



## The 2023 Charity Challenge Pairs Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March

We are raising funds for two support Charities 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 for the two charities we supported in 2022 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.

You may already have heard that in addition to the normal Charity events we run, we have decided to "slot in" one for the **Turkiye – Syria Earthquake Appeal**, which will run for the week beginning 17 April – [click here for more information](#) about this one. Another new one is a charity event run by u3a, so if you know of people who would be interested in that please send them along [to this website](#) for more information.

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 – 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! We are very grateful to Mark Horton for writing the Monday and Thursday commentaries, to Mark Mortimer who penned the ones for Tuesday and Friday and to Brian Senior for doing the mid-week Wednesday commentary. This year the event will again 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 !

*Anna and Mark*

**The ECatsBridge Team are Anna Gudge and Mark Newton**

Mill Cottage Voy

Stromness, Orkney KW16 3HX

Tel: 01787 881920

Email: [anna@ecats.co.uk](mailto:anna@ecats.co.uk) \*\*\*\* Website: <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/>

### Board 1. None. Dealer North

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

If South opens INT (12-14, 13-15, 14-16 or a shaded 15-17) West will use whatever methods are at hand to compete. For example, after 2♣, promising hearts and another suit, North's options will include passing, bidding 2♦, 2♥ (for take-out) and 2♠. In all these cases East is going to support hearts at the minimum level. After say INT-(2♣)-2♥ East bids 3♥. It might be that South will then bid 3♠, but it is not an obvious move with so many points in hearts.

If South opens 1♣ West overcalls 1♥ and if North doubles East can bid 2♣ to show a good raise in hearts or perhaps a more modern 2NT.

If EW play in hearts the defenders should score four tricks, but not if the opening lead is a minor suit, as declarer will be able to secure a trick with the ♦Q, either losing no trick in the suit or discarding a spade on her majesty.

If NS play in spades, seven tricks are the theoretical limit, but if the opening lead is a heart declarer can dispose of a club which will result in eight tricks. If EW manage to double 3♠ they will need to find the club ruff to score well.

### Board 2. N/S. Dealer East

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

If East starts with 1♦ South will be awkwardly placed, not wanting to double with only a doubleton spade, or overcall on a five-card club suit lacking any decent intermediates. Even so, I suspect the majority will try 2♣. If West doubles North has nothing to say and East can only rebid 2♦, which North should be happy to defend.

If East opens INT, (12-14 or 13-15 or 14-16) South might overcall – as on the previous deal 2♣ to show hearts and another suit is a possibility. (I could mention some of the many alternatives, but even with unlimited space it would take a while!) If NS can find a way to play in 2♠ things will not be too bad, but that will require some partnership agreement.

If East plays in INT and South leads a low club declarer wins in dummy and plays the ♦9 for the queen and ace. If North wins the next diamond and plays a club declarer has to find two discards and they must be a diamond and a spade. Then declarer can take advantage of the heart position to score 7 tricks.

If East plays in diamonds and South starts with three rounds of clubs North ruffs and switches to a spade. If declarer takes the ace and plays the ♥Q South must not fall into the trap of covering as then declarer can win and tackle the diamonds, North scoring only one more trick. By ducking South ensures that in due course it will be possible to give North a heart ruff. It is the same if declarer put in the ♠J. South wins and returns a spade and must not cover the ♥Q.

If North plays in 2♠ and East leads the ♥Q, declarer ducks in dummy. If East continues with the ♥J and follows it with the nine declarer ruffs and plays a spade for the jack and king. After ducking a spade to East's ace declarer should score eight tricks, as the ♥8 is now a winner.

To defeat 2♠ East needs to switch at trick two, but it must be to a club (or an unlikely low diamond).

### Board 3. E/W. Dealer South

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

If East opens 1♣ South might venture a 1♠ overcall but after West doubles, EW are sure to end up in 3NT even where North raises to 2♠. (By the way, some pairs play that a redouble by North indicates the possession of a high spade honour, the idea being to help partner judge the lead.)

