

*The ECatsBridge
Summer Charity Pairs
Tuesday 7th July 2026*



Thank you so much for joining us for our Summer Charity Pairs in aid of Kidney Research UK and the British Heart Foundation both of which are charities that need as much funding as possible in order to continue their work.

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.

We are very grateful to our commentators – Julian Pottage for the Monday set, Iain Sime for Tuesday's commentary, Mark Mortimer did the Wednesday commentary, Mark Horton had the fun of doing Thursday's and Liz McGowan undertook Friday's. The great question is – did they get it right ?? or did you do better ?

You will see that although there are actually 36 boards in the set, we have only asked for a commentary on the first 28, as very (very) few clubs play boards 29-36 and we don't want to overburden our commentators! So only the hand analysis is provided for those boards.

The results are at <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/default.asp> and the link to make donations to the charities is :

<https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/donations.asp> - they are done through JustGiving and you will be able to see how much is raised there. If you are making a donation please check this page: <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/BeforeDonating.asp> which explains how to avoid that JustGiving "tip".

By the way, did you know we have a Facebook page ?

<https://www.facebook.com/ECatsBridge> ... do follow us so you can see what we are up to !

And keep enjoying your bridge won't you ...

All the best

Anna & Mark

The ECatsBridge Team

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Board 1

♠ A8
♥ Q974
♦ Q842
♣ 1085

Dealer N
Vul: None

♠ K93
♥ A86
♦ K1073
♣ 742

♠ QJ10754
♥ K1053
♦ A9
♣ K

♠ 62
♥ J2
♦ J65
♣ AQJ963

If South keeps quiet, East-West should reach the easy spade game, perhaps 1♠-2♦-2♥-3♠-4♠. If South sticks in a Weak Jump Overcall of 3♣, it becomes more difficult. West may bid 3♠ and East can be excused for passing.

There is nothing to the play, unless South leads the Jack of Hearts. That would give East the chance to make an overtrick by winning the Ace and later finessing against the Queen.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	-	-	-	1
S	2	-	-	-	1
E	-	1	2	4	-
W	-	-	2	4	-

=====

Board 2

♠ KQ6
♥ 74
♦ 8543
♣ AQ104

Dealer E
Vul: N-S

♠ 32
♥ 9832
♦ AK10
♣ 7532

♠ A108
♥ KQJ65
♦ QJ6
♣ K8

♠ J9754
♥ A10
♦ 972
♣ J96

East opens One Heart and West raises. If East makes a help-suit game try of Three Diamonds, West has enough help there to bid Four Hearts. There are no bad breaks, so no ruff is possible, and the club Ace is onside. A lucky 420.

If East is playing 15/17 and opens a Strong INT, he may play there and score poorly. He can console himself that there will be a couple of hands later where a Strong No Trump works better.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	1	-
S	-	-	-	1	-
E	1	1	4	-	1
W	1	1	4	-	1

=====

Board 3

♠ 742
♥ J92
♦ J983
♣ AK2

Dealer S
Vul: E-W

♠ AQ10965
♥ A86
♦ A5
♣ QJ

♠ KJ
♥ Q10543
♦ 762
♣ 943

♠ 83
♥ K7
♦ KQ104
♣ 108765

The triumph on the previous board may induce East-West to overbid again.
1♠-1NT-3♠-4♠.

Don't try this against the club sharks. Four Spades will fail on best defence. That requires a diamond shift by North after cashing two clubs. That is not so difficult with the East hand visible, but South can help.

On the opening club lead, South gives count and he then follows by playing his lowest remaining club at trick two -Suit Preference for diamonds. High would be SP for hearts and middle would be don't care/continue.

