - 1082 |  |  | - Q |
| - QJ85 |  |  | - Al096 |
| \% K95 |  |  | \& Ql043 |
|  | 4 | AJ4 |  |
|  | $\downarrow$ | K63 |  |
|  | $\checkmark$ | 742 |  |
|  | \% | AJ86 |  |

If East opens INT (I0-I2/I2-I4) that will buy the contract unless North protects with say $2 \boldsymbol{\%}$ to show the majors. Such actions come with a health warning, as there is a risk of getting too high.

Here South might respond $2 \downarrow$ showing equal length in the majors but will then be doing very well not to raise $2 \varphi$ to $3 \varphi$.

If East opens le West can choose between responding 1$\rangle$ or essaying a tactical INT.
EW should make at least seven tricks in INT, while the best NS can hope for is seven tricks playing in hearts.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\%$ | $\checkmark$ | $\varphi$ | 4 | NT |
|  | $=$ | $=$ | = | = | == |
| N | - | - | I | - | - |
| S | - | - | I | - | - |
| E | 2 | 3 | - | I | I |
| W | 2 | 3 | - | - | I |


| Board I5 | $\pm$ | 1064 | Dealer S |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\varphi$ | 11054 | Vul: N-S |
|  | $\checkmark$ | J865 |  |
|  | 9 | 73 |  |
| ¢ Q98 |  |  | ¢ AKJ |
| - KQ9 |  |  | - ${ }^{\text {a }}$ |
| - AQ107 |  |  | - 432 |
| Al05 |  |  | - 98642 |
|  | $\pm$ | 7532 |  |
|  | $\stackrel{\square}{ }$ | 8763 |  |
|  | $\checkmark$ | K9 |  |
|  | 8 | KQJ |  |

If West starts with INT (14-16/I5-I7) East raises to game (perhaps checking for a possible five card spade suit along the way).

If West starts with a Strong le East shows a balanced positive, leading to 3NT.

With the $>K$ onside and the clubs 3-2 there are II tricks.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | \% | - | $\varphi$ | 4 | NT |
|  | = | $=$ | $=$ | $=$ | == |
| N | - | - | - | - | - |
| S | - | - | - | - | - |
| E | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| W | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 |



If West opens INT (12-14 etc) North might try overcalling 3\%, leaving South to choose between passing or venturing 34. It's a similar situation to the one where partner opens with a preemptive bid, although here you already know a certain amount of strength is on the left. The practical move is to pass, especially if you are uncertain as to the forcing nature of 34.

If West opens le North can only pass, but when East bids $1 \diamond$ South can come in with 19. If West rebids INT South can rebid 2s.
If East prefers to respond IV (the Walsh convention) West can raise to $2 \square$ over South's Is but South has more than enough to keep going with 24.

If South plays in spades the defenders must be careful. Leading either major suit is a catastrophe. If East has bid diamonds West might attack that suit, declarer ruffing the second round, playing a club to the king and then playing either a spade or a heart to the queen. In the former case West wins and must then exit with a club. In the latter case West must not make the mistake of exiting with a low spade, as declarer will take East's $\varphi Q$ and play back the $\$$, securing an overtrick. West needs to cash the $\Phi A$ and then exit with club, or exit with a third diamond to restrict declarer to nine tricks.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $\stackrel{1}{2}$ | - | - ${ }^{\text {- }}$ | - NT |
| = |  | = | = == |
| N 3 |  | - - | 3 |
| $\mathrm{S} \quad 3$ |  | - - | 32 |
| E |  | 2 I | - - |
| W |  | 2 I | - - |
| Board 17 |  | Dealer N | Vul: None |
|  |  | KQJ5 |  |
|  | - K | KIO |  |
|  |  | AKQJ1054 |  |
| - QJ874 |  |  | - K6 |
| - 92 |  |  | - A1087 |
| - 63 |  |  | - J9742 |
| - 9632 |  |  | - 87 |
|  | - A | Al09532 |  |
|  |  | 643 |  |
|  |  | AQ85 |  |
|  |  |  |  |

If North opens I South responds Is and then has to consider how best to proceed when North rebids $2 \uparrow$. As 24 would not be forcing for most pairs and 3s should suggest a better suit, South must choose between 3 NT and a fourth-suit 34 . As it happens North can bid 3NT over $3 \uparrow$, but otherwise the bid risks going past the nine-trick game.

