



The January Charity Pairs

Monday, 26 January 2026

Our January Charity Pairs, raises funds for UNICEF to help children in danger through the world.

Thank you for joining us for the event – we really appreciate your support.

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<https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/donations.asp> and
donate whatever you can – but read this first :
<https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/BeforeDonating.asp>
to make sure you don't add a "tip" to the donation –
quite unnecessary in our view.

Help us to help these children who are in such need. Please.

Board 1	♠ J10863 ♥ 5 ♦ Q32 ♣ AQ42	Love All Dlr: North									
♠ - ♥ AQJ97 ♦ AJ10764 ♣ 95	<table> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N			W		E		S		♠ KQ942 ♥ 32 ♦ 98 ♣ 10873 ♠ A75 ♥ K10864 ♦ K5 ♣ KJ6
N											
W		E									
	S										
		♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N 2 - - 3 1 S 2 - - 3 1 E - 1 1 - - W - 1 1 - -									

There are various possibilities. One is that NS will score plus 530 from 3♠ doubled. The auction is P - P - 1♥ - 2♦ - 2♠ (protected by his earlier pass) - P - P - 3♦ - P - P - 3♠ - P - P - ? East might think he is worth a double. The outcome should be a disappointment. With the alarm bells ringing, North loses just 2 aces and 2 trumps. If East had only passed (in tempo) I expect 3♠ would normally have drifted one off.

Board 2	♠ J ♥ Q875 ♦ 4 ♣ AKJ10742	NS Vul Dlr: East									
♠ KQ942 ♥ A10 ♦ 10872 ♣ 63	<table> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N			W		E		S		♠ 73 ♥ J9432 ♦ AKQ3 ♣ 98 ♠ A10865 ♥ K6 ♦ J965 ♣ Q5
N											
W		E									
	S										
		♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N 3 - - - 2 S 3 - - - 2 E - 1 1 2 - W - 1 1 2 -									

3rd seat at favourable vulnerability is the right (only?) time and place to open this hand with a weak 2♠. North may overall 3♣ and South has a pot at 3NT. A top spade lead or a diamond lead and spade shift is required. Otherwise, declarer has time to establish a heart for the 9th trick. If West passes, North might do also with the lowest ranking suit. If North has come to play, a good shot is a fourth seat 3♣ opener. 9 tricks are easy and there are chances for a 10th.

Board 3	♠ 973 ♥ A63 ♦ 97652 ♣ 73	EW Vul Dlr: South									
♠ 2 ♥ K8742 ♦ 83 ♣ KQ1054	<table> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N			W		E		S		♠ QJ85 ♥ QJ10 ♦ QJ4 ♣ J86 ♠ AK1064 ♥ 95 ♦ AK10 ♣ A92
N											
W		E									
	S										
		♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - 3 - 3 2 S - 3 - 3 2 E 1 - 1 - - W 1 - 1 - -									

South opens 1♠. Some Wests with no respect for vulnerability may make a Michaels cue bid. They will have more respect when they write 200 or worse in the minus column on a partial hand. If West passes, a Zia tip is not to pass partner's nonvulnerable opener with any excuse. Not a good hand for Zia followers - if North bids 2♠, South will reasonably raise to game, where there are 4 losers even with East's quacks lying under South's AK10s.

Board 4	♠ AQ10974 ♥ - ♦ A942 ♣ 987	Game All Dlr: West									
♠ 83 ♥ AK7 ♦ Q8763 ♣ A102	<table> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N			W		E		S		♠ 5 ♥ J53 ♦ KJ10 ♣ KQJ654 ♠ KJ62 ♥ Q1098642 ♦ 5 ♣ 3
N											
W		E									
	S										
		♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - - 2 6 - S - - 2 6 - E 13 - - - W 23 - - -									

Over a weak 1NT, the North hand looks like a vulnerable 3♠ to me. Lots of offence, so if the remaining points are equally divided 3♠ should be a happy spot. Today the auction proceeds 4♣-4♠-5♠. Visualising the club shortage opposite, North bids 5♠. I expect an occasional appearance of that rare primate, the "striped-tailed-ape" - the term for doubling them in game when they can make slam, as North should by establishing hearts.