If North plays a lazy third club, West draws trumps and can set up hearts before the diamond Ace is dislodged. North should relinquish his shark badge.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	3	-	-	-
S	2	3	-	-	-
E	-	-	3	3	2
W	-	-	3	3	2

=====

Board 4

♠ KJ
♥ AKQ3
♦ AKQ64
♣ A5

Dealer W
Vul: Both

♠ 10
♥ J754
♦ J532
♣ 9872

♠ AQ985
♥ 1086
♦ 109
♣ J43

♠ 76432
♥ 92
♦ 87
♣ KQ106

North has (should have) been a spectator for the first three auctions but now has his best hand of the year. It would be a pity to record a minus score, but some will go overboard. The target is 3NT by North which has nine top tricks, an easy tenth in clubs and an eleventh which only Deep Finesse will make* on a non-spade lead.

There are some methods to show very strong balanced hands, e.g. the Kokish convention where 2♣-2♦-2♥ is either natural or 24+ balanced. Two Spades by South asks which, then all bids other than 2NT are natural with hearts. This has the advantage that, over the slow 2NT, you can bid as if 2NT was opened.

Others should reach 3NT another way. I have never liked a 2♣-2♦-3♦ start which cramps the auction. This time North will survive if he bids 3NT over South's Three Spades.

(*No spoilers from me for those who like double dummy problems. The answer is at the bottom of the next page).

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	4	5	5	3	5
S	4	5	4	3	3
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

=====

Board 5

♠ 864
♥ A103
♦ A86
♣ K942

Dealer N
Vul: N-S

♠ KQJ1075
♥ 9654
♦ 5
♣ 108

♠ A9
♥ K82
♦ 10943
♣ AQ76

♠ 32
♥ QJ7
♦ KQJ72
♣ J53

What does Four Spades need? The heart Ace and Club King onside, hearts 3/3 and, if they force, spades 3/2. This is not a game that I want to be in... until it makes! Probably INT (by East)-2♥-2♠ -Pass.

If North thinks it is a good idea to open a 4x3 eleven count at unfavourable vulnerability, the odds for making Four Spades improve. Serves him right if they bid it.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	1	-	-	-
S	-	1	-	-	-
E	-	-	2	4	1
W	-	-	2	4	1

=====

* Hand 4. Double Dummy, how to make the eleventh trick in 3NT on a non-spade lead. Cash three hearts, one diamond and only (!) three clubs, pitching a heart. A fourth club would squeeze your hand.

Then run the other diamond to endplay East who only has spades left. You score a spade, four diamonds, three hearts and (only) three clubs.

Board 6

♠ A5
♥ Q7
♦ A103
♣ KQJ1043

Dealer E
Vul: E-W

♠ 6
♥ A9863
♦ QJ64
♣ A76

♠ Q42
♥ 105
♦ 98752
♣ 985

♠ KJ109873
♥ KJ42
♦ K
♣ 2

South-North may bid 1♠-2♣-2♥-3♦ (4th suit is forcing to game at the three level) -3♠-4♠. The normal play in trumps (nine card fit, so play for the Queen to drop) will probably lead to only ten tricks.

Deep Finesse makes the winning spade play in No Trumps for the top score. The problem with 3NT is that a misguess may result in a minus score or, at best, 400 instead of 420.

This time it is West who should respect the vulnerability and keep out with a marginal hand. Collateral damage from overcalling is that it may prompt declarer to pick up East's spade Queen. South deduces that hearts split 5/2 and West has no minor suit shortage. Therefore, he probably has a singleton spade.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	5	1	2	5	5
S	5	1	2	5	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

=====

Board 7

♠ 53
♥ AQJ95
♦ A762
♣ Q4

Dealer S
Vul: Both

♠ 764
♥ 1086
♦ Q8
♣ AK865

♠ J9
♥ 743
♦ K95
♣ J10732

♠ AKQ1082
♥ K2
♦ J1043
♣ 9

Slam time, but I don't expect that everyone will reach the excellent Six Spades. How might it be bid?