With both players having a void in partner's suit someone, probably North may have to take a gamble at some point. If South prefers 3NT to $3 \$$, North might decide to take a shot at 6 e.

If North's Is is strong South makes a positive response in spades, either naturally or with a conventional INT. If North then jumps to 3\% to show a solid suit South can mark time with 3 and then bid 3ser North's 34. If South then bids 3NT North has enough to bid on the practical choice is a jump to $6 \boldsymbol{\%}$.

This presupposes that East will pass over le, but many players will interfere, perhaps bidding IV to show two suits of the same colour. What happens after that is pure conjecture.
There is nothing to the play in $6 \%$, but 6NT (an unlikely resting place) appears $t$ be in trouble after a spade lead. However, if declarer wins with the A , crosses to dummy with the $\uparrow \mathrm{K}$ and cashes seven clubs, East is forced to come down to 4 A $\downarrow 97$ and must pitch a spade
on the final club, after which declarer can play a heart to establish a twelfth trick.


If East opens I* West responds is and must then choose between bidding $3^{3}$ or 3NT over East's 3 rebid.

If East starts with a Strong le West makes a positive response in spades, after which the final contract is sure to be 44.
If North starts by cashing the top hearts declarer will score II tricks in spades. If North cashes only one heart and then switches to a club declarer wins in dummy, ruffs a diamond, pitches a heart on the A and presents the QQ. If North covers declarer ruffs in dummy and can now play the $\$ A K$. South ruffs, declarer overruffs, pitches a diamond on the ${ }^{\top}$ J and then has a crossruff for 12 tricks. That won't happen very often, but is not totally impossible.

If West is in 3NT and North leads a club declarer wins and plays three rounds of diamonds, finishing with 10 tricks.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 9 | - | $\varphi$ | 4 | NT |
|  | $=$ | $=$ | $=$ | = | == |
| N | - | - | - | - | - |
| S | - | - | - | - | - |
| E | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 4 |
| W | 2 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 4 |


| Board 19 | 1042 | Dealer S |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - | A843 | Vul: E-W |
| $\checkmark$ | 73 |  |
| 2 | KQJ9 |  |
| ¢ 987 |  | - QJ53 |
| - KIO2 |  | - J97 |
| - QJI0984 |  | - A2 |
| 3 6 |  | \& A543 |
| 4 | AK6 |  |
| $\varphi$ | Q65 |  |
| $\checkmark$ | K65 |  |
| 0 | 10872 |  |

If South opens INT (IO-I2/I2-I4) there is no obvious reason for anyone else to get involved.

West leads the $Q$ and East overtakes and returns the suit, declarer winning the third round and forcing out the m for seven tricks. I'm sure David Bird will enjoy this deal!

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | \% | - | $\nabla$ | 1 | NT |
|  | $=$ | = | $=$ | $=$ | == |
| N | 2 | - | I | - | I |
| S | 2 | - | 1 | - | I |
| E | - | 3 | - | - | - |
| W | - | 3 | - | - | - |


| Board 20 | 4 | KQ852 | Dealer W |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\uparrow$ | KJ | Vul: Both |
|  | $\checkmark$ | A5 |  |
|  | \% | Q842 |  |
| - A643 |  |  | - J109 |
| - Al073 |  |  | - Q862 |
| - J6432 |  |  | - 9 |
| 9 |  |  | 2 KJ976 |
|  | 4 | 7 |  |
|  | $\uparrow$ | 954 |  |
|  | $\checkmark$ | KQ1087 |  |
|  | \% | Al053 |  |

If North opens Is and South responds INT, a $2 \%$ rebid will leave NS in a good spot, despite the bad break. If West is tempted to try a double it would be churlish to blame East for passing, but there is a case for taking Edgar Kaplan's advice that 'takeout doubles should be taken out'.

