



The 2022 Charity Challenge Pairs Monday 14th March

Once again this year we are raising funds for two different, but closely related Charities – Cancer Research UK and Marie Curie. And again, it is running over five days

Last year, despite all the clubs playing online you managed to raise over £6,000 for each charity which was just amazing and incredibly generous of everyone.

The past year has seen charities receiving less and less as with all the difficulties and uncertainties arising as a result of the pandemic. Many people of course have less disposable income and the charities themselves have found that many of their traditional avenues, such as the Charity Shops, Street Collections etc, were unavailable to them although at least many of them are once again open now thank goodness. But they still need as much as possible to be raised, which is why we ask you to donate, through our website. If you haven't already done so, please [click here to go to the page](#) that gives you all the information.

The future year for Simultaneous Pairs has other Charity events to enjoy - there will be one in July to raise funds for Kidney Research and of course there will be the Children in Need Pairs in November – well we couldn't NOT run that could we !

... and who knows, we may be able to run a WorldWide event again, and maybe one or two events to raise funds for Youth Bridge. Our website will let you know what and when – I will put things onto the front page at <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/> and our calendar at <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/info/calendar.asp> will be kept up to date.

Do join us for some of these events if you can – whether virtually or actually joining in “round the table”. 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! This year the event will be “hybrid” with some clubs playing face to face and others online, and I suspect that may well continue into the foreseeable future as people find what suits them best and what they are most comfortable with.

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

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Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

<p>♠ K 9 6 ♥ 9 6 5 ♦ Q J 2 ♣ J 10 6 2</p>	<p>♠ A J 5 ♥ A K Q 8 7 2 ♦ 6 3 ♣ Q 4</p>
<p>♠ 10 8 4 3 2 ♥ ♦ A K 10 7 4 ♣ A 5 3</p>	<p>♠ Q 7 ♥ J 10 4 3 ♦ 9 8 5 ♣ K 9 8 7</p>

After North opens 1♥, East is likely to cue bid 2♥ (spades and a minor). Then South passes, West bids 2♠ and North competes with 3♥. Whether or not East goes on to 3♠, South probably raises to 4♥. With the ♠K in the West hand, 4♥ makes easily. 4♠ is a very cheap save: the defenders score two spades and two clubs (or two spades, a club and a ruff). Indeed, it is by no means certain that anyone is going to double 4♠.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ 10 9 8 ♥ A J 8 7 3 ♦ A J 9 4 ♣ A</p>	<p>♠ Q 6 4 2 ♥ Q ♦ K 10 2 ♣ Q 10 6 4 2</p>
<p>♠ J 7 ♥ 9 6 5 4 2 ♦ 8 7 6 5 3 ♣ 9</p>	<p>♠ A K 5 3 ♥ K 10 ♦ Q ♣ K J 8 7 5 3</p>

South opens 1♣, West overcalls 1♥ and North makes a negative double. East raises pre-emptively to at least 3♥ or, bearing in mind the vulnerability, maybe all the way to 4♥. Either way nothing will keep South out of 4♠. West may have visions of leading the ♣A and putting East in with the ♥K to score a club ruff. Even if West doubles 4♠, I expect East to bid 5♥. 4♠ is an easy make with three aces to lose. 5♥ doubled is a good save, down 500.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ Q 5 4 ♥ J 9 8 7 5 3 ♦ ♣ 10 8 7 5</p>	<p>♠ 9 7 3 2 ♥ K Q 4 ♦ 10 9 7 4 ♣ J 2</p>
<p>♠ J 6 ♥ A 10 6 2 ♦ Q 6 3 2 ♣ Q 9 4</p>	<p>♠ A K 10 8 ♥ ♦ A K J 8 5 ♣ A K 6 3</p>

6♣ is on for East-West. I can less easily tell you how to get there. Pass-2♣-2♦-3♦-3♥-3♠-3NT should be how they start. Whether East can find 4♣ next seems doubtful, despite the fantastic controls. To be fair 6♣ is not a great contract. You need clubs 3-2, the ♦Q to come down in four rounds and the ♠J to come down in three rounds. Mind you 3NT, on as the cards lie, is not laydown either – the ♥10 with North might defeat it. 4♠ also makes.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