If 1♣ is the strong variety nothing changes, although if South passes, one theoretical idea is for West to respond 1♠ to show a balanced positive rather than bid INT.

3NT is any easy contract. Declarer wins the spade lead and plays a club for the queen and ace, North returning a spade. Declarer wins, tests the clubs and then takes a heart finesse which leads to 10 tricks.

### Board 4. All. Dealer West

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

Is the West hand worth a 2♥ bid that promises that suit and a minor? Those who do will have an easy route to 4♥, East making a slam try along the way by responding 2NT and then bidding 3♥ over West's 3♣ rebid, a method outlined in *The Mysterious Multi*.)

Otherwise, 4♥ should be reached after East opens the bidding. One route will be via an initial 19-20 2NT and a transfer by West,

another after a strong 1♣ by East and a notrump rebid after West's 1♦ response. The natural sequence starts 1♣-1♥. If East now rebids a slightly old-fashioned 3NT to show a balanced 19-20 West will either pass or bid 4♣, the latter taking us back to 4♥.

4♥ is straightforward on this layout, declarer losing a heart and two spades. You might like to consider the best way to tackle the trump suit to give yourself the best chance of coping with a 4-1 (or 5-0) split. Assuming sufficient entries it is to start with a low card to the ten.

Those pairs who finish in 3NT may do very well. Unless South leads a spade (an unlikely choice) declarer will have an easy route to 10 tricks.

### Board 5. N/S. Dealer North

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

If North starts with a Precision style 1♦ East is not strong enough to overcall 3♦, asking partner to bid 3NT with a stopper, so that leaves some number of clubs. There will be support for 2♣ and 3♣ although at the vulnerability 5♣ is also a possibility.

If North's opening bid is 1♣ that will complicate the issue unless EW have an agreement about their overcalls.

Where North passes East must choose between some number of clubs or a gambling 3NT. South can double an opening bid of 1♣/2♣/3♣/5♣ and will probably also double an opening bid of 3NT, although bidding 4♦ for takeout with emphasis on spades is also a possibility (4♣ would put emphasis on hearts).

After say 1♣-Dble-Pass North responds 2♣ and if South bids 2♠ the spade game will be reached. Something similar might happen after a Precision style opening bid of 2♣, South doubling and North responding 3♣. After an opening bid of 3♣ North can respond 4♣ to

South's double. After an opening bid of 5♣ and a double North must choose between taking the money or bidding 5♥.

After an opening bid of 3NT and a double if West bids 4♣ North might bid 4♥ or try a responsive double.

If NS play in spades they are sure to lose three tricks, but if they play in hearts and East starts with a top club declarer will be able to ruff a club in dummy and take 11 tricks.

If East bids 5♣ (which will surely be the case most of the time) there will be nine tricks.

### Board 6. E/W. Dealer East

<p>♠ A 5 ♥ A Q J 8 6 ♦ J ♣ A Q 7 5 4</p> <p>♠ Q J 8 7 2 ♥ 7 5 3 ♦ A Q 3 ♣ 9 2</p>	<p>♠ 10 9 6 3 ♥ 10 ♦ 10 9 8 6 4 2 ♣ K J</p> <p>♠ K 4 ♥ K 9 4 2 ♦ K 7 5 ♣ 10 8 6 3</p>
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If the vulnerability was reversed, I would be willing to open the East hand with a weak 2♦. If North opens 1♥ South responds according to system and all roads should lead to the heart game.

The same is true if North starts with a strong 1♣.

A diamond loser is a certainty, but the layout in the club suit is such that declarer should only lose one trick there for a total of eleven.

### Board 7. All. Dealer South

<p>♠ A 8 5 4 2 ♥ A 9 5 2 ♦ 2 ♣ 8 6 2</p> <p>♠ 10 ♥ K Q 10 8 6 ♦ K J 10 6 ♣ A Q 9</p>	<p>♠ 9 6 ♥ J 7 4 3 ♦ A 9 8 7 4 ♣ K 10</p> <p>♠ K Q J 7 3 ♥ — ♦ Q 5 3 ♣ J 7 5 4 3</p>
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Many players will open the South hand, the alternatives being 1♠ or 2♠. In either case

West has an easy double and North will probably jump to 4♠, although there is also a case for bidding 4♦, pinpointing the shortage. In that scenario East bids 4♥ and then doubles North's inevitable 4♠.