Board 5	♠ 10743 ♥ 54 ♦ A654 ♣ 432	NS Vul Dir: North						
♠ KJ86 ♥ AK6 ♦ 1072 ♣ A107	<table> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	♠ A5 ♥ Q10972 ♦ J93 ♣ K85
N		E						
W		S						
	♠ Q92 ♥ J83 ♦ KQ8 ♣ QJ93	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - - - - S - - - - E - 4 - 3 W - 4 - 3						

At different vulnerability, a weak 1NT by South might be popular. If the bold West who made the Michaels cuebid on hand 3 has moved to the South seat he should be taught another painful lesson. Double of 1NT and any run-out ought to be 1100. This time the defence can afford to drop a couple of tricks and still beat those in the heart game. Back in the sober world, EW bid unopposed: P -1♠ -2♥ -4♥, or P -1♠ -1♥ -1NT -2♣ (Checkback Stayman) -2♥ -4♥.

Board 6	♠ 10 ♥ J52 ♦ 103 ♣ QJ98732	EW Vul Dir: East						
♠ 4 ♥ KQ86 ♦ AJ42 ♣ A1064	<table> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	♠ AQJ732 ♥ 7 ♦ Q8765 ♣ K
N		E						
W		S						
	♠ K9865 ♥ A10943 ♦ K9 ♣ 5	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - - - - S - - - - E - 6 - 3 4 W - 6 - 3 4						

Some will pre-empt with the East hand, probably missing their game. Those who open 1♠ will certainly reach game, with 3NT likely to be popular. West might drive towards the poor slam after 1♠ - 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♥ (4th suit) - 3♦. A keycard ask might put the brakes on, but with 5♦ likely to be outsourced by 3NT some Wests will still bid the poor slam. Hoping to have a diamond trick, South might lead the ♥A, speeding up play.

Board 7	♠ AK975 ♥ J96 ♦ K73 ♣ 43	Game All Dir: South						
♠ 10643 ♥ KQ10872 ♦ - ♣ AK9	<table> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	♠ J82 ♥ A ♦ J986 ♣ QJ1072
N		E						
W		S						
	♠ Q ♥ 543 ♦ AQ10532 ♣ 865	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - 2 - - - S - 2 - - - E 4 - 4 1 - W 4 - 4 1 -						

4♥ by West is a fortuitous make but few will bid it. If South has a weak 2♦ in his locker he may play 3♦ when North supports after the 2♥ overcall. If West re-opens with a double the stakes could be high if East passes for penalty. 3♦ has 5 obvious losers, but the defence need to unscramble their tricks. If West leads a top club for a count signal he must switch to hearts. Since the penalty pass suggests short hearts the switch should be found.

Board 8	♠ KJ92 ♥ K5 ♦ 32 ♣ AKQJ10	Love All Dir: West						
♠ 83 ♥ QJ987 ♦ J108 ♣ 973	<table> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	♠ A765 ♥ 10632 ♦ A5 ♣ 864
N		E						
W		S						
	♠ Q104 ♥ A4 ♦ KQ9764 ♣ 52	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N 5 4 - 5 5 S 5 4 - 5 5 E - - - - W - - - -						

This should be a flattish 3NT making 10 tricks. North-South bid 1♠ -1♦ -1♠ -1NT -3NT. West leads a heart, declarer dislodges the ♠A etc. But wait! Deep Finesse makes 11. How does she do that? (DF is a woman because she is never wrong). Win the ♥K and lead a diamond. Back to a club for another diamond. That makes 12 tricks if East doesn't cash out. But If West has the ♠A DF has just gone down in a contract even her husband would make.