<p>♠ K 4 ♥ Q 10 9 ♦ A K Q 3 ♣ K 6 4 2</p>	<p>♠ Q 9 8 5 ♥ K J 8 ♦ J 9 7 4 ♣ A 8</p>
<p>♠ J 7 ♥ A 7 4 3 ♦ 10 2</p>	<p>♠ A 10 6 3 2 ♥ 6 5 2 ♦ 8 6 5 ♣ 7 5</p>

♣ Q J 10 9 3

If all the players go by the textbook, West opens 1♦ and plays there. If the defenders get things right, 1♦ fails by a trick – declarer makes five top winners and one other trick. If West prefers to open 1♣ and plays there, a club or low heart lead could beat it by two. East might scrape up a 1♠ response, allowing West to play in INT. If the ♣K scores, declarer can get out for one down in INT. Finally, if West opens a 15-17 INT, you might play in 2♠ – one down again.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

<p>♠ 6 4 2 ♥ Q 3 2 ♦ J 9 5 ♣ A K Q 4</p>	<p>♠ K Q 8 5 3 ♥ 8 ♦ A Q 7 6 2 ♣ J 7</p>
<p>♠ A J 10 9 ♥ K J 6 5 ♦ 8 ♣ 10 5 3 2</p>	<p>♠ 7 ♥ A 10 9 7 4 ♦ K 10 4 3 ♣ 9 8 6</p>

North-South figure to reach 2♦ via the sequence 1♠-1NT-2♦. West looks a bit flat to reopen with a double, though some will. Holding a fifth diamond and so few losers North may well bid 3♦ after the double without waiting to hear East's bid. If not, East goes 2♥, when South might double. Declarer can get out for one down in 2♥ doubled. 3♣ is also down one. 3♦ makes in comfort – the defenders need to start with three rounds of clubs to stop ten tricks.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ Q 9 8 3 ♥ K 6 ♦ K 9 6 ♣ A 10 6 5</p>	<p>♠ A 7 6 5 ♥ A 10 7 3 ♦ J 8 4 ♣ J 4</p>
<p>♠ J ♥ J 9 8 5 4 ♦ A 10 7 3 ♣ 9 7 3</p>	<p>♠ K 10 4 2 ♥ Q 2 ♦ Q 5 2 ♣ K Q 8 2</p>

South is likely to open a 12-14 INT and play there. You can make INT if you avoid the traps along the way. For example, if you win the spade lead with the king and play a club to the jack, you can go on to knock out the ♣A. A path home now is to put West back in with fourth rounds of clubs. North-South should do better if they find their spade fit, with no heroics required to make eight tricks. If East-West buy the contract, they figure to go one down in 2♥.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

<p>♠ 4 3 ♥ Q J 7 ♦ 2 ♣ K Q 9 8 7 6 3</p>	<p>♠ A J 10 5 2 ♥ A 10 8 4 ♦ 9 8 ♣ A 2</p>
<p>♠ K 9 7 ♥ K 9 ♦ K Q J 10 7 6 3 ♣ 10</p>	<p>♠ Q 8 6 ♥ 6 5 3 2 ♦ A 5 4 ♣ J 5 4</p>

Even with a clear run, North-South would do well to reach 6♦. They would be much more likely to reach 4♠. You can make 6♦ without guessing the spades if you play three rounds of hearts before you try the spades. The ♦A lead holds a spade contract to 11 tricks for sure. In practice, West overcalls 1♦ with 3♣ (if weak) or some other number of clubs. 4♣ doubled goes down 800 if South scores a heart ruff. 3NT is a very poor contract, going at least one down.

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

<p>♠ 7 6 4 ♥ J 9 7 2 ♦ 5 ♣ K 10 9 7 5</p>	<p>♠ A J 2 ♥ 6 4 3 ♦ K Q 10 9 ♣ Q J 4</p>
<p>♠ 10 8 5 ♥ A 10 8 5 ♦ A J 7 6 2 ♣ 2</p>	<p>♠ K Q 9 3 ♥ K Q ♦ 8 4 3 ♣ A 8 6 3</p>