If South elects to pass, West opens 1♥ and North overcalls 1♠. Whatever happens after that, the key point is that North will be on lead against a heart contract.

If East finishes in 5♥ and South leads the ♠K and switches to a club declarer will win in hand and play a heart to the king disclosing the 4-0 split. If North wins and returns a spade to force the dummy declarer ruffs and draws trumps via the marked finesse. If declarer unblocks the diamonds by playing the jack or ten to the ace and then finesses, 11 tricks will be in the bag.

You see the potential importance of the splinter bid from the defenders point of view? An initial diamond lead from South allows North to underlead in spades after taking the ♥A and a second diamond gives the defenders a third trick.

### Board 8. None. Dealer West

<p>♠ 9 8 7 3 2 ♥ Q 6 3 ♦ 9 4 3 2 ♣ 3</p> <p>♠ J 10 5 ♥ 10 7 2 ♦ A Q 10 6 ♣ K J 10</p>	<p>♠ A K 6 4 ♥ K 9 4 ♦ J 7 5 ♣ A 4 2</p> <p>♠ Q ♥ A J 8 5 ♦ K 8 ♣ Q 9 8 7 6 5</p>
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If West is one of the select few who can start with a 10-12 INT East has an easy raise to game. Going via Stayman is a matter for the individual conscience.

If West starts with a Precision style 1♦ East responds 1♠, South overcalls 2♣ and East either jumps directly to game or temporises with 3♣.

If West opens 1♣ East responds 1♠ and West finishes up in 3NT.

If East is the declarer in 3NT and South leads a club one option is to win with the ace, play a diamond to the queen and a spade to the ace. When the queen falls it is easy enough to secure 11 tricks.

If West is the declarer and North leads a club for the queen and king, the entry situation is a little more tangled and declarer may end up having to play South for a doubleton king of diamonds.

**Board 9. E/W. Dealer North**

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

If North opens 1♣ South responds 1♠, bids 2♦ over North's 2♣ rebid and goes on to game when North continues with 2♠.

If North starts with a Precision style 2♣ one option for South is to bid 3♠, which North will raise to game.

Declarer cannot avoid the loss of two tricks in hearts.

**Board 10. All. Dealer East**

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

If South starts with a 12-14 INT West doubles and North uses whatever methods are available to show the clubs. After INT-Dble-2♣ if East decides to bid 2♥ game is sure to be reached. If East passes and the agreement is that a second double is for takeout, then East bids 2♥ and as long as West takes another bid EW should finish in 4♥.

If South opens 1♣ West doubles and North raises clubs (there was a time when North would make a psychic response of 1♥, but that type of strategy has fallen out of fashion). If

North opts for 3♣ West doubles again and then raises East's 3♥ to game.

All things being equal, the odds line in hearts is to play low to the queen, but after a small club is led for the queen and ace, declarer might elect to run the nine which should result in 12 tricks.

**Board 11. None. Dealer South**

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

If South opens a 15-17 INT North might well pass, following the principle that one should not press for thin games at pairs. Those who look for a heart fit and then invite game may be rewarded.

If South starts with 1♣ the heart fit will be located regardless of North's response (the modern trend is for 1♦ to be a transfer to hearts).

An Acol style 1♥ will disclose the fit immediately. After 1♥-2♥ if South rebids 2NT North is likely to go on to game.

In some scenarios East might bid spades (for example after 1♣-1♦ but if EW get too ambitious a double might prove costly.

Playing in hearts if declarer is left to tackle the diamond suit it is impossible to go wrong, but if West switches to a low diamond when gaining the lead with the ♥A declarer has a guess, although in this situation a defender is more likely to be leading away from the ace than the queen. An initial low diamond lead by West(!) would probably be a killer.

