

Aid 4 Ukraine Simultaneous Pairs

Monday 11 April 2022

Thank you for joining us – we felt so helpless and wanted to do something to help so hence this Simultaneous Pairs which we hope you have enjoyed.

It's been a simple affair – there are no overall master points, no prizes – just the hands to play and score to give you an overall result.

But more important it is to try and raise some money to send to UNICEF. If you haven't already donated, please please do so – if you go to :

<https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/donations.asp> there are various ways to send in your donation.

Again – thank you so much for your support. We really appreciate it !

All the best

Anna & Mark - the ECatsBridge Team

Board 1. None. Dealer North

<p>♠ A 9 7 6 2 ♥ 10 4 ♦ K 5 3 ♣ A 9 3</p> <p>♠ 10 8 ♥ A Q 5 ♦ A J 8 4 ♣ K 6 5 2</p>	<p>♠ 5 3 ♥ K J 9 8 7 2 ♦ 10 7 6 ♣ 10 7</p> <p>♠ K Q J 4 ♥ 6 3 ♦ Q 9 2 ♣ Q J 8 4</p>
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If North opens 1♠ South raises according to system. If that is at a level that allows West to compete (for instance after 1♠-INT*) a takeout double will see East bid hearts. Reaching 3♥ is fine for EW but bidding 4♥ over 3♠ runs the risk that someone will double.

It is easy to see that NS have nine tricks in a spade contract. Were East to lead the ♣10 West must avoid covering dummy's ♣J which would hand over an important overtrick.

Board 2. N/S. Dealer East

<p>♠ J 8 7 ♥ A 8 5 4 ♦ Q 4 2 ♣ 7 4 3</p> <p>♠ A Q 6 2 ♥ K Q 9 6 ♦ 9 3 ♣ Q 8 2</p>	<p>♠ K 5 ♥ 10 7 3 2 ♦ K 7 6 5 ♣ J 10 6</p> <p>♠ 10 9 4 3 ♥ J ♦ A J 10 8 ♣ A K 9 5</p>
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If South opens 1♦ West has an obvious double. If North elects to bid 1♥ it picks off the best spot for EW. If East then passes and South rebids 1♠ North might try INT rather than 2♦. In former times East would double 1♥ to show four cards in the suit (exposing a possible psyche) and bid 2♥ with five hearts, but that idea has gone out of fashion.

If South starts with 1♣ West has an imperfect double – now North responding 1♥ might see East try 2♦ when EW are awkwardly placed. If West makes a disciplined pass over 1♣ North bids 1♥ and South rebids 1♠/INT according to agreements.

Oddly enough if NS play in INT the best lead from either side is a heart. Then as

long as East does not cover the $\heartsuit Q$ declarer will have no more than six tricks. Were West to lead a spade declarer would have just enough time to establish a trick in the suit to get up to seven.

Board 3. E/W. Dealer South

\spadesuit 10 9 2 \heartsuit 10 9 6 4 \diamondsuit 9 2 \clubsuit Q J 6 2	\spadesuit 8 6 5 \heartsuit Q 5 2 \diamondsuit A Q 7 6 \clubsuit 5 4 3 \spadesuit A Q 7 3 \heartsuit K J \diamondsuit K J 8 5 \clubsuit A 10 9 \spadesuit K J 4 \heartsuit A 8 7 3 \diamondsuit 10 4 3 \clubsuit K 8 7
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If South opens $1\clubsuit$ North responds $1\diamondsuit$ and East overcalls INT which should end the auction.

When South opens $1\diamondsuit$ North can only bid INT which leaves East a bit stuck. A double risks an unwelcome response in hearts when East would have to pass or try 2NT.

If South passes initially East opens $1\diamondsuit$ intending to rebid 2NT if West responds.

If East starts with a strong $1\clubsuit$ it will be possible to rebid INT over West's negative $1\diamondsuit$.

South has an awkward lead against a notrump contract.

Starting with a passive diamond might be popular, North taking the ace and returning the $\diamondsuit 6$. If declarer puts in the eight South wins and now needs to switch to the $\heartsuit A$ followed by a heart which is fine as long as North does not play the queen!

If declarer plays the $\diamondsuit J$ on the second round of the suit there is more than one way to get up to seven tricks – playing on hearts is probably the simplest although some care may still be required.