After North opens a 12-14 INT in second seat, should South bid 2♣ (Stayman), trying to improve the contract? With these values – enough to expect INT to make – and only the one four-card major – I would say pass is better. So it turns out: 120 for an overtrick in INT beats all the scores of 110 for 2♦ plus one. Indeed, if East manages to avoid the ♠K lead, declarer will do well to make nine tricks in 2♦. 3♣ is on for East-West if North-South are chicken.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

	♠ A J 8 5 2	
	♥ 5	
	♦ K J 10	
	♣ A J 3 2	
♠ 9		♠ K Q 10 3
♥ 9 6 4 3		♥ A Q 10 8 2
♦ 8 7 5 2		♦ A 9
♣ K 10 8 5		♣ 9 6
	♠ 7 6 4	
	♥ K J 7	
	♦ Q 6 4 3	
	♣ Q 7 4	

After North opens 1♠, I am sure most players with the East cards will prefer 2♥ to 1NT. For South the poor shape and honour location mean that a raise to 2♠ barely appeals. I guess most will bid 2♠, warts and all. Does West now raise to 3♥ with this shape despite the lack of values? Failing contracts will be the norm on this deal. 3♠ goes down one, with three trumps and two aces to lose. Even 2♥ fails, with a spade, two hearts, two clubs and a diamond to lose.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

	♠	
	♥ A 8 6	
	♦ A K Q 7	
	♣ Q J 10 9 8 7	
♠ J 9 8 2		♠ A K 7 6 5 3
♥ K 9 3 2		♥ Q 5 4
♦ 6 5 2		♦ 9 4
♣ 6 2		♣ A 5
	♠ Q 10 4	
	♥ J 10 7	
	♦ J 10 8 3	
	♣ K 4 3	

If two passes follow East's 1♠ opening, North will reopen with a double. Now East has six spades, yes, but 2♠ vulnerable is risky. If East passes, South bids 2♦, West makes a delayed raise to 2♠ and North gets quite excited. Perhaps West bids 2♠ on the first round, giving North more of a problem. The snag with a take-out double is that South might bid 3♥. The snag with 3♣ is that it understates the values. 5♦ makes, as does 4♣. 5♠ doubled would cost 800.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

	♠ Q 10 8 7 3 2	
	♥ A	
	♦ Q 9 6 5 4 3	
	♣	
♠ 4		♠ A J 5
♥ Q 9 8 3 2		♥ K 10 7 6
♦ A J 10 8		♦ K
♣ A Q 10		♣ K 9 7 6 3
	♠ K 9 6	
	♥ J 5 4	
	♦ 7 2	
	♣ J 8 5 4 2	

West opens 1♥ and North may well bid 2♥ (same as East's bid on board one). A splinter – 4♦ to show a raise to 4♥ with a singleton or void in diamonds – is East's best bid despite the slight flaw of the fact that the singleton is the king. West likes the diamond position but has too little extra to go beyond game. North's 4♠ gives them a second chance to find the slam, which they are unlikely to take. 4♠ doubled is down two for 300. 480 will be the commonest score.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

	♠ K Q 10 4	
	♥ A 9 8 7 5 4	
	♦ 9 6	
	♣ K	
♠ A 2		♠ 9 7 6 5 3
♥ Q J 10 6		♥ K 3 2
♦ J 7 2		♦ A 10
♣ J 10 8 7		♣ Q 6 3
	♠ J 8	
	♥	
	♦ K Q 8 5 4 3	
	♣ A 9 5 4 2	

When North opens 1♥ and predictably rebids 2♥ over the 2♦ response, what should South bid? 'Stay low on a misfit' says to pass. This is unattractive with the void, especially as North might have had to rebid a five-card suit. 3♣ is an overbid, for sure, which leaves 3♦ and 2NT. With the kindly diamond layout, 2NT does make. 3♦ is a safer spot, with 10 tricks for 130 probable. As it happens, 2♥ makes unless East finds the ♦A lead and so scores a diamond ruff.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

	♠ J 8 7 4	
	♥ K 5 4	
	♦ 7 5	
	♣ A 9 5 3	
♠ Q 6		♠ A 10 9 5 3 2
♥ A 9 6		♥ Q J 10 8 2
♦ K J 10 3		♦ 9 6
♣ Q J 10 4		♣
	♠ K	
	♥ 7 3	
	♦ A Q 8 4 2	
	♣ K 8 7 6 2	

