

The ECatsBridge Charity Pairs Monday 5th July 2021



Thank you so much for joining us for our Charity Pairs in aid of Kidney Research UK and the British Heart Foundation both of which are charities really badly affected by the pandemic in terms of their funding capability.

We hope you enjoyed the hands and that they weren't too challenging - and whether or not you did well at least you can at least rest assured that you are helping to support two great charities.

The results are at <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/default.asp> and if you want more general information about the event and a link to make donations then just go to : <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/Summer-Pairs/default.asp>

Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

<p>♠ K 3 2 ♥ A Q 7 4 ♦ 8 5 ♣ A 10 7 6</p> <p>♠ J 9 7 5 ♥ J 8 5 3 ♦ A 9 3 ♣ Q 9</p>	<p>♠ 8 6 4 ♥ 10 9 2 ♦ Q 7 4 ♣ 8 4 3 2</p> <p>♠ A Q 10 ♥ K 6 ♦ K J 10 6 2 ♣ K J 5</p>
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This should end up in a notrump game. If South gets over-excited after North opens the bidding, then they could finish in 6NT: a very lucky make and an undeserved good result.

The auction might start 1♣, 1♦, 1♥, 1♠, 1NT – that exhausts the one-level. Now South should just bid 3NT – the 17 points is not enough for slam opposite a 12-14 hand.

Any interest in the play? There could be if West is inspired to duck in diamonds when declarer leads to the jack, and again when he leads to the ten. Now declarer might abandon diamonds thinking that East started with AQxx. It's still hard to lose two tricks on the actual layout, but possible.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ K 6 2 ♥ A 6 5 ♦ Q J 9 2 ♣ A 10 2</p> <p>♠ 9 8 ♥ 8 7 4 3 ♦ K ♣ K J 9 8 7 5</p>	<p>♠ A J 10 7 ♥ K Q J 10 ♦ 5 4 3 ♣ Q 4</p> <p>♠ Q 5 4 3 ♥ 9 2 ♦ A 10 8 7 6 ♣ 6 3</p>
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Playing 5-card majors, the 1♦ opening from East picks off the N/S diamond fit. After a 1♥ response, North should pass, but when 2♥

comes back to him, it's tempting to double, despite the dangerous vulnerability. In that scenario, South will bid 2♠ – should E/W pass 2♠, double 2♠, or bid 3♥?

And against 2♠, West might lead partner's "suit", the ♦K. That doesn't look too successful, but it will be, because the trick comes back via a diamond ruff, and that's the setting trick.

If East happens to open 1♣ (not recommended! I would prefer 1♥, even playing 5-card majors), that creates some subtle differences in the auction. West would be much more inclined to bid on to 3♥ if N/S compete.

All in all, this is a deal that makes matchpoints so interesting. I don't have any firm answers to the bidding dilemmas here – sorry!

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ A K 9 ♥ Q 8 7 4 ♦ Q 9 6 2 ♣ 8 3</p> <p>♠ Q 10 5 ♥ K 9 5 ♦ A 8 7 3 ♣ A K 9</p>	<p>♠ 8 6 3 ♥ J 10 6 ♦ 5 ♣ Q J 10 7 5 2</p> <p>♠ J 7 4 2 ♥ A 3 2 ♦ K J 10 4 ♣ 6 4</p>
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How should East react to West's 1NT bid? It seems likely that the clubs won't run in 1NT (a doubleton with West being all too likely), so I'd head to the "safety" of 3♣. Oh well – this time 1NT works out OK – 7 or 8 tricks depending on North's lead.

If you get to 3♣ via a transfer, then North's top spade lead will let it make. That's one of the benefits of transfers: getting the stronger hand as declarer.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

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

A dynamite hand – the higher North opens, the uglier is East's problem. If East takes a bid – well, South has a whole bunch of Red cards available.

If North opens 3♠, maybe East, whose partner is a passed hand, should play it cool and pass – the alternatives of double, 3NT and 4♣ are all seriously flawed in one way or another. If East doubles, should West find the winning Pass? Probably not.

If you polled a group of experts on North's opening bid, you would get a wide range of opinions: 1♠, 2♠, 3♠ and pass would all get votes, I expect. The hand doesn't seem to fit neatly into any of these categories – the only people I would disagree with here are the ones with a strong view!

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

On the surface, this is quite a good 6♥, but after 1♦, Pass, 1♥, 1♠ overcall, I would expect most pairs to rest in game.

The play's the thing. If you guess to drop the ♥K (possible as the safest way to ruff two clubs), then you make 13 tricks. Otherwise, you are likely limited to 11 tricks. It seems like a tossup to me.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

The main point here is for East to go quietly with his 15 count. I can imagine the auction starting 1♦ – 1♥, North overcalls 1♠, and West subsequently bids 2♥. Now East should pass – sure, he has some extras, but there is no fit. If East bids on, E/W are in danger of going minus.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

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

A partscore battle – West's spades versus South's hearts. It's ugly for E/W in spades – the 4-0 break limits them to 7 tricks on best defence.