Board 9	♠ 82 ♥ KJ1095 ♦ KJ10 ♣ Q109	EW Vul Dir: North																													
♠ Q93 ♥ A7642 ♦ 82 ♣ 654	<table><tr><td>N</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td>S</td></tr></table>	N	W	E	S	♠ 10765 ♥ 3 ♦ Q973 ♣ AJ83																									
N																															
W	E																														
S																															
	♠ AKJ4 ♥ Q8 ♦ A654 ♣ K72	<table><tr><td>♠</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table>	♠	♦	♥	♣	NT	N	-	3	5	-	5	S	-	4	5	-	5	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-
♠	♦	♥	♣	NT																											
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W	-	-	-	-	-																										

All routes lead to 3NT by South. West has an interesting choice of bad leads. The 4th best heart, despite North's bid, gives a tempo but does no immediate damage. I would choose a club, solving declarer's problem in that suit. The 11th trick now comes from finding the ♦Q. Those searching for 4 diamond tricks will play West for the queen. Those who only need 3, perhaps after my "unfortunate" club lead, should go with the odds when they uncover the heart position.

Board 10	♠ A8 ♥ AQJ93 ♦ QJ3 ♣ A104	Game All Dir: East																													
♠ J97542 ♥ 54 ♦ 10984 ♣ Q	<table><tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr></table>	N	E	W	S	♠ K ♥ K762 ♦ K72 ♣ 87532																									
N	E																														
W	S																														
	♠ Q1063 ♥ 108 ♦ A65 ♣ KJ96	<table><tr><td>♠</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>6</td><td>-</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>6</td><td>-</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table>	♠	♦	♥	♣	NT	N	5	-	6	-	6	S	5	-	6	-	6	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-
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S	5	-	6	-	6																										
E	-	-	-	-	-																										
W	-	-	-	-	-																										

Deep Finesse is on form again, racking up slam in hearts or NT. This one is definitely odds against and won't be reached very often. 1♥-1♠-2NT-3NT should be common. The likely club lead collects the ♣Q. Declarer may eventually deduce that East has a single spade. Will he play him for the ♠K or the ♠J? Since the ♠Q is a squeeze menace if West has to guard diamonds, I expect most to get this right.

Board 11	♠ 432 ♥ J83 ♦ J8 ♣ A7543	Love All Dir: South																											
♠ KQ987 ♥ A654 ♦ A97 ♣ 10	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A10 ♥ K72 ♦ 65432 ♣ Q62																		
	N																												
W		E																											
	S																												
	♠ J65 ♥ Q109 ♦ KQ10 ♣ KJ98	<table><tr><td>♠</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr></table>	♠	♦	♥	♣	NT	N	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	E	-	4	3	3	2	W	-	4	3	3	2
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E	-	4	3	3	2																								
W	-	4	3	3	2																								

Love all is bidders' vulnerability at match-points. South kicks off with a weak 1NT. West shows the majors (a Landy 2♣ is the popular toy) and East chooses 2♥. If this is passed out EW will score an easy 140. Some Norths will not surrender so easily and re-open with 3♣. East does best to double that, but can collect a winning +150 by passing and leading ♠A, ♥K, ♠KQ pitching a heart, ♥A, heart ruff. I doubt that will happen often; more likely East will accept the push to 3♥.

Board 12	♠ J4 ♥ J10852 ♦ KJ6 ♣ 964	NS Vul Dlr: West																									
♠ K9753 ♥ 63 ♦ 9832 ♣ KQ	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A10862 ♥ K7 ♦ A107 ♣ A75																
	N																										
W		E																									
	S																										
	♠ Q ♥ AQ94 ♦ Q54 ♣ J10832	<table><tr><td>♠</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>3</td></tr></table>	♠	♦	♥	♣	NT	N	2	-	-	-	S	2	-	2	-	E	-	3	-	4	W	-	2	-	3
♠	♦	♥	♣	NT																							
N	2	-	-	-																							
S	2	-	2	-																							
E	-	3	-	4																							
W	-	2	-	3																							

Those who open 2♠ to show spades and a minor may incur an unfortunate result: a heart lead from North sinks 4♠. If East declares he can ditch a heart on the ♣A before North gains the lead. Mostly East will declare 4♠, bidding unopposed 1♠-3♠-4♠. (The 5th trump makes the West hand worth 3♠.) Some Souths may venture a shape-suitable double, but the vulnerability will dissuade North from -500 or worse.