Few pairs have a way to show a two-suited hand with an opening bid, which means that South will get to open 1♦ in third seat. North's 1♠ response makes it hard for East to bid on the second round as well. When South rebids 2♣ and this comes back, finally East comes in, with 2♥. East can make 10 tricks with spades as trumps and, unless South leads the ♠K, the same number with hearts as trumps. 3♣ played by South – probably doubled – fails by a trick.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

	♠ K 2	
	♥ K J 9 5 2	
	♦ Q 8 6	
	♣ K Q 5	
♠ A 8 5 3		♠ Q J 10 6 4
♥ A 4 3		♥ 10 7
♦ A J 3		♦ 5 4
♣ A J 9		♣ 10 8 7 3
	♠ 9 7	
	♥ Q 8 6	
	♦ K 10 9 7 2	
	♣ 6 4 2	

Most routes seem to lead to 3♠ played by West. After 1♠ in third seat and a 2♥ overcall, East's fifth spade easily justifies a raise to 2♠. If South passes now, West rebids 2NT and East pulls to 3♠. If South raises to 3♥, West doubles (not caring how East reads it!) and again East removes to 3♠. With careful play, West can strip the red suits and put North in with the second round of trumps to avoid the second club loser and make 3♠. 3♥ would be down one.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

	♠ 6 3	
	♥ A K J 4	
	♦ 9 4	
	♣ K Q 9 6 2	
♠ Q 10 7 2		♠ A J 8 5
♥ Q 10 9 7 6 5 2		♥ 3
♦ 10		♦ K Q J 8 5
♣ 10		♣ A 8 4
	♠ K 9 4	
	♥ 8	
	♦ A 7 6 3 2	
	♣ J 7 5 3	

The four-card spade suit will deter most in the West seat from opening 3♥. Those not so deterred will play in 3♥ and go two down. Assuming North opens 1♣ in third seat, East overcalls 1♦. Now South may jump to 3♣ (not a strong action after the overcall), settle for 2♣ or venture INT (it is pairs!). West will bid 2♥ if able so to do. All ways on, it seems hard for East-West to locate their spade fit. 3♠ is on their way, as is 4♣ for their opponents.

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

	♠ 10 8	
	♥ K Q 10 8	
	♦ A Q 8	
	♣ J 10 6 2	
♠ A 9 4		♠ K 5 3 2
♥ A J 6 2		♥ 5 3
♦ J 9 2		♦ 7 6 5 4
♣ A Q 7		♣ K 5 3
	♠ Q J 7 6	
	♥ 9 7 4	
	♦ K 10 3	
	♣ 9 8 4	

Playing a 12-14 INT, East-West bid 1♥-1♠-INT. They will reach INT even quicker playing the strong variety. On the ♥K lead and a spade switch, or an initial spade lead, INT must fail. The defenders can then get two tricks in each major to go with their three diamonds. If they fail to play spades early, West can set up a long diamond in dummy to make INT. 1♦, 1♠ and, surprisingly, 1♣ are on for East-West. North-South can make 1♥ – what an exciting deal!

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

	♠ A 6 4 2	
	♥ A 10 8 4 3	
	♦ J 6	
	♣ A 2	
♠ J 9 8 7 3		♠ K 10 5
♥		♥ K Q J 6 5
♦ K 8 5 2		♦ A 10
♣ K Q 10 4		♣ 9 6 3
	♠ Q	
	♥ 9 7 2	
	♦ Q 9 7 4 3	
	♣ J 8 7 5	

Two passes will surely follow North's 1♣ opening. Traditionalists will reopen with a double on the West cards and find this ends the auction. 1♥ doubled fails if East leads a top heart or cashes the ♦A and shifts to a top heart. On any other defence, the singleton spade in dummy leads to too many ruffs. West does far better as the cards lie to reopen with 1♠. Nine tricks are easy to make with spades as trumps and ten possible if you view to drop the singleton ♠Q.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

	♠ J 10 8 6 4	
	♥ 9 2	
	♦ J 9 8	
	♣ K 8 4	
♠ A		♠ 9 7 5
♥ A Q 10 7 6 3		♥ J 8 5
♦ K Q 10		♦ 6 5 4 3
♣ A 10 7		♣ Q J 2
	♠ K Q 3 2	
	♥ K 4	
	♦ A 7 2	
	♣ 9 6 5 3	