Board 4. All. Dealer West

\spadesuit 10 4 \heartsuit K Q 10 9 8 \diamondsuit A J 9 \clubsuit 9 7 2	\spadesuit J 6 5 3 \heartsuit 6 5 2 \diamondsuit 10 8 6 5 2 \clubsuit 3 \spadesuit A 9 8 2 \heartsuit A 7 4 \diamondsuit 4 3 \clubsuit K J 10 5 \spadesuit K Q 7 \heartsuit J 3 \diamondsuit K Q 7 \clubsuit A Q 8 6 4
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Assuming West passes and East opens $1\clubsuit$ South can overcall INT which West will double. If North retreats to $2\diamondsuit$ West might be tempted to bid $2\heartsuit$, but doubling will produce a better score.

If West happens to open $1\heartsuit$ East responds $1\spadesuit$. If South comes in with INT (ignoring the lack of a heart stopper) North bids $2\diamondsuit$ and East doubles. If West can find a Pass then +200 is within reach, especially as East is likely to lead a trump, which is frequently the right thing to do when you know your side has the balance of power.

If West plays in hearts and North leads the $\clubsuit 3$ West should conceal the $\clubsuit 2$ on the first round of the suit. Then if South cashes the $\clubsuit A$ before returning a low club declarer will be on track for nine tricks.

Board 5. N/S. Dealer North

\spadesuit A K Q 10 \heartsuit 10 7 5 \diamondsuit A K J 5 3 \clubsuit 8	\spadesuit J 9 4 \heartsuit A 4 \diamondsuit 8 7 6 2 \clubsuit J 9 7 6 \spadesuit 5 \heartsuit Q J 9 8 \diamondsuit Q 10 4 \clubsuit A K Q 4 3 \spadesuit 8 7 6 3 2 \heartsuit K 6 3 2 \diamondsuit 9 \clubsuit 10 5 2
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If East opens $1\clubsuit$ West responds $1\diamondsuit$ and then uses the fourth-suit over East's $1\heartsuit$ which sees East support diamonds. So far so good and West will certainly be thinking in terms of a possible slam. Creating a situation where East gets a chance to cue-

bid a heart control will be West's aim. After 1♣-1♦-1♥-1♠*-2♦-2♠-3♣-3♦ East's 3NT will sound a warning note.

It is easy to see that playing in notrumps is the best option for EW – if the defenders don't cash their hearts on the go, one trick will vanish.

Board 6. E/W. Dealer East

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

If East opens 1♥ and West responds 1♠ East can force to game with 3♣. West's simplest option at this point is to bid 3♥ (4♥ is possible, but West's trumps are not quite good enough and he does control three suits) When East bids 3♠ West can continue with 4♣ and EW should reach a slam in one of the majors.

If East starts with a strong 1♣ South might try to complicate matters by coming in. However, EW should be able to overcome any interference for example after 1♣- (3♣) West can bid 3♠ when East is unlikely to stop below 6♠.

As the cards lie there should be no problems in the play.

Board 7. All. Dealer South

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

If South opens 1♠ and West overcalls 2♥ (not a great suit, but there are six of them) East will have a problem. If he tries to solve it by bidding 3NT the spotlight will be on South.

Leading a spade allows declarer to win and play three rounds of hearts after which there is no way to prevent nine tricks. It takes an initial diamond lead to give the defenders a chance. However, that is not quite the end of the story, as if North takes the ace and returns the suit declarer ducks, wins the next diamond, plays a heart to the queen, and then ducks a heart to South's king. The winning shot for North is to put in the jack at trick one! If declarer ducks North continues with a low diamond and the defenders must come to five tricks (double-dummy they can do even better!)

Board 8. None. Dealer West

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

If West opens 2♥ East does best to pass.

If West starts with a Multi 2♦ East bids 2♥ and that should end proceedings unless NS do something unexpected.

Were West to start with a Pass, North might be the one to make the first move. Opening 2♠ might see West speculate with a double which will reap a rich reward. If North tries a Multi 2♦ East might overcall 2♠ which lets NS off the hook. Another possibility is to jump to 4♣ showing that suit and a major, but I'm not sure the East hand is strong enough for that.

Despite the dreadful break EW can score nine tricks in spades, provided declarer runs dummy's ♣10.

Board 9. E/W. Dealer North

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

If North opens INT (14-16, 15-17) East might be tempted to bid 2♣ for the majors when West bids 2♥.