Board 13	♠ Q53 ♥ J10542 ♦ KQ8 ♣ 82	Game All Dlr: North									
♠ 76 ♥ AK8 ♦ J6432 ♣ AQ6	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K109 ♥ Q9 ♦ 975 ♣ K10953
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AJ842 ♥ 763 ♦ A10 ♣ J74	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - - 1 1 - S - - 1 1 - E 2 2 - - 2 W 2 2 - - 2									

Less action at Game All. At many tables West's 4th seat 1NT will end the bidding. There are 8 obvious tricks, 5 obvious defensive tricks. Can West find a 9th trick? Win the lead with the ♥K, spade to ♠9 and ♠J. Heart return to the ♥Q, cross in clubs, take a deep breath, spade to ♠10 and... ♠A (phew!). 9 tricks if hearts are woodenly cleared. If West tries that, check that his bravery pills conform to WBF doping regulations.

Board 14	♠ KQ3 ♥ K10876 ♦ Q65 ♣ K8	Love All Dir: East																														
♠ A109864 ♥ J2 ♦ K97 ♣ 43	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 2 ♥ AQ543 ♦ 832 ♣ J962																					
	N																															
W		E																														
	S																															
	♠ J75 ♥ 9 ♦ AJ104 ♣ AQ1075	<table><tr><td></td><td>♠</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table>		♠	♦	♥	♣	NT	N	3	3	-	-	3	S	3	3	-	-	3	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-
	♠	♦	♥	♣	NT																											
N	3	3	-	-	3																											
S	3	3	-	-	3																											
E	-	-	-	-	-																											
W	-	-	-	-	-																											

A likely 3NT by North, perhaps via 1♠ - (1♠ overcall)-2♥-3♣-3NT. East dutifully leads partner's suit and 9 tricks are the norm, the defence making 2 hearts, ♠A and ♦K. At some tables a lot of points will hinge on a club guess. West is likely to have a doubleton at most, having followed to 3 diamonds. Since East did not open a weak 2♥ the odds favour a finesse, but if the penalty for losing to a doubleton jack is 3 down (spades having been cleared) it will take some courage.

Board 15	♠ AK1073 ♥ 105 ♦ J103 ♣ A63	NS Vul Dir: South																													
♠ J864 ♥ 8742 ♦ A652 ♣ 7	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 2 ♥ AKQ ♦ KQ74 ♣ KJ842																				
	N																														
W		E																													
	S																														
	♠ Q95 ♥ J963 ♦ 98 ♣ Q1095	<table><tr><td>♠</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr></table>	♠	♦	♥	♣	NT	N	-	-	-	1	-	S	-	-	-	1	-	E	-	4	1	-	1	W	-	4	1	-	1
♠	♦	♥	♣	NT																											
N	-	-	-	1	-																										
S	-	-	-	1	-																										
E	-	4	1	-	1																										
W	-	4	1	-	1																										

Does double of a major promise 4 cards in the other major? Here East must surely be allowed to double a 1♠ opener. If South passes, West bids 2♥ and plays in the wrong denomination. If South bids 2♠, West passes and East doubles again. Now West can bid 2NT showing two places to play (it cannot be natural by a hand that couldn't bid a round sooner). East bids 3♣ and West 3♦, showing the red suits. Reaching the 4/4 minor fit may be rewarded as spade leads would defeat 3♥.

Board 16	♠ A6 ♥ 943 ♦ K109754 ♣ 95	EW Vul Dlr: West									
♠ Q7542 ♥ AQJ8 ♦ 83 ♣ A7	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 98 ♥ K102 ♦ AJ2 ♣ K10863
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ KJ103 ♥ 765 ♦ Q6 ♣ QJ42	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - - - - - S - - - - - E 3 - 3 3 3 W 3 - 3 3 2									

Given a free run, East-West might bid 1♠-2♣-2♥-2NT-? There is a stronger argument for 3NT at teams, but one should be aware that partner can have a misfitting 10-count in this sequence. The auction to 2NT suggests a heart lead. South's passivity is rewarded here as East will struggle to make 8 tricks if he has to fend for himself. What's this? Deep Finesse makes 9! Of course, DF sees the club position and runs ♠10.