One reason for bidding $2 \varphi$ is that South might be tempted to raise to $3 \%$ and now East will be on firmer ground with a double.

Although 5422 is not a great pattern, some might open INT, when South is likely to raise to game.

There should always be eight tricks in clubs although there is one way in which the defenders could test declarer, West switching to a low heart when getting in with the L A . It risks surrendering an overtrick.

If EW play in hearts South is likely to lead the 47. If declarer ducks North wins and returns the $\$ 8$ for South to ruff. A diamond to the ace puts North on lead to deliver another ruff, but after that declarer will lose only one more trick. Having scored one ruff, South must switch to a heart. If North is allowed to win with the king he can give South another ruff, then gain the lead with the $\forall A$ and exit with the $\upharpoonright$ J, holding declarer to six tricks.

If North is in 3NT and East leads a club declarer is off to a good start, but finding a route to nine tricks is strictly for the double dummy aficionados. Declarer must win with the 2 Q (not the 88 ) and then play back a club, winning with the ace when East plays the jack. Then declarer needs to run the $\$ 10$. When it holds he can play a spade to the queen, unblock the A and play a club towards dummy's $\$ 10$. He can later play a heart to the king for (at least) nine tricks. Wow!

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 8 | $\checkmark$ | $\varphi$ | 4 | NT |
|  | $=$ | $=$ | $=$ | $=$ | == |
| N | 2 | 2 | - | I | 2 |
| S | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 |
| E | - | - | 1 | - | - |
| W | - | - | I | - | - |



If North opens East overcalls INT, ending the auction.

The layout is such that declarer should secure nine tricks. On a spade lead declarer wins the second round, crosses to dummy with a diamond and plays a club to the queen. Now a low heart to dummy's $\% 10$ forces North to exit with a club and after taking three more tricks in that suit declarer goes to dummy to take a heart finesse.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 2 | - | $\stackrel{\rightharpoonup}{ }$ | 4 | NT |
|  | = | $=$ | = | $=$ | = |
| N | - | - | - | - | - |
| S | - | - | - | - | - |
| E | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| W | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |



If East opens Is West will raise (a double by South notwithstanding) and East will bid game.

If East starts with a Strong 1q South has no reason to bid and 4 will be reached in short order.

If South leads the YK declarer wins and can secure 10 tricks by cashing the top spades. However, if South has doubled on the first round, declarer might lose a trick to the Q which will mean one down.

Were South to lead the $\mathbf{e} / \mathrm{Q}$ declarer would be able to win and play the $\uparrow K$, setting up a discard and ensuring at least 10 tricks.


If East opens Is and West responds INT it will not matter what East rebids - the choice is between 34 and 4 - as West raises 3s to game.

If West responds 2 (an option for pairs playing Acol) East rebids 34 and West raises to game.

If East starts with a Strong 1\& South might get involved despite the vulnerability, say with IP to show two suits of the same colour. When West doubles North's options include bidding 2 to show a preference for that suit over spades, at the same time indicating a fit in a red suit. However, Nothing should prevent EW from reaching 4@.
44 is not in danger, the question being how many overtricks can declarer secure?
If South leads a club declarer will have an easy route to II tricks.