If North opens 1♦ and East makes an imaginative double (nice shape, shame about the points) West will probably decide to play for a penalty.

If North starts with a strong 1♣ East might be tempted to bid, but the vulnerability is a significant factor. If the bidding starts 1♣-1♦ and East is able to double to show diamonds East will probably bid 1♠ if North passes or redoubles.

If N/S play in diamonds it is easy to see that declarer should score seven tricks – for example if East leads a top club declarer wins and plays back a club, East winning and switching to a heart for the jack, queen and ace. Declarer goes back to dummy with a heart and plays a club. If West discards declarer ruffs and exits with a heart and with ♦KQ107 left must score three more trump tricks.

If EW play in hearts and North leads a top diamond declarer wins and plays a club when the simplest defence is for North to win and exit with a club. If declarer continues with the ♥10 South must not make the mistake of playing low as North will be in trouble after taking the ♥A. Returning a heart, South cashing the king and exiting with the jack allows declarer to win and play the ♦J. When North covers with the queen declarer discards a spade from dummy and is now in sight of an overtrick.

If South covers the ♥10 with the jack North takes declarer's queen but must then return the ♦Q – not an easy play to find. South can assist by putting up the ♥K on the ten and then returning a diamond (or a spade, when again North must revert to diamonds) but again these are not easy plays to find.

If North plays in INT and East leads a spade West wins and returns the queen. Declarer should duck that and when West switches to a club East wins and clears the spades. Declarer plays the ♦K and when East discards a heart to the jack sees West win and exit with a club. Declarer wins, cashes toe hearts ending in dummy and plays a diamond and must come to seven tricks.

Board 10. All. Dealer East

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

If East opens 1♣ South must choose between a double and 1♦. After a double West has various alternatives, to some extent depending on how many clubs East has promised. If we assume West bids 1♥ then North is likely to bid 1♠ (some players may be able to bid a weak 2♠). After that its unclear as to where the music will stop.

After a 1♦ overcall if West raises clubs South re-opens with a double and North bids spades. Its hard to say if NS will get to 4♠, but if they do EW might take the save which, theoretically, is a good idea.

If East starts with INT and South doubles West has an interesting problem. Although the spade void is a concern it might be best to pass and, on this occasion, North will bid spades. If North bids 1♠ and South does

not raise West is likely to re-open with a double and now East should bid 2♣. If South raises to 2♠ West can compete with 3♣. Were North to press on with 3♠ South might find an inspired raise to game when we could be in *Biltcliffe Coup* territory as East will surely double.

If North is in 4♠ and East leads a heart declarer will win the second round and play the ♠10, intending to run it. That results in an easy ten tricks.

If EW play in clubs East's heart intermediates come in useful and declarer should always secure ten tricks.

Board 11. None. Dealer South

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

If West starts with 1♣ and East responds 1♥ West will raise to 2♥ which ought to end the auction.

If East responds 1♦ and West bids 1♥ East should raise to 2♥. (I would like to raise to 2½♥ but at pairs there is no need to press for close games.)

If West opens INT and North passes East can bid 2♣ and must then decide what to do over West's 2♥. It looks reasonable to invite game, an invitation West will decline. It's possible that North might bid over INT, but a natural 3♣ is quite a stretch with such a poor suit. Were that to happen East will want to be able to double for takeout.

How will EW fare in a heart contract?

If North is on lead and it tempted to start with three rounds of hearts declarer can win, cash the ♦K and then duck a diamond to South's queen for ten tricks.

If North leads the ♦10 declarer plays dummy's jack and if that holds the natural line is to unblock the ♣A and then play a heart. If South wins with the nine and switches to a spade declarer tries the queen and North wins and returns a spade, declarer winning and discarding a spade on the ♣K. If declarer plays a trump at this point North can take two rounds of hearts and then play a spade, forcing dummy to ruff and holding declarer to eight tricks. Declarer can improve on that by playing the ♦K. If North ruffs and cashes the ♥A it is clear declarer will take the rest. Discarding only postpones the inevitable.

If East is the declarer, only an unlikely spade lead gives the defenders a chance of restricting declarer to eight tricks. If declarer knows South is not the type to lead away from a king at trick one and puts in dummy's eight North wins with the nine, and must now avoid playing three rounds of hearts, felling partner's queen or a switch to the ♦10.