Assuming South opens 1NT, West doubles and North removes to 2♠. West is a bit good now to bid 3♥, which just sounds competitive. Double, if for take-out, is fine. Otherwise, it looks tempting to bid 4♥. Most routes to ten tricks in 4♥. Even if you guess wrongly to play trumps (rather than clubs) from hand, you can lead twice up to the king-queen of diamonds. 2♠ doubled would go down one. 1NT doubled would go down three on a club lead, down one otherwise.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

	♠ 5 4	
	♥ A K 8 6 3	
	♦ Q 9 8	
	♣ A 6 5	
♠ K 10 9 6 2		♠ J 3
♥ Q 10 7		♥ J 5 4 2
♦ K J		♦ 7 5 4 2
♣ K Q 4		♣ 10 8 2
	♠ A Q 8 7	
	♥ 9	
	♦ A 10 6 3	
	♣ J 9 7 3	

Non-vulnerable and holding two and a half defensive tricks, South scrapes up a 1♦ opening. This leads to regret when West overcalls 1♠ and North bids 2♥. A 2NT rebid works well as the cards lie, 3NT by South being makeable. Mind you, this is hard work. Assuming a spade lead to the queen, you must knock out the ♦K and run the diamonds to squeeze West in three suits – dummy's heart spots are key. 3♣, 4♦ and 2♥ (if by North) are the limits in suit contracts.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

	♠ K Q 9 7 3	
	♥ 9	
	♦ 10 9 7 6 2	
	♣ 6 2	
♠ A 8 6		♠ J 10 4
♥ A 8 7 3		♥ K J 10 6
♦ J 4 3		♦ A Q
♣ A 9 4		♣ K Q 10 8
	♠ 5 2	
	♥ Q 5 4 2	
	♦ K 8 5	
	♣ J 7 5 3	

If West opens a 12-14 INT, East's honour location (great strength in the doubleton) suggests a simple raise to 3NT rather than a Stayman inquiry. West can make 11 tricks in either hearts or no-trumps. With positions in both hearts and clubs to negotiate, it all depends on how good a guesser you are! If North leads a low spade (against 3NT no doubt), you might even make 12 tricks. I suspect that 650 will be close to average and 660 well above average.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

<p>♠ Q J 9 5 3 ♥ A 8 6 4 ♦ A 10 9 ♣ 9</p>	<p>♠ A 8 6 2 ♥ 9 5 2 ♦ J 8 ♣ 10 8 3 2</p>
	<p>♠ K 10 7 4 ♥ K J 10 7 ♦ 7 5 3 2 ♣ K</p>

North opens 1♣, South responds 1♥ and West will surely overcall 1♠. With a four-loser hand and a good seven-card suit, North jumps to 3♣. If East passes, South is likely to try 3NT. If East raises to 3♠, South may judge it safer to double, when North will no doubt run to 4♣. 3NT would go down two, with four spades and two aces to lose. Unless East finds an inspired heart lead, an overtrick is likely in 4♣. 3♠ doubled would go down only one.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ Q 2 ♥ Q 10 4 3 ♦ 10 9 7 ♣ A 10 8 3</p>	<p>♠ A K 10 6 4 3 ♥ 9 ♦ Q 6 4 ♣ J 7 4</p>
	<p>♠ 5 ♥ A J 8 2 ♦ A K J 8 3 ♣ Q 9 5</p>
	<p>♠ J 9 8 7 ♥ K 7 6 5 ♦ 5 2 ♣ K 6 2</p>

East opens 1♦ and West responds 1♥. North may well jump to 2♠ (who plays it as strong these days?). Since 3♥ might sound like a stretch, East is close to bidding 4♥. South will support spades in any event. If North starts with two top spades, it takes careful play to make 4♥. You need to ruff and, perhaps after cashing a top diamond, lead a heart away from the ace. 4♠ doubled would go two down – a cheap save in theory – if probably not in practice.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

<p>♠ J 9 7 3 ♥ J 9 4 ♦ 9 4 ♣ J 10 8 5</p>	<p>♠ 8 6 5 2 ♥ Q 10 5 ♦ J ♣ A Q 9 4 3</p>
	<p>♠ K 10 4 ♥ A 7 3 ♦ A K Q 8 3 ♣ K 2</p>
	<p>♠ A Q ♥ K 8 6 2 ♦ 10 7 6 5 2 ♣ 7 6</p>