Were EW to bid 4♠ South would double and lead a top club (the ace for attitude is best). If North encourages and South continues with a low club the defenders can play four rounds of the suit when North's ruff should restrict declarer to six tricks.

### Board 12. N/S. Dealer West

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

If West starts with a 15-17 INT East will raise to game. If West opens 1♦ East will respond according to system and again the nine trick game is likely to be reached.

If West begins with a Strong 1♣ and East shows a balanced positive 3NT will be the final contract.

Even if North does not start with a heart there will be time to switch to that suit when in with the ♦K, holding declarer to eight tricks.

### Board 13. All. Dealer North

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

If North opens 1♣ and East overcall's 1♥ South has no obvious bid. After a pass and a raise to 2♥ by West, a double is possible (although still dubious) but if North then bids 2♠ and South retreats to 3♣/3♦ West/East might double.

Where North passes initially East opens 1♥ and if that promises a five-card suit West will raise to 2♥. If 1♥ is Acol style West is more likely to respond 1♠. If East then bids 2♠ West will let matters rest. If East prefers 2♦ West bids 2♥, which should end the auction (if East now bids 2♠ it should promise a stronger hand than this one).

There are chances of 10 tricks playing in hearts. For instance, on a trump lead declarer does

best to win with dummy's king and play the ♦J. If North takes the ace and plays a second heart declarer wins, ruffs a diamond, plays a spade to the ace, draws the outstanding trump, and then plays a spade, the appearance of the king resulting in +170.

Playing in spades EW are likely to take at most eight tricks.

### Board 14. None. Dealer East

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

When East opens 1♠ South will probably overcall 2♦, despite the modest nature of the suit. If West raises to 2♠ and North marks time by bidding 3♠ East will either bid 4♥ or 4♠ and North is likely to take the save in 5♦ in either case, although it might appear more dubious if East has mentioned hearts. If all that comes to pass East will have to decide if there is a case for bidding on to 5♠. If East has mentioned hearts, he can consider leaving the decision to West, who will surely double.

If EW play in spades they should manage 11 tricks if declarer does not lose a heart trick. Were South to lead the ♣A and follow it with the queen, declarer would need to play a heart to the nine at trick three (or run dummy's ten).

If NS play in diamonds they should take nine tricks, making 5♦ doubled a good save.



### Board 15. N/S. Dealer South

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

If South opens INT (14-16/15-17) North might simply take a shot at 3NT, hoping there will be six diamond tricks and not five losers. The scientific approach is to transfer to diamonds (as long as the methods allow partner to show they have a high honour) intending to stop in diamonds if partner does not have the ♦A.

If South starts with an Acol 1♥ and North responds INT South will probably pass. There is a case for North to respond 2♦ (I recall Sandra Landy telling me that when Acol first appeared a two-level response with 8 points was part of the system).

There is nothing to the play in 3NT.

### Board 16. E/W. Dealer West

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

If South opens 2NT those with the right methods will be able to locate the 5-3 heart fit and play in 4♥. Otherwise 3NT is likely to be the final contract.

If South starts with a strong 1♣ it will not really affect the issue.

Suppose West leads the ♦J against 4♥.

If declarer plays low from dummy and East wins and returns a diamond (the ♦3, trusting that partner would notice that the ♦2 was missing,

suggesting a minor honour in clubs as opposed to the ace or king) West ruffs, but must now switch to a club before declarer has time to set up the spades.

To be sure of defeating 3NT, West must lead a club. If declarer wins the third round and then tests hearts, discovering the bad break, one possibility is to take the 1.2% chance of four diamond tricks by leading the queen. Alas, although there is a singleton jack it is with West rather than East, so eight tricks will be the limit.

### Board 17. None. Dealer North

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

When North starts with INT (10-12/12-14) South has enough to invite game (non-promissory Stayman would be useful) facing the latter. After INT-2♣ West might bid 2♠ and that will ensure the defence get off to the best lead.