Board 12. N/S. Dealer West

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

If West opens 1♠ North can only pass and East responds INT. Should South bid 2♣/3♣? Given that in a pair game one should strain to get involved I would be inclined to say yes, but don't blame me if it goes wrong. If West rebids 2♦ or 2♠ North can bid 2NT, when South will retreat to 3♣.

If South does not overcall West rebids 2♦ or 2♠ and South will have the opportunity to balance with 3♣.

3♣ is a comfortable spot – only a double dummy diamond lead holds declarer to nine tricks.

If West plays in spades and North leads a club declarer wins in hand and plays a spade. Now the best North can do is take the ace and switch to hearts, but declarer still emerges with eight tricks.

An initial trump lead is one way to put the defenders in charge.

Board 13. All. Dealer North

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

If North opens 1♣ and East passes South responds 1♥ and North raises to 2♥. Now East might come to life with a double – not ideal, but the sort of thing you have to do. West bids 2♠ and if South come again with 3♥ (or a more useful 3♦) East will probably take the push to 3♠.

If North starts with 1♦ then East's double after 1♦-1♥-2♥ will be very sound.

If North opens INT East is likely to come in using whatever methods are being employed and the spade fit should be located.

The advantage of bidding diamonds is shown if the defenders start with four rounds of the suit against a spade contract. To score nine tricks declarer must ruff with the ♠Q and then play a spade to the eight. When that holds declarer must play on clubs.

If South switches to a heart after three rounds of diamonds, declarer wins with the ace, cashes the ♠AK and then plays on clubs.

Board 14. None. Dealer East

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

If North opens 1♣ South responds 1♥ and North raises hearts over West's 1♠ overcall. With a five-loser hand bidding 4♥ is not out of the question. If North only bids 3♥ then South has enough to go on to game.

If North opens 1♦ things do not change much.

Were North to start with a three-suited 2♥ South could raise to 3♥ when North would continue to game.

It should not be difficult to secure ten tricks in hearts. If West cashes a diamond and then switches to a heart declarer can draw trumps and play the ♦Q pitching a spade.

This is one amusing trap the defenders must avoid. Suppose West leads a trump and declarer wins in dummy and plays a spade. If East takes the ace and exits with a heart declarer wins in hand and might try the ♠Q. If West covers that declarer ruffs, cashes three top clubs and then plays the ♦Q. West can win, but that will be the last trick for the defence. To hold declarer to ten tricks West must not cover the ♠Q.

Board 15. N/S. Dealer South

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

If West opens 1♣ North must choose between a double and INT. After a double East bids 1♦ and if West rebids INT North might double again. If East rebids 2♦ South might bid 2♥ although the ♣K does not look useful.

If North overcalls INT East might try 2♦, probably ending the auction.

If West opens 1♦ INT has more to commend it but East has an easy raise to 2♦.

If West starts with INT and North doubles East bids 2♦.

If NS play in hearts the defenders need to score a club ruff to hold declarer to seven tricks – if West leads the ♦Q East wins and switches to a club.

If EW play in diamonds declarer should secure nine tricks without any difficulty.

Board 16. E/W. Dealer West

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

If East opens INT (13-15, 14-16 or 15-17) that is likely to end the auction.

If East starts with 1♣ West responds 1♥ and East raises.

If East opens 1♥ West raises.

As the cards lie declarer can take advantage of the favourable positions in every suit to secure nine tricks in notrumps.

If EW play in hearts and North leads a trump declarer wins and does best to play a diamond to the jack and ace. If South returns a trump declarer wins in dummy, unblocks the ♥♦K, comes to hand with the ♥A and plays the ♦10. If North ducks, declarer can discard a spade and then play on clubs. If North covers, declarer ruffs in dummy and then plays a low club. If North wins and returns a club, declarer ducks and has ten tricks. If North switches to a spade South wins with the king but must then return a low spade when declarer must withhold the jack to ensure ten tricks.

Board 17. None. Dealer North

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

An age-old question – should East open 1♥ or INT?

After INT most defences concentrate on showing hands with at least one major. Still, South might bid 2NT to show the minors. If West then bids 3♠ North might (or might not) compete with 4♣. If North does bid 4♣ East has a similar problem regarding a possible 4♠ bid.