Three passes are likely to start the auction. With good controls and a strong five-card suit, I expect East to upgrade the hand to a 2NT opener in fourth seat. A heart lead would defeat 2NT by two tricks, giving the defenders time to make three hearts, two clubs and two spades. A diamond lead sets 2NT by only one. If East opens 1♦, North reopens with a double and East can rebid 1NT. Now South may bid 2♥ (down one). 2♣ (North) is the highest makeable contract.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

<p>♠ K J 10 4 2 ♥ 2 ♦ 7 5 3 ♣ 10 7 4 3</p>	<p>♠ Q 9 7 5 3 ♥ 10 ♦ A J 9 2 ♣ A J 2</p>
	<p>♠ 8 6 ♥ A J 9 7 4 ♦ 6 4 ♣ K Q 8 6</p>
	<p>♠ A ♥ K Q 8 6 5 3 ♦ K Q 10 8 ♣ 9 5</p>

After North opens 1♠, a few East players will make a scary 2♥ overcall. If South passes and North finds a reopening double, the penalty could be 800. If East makes the sounder pass, 1♠-2♥-2♠-3♦-3NT is the likely auction. With two possible club stoppers, I expect North to prefer 3NT to raising diamonds on the third round. The hostile breaks mean that in theory no game is on for North-South. In real life, the ♣6 lead might let 3NT make.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

	♠ A 8 5	
	♥ A 5	
	♦ A 2	
	♣ K J 9 7 3 2	
♠ Q 6 4		♠ 10 7
♥ Q J 9 4		♥ K 10 8 7 6 3
♦ K J		♦ Q 6 5 4
♣ A 8 6 4		♣ 5
	♠ K J 9 3 2	
	♥ 2	
	♦ 10 9 8 7 3	
	♣ Q 10	

After North opens 1♣, East comes in with 2♥ (if weak) and West raises to 3♥. This may well end the auction. 3♥ makes easily, with just four top tricks to lose. If East passes over 1♣, South responds 1♠ and North has a tricky rebid. 2♣ is an underbid but 3♣ not ideal. INT will tempt some! 3♣ will end the auction but South would bid 2♦ over INT. 10 tricks are easy with a black suit as trumps. You can make 11 if you guess the spade position (lead the jack).

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

	♠ 5 4 2	
	♥ J 9 8 3	
	♦ 7 5 3	
	♣ A J 5	
♠ J 3		♠ A Q 7 6
♥ 4		♥ Q 10 7 6
♦ A K Q J 4		♦ 9 6 2
♣ K Q 9 6 3		♣ 10 8
	♠ K 10 9 8	
	♥ A K 5 2	
	♦ 10 8	
	♣ 7 4 2	

Pass-1♦-1♥-2♣-2♦-3♣-3NT is one way for East-West to bid. With only 16 points in high cards and eleven tricks needed for game in a minor, West is too weak to bid 3♣ over 1♥. East might sign off in 3♦ over the delayed 3♣ bid. Caution works well today: the hostile club position defeats 3NT even after a spade lead into the ace-queen. In a diamond contract, the club position is less critical: for this, the location of the ♠K dictates whether you can make 11 tricks.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

	♠ K Q 10 9 7	
	♥ 7	
	♦ A 4 3	
	♣ K 5 4 2	
♠ A 6 3		♠ J
♥ 10		♥ K J 6 4 3 2
♦ K Q 10 7		♦ 9 8 6 2
♣ A 9 7 6 3		♣ J 10
	♠ 8 5 4 2	
	♥ A Q 9 8 5	
	♦ J 5	
	♣ Q 8	

After West opens 1♣ and North overcalls 1♠, East is too weak for 2♥ (if forcing) and prefers a negative double. South probably bids 3♥ (if a fit-showing jump) and North signs off in 3♠ – news of heart values is not great. 3♠ should make exactly. The defenders can stop the overtrick by taking out some trumps or East could score the ♠J on the third round of clubs. If they get to play the contract, East-West can make eight tricks with diamonds as trumps.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