If North opens 1♣ South responds 1♦ and now West has an easy 1♠. If North passes and East raises to 2♠ South bids 3♣ when North must resist any temptation to bid 3NT.

There are eight tricks in notrumps unless East leads a heart, but you can take 10 playing in clubs.

### Board 18. N/S. Dealer East

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

If East opens a 12-14/13-15 INT South either shows the spades (2♠ or a Mult Landy 2♦) or makes a bid to show both majors. If you go down the latter route you will want a rebid of 2♠ to show six spades and be non-forcing.

If East opens 1♣ and South overcalls 1♠ that is likely to end the auction. The same is true if East begins with a Precision style 1♦.

If West leads a club against 2♠ declarer wins in dummy and must avoid playing a second club for a discard. In that case even if declarer plays the trumps for one loser (not too difficult) East will win and switch to the ♥9 for the ten and jack (it is a good idea to lead second highest in this situation, denying the ace or king of hearts) and West will exit with the ♠10 when declarer cannot avoid one down.

The winning line is to play a spade at trick two. Then, when East wins the second round of spades and switches to a heart declarer can win West's spade exit and get home in a number of ways, the simplest being to duck a heart.

#### Board 19. E/W. Dealer South

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

When West opens 1♦ North overcalls 1♠ and East either bids some number of notrumps or starts with 2♣. After 1♦-(1♠)-2♣-(2♠)-Pass-(Pass) East must choose between 2NT and 3NT. It's not an easy decision – only one spade stopper, but a very good five card-suit and opening bid values facing an opening bid.

Those who bid 3NT will want the clubs to play for five tricks, but the 36.33% chance does not come off.

#### Board 20. All. Dealer West

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

If West starts with 1♣ North overcalls 1♠ and South raises according to system. Adherents of *Meckstroth's Law* will find it difficult to stop below game.

The situation does not change much if West's opening bid is a Precision style 2♣. If North overcalls 2♠ and South bids 3♣ North may not be prepared to settle for 3♠, especially looking at the club holding. Turn the ♦K in to the ♥K and you would be sorry to miss 4♠.

Barring an accident, it's hard to see how declarer can score more than nine tricks in spades.

#### Board 21. N/S. Dealer North

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

North has a reasonable hand for anyone who has an opening bid to show both majors. (*The Mysterious Multi* explains the use of an opening bid of 2♥ to do just that.) It might work well here, especially if South passes and West bids 3♣, as East might be tempted to try 3NT.

Assuming North passes, it is likely to be West who starts with 1♣. If North then bids 1♥ East doubles and South can bid 2♣ to show a good raise to at least 2♥. Now West bids 2♠ and the fate of the board will be determined by the actions of South and East. If South goes on to



3♥ East will need to double rather than bid 3♠, which is perhaps not as easy as it may appear.

Defending a heart contract, if East cashes a top diamond (the ♦K for count is best) and then switches to the ♣2, West must play four rounds of the suit (otherwise declarer can for example cross-ruff for nine tricks), forcing declarer to ruff with the ♥K, after which the defenders will eventually score another trick for the 'magic 200'.

If EW play in spades, North must avoid leading a club, as that will allow declarer to pitch two hearts on winning clubs and then play a fourth club to discard dummy's remaining heart, a line that should result in nine tricks being taken.

### Board 22. E/W. Dealer East

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

If East is in range for INT West transfers to hearts and then bids 3♦. If East then jumps to 4♥ West can bid 4♠ and then continue with 5♦ over East's 5♣, the small slam being reached in some comfort.

If East opens 1♣ (or 1♦) there are players who will venture 1♠ with South's cards. It should not affect the outcome, even though North will be able to steal some space. The tricky auction will be along the lines of: 1♣-(1♠)-2♥-(4♠)-Pass-(Pass). Rightly or wrongly, if West now bids 5♠ East has an easy 6♥. Should North then bid 6♠? Even if EW defend perfectly, they can only collect 1400, so in theory the answer is yes, but that requires the majority of field to reach 6♥.