If East opens 1♥ South might overcall 2♦, despite the lack of a sixth diamond. What happens after that will depend on agreements. West might like to be able to bid a non-forcing 2♠.

If EW play in spades, then nine tricks appear to be the limit. One possible danger is that North might lead the ♦10 for the jack and king. If South is tempted to

continue diamonds in the hope of giving partner a ruff, then declarer will secure an overtrick.

If NS play in clubs and East leads a top spade and switches to a club declarer wins in dummy and plays back a high club, East winning and exiting with a club. Declarer wins, ruffs a spade and then plays three rounds of diamonds to endplay East and secure ten tricks. Not easy, but not impossible.

If NS play in diamonds declarer should score nine tricks without too much trouble.

Board 18. N/S. Dealer East

<p>♠ 10 6 3 ♥ A K 4 2 ♦ J 9 6 ♣ 6 5 4</p>	<p>♠ Q J 7 ♥ J 10 9 5 ♦ A Q 8 3 2 ♣ Q</p> <p>♠ K 9 8 5 4 ♥ 8 6 3 ♦ 10 ♣ A 9 8 2</p> <p>♠ A 2 ♥ Q 7 ♦ K 7 5 4 ♣ K J 10 7 3</p>
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If South opens 1♣ North responds 1♦ and East chips in with 1♠. When South continues with 2♦ West raises to 2♠ (or perhaps tries an avant-garde 2♥). North then bids notrumps – put me down for 3NT.

If South starts with 1♦ North responds 1♥ and East overcalls 1♠. Whatever South does now 3NT should be the final contract.

Were South to begin with 1NT North would look for a heart fit before bidding 3NT.

3NT is an easy contract. If North is declarer and East leads a spade declarer wins with the queen and plays the ♣Q. If East ducks declarer crosses to the ♦K and forces out the ♣A. Now East needs to find a heart switch to hold declarer to ten tricks.

Board 19. E/W. Dealer South

<p>♠ J 4 2 ♥ A K J 9 5 3 ♦ J 2 ♣ J 6</p>	<p>♠ 10 7 5 ♥ Q 10 ♦ 10 9 7 4 ♣ 10 9 3 2</p> <p>♠ A 9 ♥ 7 6 2 ♦ K Q 6 5 ♣ K Q 5 4</p> <p>♠ K Q 8 6 3 ♥ 8 4 ♦ A 8 3 ♣ A 8 7</p>
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When South opens 1♠ West overcalls 2♥ and East raises to game.

There is nothing to the play unless declarer decides to take a heart finesse.

Board 20. All. Dealer West

<p>♠ A Q J 5 ♥ 9 3 ♦ A Q J 10 5 ♣ A J</p>	<p>♠ 8 6 ♥ 10 8 7 5 4 ♦ 9 7 6 ♣ 9 8 5</p> <p>♠ 10 9 7 ♥ A J ♦ K 8 4 ♣ K 10 6 3 2</p> <p>♠ K 4 3 2 ♥ K Q 6 2 ♦ 3 2 ♣ Q 7 4</p>
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If West opens 1♦ and East responds with a game-forcing 2♣ (a close call) West rebids 2♦ to show 5+♦. If East now jumps to 3NT to show a minimum West has a decision to make. On this layout bidding on is a winner.

If East responds 1NT West can mark time with 2♠. If East then bids 3♦ and West decides to go past 3NT by bidding 4♣ East can bid 4♥ and a slam will be reached. It's not a convincing sequence but it does result in a making slam.

Let's assume West plays in 6♦ and North leads a heart. Declarer wins in dummy, cashes two top diamonds, and then plays three rounds of clubs, ruffing high. After crossing to dummy with the ♦K declarer cashes two clubs discarding a heart and the ♠J. Then the ♠10 is finessed, and declarer collects all the tricks.

Board 21. N/S. Dealer North

<p>♠ 9 7 6 3 ♥ 10 9 3 ♦ Q 10 6 ♣ Q 6 4</p> <p>♠ J 8 ♥ Q 8 7 5 ♦ K 9 ♣ A K J 5 2</p>	<p>♠ A K Q 10 5 ♥ A 4 2 ♦ J 2 ♣ 9 7 3</p> <p>♠ 4 2 ♥ K J 6 ♦ A 8 7 5 4 3 ♣ 10 8</p>
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If East opens 1♠ South overcalls 2♦ and West doubles. East rebids 2♠ and West must choose between jumping to 3NT or marking time with 3♣. Over the latter East might try 3♥ and if West then decides to raise or bid 3♠ a major suit game will be reached.