Board 17	♠ AQ95 ♥ KQJ4 ♦ K5 ♣ AKJ	Love All Dlr: North
♠ 843 ♥ A103 ♦ A102 ♣ Q843	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W<div>E</div>S</div> </div>	♠ 72 ♥ 98652 ♦ 98763 ♣ 6
	♠ KJ106 ♥ 7 ♦ QJ4 ♣ 109752	♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ NT N 4 - - 5 5 S 4 - - 5 5 E - - - - W - - - -

After 2♣-2♦-2NT some version of Stayman/Baron will see NS declare 4♠. When West views dummy he realises that partner isn't going to help much. He grabs his aces and concedes 450. Some will bid 3NT looking for the extra 10 points. They are in luck this time as the club finesse works. With care they can gather 4 spades, 3 clubs and 2 in each red suit. It may not be so easy - perhaps West establishes the ♠Q whilst still holding an ace. +430 scores poorly against a line of 450s.

Board 18	♠ Q32 ♥ 6543 ♦ 107 ♣ QJ43	NS Vul Dlr: East
♠ AJ87 ♥ AKQ10 ♦ Q98 ♣ 86	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W<div>E</div>S</div> </div>	♠ 105 ♥ J97 ♦ AJ42 ♣ K975
	♠ K964 ♥ 82 ♦ K653 ♣ A102	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - - - - S - - - - E - 2 3 - 2 W - 2 3 - 2

We were taught that 25 points = 3NT (23 nowadays in some circles). EW have the points, and the intermediates make 3NT look good. Sadly the defence have a diamond, a spade and 3 clubs for one down. Those who bid 1♥ - 1NT - Pass will be pleased with themselves. Some will be allowed to make 3NT. You might play diamonds for 3 tricks, and hope they give you the ♣K before taking a spade.

Board 19	♠ K73 ♥ K52 ♦ J2 ♣ AJ954	EW Vul Dlr: South
♠ A985 ♥ QJ76 ♦ 1095 ♣ K7	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W<div>E</div>S</div> </div>	♠ J642 ♥ 3 ♦ AQ864 ♣ Q106
	♠ Q10 ♥ A10985 ♦ K73 ♣ 832	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N 2 - 2 - - S 2 - 2 - - E - 2 - 2 - W - 2 - 2 -

Some will throw this in, at other tables it will be a major suit part score battle. Anyone at the 3- level is risking a tiger double for minus 200. 3♥ might even be -200 without the double; Deep Finesse can play these hearts for one loser, but the rest of us aren't that clever. NS may start P-1NT-2♦(transfer)-2♥. To get his side into this auction, East has to pre-balance with a double now. He has the perfect shape and South's initial pass offers some protection. Happily West has 4 spades and the double has salvaged the board.

Board 20	♠ AKQJ982 ♥ Q3 ♦ A85 ♣ A	Game All Dlr: West
♠ 87 ♥ 1087 ♦ QJ72 ♣ Q854	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W<div>E</div>S</div> </div>	♠ - ♥ AKJ542 ♦ K1043 ♣ 1076
	♠ 10643 ♥ 96 ♦ 96 ♣ KJ932	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - - - 5 1 S - - - 5 1 E - 4 4 - - W - 4 4 - -

An exciting board for some, a dull 4♠ making an overtrick for others. With 9 sure tricks, North opens 2♣. East is not intimidated, and is worth a space-consuming 3♥, even vulnerable. This won't stop NS from bidding 4♠, but it gives EW a chance to save in 5♥. And, with each holding a doubleton heart, who would blame NS for doubling? In fact, par is 6♥ doubled, down two.