	♠ K 3	
	♥ J 9 3	
	♦ A K 7	
	♣ A K Q 8 3	
♠ A 9 4 2		♠ Q J 8 7
♥ A K 5 4 2		♥ Q 10
♦ J 6 2		♦ Q 8 4
♣ 4		♣ J 10 7 5
	♠ 10 6 5	
	♥ 8 7 6	
	♦ 10 9 5 3	
	♣ 9 6 2	

North doubles 1♥ for take-out: 2♣ is a big underbid with 20 points. East will do well to bid 1♠, in which case West raises to 2♠. North bids 3♣ next and West will probably compete to 3♠. Any North who doubles this in annoyance will regret it. 3♠ is cold. North can make little offensively either. With three hearts, a spade, a diamond and a club to lose, even 2♣ is too high. Plus scores for North-South will be rare. A minus below 200 may well be over average.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

	♠ Q 10 8 6	
	♥ 10 8 7 2	
	♦ K J 8	
	♣ A 3	
♠ A K J 4		♠ 7
♥ K Q 6 4		♥ A 9 5 3
♦ 10 9 7		♦ A 5 4
♣ K 2		♣ Q 10 9 7 6
	♠ 9 5 3 2	
	♥ J	
	♦ Q 6 3 2	
	♣ J 8 5 4	

I expect West to open 1♥ in fourth seat and East to respond 3♠ (splinter, singleton or void in spades and a raise to 4♥). With plenty of wastage in spades, West signs off in 4♥. On a kind spade lead into the A-K-J, declarer can come to 11 tricks. On any other lead, the defenders should prevent the overtrick. 620 should be the most common result and yield almost an average. 650 will be well over average. 600, if East-West play in 3NT, will be below average.

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

	♠ 6 5 3	
	♥ J 8 6 5	
	♦ A 7 2	
	♣ J 9 7	
♠ J 7		♠ A K 10 8 2
♥ Q 10		♥ A K 7 2
♦ K J 8 5 4		♦ 6 3
♣ 10 6 5 4		♣ K 2
	♠ Q 9 4	
	♥ 9 4 3	
	♦ Q 10 9	
	♣ A Q 8 3	

1♠-INT-2♥-2♠-2NT sounds like the right way for East-West to bid. East is not quite strong enough to rebid 3♥, while 2NT risks missing a heart fit. There may well be the chance to bid 2NT next time if West does not like hearts, as indeed is the case. With no aces and only 7 points, West does not go on to 3NT. Most likely declarer makes four spade tricks, three hearts and one other trick to make 2NT exactly. 3♠ plays better as the cards lie, with 140 available.

Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

	♠ 9 8	
	♥ Q 10 6	
	♦ Q 10 9 8	
	♣ A K 7 4	
♠ 6		♠ A K Q 5 3 2
♥ J 9 7 5		♥ 3
♦ 7 6 5 4		♦ K J 3
♣ Q J 8 3		♣ 10 9 5
	♠ J 10 7 4	
	♥ A K 8 4 2	
	♦ A 2	
	♣ 6 2	

South opens 1♥, North responds 2♣ and East comes in with 2♠, silencing South. North reopens with 3♥, probably ending the auction. You can make 10 tricks with hearts as trumps if you read the position well. In practice, most declarers will lose a trump, a diamond and two spades for 140. 3NT you can also make if you are a good guesser. If South doubles 2♠ for penalties or if North reopens with double (which South will leave in), they can collect 300.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

	♠ K 4 2	
	♥ K 4	
	♦ K 5	
	♣ A K 9 6 5 4	
♠ J 9 6		♠ A Q 8 7 5 3
♥ Q 10 9 5		♥ 7
♦ Q 9 3		♦ J 10 7 2
♣ J 7 3		♣ Q 2
	♠ 10	
	♥ A J 8 6 3 2	
	♦ A 8 6 4	
	♣ 10 8	

If East jumps to 2♠ over 1♣ (you see why I like weak jump overcalls – they come up frequently and pose problems for the opposition), South has just enough to try 3♥. Will North now risk 3NT or just raise to 4♥? 3NT is hopeless on a spade lead. 4♥ makes in comfort, with an overtrick on if you read it right. After you ruff two spades, a diamond and a club, West has to ruff the last diamond and lead into the trump tenace. 2♠ doubled would go two down.