1♠-2♥-3♠ shows seven playing tricks and is Game Forcing. That is because South has shown extras and North had enough (9+) to bid at the two level. Some partnerships will now play Four Diamonds is a cue bid agreeing spades. Others will play it two-way (natural or cue). If South now bids Four Hearts, North bids Four Spades, confirming that Four Diamonds was a cue agreeing spades.

That may be all the encouragement South needs. His heart holding couldn't be better, and he has the club control that North has denied. South checks for Aces and bids the slam. Six Spades makes easily; six spades, five hearts and the diamond Ace.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	5	6	6	2
S	-	5	6	6	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

=====

Board 8

♠ A1043
♥ Q864
♦ 9652
♣ 4

Dealer W
Vul: None

♠ 652
♥ 9
♦ J104
♣ KQ9753

♠ J97
♥ AK2
♦ AQ87
♣ 1082

♠ KQ8
♥ J10753
♦ K3
♣ AJ6

East should open a 12/14 INT; this is not a heart suit I want to have to rebid over a response of two of a minor. West transfers to clubs (Two Spades for most) and passes Three Clubs. Plus 110? Unless....

..... Pairs experts recognise that Love All is “bidders’ vulnerability.” North balances with a light but shape-suitable take-out double, turning a minus score into a probable plus in Three Diamonds.

That is unless South hangs him for protecting by bidding Four Diamonds on his flat 14 count. North will never balance again.... in this partnership.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	3	2	2	-
S	-	3	2	2	-
E	3	-	-	-	1
W	3	-	-	-	1

=====

Board 9

♠ 653
♥ 1064
♦ KQ5
♣ 8532

Dealer N
Vul: E-W

♠ 74
♥ KQJ
♦ J9843
♣ J104

♠ 1098
♥ 7532
♦ A1076
♣ K7

♠ AKQJ2
♥ A98
♦ 2
♣ AQ96

South opens One Spade and if North squeaks they may reach the hopeless Four Spades. Lacking an entry to dummy, South may have to guess very well (club Ace and a small club) for one down.

3NT (perhaps reached if South opens an off-shape 2NT) can be made with the same play. In practice that will be unnecessary if diamonds are led and continued. Now South is on dummy and takes the club finesse for his ninth trick. After a heart lead, declarer would have to win before hearts are unblocked, cash the spades and exit in diamonds endplaying West.

Despite this, I expect making 140 in One Spade to score well enough.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	3	-	2	3	3
S	3	-	2	3	3
E	-	1	-	-	-
W	-	1	-	-	-

=====

Board 10

♠ K732
♥ J
♦ J873
♣ A974

Dealer E
Vul: Both

♠ 84
♥ 872
♦ A1054
♣ Q1086

♠ AJ105
♥ K43
♦ K962
♣ J5

♠ Q96
♥ AQ10965
♦ Q
♣ K32

East opens INT (12/14). South has an opener and a good suit. That means it is usually right to bid over INT, but not this time.

Even if East guesses the diamonds there are only five tricks in INT before the roof falls in. Plus 200 is a great score on a partial at match points and that is what South should score from defending.

South would need three overtricks from Two Hearts to equal that plus 200. Sound defence will result in three fewer overtricks.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	-	2	2	1
S	2	-	2	1	1
E	-	1	-	-	-
W	-	1	-	-	-

=====

Board 11

♠ AK86
♥ K95
♦ AK64
♣ 63

Dealer S
Vul: None

♠ Q93
♥ AQJ6
♦ Q87
♣ Q105

♠ J2
♥ 104
♦ J1093
♣ KJ742

♠ 10754
♥ 8732
♦ 52
♣ A98

This time West opens INT and North doubles. East may roll the dice and Pass, but INT shouldn't make.

If East bids or transfers to Two Clubs, it tests the North-South methods. I like to play that the second double by North is take out. If South takes it out to Two Hearts, he could record a minus score. Two Spades works much better, but the big winner is to pass for penalties. Three rounds of diamonds ruffed, and a heart through the AQ gives plus 300. The heart return should be indicated by North playing his lowest diamond (the four) when issuing the ruff.