What should South open, if anything? I can't make up my mind – all the rules say that this isn't a weak two: poor suit, side ace, side void. Maybe the experts open 1♥, but I would probably pass and hope I can get back into the auction.

If South passes, West has a similar problem, but that hand seems a closer fit to a weak two than South's. Let's explore such an auction: East should pass 2♠, South now tries 3♥, and that rolls back to East, who has nothing but losing choices. He can pass 3♥ and see it make (West is not going to find the ♥9 lead!), or bid 3♠ and go down 200 – the kiss of death.

Actually -200 won't be a bottom for E/W – I'm sure there will be those in 4♠, and that's either -300 or -800.

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

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

Another tight partscore hand. West opens 1♥, North bids INT and plays it there, maybe doubled. Now it's up to East to be a good person, and lead partner's suit – necessary to defeat INT. Virtue (in the opening lead) will be rewarded.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

Well done to any N/S that can bid this hand to 3NT. It seems that 4♠ will be the common outcome, and Deep Finesse says there are only 9 tricks. Still there are many variations to the play, and maybe a few pairs will make 4♠.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

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

4♥ is easy enough to bid and play, and N/S should be able to take the first three tricks, at least with West as declarer.

N/S have a paying sacrifice in 5♣, but first they must get into the auction. If East opens 1♦, the book bid from South is Pass, but some might try

a theoretically unsound 2♣, or even an inventive 1♠. Then North has to commit to the vulnerable sacrifice. It all seems rather unlikely. If it does start 1♦ – 2♣ overcall, West has a problem. This is a setup made for “negative free bids” – a 2♥ bid here from West being non-forcing. If you don't play that, then maybe you should play that a jump to 3♥ from West is natural and non-forcing. On the layout, even a pass by West will work out, because East will re-enter the auction (perhaps with a takeout double of 3♣), and West gets another chance.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

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

It's never routine to bid a slam, but the field should get to 6♥ here, and there is nothing to the play. Well done to anyone who reaches 7♥ – I know I wouldn't come close.

Notice the power of the 4-4 fit over the 5-3 fit. In clubs (or notrumps), you need the spade finesse to take all the tricks – not so in hearts.

I expect the bidding to go something like 1♣ – 1♥ – 4♥ (or 2NT followed by 4♥?). Now East has the choice of cue-bidding or wheeling out Blackwood. I suppose cue-bidding does allow you to stay at the 5-level if partner lacks a spade control, but then again, a cue-bidding auction helps the opponents with the opening lead. Maybe it's better in the long run to forget cue-bidding science and just blast away.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

N/S are most likely to bid the lucky 4♠ game if pushed into it, although the adverse vulnerability

might scare them off. There will be N/S plus scores ranging from 100 all the way up to 790.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

2NT or 3NT? 8 tricks or 9 tricks? That will probably cover 95% of the results on this deal. The hand is full of guesses for the defence, including an opening lead guess where it is quite possible that E/W have mentioned all four suits. It's easier for declarer – every suit he tries will work well for him.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

You have to be really hungry to open that dreadful East hand in first position. If you do, you can watch your partner go down in 4♠ – even a friendly club lead from North won't save you.

After a sensible pass, the auction might get competitive, but E/W probably end up in a spade partscore. Perfect defence (two rounds of diamonds followed by a trump exit) will put 3♠ under pressure, but that perfect defence is not easy to find.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

You can throw away the heart king and spade queen, and still 6♠ is excellent – can it be reached? Let's say the auction starts INT from West and a 2♥ transfer from East. West should super-accept, but how? This is a matter of system – some play that West should bid a short suit, 3♦ here; others that West bids a side strength: 3♣. Well, either way, it's all good news to East, who might use Roman Key-Card Blackwood (if available – otherwise simple Blackwood), and bid 6♠ when West shows 3 key cards. Perhaps I am resulting this hand ... it will be interesting to find out how many bid the slam. Compare this with Board 11, where I also suggest a blasting auction from East, not giving information away about his low doubletons.

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

What an evil setup. A 4♠ opening is possible, and avoids bidding agony for E/W – East passes thinking: "you bid it partner, you can make it". South should pass 4♠, rather than getting involved.

If West opens 1♠, then E/W can fight it out between their 8-card black suit "fits". It probably ends up in 4♠ again.

As for the play in 4♠, that's ugly for North on lead.

A diamond lead gives declarer a chance if he guesses well. Diamond 10 to force the king, then a club up, finessing the jack.

A trump lead gives declarer an easier time – only one guess required, in clubs.