In reality not many players will overcall 1♠ so the question is probably of academic interest only.

After 1♣-1♥-2♥ West has all sorts of options. Simplest is to bid 3♦ and then keep going when East jumps to 4♥.

It's worth noting that if South holds all the missing hearts, starting with the queen avoids the loss of more than one trick in the suit.

### Board 23. All. Dealer South

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

When West opens 1♦ North overcalls 1♥ and East bids 1♠. As a passed hand South has several options, but whatever route is selected it should result in 4♥ being reached. Then it will be interesting to see how many times West decides to bid 5♦.

If North is in 4♥ and East leads the ♦4 West wins and returns the ♦8. Declarer ruffs high and now has more than one route to 10 tricks. The natural play is to cash a top heart as a 2-1 trump break will allow declarer to get home via the ruffing diamond finesse. When West discards declarer plays the ♥6 to dummy's seven (it does not help East to put in the nine) and must now play the ♣J. If West covers declarer wins, crosses to the ♥K and takes the ruffing diamond finesse.

If West bids 5♦ North must avoid a trump lead to ensure that the defenders collect four tricks. Even so, -500 is a good save against the heart game.

### Board 24. None. Dealer West

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

There may be a few players who can open the West hand 2♥, promising hearts and a minor. If the next two players pass and South decides to double North might have a Lebensohl type 2NT available, aiming to play in 3♦, although North might also be tempted to simply bid 2♠. If North goes down the former route and East takes the push to 3♥ that will be the end of the matter.

Where West passes North might venture a weak 2♦ when available. If East passes, South might try a tactical raise to 3♦. If West now comes in with 3♥ East should make a disciplined pass.

If North does not open and East bids 1♣ West responds 1♥ and might then bid 3♣ over East's 1♠ rebid. That's a decent spot for EW, although it does not score as well as 3♥.

If NS defend a heart or club contract, they should collect four tricks if they set up a diamond trick.

#### Board 25. E/W. Dealer North

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

If North opens 1♥ East has a classical double and South raises according to systemic agreements. For the sake of argument let's assume South bids 4♥. West can hardly bid 4♠, and it would be very pushy of East to double for a second time, particularly given the vulnerability.

What should East lead? The practical choice is the ♦A and when West follows with the jack it is easy enough to continue with the ♦5, West ruffing and returning the ♣2. East wins and plays another diamond and West ruffs with the ♥10 ensuring a second trump trick.

#### Board 26. All. Dealer East

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

Although East has a poor suit there will be plenty of votes for 2♠ or a Multi 2♦. After 2♠-(Dble) West might jump to 4♠ (a very law-abiding bid). If the opening bid is 2♦ and South bids 2♥ West doubles and when East bids 2♠ we are back to square one.

Not for the first time, there is nothing to the play.

#### Board 27. None. Dealer South

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

If South opens a 10-12 INT it might steal the pot, although East can keep it boiling by doubling.

Where South does not open East might start with INT, encompassing various possible ranges. Opposite 14-16 West might try an optimistic 2♣ which will lead to 2NT being the final contract.

As the cards lie declarer is likely to score at least nine tricks. If South leads a heart honour declarer wins in dummy and might elect to play a club to the queen. A heart to the ten can followed by the ♣10 pinning the nine and having taken North's jack with the ace declarer plays a third heart and one way or another should secure nine tricks.

### Board 28. N/S. Dealer West

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

If West opens 1♠ and North overcalls 2♥ East might stretch to a Splinter bid of 4♥, West signing off in 4♠. If East prefers to show support via 2NT South might come in with 3♥ but East is sure to go to game.

If West starts with INT and North overcalls East will want to have a way of discovering if there is a spade fit. For example, if North overcalls 2♣ to show hearts and another suit some pairs play that a double is still Stayman.

Playing in spades there should be 10 tricks unless declarer takes a spade finesse.