The East-West pairs playing a Strong INT/ five card major system may find themselves in deeper trouble if East bids a pre-emptive Three Clubs over One Club doubled. Or they may score a top when South bids Three Hearts over North's second double.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	-	1	3	1
S	1	-	1	3	1
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	1	-	-	-

=====

Board 12

♠ KQ1096
♥ 3
♦ Q964
♣ K84

Dealer W
Vul: N-S

♠
♥ AKQ10762
♦ AJ87
♣ J5

♠ J83
♥ 98
♦ K10532
♣ 932

♠ A7542
♥ J54
♦
♣ AQ1076

Seven Hearts is excellent, but I expect more pairs will miss slam altogether than will bid the grand. Only a trump lead gives it a problem. Otherwise pitch a club on the Spade Ace and ruff the small diamonds.

I would open Two Clubs. My reason is that there are hands that partner would pass a one level opener where game was likely. So 2♣-2♦ (waiting)-3♥ (trump setting)- some cue bidding and maybe some Blackwooding.

Blackwood with a void isn't always useful. Here it helps, since West will discover that the Spade Ace provides a discard for the club loser.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	7	2	7	3	7
W	7	2	7	3	7

=====

Board 13

♠ A753
♥ 9
♦ A1096
♣ K852

Dealer N
Vul: Both

♠ K982
♥ AQ543
♦ J8
♣ A9

♠ Q104
♥ K10872
♦ K4
♣ J64

♠ J6
♥ J6
♦ Q7532
♣ Q1073

4441 hands are good for defending. North's best chance of a windfall penalty is to pass as dealer. West innocently opens One Heart in fourth seat, not suspecting that a gruesome fate is in store. That will happen if North now doubles and South passes for penalty.

The book recommends "lead a trump" and North's nine is just what South hoped for. Declarer tries Ace and a club, but North hops up and plays Ace and a diamond. South pins the heart Jack and West is looking at minus 800 from a hand which he could have passed out.

Well, it was board 13. Somebody had to be unlucky.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	-	2	2	1
S	2	-	2	2	1
E	-	1	-	-	-
W	-	1	-	-	-

=====

Board 14

♠ Q984
♥ AK4
♦ 3
♣ Q8643

Dealer E
Vul: None

♠ KJ5
♥ J975
♦ K842
♣ A10

♠ A107632
♥ 86
♦ A6
♣ KJ7

♠
♥ Q1032
♦ QJ10975
♣ 952

East-West bid smoothly to Four Spades, usually 1♠-2♦-2♠-4♠. South leads the obvious diamond Queen.

Not everyone will make ten tricks. A successful line would be diamond Ace, spade to dummy noticing that South shows out and finesse on the way back. Then club Ace, King and ruff.

North can ruff the diamond King, but that was with his trump trick. Declarer only loses that trick and two hearts.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	1	-	-	-
S	-	1	-	-	-
E	1	-	1	4	3
W	-	-	1	4	3

=====

Board 15

♠ 6
♥ A103
♦ AK652
♣ KJ92

Dealer S
Vul: N-S

♠ 9752
♥ Q52
♦ 974
♣ 765

♠ AQ3
♥ KJ87
♦ Q103
♣ AQ3

♠ KJ1084
♥ 964
♦ J8
♣ 1084

North opens One Diamond and East overcalls INT (15/18). Nobody should bid over that.

If South leads a diamond and North ducks, seven tricks will be a struggle. One of the black Queens will have to score, which is not certain.

If South leads his own suit, declarer has the chance of an overtrick. North's jibe is "if I had opened One Spade would you have led a diamond?"