If West is in 3NT North does best to lead the ♦10 (or queen) to avoid blocking the suit. That should hold declarer to nine tricks.

If East is in 4♠ and South leads a club declarer wins in dummy, draws trumps and ducks a club to North. If North returns a heart declarer takes the ace and cashes two clubs. On the last of these South is down to ♥KJ ♦A8 and is squeezed in an unusual way. Pitching a heart allows declarer to ruff a heart and then play a diamond, securing a trick for the ♦K, while discarding a diamond allows declarer to duck a diamond, setting up the king. Either way that's 11 tricks.

If EW are in hearts the friendly trump position ensures 11 tricks.

Board 22. E/W. Dealer East

<p>♠ A Q 7 4 2 ♥ A ♦ A 9 6 2 ♣ 9 8 3</p> <p>♠ K J 9 6 3 ♥ Q 9 6 ♦ 4 ♣ J 6 4 2</p>	<p>♠ 5 ♥ K 10 5 3 2 ♦ K 8 5 ♣ A 10 7 5</p> <p>♠ 10 8 ♥ J 8 7 4 ♦ Q J 10 7 3 ♣ K Q</p>
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In today's world the East hand looks like a 1♥ opening. If West raises to 2♥ and North bids 2♠ I can't think of a compelling reason for anyone to bid after that, can you? Were South to bid 2NT North would try 3♦.

North might decide to double 2♥ which sees South bid 3♦.

If North plays in spades eight ricks should be the limit. On a heart lead declarer wins and plays a club. That sets up a club ruff and even if declarer takes a losing diamond finesse, he will still arrive at eight tricks.

Playing in diamonds declarer rates to take nine tricks (there are ways to get up to 10, but they are too esoteric).

Board 23. All. Dealer South

<p>♠ J 4 2 ♥ K 9 6 ♦ A 10 7 4 ♣ 5 4 3</p> <p>♠ Q 10 7 3 ♥ 7 4 2 ♦ J 3 2 ♣ 10 9 6</p>	<p>♠ 9 6 5 ♥ Q J 5 ♦ Q 9 6 5 ♣ A K Q</p> <p>♠ A K 8 ♥ A 10 8 3 ♦ K 8 ♣ J 8 7 2</p>
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If South opens 1NT the percentage action for North is to pass.

If South starts with 1♥ in the Acol style, North responds 1NT and that ends the auction.

If South is declarer West must avoid a spade lead. Declarer plays dummy's jack and can get up to eight tricks by playing on

hearts. If declarer decides to play on clubs even nine tricks are possible! East will win and play a spade and that process is repeated until East wins the third round of clubs. At that point declarer will probably win the diamond exit in hand, cash the long club and play a heart to the nine.

A club lead looks reasonable and should hold declarer to eight tricks. If East cashes three clubs, switching to a spade or a diamond is good enough.

The best lead is a heart, South winning with the ace. If declarer then ducks a club East wins and can switch to a spade, West winning with the queen and returning the suit. Declarer wins and ducks a club and now East does best to switch to a diamond, holding declarer to seven tricks. Not an easy sequence of plays to find.

If North is the declarer East is likely to lead a top club. After that declarer is one step ahead and should take eight tricks.

Board 24. None. Dealer West

<p>♠ Q 2 ♥ Q 10 9 6 ♦ 10 3 2 ♣ A 10 9 4</p>	<p>♠ 10 3 ♥ A 8 2 ♦ 9 7 6 ♣ K Q 8 3 2</p> <p>♠ K J 8 6 4 ♥ 4 3 ♦ A J 8 5 ♣ 7 5</p> <p>♠ A 9 7 5 ♥ K J 7 5 ♦ K Q 4 ♣ J 6</p>
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If the first three players pass and South opens 1NT (12-14, 13-15, 14-16) East is likely to back in with something to show spades and another suit. 2♠ is not a great spot, but even two down might be a good score if South can make eight tricks in 1NT.

If South opens 1♣ and North responds 1NT that should end the bidding, as would 1♦-1NT.

Were East to try a third-in-hand 1♠ West responds 1NT and then bids 2♠ over East's 2♦.