### Board 29. All. Dealer North

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

Assuming none of the first three players can find an opening bid (a dangerous premise in these inflationary times!) and West opens 1♣ North might venture 1♦. If East rebids 1♠ West raises to 2♠. It would hardly be a crime for East to jump to 4♠ at this point. He more cautious approach would be to continue with 3♦ and then make a disciplined pass if West bids 3♠.

Were West to open INT (not everyone's cup of tea with a 4-2-2-5) an uncontested auction might continue 2♥\*-2♠-3♦-4♠. If North bids over INT suggesting values in hearts, it is just

about possible that EW might stop short of game.

Say South leads the ♦J against a spade contract. Declarer wins and plays a spade to dummy getting the bad news. A club sees South win and exit with the ♠J and it is already clear that declarer cannot hope for more than eight tricks.

### Board 30. None. Dealer East

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

If South opens INT one option for North is to respond 2♣ and then bid 3♣ over South's 2♦. If South raises to 4♣ it is odds on that NS will not stop short of 6♣. Another possibility is for South to bid 3♦ over 3♣ and then bid 4♣ over North's 3♥. Despite the obvious issue of diamond values opposite the void North is unlikely to stop below 6♣.

If East leads a trump against 6♣ declarer wins in hand and must resist the temptation to play a second round. Then, if West withholds the ♠A on the first round of the suit, East will be able to win a second spade and play a third trump. The winning line is to cross to dummy with the ♥A and play a spade. With the ace on side, it will be possible to ruff two spades in dummy, the ♦AK taking care of two hearts.

### Board 31. N/S. Dealer South

<p>♠ A 5 2 ♥ K J 9 3 2 ♦ A 9 6 ♣ 9 2</p> <p>♠ K Q J 8 6 3 ♥ A ♦ 10 4 ♣ J 8 7 4</p> <p>♠ 10 9 4 ♥ 4 ♦ Q 5 2 ♣ A Q 10 6 5 3</p>	<p>♠ 7 ♥ Q 10 8 7 6 5 ♦ K J 8 7 3 ♣ K</p>
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If West opens 1♠ North will be well advised to remain silent. Overcalling at the two-level with a broken five-card at adverse vulnerability is not the way to make a living. Suppose North does overcall and the next two players pass. It is a pound to a penny that East is waiting for West to reopen with a double, so it would be a shame to pass up the likely penalty by rebidding 2♠.

Where North does pass, East may have to respond INT. Assuming South passes West chooses between 2♣ and 2♠, the former allowing East to rebid 2♥. Then West has a decision of sorts – is it best to pass, or to rebid 2♠. On this layout the latter is going to deliver a better outcome.

If EW play in hearts and South leads a diamond North wins and does best to exit with a heart, removing dummy's only entry. After that declarer cannot expect to score more than six tricks.

If EW play in spades and North leads a club, South wins and switches to a spade, North winning and returning a club. South wins and plays a third club, North ruffing. If North exits with a trump declarer wins and should not go wrong in diamonds. However, what if South returns the ♣3 for North to ruff and a diamond comes back. If South has the ♦A then going up with dummy's king will result in two down. Declarer should not be fooled. If South held ♣AQ10653 and the ♦A an opening bid of 1♣ (or an overcall of 2♣) would be a racing certainty.

### Board 32. E/W. Dealer West

<p>♠ Q 10 7 ♥ A 8 7 4 ♦ A 10 4 ♣ J 8 4</p> <p>♠ 8 6 5 2 ♥ Q 10 5 2 ♦ 8 3 2 ♣ K 10</p> <p>♠ K J 4 ♥ J 6 ♦ K Q 7 ♣ A Q 9 5 3</p>	<p>♠ A 9 3 ♥ K 9 3 ♦ J 9 6 5 ♣ 7 6 2</p>
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If South opens INT (14-16/15-17) North might not bother with Stayman, but in any event the contract will be 3NT.

If West leads a spade and East wins with the ace and returns the suit declarer has time to play on clubs (starting with dummy's jack, gives you a 22% chance of 5 tricks) and will secure 10 tricks.

If West leads a heart the defenders are on track for four tricks.