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	1	-	1	-
S	1	1	-	1	-
E	-	-	-	-	1
W	-	-	-	-	1

=====

Board 16

♠ AQ7
♥ 98743
♦ A3
♣ A103

Dealer W
Vul: E-W

♠ J6
♥ A102
♦ J10976
♣ J65

♠ 5432
♥ K6
♦ K52
♣ K974

♠ K1098
♥ QJ5
♦ Q84
♣ Q82

North may open 1NT (12/14) and play there. I expect that nine tricks will be tough to beat, and many will make a tenth for +180. A spade lead is likely, and declarer should have the hearts running before the defence comes to five tricks.

Could North-South have bid game? Perhaps, if North upgrades. Then 1♥-1♠-1NT (15/17)-3NT. Aces are good, but I would have liked the North hand better if one of them was in my long suit.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	-	3	3	2
S	2	-	3	3	2
E	-	1	-	-	-
W	-	1	-	-	-

=====

Board 17

♠ AQ954
♥ K9
♦ Q643
♣ J4

Dealer N
Vul: None

♠ K10876
♥ AJ103
♦ K
♣ A97

♠ J
♥ Q52
♦ A9852
♣ KQ86

♠ 32
♥ 8764
♦ J107
♣ 10532

North opens One Spade. If East doubles, he hits the Jackpot when West passes. As in hand 13, a trump lead is recommended. Declarer may try for a diamond trick, but this doesn't work well. I expect three down for 500, which will be enough to beat those in 3NT.

Not everyone will bid 3NT. If East passes One Spade, West had better balance. Missing 27-point games is not a winning strategy. I prefer overcalling 1NT (11/15 in the pass out seat) to the other flawed options. East has enough to invite 3NT, which West accepts.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	3	4	2	3
W	4	3	4	3	3

=====

Board 18

♠ J843
♥ 983
♦ 94
♣ K642

Dealer E
Vul: N-S

♠ AKQ102
♥ 1054
♦ K87
♣ AQ

♠ 975
♥ 7
♦ J1032
♣ 109875

♠ 6
♥ AKQJ62
♦ AQ65
♣ J3

Hearts against Spades. Perhaps P-1♥-1♠-P-P- 2♥-2♠-3♥-3♠.

Now what? South had better bid again, since minus 140 will score poorly. To make Four Hearts after a top spade and trump switch declarer ducks a diamond and can then ruff out the King. The diamond Queen becomes the tenth trick. This play is not so far-fetched after East didn't raise spades sooner.

If West thinks declarer will manage this, Four Spades doubled for minus 100 is the par score.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	4	-	2
S	-	-	4	-	2
E	2	1	-	3	-
W	2	1	-	3	-

=====

Board 19

♠ 764
♥ QJ87
♦ 95
♣ K974

Dealer S
Vul: E-W

♠ AQ1053
♥ AK4
♦ 1043
♣ 82

♠ J92
♥ 1032
♦ AK62
♣ 1063

♠ K8
♥ 965
♦ QJ87
♣ AQJ5

South will open a 12/14 INT which may be passed out. Best defence is three off (minus 150), but this will be hard to find if West hasn't bid spades. Perhaps lead the Heart Ace, then a switch to a high (discouraging) diamond will induce East to play spades.

If West leads a spade declarer had better run for five tricks (minus 100). The match point difference between minus 150 and minus 100 will be significant since the Wests who play in a spade partial are likely to score 140. That will happen when West overcalls the Strong No Trumper's minor or butts in over the 12/14 NT despite the vulnerability.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	-	-	-	-
S	1	-	-	-	-
E	-	2	1	3	3
W	-	2	1	3	3

=====

Board 20

♠ Q
♥ 75432
♦ K65
♣ KJ76

Dealer W
Vul: Both

♠ K954
♥ KQ9
♦ AQ73
♣ Q9

♠ A872
♥ A8
♦ J1092
♣ 1042

♠ J1063
♥ J106
♦ 84
♣ A853

Some thin games have been made in this set, but this one is doomed. Minus 200 is usually a very bad result at match points, but there may be a column of minus 200s here. 1♦-1♠-3♠-4♠ seems reasonable to me. The defence will collect two clubs, the diamond King and usually two spades.