What about the ♣Q? Declarer can dispose of his heart loser on a club, but is in danger of losing two trump tricks even if he guesses the suit – a third club will promote North's ♠J, and the defence eventually comes to a diamond trick. Declarer has a most unusual counter: assume South switches to a heart at trick two – declarer wins the ace, discards a heart on the ♣J and then makes the key play – ♦Q! After that's covered with the king and ace, now ace and another spade. If South then plays the good club, declarer can discard his losing diamond. The defence cannot take their diamond trick without leaving the wrong hand (North) on lead. The only truly killing lead is a heart – declarer cannot wriggle 10 tricks if the defence is careful.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

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

INT – 3NT is the auction. East's lead is rather non-obvious – all four suits are in contention. I would start by ruling out spades: trying to hit partner's suit is pointless as West will have no entries. But there is merit in all the other suits: hearts included because N/S haven't searched for a major suit fit.

It seems to me that unless North plays with mirrors, 3NT will be defeated, but there are many different paths to take in the play. East may need to diagnose the ♣QJ doubleton.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

An obvious major suit game, the adverse vulnerability and maybe an Easterly 1♦ opening

keeping N/S quiet. The overtrick depends on finding the spade queen, and all things being equal, the percentage play is to lose to North's queen. (This picks up all 3-2 and 4-1 breaks where South has the spade queen, and also when North's queen is singleton.)

But are all things equal? Let's say the defence starts a minor against an uncontested 4♥, and declarer gets in and draws trumps, finding South with three hearts to North one. Now North is rather more likely to have spade length than South, so it becomes attractive to run the spade ten. As it turns out, North is short in both majors, but the overtrick appears anyway. There's lots of matchpoints to be won with such subtle inferences.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

Any alternatives to the N/S auction 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♥ – Pass? Some Norths might rebid 2♠, perhaps. South's rebid of 2♥ should show a 6-card suit, so I personally wouldn't speculate on spades as North, preferring the known 7-card fit.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

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

A dull 3NT delivering 9 tricks on any sane play.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

Another flattish board, expecting 11 tricks in spades. Deep Finesse sparks some interest, telling us that you can make 11 tricks in notrumps. Don't believe it, thinking that a diamond lead develops three defensive tricks? DF never lies of course, so we take ♦A and run 6 spades pitching two hearts and a diamond from West: North is squeezed down to four clubs and two hearts, and now declarer sets up his heart trick in peace. It's fun to work out, but has nothing to do with reality.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

Anything could happen here. A lot depends on what North might do over a 1♣ opening ... Michaels or 1♠? There is a school of thought that this is an in-between hand and therefore should bid 1♠, Michaels being reserved for either clearly strong or weak hands. Personally, I just use Michaels on all 5-5's and worry about the strength later, preferring to name both my suits in one go.

The auction might determine the lead if East declares 3NT – a heart lead is going to work better for the defence than a spade lead. Either way, declarer should cash ♣K, protecting against South (rather than North who has shown other suits) holding all four clubs – compare with board 18.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

Spades beats hearts, but can E/W mention their spades? It all depends on how high North's response to 1♥ is. East can introduce spades happily at the two level, but he is not so comfortable at higher levels.

Strong club methods can work well here: South opens 1♥, and North responds 4♥ (knowing there is no likely slam due to the limited opening) – East is really fixed and has to guess.

N/S will do well not to double a high spade contract, despite their 22 points. You might see some 990s and 850s on this board.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

The key decision here is North's – over 1♠, should he try INT? He will regret it if he does; INT will have dual effect of keeping E/W low, and telling them how to make 9 tricks (dropping the ♥K doubleton). If North keeps quiet, he's quite likely to end up taking 5 tricks against 3♠ or 4♠.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

Spades still beats hearts, but unlike on Board 23, E/W will have no problems finding their fit. I expect a heap of 140s for E/W.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

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

Put those two 4-3-3-3's together and usually you will do best in notrumps. On this layout, it could go either way. If E/W get their hearts going, then 2NT is the limit, whereas 3♠ can always be made.

But maybe spades versus NT is not the main issue here: the really good scores will be available for those who stop short of game with the combined 25 HCP. There are many delicate and not-so-delicate auctions possible. Give yourself full credit if you stayed out of game, either one or both of you devaluing the flat shape.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

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

That South hand is far stronger than its 19 HCP: the long hearts with great spots, the four aces: a 1 level opening is not enough, and 2NT is mis-directed, although it probably works out OK. I think South has enough to open 2♣, and North should be able to get the partnership to 6NT – the top spot.

Strong clubbers have no problem with the opening bid, but need to recognize later in the auction just how many extras South has.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

Speaking of monsters ... what's the opening bid by North if West passes? They say you shouldn't open 2♣ with two suiters, but there are limits and you can never describe the hand if you start with 1♥, aside from the risk that it plays there. Meanwhile South has to somehow realise that his eight card diamond suit is worthless.

The play could be cute in 4♥. Suppose the defence is inspired enough to lead a trump, stopping a spade ruff. Declarer should play spades from the top, hoping that the 8 falls in three rounds. It does. Playing a low spade out at any point caters only for someone holding exactly AQJ.