If South is in 1NT and West leads a diamond (a heart is a very good start for declarer) East wins and returns the suit, declarer winning and playing on clubs. If West wins the first round of clubs and exits with a diamond declarer has an easy route to eight tricks by clearing the clubs. Were West to duck the first club, then win the third round and exit with a diamond declarer would need to play very well to get up to eight tricks. Placing West with high cards in both majors (because of the passive lead) declarer must cross to the ♥A and then play the ♠3, West winning with the queen and exiting with a spade. Declarer wins and then plays a low heart, eventually taking the last two tricks with the ♥KJ. That would be a fantastic play to find!

If North is the declarer and East leads a spade declarer will win the second round and play on clubs, which should result in eight tricks.

If East plays in spades it is hard to see how declarer can take more than six tricks.

Board 25. E/W. Dealer North

<p>♠ Q J 6 4 ♥ Q J 10 ♦ 9 8 6 2 ♣ 7 3</p>	<p>♠ 10 9 2 ♥ 8 5 3 ♦ Q 10 5 4 ♣ J 10 8</p> <p>♠ A K 8 7 3 ♥ A K 7 6 ♦ 7 ♣ K Q 5</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ 9 4 2 ♦ A K J 3 ♣ A 9 6 4 2</p>
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If East opens 1♠ South can double, and once West has indicated spade support East will bid game.

If East starts with a strong 1♣ and South interferes it should not prevent EW from locating the spade fit. For example: 1♣-(1♠*)-Dble-(Pass*)-Pass-(2♣)-Pass-(Pass)-2♠-(Pass)-3♠ etc. Here South has shown the majors or the minors, North's pass promising better spades than hearts and suggesting a better fit in a minor.

There is nothing complicated about the play in 4♠.

Board 26. All. Dealer East

<p>♠ K 10 2 ♥ 9 8 7 3 2 ♦ 6 2 ♣ Q 9 7</p>	<p>♠ Q ♥ A Q J 4 ♦ A K Q 9 7 ♣ 10 4 2</p> <p>♠ 7 6 5 4 ♥ 6 ♦ J 10 8 5 4 ♣ K J 8</p> <p>♠ A J 9 8 3 ♥ K 10 5 ♦ 3 ♣ A 6 5 3</p>
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If South opens 1♠ North responds 2♦ and then bids 3♥ over South's 2♠. If South then bids 3NT North might try a quantitative 4NT, but South will decline the invitation.

If West leads a club declarer will be held to ten tricks. Anything else results in 12.

Board 27. None. Dealer South

<p>♠ Q 10 8 ♥ 10 6 5 ♦ K 9 6 4 ♣ Q 4 3</p>	<p>♠ A 7 6 3 ♥ J ♦ A Q 2 ♣ K J 10 7 5</p> <p>♠ 9 5 ♥ Q 8 7 4 3 2 ♦ J 10 7 5 ♣ A</p> <p>♠ K J 4 2 ♥ A K 9 ♦ 8 3 ♣ 9 8 6 2</p>
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The South hand is nothing to write home about, but some players will open the bidding (especially those playing a 10-12 INT). All roads should lead to 4♠ although after 1♣-1♠-2♠ North must avoid becoming over-enthusiastic.

As the cards lie it is hard to see how declarer can fail to take 11 tricks.

Board 28. N/S. Dealer West

<p>♠ J 9 5 2 ♥ A 7 6 3 ♦ A 10 7 ♣ 7 6</p>	<p>♠ A K 10 7 4 ♥ 10 8 5 ♦ J 2 ♣ J 9 5</p> <p>♠ Q 3 ♥ J 4 2 ♦ Q 9 8 3 ♣ 10 4 3 2</p> <p>♠ 8 6 ♥ K Q 9 ♦ K 6 5 4 ♣ A K Q 8</p>
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If South opens INT North transfers to spades and then chooses between an invitational 2NT or a full-blooded 3NT. In any event 3NT is sure to be reached, leaving West to find a lead.

With nothing attractive West will do well to start with a passive club.

If declarer wins in hand and plays a spade to the ten (the best chance for 4/5 tricks) East will win and exit with a club and the spade break will doom declarer to defeat. If declarer guesses to run the ♠8 at trick two East wins and exits with a club. If declarer wins in hand and plays a spade to the ten nine tricks are assured.