On another day the spades will break 3/2, and the diamond King is onside. That is still only a 34% game- not the odds you want at match points.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	-	1	-	-
S	1	-	1	-	-
E	-	3	-	2	2
W	-	3	-	2	2

=====

Board 21

♠ Q2

Dealer N

♥

Vul: N-S

♦ Q98754

♣ KQ943

♠ KJ109865

♠ A73

♥ Q76

♥ A984

♦ 10

♦ 63

♣ 107

♣ AJ65

♠ 4

♥ KJ10532

♦ AKJ2

♣ 82

A sacrifice at adverse vulnerability is rare, but if North opens a weak Two Diamonds, South may find the save here. West can make Four Spades even if the defence find a heart ruff. The club Jack will eventually provide a discard for his other heart loser.

If North passes it may be East who declares after a transfer. In practice, East will also make Four Spades, because a diamond lead is probable. To ensure a ruff North plays a suit preference nine under the lead. Some will play the Queen but on another layout that would cost a diamond trick. The nine should be clear enough.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	4	1	-	-
S	1	4	1	-	-
E	-	-	-	3	1
W	-	-	-	4	1

=====

Board 22

♠ Q74
♥ QJ953
♦ 6543
♣ 2

Dealer E
Vul: E-W

♠ KJ853
♥ A2
♦ J
♣ QJ754

♠ A109
♥ 64
♦ K108
♣ AK983

♠ 62
♥ K1087
♦ AQ972
♣ 106

I think the East hand is too good to open a weak INT. I know it is only 14 points, but I have seen worse sixteen counts. Those who open INT regardless are likely to end up in a making Four Spades- INT-2♥-2♠-3♣-3♠-4♠. They will make 10, 11 or 12 tricks depending on the trump guess and whether the defence establish a heart trick before there is a discard on diamonds.

Those who open One Club may end up in Six Clubs. Unless the defence are helpful, the slam will depend on finding the Queen of Spades. How do you do that?

- If you can get a count on the hand, you play the hand with longer spades for the Queen. Lucky.
- Or, you may play for the lie of the cards where you can pick up Qxxx without losing to the singleton Queen offside. Unlucky.
- Eeny, meeny, miny, mo.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	2	1	-	-
S	-	2	1	-	-
E	6	-	-	5	5
W	6	-	-	5	5

=====

Board 23

♠ 9
♥ J102
♦ A64
♣ AK8432

Dealer S
Vul: Both

♠ QJ642
♥ KQ643
♦ J105
♣

♠ 107
♥ 75
♦ KQ82
♣ Q10965

♠ AK853
♥ A98
♦ 973
♣ J7

An opening bid opposite an opening bid makes a game doesn't it?

Not always. And those who bid 3NT risk a greedy double from defenders who have been paying attention and realise that suits aren't breaking, and their cards are well placed. For example, 1♠-2♣-2♠-3♦-3NT is an auction on which either East or West may double.

If North deduces the misfit early enough, he may bale out in 2NT or Three Clubs; minus 100 should be an OK result.

The way for East-West to score badly is to butt into their auction. That may happen if South opens 1NT and West bids a "Landy" Two Clubs (both majors). Right shape, wrong cards (quacks), wrong vulnerability.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	-	-	-	-
S	2	-	-	-	1
E	-	1	-	-	-
W	-	1	1	1	-

=====

Board 24

♠ AK10764
♥ 1042
♦ QJ3
♣ 7

Dealer W
Vul: None

♠ Q982
♥ AQ65
♦ A5
♣ 962

♠ 53
♥ K973
♦ 10984
♣ AKJ

♠ J
♥ J8
♦ K762
♣ Q108543

West opens a 12/14 INT and North overcalls Two Spades. What should East do? Those who use Lebensohl (either an immediate or a slow Three Spades shows four hearts and no stopper) will have overbid to a hopeless game.