A low diamond allows declarer to win with the queen and knock out the A . If North switches to a heart declarer can take the ace, play three rounds of clubs, ruffing and then run the trumps, squeezing South in the red suits for 12 tricks. (The Rueful Rabbit would probably drop the $\downarrow K$ on the table at trick one - that holds declarer to II tricks.)
A heart lead presents declarer with a trick, but as long as North does not take the first round of spades and then switches to a diamond there will only be II tricks.
A spade lead is best for the defence.
If North ducks, wins the second spade and switches to a heart declarer takes the losing finesse and wins South's heart return.
Playing South for the e results in only 10 tricks, but there are alternatives. Playing three rounds of clubs does not bring down the Q but declarer can then run the trumps and South is squeezed in the red suits.
Declarer can also try cashing some trumps without touching the clubs, but in the six-card ending that arises he must give up the club menace and play for the red suit squeeze.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | \& | * | $\stackrel{\square}{ }$ | - | NT |
|  | = | = | $=$ | $=$ | $=$ |
| N | - | - | 1 | - | - |
| S | - | - | 1 | - | - |
| E | 1 | 1 | - | 5 | 5 |
| W | 1 | - | - | 4 | 3 |


| Board 24 | $\begin{aligned} & 42 \\ & 98 \\ & \text { Q10653 } \\ & \text { A642 } \end{aligned}$ | Dealer W <br> Vul: None |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - 97 |  | - AKQ863 |
| - KJIO762 |  | - Q |
| - AK74 |  | - 9 |
| - 7 |  | * K10985 |
|  | J 105 |  |
|  | A543 |  |
|  | J82 |  |
|  | QJ3 |  |

If West opens IV East responds IQ and sees West rebid $2 \downarrow$. If East continues to explore with 3 West will bid 3 . If East then bids 34, West will raise to game.

Another possibility is that East will simply bid 3NT over 3Y.

If the final contract is 3 NT South's best lead is a club, which should ensure three tricks for the defence.

If East is in 44, the lead to avoid is a diamond, which allows declarer to get rid of the PQ and then play a club towards the king which should result in 12 tricks being taken.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\stackrel{1}{0}$ | - | $\stackrel{\rightharpoonup}{*}$ | $\underline{1}$ | NT |
|  | = | = | $=$ | $=$ | = |
| N | - | - | - | - | - |
| S | - | - | - | - | - |
| E | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| W | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 4 |



If North starts with a weak $2 \star$ the player with the problem will be South. A non-forcing 2 would be a possibility. Another idea would be to enquire with 2NT, intending to pass if North bids $3 \star$ to show a minimum. Raising to $3 \downarrow$ would be right down the middle.
Where North passes and East opens I\& South overcalls Is and West will probably double to show at least four hearts. If East rebids 2e South can bid 2 and West raises to $3 *$ when it will not be easy for North to raise to 3s.
If East's opening bid is a Precision style 2e South overcalls 2 leaving West to choose between a negative double and a raise to $3 \%$.
3 is a comfortable spot for EW. South has an awkward lead - after a diamond declarer wins, crosses to the 2 , runs the 210 and will emerge with 10 tricks.

South might lead the ©A, but when North follows with the 10 it is not clear that a switch to a low heart is required.

3 is uncomplicated. Declarer can play to ruff a heart in dummy and should come to nine tricks.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 9 | - | $\varphi$ | 9 | NT |
|  | = | = | = | = | == |
| N | - | 3 | - | 3 | - |
| S | - | 3 | - | 3 | - |
| E | 3 | - | 3 | - | 2 |
| W | 3 | - | 3 | - | 2 |



If South opens 2NT North will look for a major suit fit using whatever methods are available and 4s should be reached. If that involves North responding 3e East will be able to double, which offers NS the opportunity to play in $3 \boldsymbol{e}$ redoubled - much more fun than a mundane 44.

If South's opening bid is a Strong is then West might join in, bidding IV to show two suits of the same colour (East will have a good idea which). If North doubles East can only bid $2 \checkmark$ and hope for the best.

Otherwise, North responds IV when the only thing that is certain is that NS will reach game, either 4s or 3NT.

If NS play in spades II tricks should be taken, declarer playing to ruff a couple of clubs in dummy.