Board 21	♠ J64 ♥ Q1075 ♦ 1085 ♣ J85	NS Vul Dir: North									
♠ A10872 ♥ 86 ♦ J2 ♣ AK42	<table border="1"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N		E	W				S		♠ Q953 ♥ AK4 ♦ AQ96 ♣ Q7
N		E									
W											
	S										
♠ K ♥ J932 ♦ K743 ♣ 10963		♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - - - - S - - - - E - - 6 6 W - - 6 6									

EW might bid and make 6♣ here. The diamond finesse fails, but spades can be collected for no losers. In fact, for those really desperate for tops, 6NT makes the same 12 tricks. Playing a weak 1NT, East-West might bid 1♦-1♠-3♠-4♣(cue). Now, with his excellent red suit controls, East can take over. However, if he cuebids 4♦ and passes 4♠ only result merchants will be critical. Those who open the East hand a strong 1NT or a quaint 1♠ will have right-sided the slam in that a diamond lead will be welcome.

Board 22	♠ A9876 ♥ 62 ♦ 98 ♣ Q753	EW Vul Dir: East									
♠ KQJ ♥ J85 ♦ KJ43 ♣ KJ8	<table border="1"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N		E	W				S		♠ 4 ♥ A103 ♦ 107652 ♣ A942
N		E									
W											
	S										
♠ 10532 ♥ KQ974 ♦ AQ ♣ 106		♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - - - 1 - S - - - 1 - E 3 3 - - 4 W 3 3 - - 1									

A lucky 3NT by East (or West on a non-heart lead). Most will be in a diamond partial, making 9 tricks on a heart lead, but more if North leads a club. Some NS pairs will find their spade fit, and compete to 3♠. To protect their equity, West must double, and beat it by 2 tricks - not a problem if East leads a diamond, but with West on lead South might escape for one down.

Board 23	♠ J82 ♥ J104 ♦ A952 ♣ Q75	Game All Dir: South									
♠ A5 ♥ AK73 ♦ Q763 ♣ K32	<table border="1"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N		E	W				S		♠ Q3 ♥ Q9862 ♦ K ♣ A10864
N		E									
W											
	S										
♠ K109764 ♥ 5 ♦ J1084 ♣ J9		♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - - - - - S - - - - - E 5 - 5 - 3 W 4 - 4 - 2									

A suicidal South might open a weak 2♠. (I know one for whom 2♠ would not be enough!) Most Wests will be allowed to open 1♥ (unless playing 5-card majors). Now East has a dilemma: a limit raise to 3♥ seems right, but some will decide the extra shape is worth more, which may get them too high. I don't like to splinter with a kingleton, so perhaps EW bid 1♥-2♣-2NT-4♥. Is that weaker than 1♥-2♣-2NT-3♥-3NT-4♥ or through a Jacoby 2NT raise? One for serious partnerships to discuss.

Board 24	♠ A10952 ♥ 53 ♦ J764 ♣ 52	Love All Dir: West									
♠ 84 ♥ 1097 ♦ AK1082 ♣ K64	<table border="1"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N		E	W				S		♠ J3 ♥ AKQJ ♦ 93 ♣ AQ973
N		E									
W											
	S										
♠ KQ76 ♥ 8642 ♦ Q5 ♣ J108		♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - - - - - S - - - - - E 5 4 5 - 2 W 5 4 5 - 2									

The trick here is to avoid 3NT - or to play against a South who believes in passive leads. After 1♠-1♦-1/2NT-3NT South will achieve a passive near-zero if he leads anything but a spade. The best scoring spot is 4♥, perhaps not too difficult to bid after 1♠-1♦-1♥-3♠. East bids 3♠ and West 4♠. East now offers 4♥ which West may pass. Again, only results merchants will be critical if West prefers the safer refuge of 5♣.