What would East's double of Two Spades mean? I hope your partnership is on the same page. I prefer a take-out double, some play balance of points, some play penalty doubles which makes bidding this East hand very difficult.

If West declares Three Hearts, North starts with three rounds of spades. West's safest play (a bad trump break is more likely when spades are 6/1) is to pitch from dummy as South ruffs. Win the next trick and draw trump, losing only a diamond; the club Jack is discarded on the Spade Queen.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	1	-
S	-	-	-	1	-
E	-	1	3	-	2
W	-	1	3	-	2

=====

Board 25

♠ Q10762
♥ K9
♦ 8654
♣ 83

Dealer N
Vul: E-W

♠ A853
♥ 1064
♦ Q2
♣ Q976

♠ 94
♥ A732
♦ J103
♣ AJ105

♠ KJ
♥ QJ85
♦ AK97
♣ K42

North-South may bid unopposed Pass-1♦-1♠-INT-2♦-Pass. This should make nine tricks, losing only a trick in each suit for plus 110.

Those who play a strong INT opener may be on a winner here. North transfers to spades and passes. The same nine tricks as in diamonds can be made, but this time for plus 140.

At a different vulnerability East might protect when North passes Two Spades. Here it would be out of the 140-degree frying pan and into the 200-degree furnace.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	3	1	3	1
S	-	3	1	3	1
E	1	-	-	-	-
W	1	-	-	-	-

=====

Board 26

♠ AQ6
♥ A2
♦ Q10872
♣ 954

Dealer E
Vul: Both

♠ 94
♥ KJ10753
♦ J93
♣ J3

♠ 102
♥ 9864
♦ K
♣ AQ10872

♠ KJ8753
♥ Q
♦ A654
♣ K6

This is not a slam I would be proud of bidding. However, twelve tricks are unbeatable, perhaps inevitable. Club Ace onside and a miracle in diamonds.

If unopposed, 1♠-2♦-3♦-4♠-Pass.

If East sticks in a club bid, that shouldn't derail North-South. It may even encourage South to overbid, knowing that his club King is likely to be working. That could be the last thing that East intended.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	6	-	6	6
S	-	6	-	6	6
E	2	-	2	-	-
W	2	-	2	-	-

=====

Board 27

♠ 95
♥ 1094
♦ AK1097
♣ QJ10

Dealer S
Vul: None

♠ AQ632
♥ K3
♦ 853
♣ K32

♠ K1084
♥ A765
♦ Q2
♣ 765

♠ J7
♥ QJ82
♦ J64
♣ A984

Another open One Spade or INT dilemma. How should these be resolved?

I think that if you are comfortable rebidding Two Spades over partner's two-level response, open One Spade. If your suit is not so robust, open INT.

Although the pips are poor, West's suit is good enough for One Spade. That should lead to plus 140 in a spade partial rather than plus 90 in INT. Perhaps plus 120 in INT if the defence don't untangle their five diamond tricks soon enough. Leading the King for unblock or count would work here.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	1	-	-	-
S	1	1	-	-	-
E	-	-	-	3	1
W	-	-	-	3	1

=====

Board 28

♠ J
♥ Q1084
♦ 863
♣ AKJ75

Dealer W
Vul: N-S

♠ A9642
♥ K953
♦ 10
♣ 1098

♠ Q87
♥ J76
♦ AJ54
♣ Q32

♠ K1053
♥ A2
♦ KQ972
♣ 64

At teams it can be right to risk a 23-count 3NT with two possible sources of tricks. At match points you want better than 50% odds to be in a game that most of the field will not bid. Just score an overtrick in everyone's part score and don't risk the zero by being the hero.

2NT is never a favourite contract but there are many roads that will lead there. Maybe 1♣-1♦-1♥-2NT-Pass will be the most popular.