In 3NT declarer has 10 tricks with the 9 K onside. On a diamond lead declarer wins in hand, goes to dummy with a diamond and runs the $\$$. He repeats the finesse, cashes the $\downarrow A$
and then takes his major suit winners. Declarer's last four cards will be the eAJ86. West is known to be 1561 and if declarer exits with a low club he secures a valuable extra overtrick.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 9 | $\checkmark$ | $\varphi$ | 4 | NT |
|  | = | = | = | = | $=$ |
| N | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| S | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| E | - | - | - | - | - |
| W | - | - | - | - | - |

$\left.\begin{array}{llll}\text { Board } 27 & \text { Q } & \text { K } & \text { Dealer S } \\ & & \text { K72 } & \text { Vul: None } \\ & & \text { A642 } & \\ & \text { Q8532 } & & \text { KQ1092 }\end{array}\right)$

If South opens $2 \varphi$ West overcalls 24, North jumps to $4 \longdiv { \square }$ and East bids 44, leaving North to choose between passing, doubling or bidding 57. In the latter case West might decide to double - not gilt edged, but the sort of thing one tends to do.

If South starts with a Multi $2 \checkmark$ and West bids 24. North doubles. If East raises to 3s North can bid $4 \uparrow$, but West will surely go on to 44. East might also choose to raise directly to 44.

If EW play in spades declarer needs to get the trump suit right, starting with a low card. Kowing that South has six hearts, declarer might go wrong, starting with the $\Phi \mathrm{Q}$ hoping to find South with a singleton $9 / \mathbf{L} 10$.

If NS play in hearts the defenders should collect four tricks unless West leads the en, which gives declarer a chance of II tricks as long as declarer plays to ruff a spade in dummy.

| Makeable Contracts |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 2 | $\checkmark$ | $\varphi$ | 1 | NT |
|  | = | = | = | $=$ | == |
| N | - | - | 3 | - | I |
| S | - | - | 3 | - | I |
| E | - | 2 | - | 4 | - |
| W | - | 2 | - | 4 | - |

Board 28

| 4 | QJ43 | Dealer W |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $\stackrel{\rightharpoonup}{ }$ | Q2 | Vul: N-S |
| $\checkmark$ | A7 |  |
| 9 | KQ986 |  |
| 86 |  | ¢ 752 |
|  |  | - K973 |
|  |  | - 9652 |
|  |  | - 54 |
| $\pm$ | 9 |  |
| $\downarrow$ | AJ65 |  |
| $\checkmark$ | KQJ103 |  |
| 8 | AJ2 |  |

I know players who would open the West hand 24. Were North to bid 2NT over that East might raise to 34 when the auction could go in several directions. Were South to start by bidding 4e North would probably bid 5e which might see South raise to $6 \%$.

If North passes over 24 and East raises to 34 South doubles, leaving North to choose between passing, bidding 3NT or something else.

Where West passes initially and North opens I South responds 1 and West joins in with I4. If North rebids INT South might not think in terms of a slam, especially where $1 \%$ does not guarantee club length.
On balance, NS should probably stop short of slam, which at best depends on the location of the PK. However, give North a sixth club (or South a sixth diamond) and the tricks would be on top.

If NS bid a slam ( $6 \%$ or $6 *$ ) then the location of the YK means that 12 tricks can be taken. However, were West to hold the PK there would be an interesting possibility in 6 6 . After cashing a top spade West exits passively and declarer plays to reach a three-card ending where Dummy has $4 \mathrm{Q} \geqslant 2 \$ 6$ and declarer PAJ6. When the last club is cashed, West, holding SA PKIO would be squeezed.
Makeable Contracts

|  | \% | $\checkmark$ | $\uparrow$ | Q | NT |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | = | $=$ | $=$ | = | $=$ |
| N | 6 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| S | 6 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| E | - | - | - | - | - |
| W | - | - | - | - | - |