Board 25	♠ AJ75 ♥ A7 ♦ K82 ♣ KQ92	EW Vul Dlr: North
♠ 4 ♥ J986 ♦ AJ765 ♣ 1043	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W<div>E</div>S</div> </div>	♠ Q1085 ♥ 10432 ♦ Q1093 ♣ 5
	♠ K932 ♥ KQ5 ♦ 4 ♣ AJ876	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N 5 - - 4 5 S 5 - - 4 5 E - - - - W - - - -

Quite a few NS pairs will over-stretch. 1♣ -1♠ -3♠ seems a reasonable start. South has extras and a double fit and bids 4♣. A couple of red suit cue bids and a key-card ask reveal that an ace and the trump queen are missing. 5♠ would normally survive, but not today, when the singleton club lead means that even the safety play in trump (cash ♠A, then lead low to ♠9) does not save the contract - and who takes safety plays at pairs? Another good board for the conservatives.

Board 26	♠ 764 ♥ 103 ♦ 98 ♣ J97654	Game All Dlr: East
♠ QJ95 ♥ Q ♦ AKJ104 ♣ Q32	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W<div>E</div>S</div> </div>	♠ AK1083 ♥ K72 ♦ Q652 ♣ 10
	♠ 2 ♥ AJ98654 ♦ 73 ♣ AK8	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N 2 - 2 - - S 2 - 2 - - E - 5 - 5 4 W - 5 - 5 4

East opens 1♠ and South overcalls 2♥. Some Wests will bid 4♥, a splinter raise. I don't like this, not least because it leaves no room for East to make a slam try with a marginal hand. A better bid by West is 4♦, a "fit jump". East has a minimum, or even less with a likely wasted ♥K. He cannot get out quickly enough and signs off in 4♠. This time an adventure beyond game would survive, losing only 2 aces.

Board 27	♠ K53 ♥ KQJ62 ♦ K ♣ 10873	Love All Dlr: South
♠ Q864 ♥ A104 ♦ A94 ♣ Q95	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W<div>E</div>S</div> </div>	♠ J1072 ♥ 95 ♦ 76 ♣ AJ642
	♠ A9 ♥ 873 ♦ QJ108532 ♣ K	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - 3 3 - - S - 3 3 - - E 1 - - 3 - W 1 - - 3 -

If South opens 3♦ that should silence everyone. The defence will have to find a heart ruff to prevent an overtrick. Not easy and 130 will be common. Deep Finesse makes 3♠, but she drops the club kingleton. Even if EW bid to 3♠ and go one down they will record an excellent score. Therefore the 3♦ pre-empt works, even though it kept NS out of the higher scoring heart partial.

Board 28	♠ KJ4 ♥ 8 ♦ A98742 ♣ KJ8	NS Vul Dlr: West
♠ 96 ♥ A2 ♦ 6 ♣ Q10965432	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W<div>E</div>S</div> </div>	♠ AQ1082 ♥ K7653 ♦ KJ5 ♣ -
	♠ 753 ♥ QJ1094 ♦ Q103 ♣ A7	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - 1 - - 1 S - 1 - - - E 3 - 2 2 - W 3 - 2 2 -

This time West can shut everyone up with a club pre-empt. Some will open 4♣, losing a diamond and 3 clubs. 3♣ will be more common. East will be pleased if North overcalls 3♦ and may express an opinion with a double. Deep Finesse beats 3♦ by 2 tricks-heart lead, three rounds of spades, West ruffing, and a club ruff, with DK to come. In real life, West thinks, "why did partner not lead clubs?" He returns a club at trick two for partner to ruff. East is now end-played, not for the last time on this hand, and 3♦ makes 670.

Board 29	♠ 93 ♥ AK10653 ♦ A543 ♣ 6	Game All Dir: North																													
♠ KQ76 ♥ Q82 ♦ Q9 ♣ J942	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 542 ♥ 974 ♦ 107 ♣ KQ1053																				
	N																														
W		E																													
	S																														
	♠ AJ108 ♥ J ♦ KJ862 ♣ A87	<table><tr><td>♠</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>7</td><td>7</td><td>-</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>7</td><td>7</td><td>-</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table>	♠	♦	♥	♣	NT	N	-	7	7	-	7	S	-	7	7	-	7	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-
♠	♦	♥	♣	NT																											
N	-	7	7	-	7																										
S	-	7	7	-	7																										
E	-	-	-	-	-																										
W	-	-	-	-	-																										