If North passes, the sounder diamond part score can be reached by Pass-1♦-2♣-2♦-2♥-2NT-3♦-Pass. Note that North's Two Hearts and Three Diamond bids would have been Game Forcing if he had not passed as dealer.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	3	4	1	1	2
S	3	4	1	1	1
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

=====

I hope you enjoyed the hands and the commentary. My apologies for the mistakes or if I overlooked the brilliancy you found at the table. Iain Sime

Board 29

♠ A6
♥ AQ4
♦ A8632
♣ K63

Dealer N
Vul: Both

♠ Q10953
♥
♦ KQ1094
♣ 1074

♠ KJ874
♥ 10862
♦ 75
♣ A5

♠ 2
♥ KJ9753
♦ J
♣ QJ982

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	4	-	6	-	2
S	5	-	6	-	2
E	-	-	-	4	-
W	-	-	-	4	-

=====

Board 30

♠ 86
♥ KQ104
♦ Q9654
♣ 72

Dealer E
Vul: None

♠ AKQJ93
♥ 976
♦ A10
♣ Q9

♠ 1052
♥ J532
♦ 83
♣ AJ85

♠ 74
♥ A8
♦ KJ72
♣ K10643

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	3	-	-	-
S	1	3	-	-	-
E	-	-	-	2	2
W	-	-	-	2	2

=====

Board 31

♠ AQ96
♥ Q62
♦ K102
♣ A86

Dealer S
Vul: N-S

♠ 10743
♥ 843
♦ 64
♣ Q952

♠ J852
♥ K75
♦ AJ8
♣ KJ10

♠ K
♥ AJ109
♦ Q9753
♣ 743

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	3	5	5	2	4
S	3	5	5	2	4
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

=====

Board 32

♠ Q42
♥ J965
♦ A
♣ QJ843

Dealer W
Vul: E-W

♠ 9863
♥ Q4
♦ KJ42
♣ K96

♠ KJ5
♥ AK1083
♦ Q875
♣ 10

♠ A107
♥ 72
♦ 10963
♣ A752

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	-	-	-	-
S	2	-	-	-	-
E	-	3	2	1	1
W	-	3	2	1	1

=====

Board 33

♠ Q43
♥ J1032
♦ Q9
♣ Q1075

Dealer N
Vul: None

♠ 985
♥ A765
♦ 754
♣ 843

♠ A107
♥ KQ8
♦ J10863
♣ Aj

♠ KJ62
♥ 94
♦ AK2
♣ K962

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	3	-	1	2	2
S	3	-	1	2	2
E	-	1	-	-	-
W	-	1	-	-	-

=====

Board 34

♠ 75
♥ 2
♦ 1072
♣ AK107632

Dealer E
Vul: N-S

♠ AJ10932
♥ Q53
♦ J43
♣ 9

♠ 6
♥ AJ864
♦ AK986
♣ 54

♠ KQ84
♥ K1097
♦ Q5
♣ QJ8

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	-	-	-	-
S	2	-	-	-	-
E	-	4	4	3	-
W	-	4	4	3	-

=====

Board 35

♠ Dealer S

♥ 10763

Vul: E-W

♦ Q32

♣ AKQ1084

♠ 942

♠ Q1087

♥ AQ542

♥ J

♦ AJ964

♦ K75

♣

♣ 76532

♠ AKJ653

♥ K98

♦ 108

♣ J9

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	-	-	-	-
S	2	-	-	-	-
E	-	3	1	-	-
W	-	3	1	1	-

=====

Board 36

♠ Q109

Dealer W

♥ J1098654

Vul: Both

♦ 10

♣ AJ

♠ AKJ2

♠ 53

♥ AK3

♥ Q7

♦ 74

♦ 9532

♣ 7654

♣ 109832

♠ 8764

♥ 2

♦ AKQJ86

♣ KQ

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	2	1	3	2
S	-	2	1	3	2
E	2	-	-	-	-
W	2	-	-	-	-

=====