7NT! 6 hearts, 5 diamonds and 2 aces. Less than a 10% shot and potentially a few off if anything goes wrong. If they bid and made it against you, you should have stayed in to watch the football! If you must be in grand, 7♦ is almost a 50% shot. Suggested auction: 1♥ -2♦ -4♣(Splinter) -4♣ -4NT(keycard ask)- 5♣/♦ (0 or 3) - 5♥ (trump Queen?) -6♣(no). If the trump queen does not drop, the favourable heart position allows 3 spade pitches.

Board 30	♠ AKQ ♥ 1042 ♦ AJ8743 ♣ J	Love All Dir: East																									
♠ J52 ♥ K9653 ♦ 62 ♣ AK4	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 8763 ♥ AQ ♦ 105 ♣ 98532																
	N																										
W		E																									
	S																										
	♠ 1094 ♥ J87 ♦ KQ9 ♣ Q1076	<table><tr><td>N</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table>	N	♦	♥	♣	NT	N	-	3	-	-	S	-	3	-	-	E	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-
N	♦	♥	♣	NT																							
N	-	3	-	-																							
S	-	3	-	-																							
E	-	-	-	-																							
W	-	-	-	-																							

If West opens a 3rd seat 1♥ NS ought to stay out of 3NT. A diamond partial by North is the most likely contract. Some Wests will open a light 1NT, not a good idea in 3rd seat. Doubling this and the run-out to 2♣ should result in +300 and an excellent board for NS. Most experts now play that the double of the rescue suit is take out. This is a good hand for the treatment: North doubles and South passes for penalty.

Board 31	♠ K105 ♥ AKQ1074 ♦ Q973 ♣ -	NS Vul Dlr: South																									
♠ 96 ♥ 83 ♦ K10652 ♣ A1083	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ AQJ82 ♥ J2 ♦ A4 ♣ KQ54																
	N																										
W		E																									
	S																										
	♠ 743 ♥ 965 ♦ J8 ♣ J9762	<table><tr><td>♠</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>4 1</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>4 1</td></tr></table>	♠	♦	♥	♣	NT	N	-	1	-	-	S	-	1	-	-	E	5	3	-	4 1	W	5	3	-	4 1
♠	♦	♥	♣	NT																							
N	-	1	-	-																							
S	-	1	-	-																							
E	5	3	-	4 1																							
W	5	3	-	4 1																							

This might start P - P - 1♥ - 1♠ - P - P - ? Will North think that the opponents have game on? I doubt it, and he will balance with 2♥. East probably doubles for take-out. West has an interesting choice. 2NT should be "pick a minor" and they end up in 3♣. North will temporarily think that his balance was foolish, but he may have converted minus 170 into minus 150.

Board 32	♠ J108 ♥ K53 ♦ K98742 ♣ 10	EW Vul Dir: West																														
♠ AK965 ♥ QJ7 ♦ AQ ♣ 986	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q3 ♥ A10862 ♦ 3 ♣ J7542																					
	N																															
W		E																														
	S																															
	♠ 742 ♥ 94 ♦ J1065 ♣ AKQ3	<table><tr><td></td><td>♠</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table>		♠	♦	♥	♣	NT	N	-	1	-	-	-	S	-	1	-	-	-	E	3	-	3	3	4	W	3	-	3	3	4
	♠	♦	♥	♣	NT																											
N	-	1	-	-	-																											
S	-	1	-	-	-																											
E	3	-	3	3	4																											
W	3	-	3	3	4																											

East has a difficult response to 1♠ - not really worth 2♥, but the alternative, 1NT, is a hideous distortion. With the heart king well placed and spades 3/3, 3NT makes a lucky 10 or 11 tricks. However, 4♥ runs into 3 top clubs and an overruff. Most will settle for a partial. Those in hearts will usually be held to 9 tricks. Many in No-trump will record plus 210. It would be a very perceptive defender as South who cashed the third club with partner baying for a diamond switch.