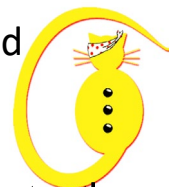


ECatsBridge Simultaneous Pairs for Children in Need

Tuesday 7th November 2023



Together we can ...

... and by competing in this Simultaneous Pairs you have once again certainly shown that **together we can indeed do something to help make a difference** to children who really need our help. Over the past years we (well you) have helped raise an amazing **£1,277,280.68 ...** hopefully we will be a good bit more to that this year!

Thank you so so much for coming along and joining in, playing and donating – please don't forget the donating bit though, will you – just go to :

<https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/donations.asp>

and you will see how you can do it – if you haven't already done so of course!

Our thanks, as always, go to our commentators: Mark Horton for his words of wisdom on Monday and Friday, Brian Senior did the analysis for the Thursday session and Julian Pottage completes the crew, writing up the Tuesday and Wednesday events. It's always interesting to see if they got it right but you will have discovered that by now of course !

With very best wishes

Anna & Mark – the ECatsBridge Team

Board 1 ♠ 9 Dealer N
 ♥ J4 Vul: None
 ♦ 108754
 ♣ QJ1082

♠ J10763	♠ K854
♥ K10976	♥ Q832
♦ K2	♦ J3
♣ 9	♣ 763

♠ AQ2
 ♥ A5
 ♦ AQ96
 ♣ AK54

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	2♣
2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
All Pass			

With 23 HCP South opens 2♣ intending to rebid 2NT. If the East-West methods include a conventional way to show both majors, West might use it; if not, a 2♥ overcall seems reasonable – West would prefer a heart lead to a spade lead. Aware that North-South almost certainly have game on, East raises the hearts. South's pass over 3♥ suggests a balanced hand. North's 4NT is an unusual application of the unusual no-trump but I do not see what else it could be.

A heart lead is likely to hold a club (or diamond) contract to 11 tricks. Declarer

would need to finesse the ♠Q (and so risk going down) to make 12 tricks.

In 3NT on a heart lead declarer should run five rounds of clubs before deciding which pointed suit finesse to take.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	6	6	-	-	3
S	6	6	-	-	3
E	-	-	1	2	-
W	-	-	1	2	-

Board 2 ♠ QJ Dealer E
 ♥ 854 Vul: N-S
 ♦ KJ985
 ♣ 1082

♠ A84	♠ 7653
♥ AQJ6	♥ K1072
♦ A7	♦ 643
♣ KQ95	♣ A3

♠ K1092
 ♥ 93
 ♦ Q102
 ♣ J764

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West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

This time West is the player with the strong balanced hand. East, holding two four-card majors, looks for a fit rather than simply raising to 3NT. In the version of 5-card Stayman with which I am most familiar, East would rebid 3♥ to deny four hearts, rebid 3♠ to show four hearts but not four spades or (as here) rebid 3NT to show four cards in each major.

East-West have nine top tricks, which is all they are sure to make if they are in 3NT. They might make one more because South has a couple of discards to find on the hearts. Perhaps North will find some way to signal for spades, which will encourage South to discard two spades, or one card in each pointed suit, rather than any clubs.

In a heart contract declarer easily makes a tenth trick, taking a ruff at some point to add to the nine top winners.

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

Board 3				
	♠	♥	♦	♣
	KQ1087	10	QJ7	KJ43
	52	KQJ5	AK54	A98
	AJ963	97632	109	Q
	4	A84	8632	107652
West	North	East	South	
1♥	1♠	2♥	4♠	
Dble	All Pass			

Playing a weak no-trump and 4-card majors West opens 1♥. Despite having only 4 HCP, the singleton spade will encourage East to find

a raise. South has good spade support and good shape – but also good defence against hearts. Maybe the raise to 4♠ is a bit too much, though if North is void in hearts then there will be very few losers. If West opened a strong INT, North-South would still find their spade fit but probably not bid game.

The defenders have four top tricks to take against a spade contract.

Looking only at the East-West cards you would expect to make nine tricks in a heart contract. You ruff a spade in the East hand, expecting to lose a spade, a diamond and two clubs. The 5-1 trump split means you do not have time to score a long diamond and lose another trick.

In a no-trump contract East-West just make their seven top winners.

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

Board 4			
	♠	♥	♦
	85	A874	9864
	Q103	J63	Q5
	J953	K974	Q5
	4	Q	AJ10732
	AJ62	K1092	K
	A1074	A1074	K
West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♣	1♦
2♣	Pass	Pass	2♦
3♣	3♦	All Pass	

With the ♠A in the East hand, 3♦ should make. Declarer just needs to use the ♥A as an entry for making the first spade lead from North. This way the only losers are one in each suit.

Although the computer says that a club contract 10 tricks, declarer is unlikely to do as well as that at the table. After a diamond lead to the ace, South can safely continue diamonds.

home either by playing up to the spades (which seems normal) or by taking two heart finesses.

The vulnerability makes it most unlikely that East-West will buy the contract. They would have two losers in spades and one in each other suit if they do declare a diamond contract.

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

Board 7			
♠	AQ107	Dealer S	
♥	AQJ93	Vul: Both	
♦	76		
♣	105		
♠	83	♠	K42
♥	104	♥	752
♦	AQ943	♦	K52
♣	K932	♣	QJ64

Board 7			
	♠	J965	
	♥	K86	
	♦	J108	
	♣	A87	
West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
Dble	3♠	All Pass	

If ever there was a hand on which you wish you had a 'two and half spades' card in the bidding box, North has it here. Fortunately, because South is a passed hand, which means North could (with a different hand) pass 1♠, the raise to 2♠ is slightly more constructive than it might be.

Once North-South find a fit, West does not want to let them play quietly at the two level. Indeed, with the ♠A in the North hand and no bad breaks, East-West can make nine tricks with either minor as trumps.

Vulnerable at teams you would want to be in 4♠ on the North-South cards. It needs very little more than the ♠K in the West hand. You do not need a 3-2 trump split because if the defenders start with three rounds of diamonds

you can discard a club. Even at matchpoints 4♠ is a fair spot. Alas, your luck is out if you bid to game, which you would if North raised 1♠ to 3♠ because South would surely go on to 4♠.

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

Board 8			
♠	97	Dealer W	
♥	J10762	Vul: None	
♦	1054		
♣	1032		
♠	K43	♠	AQJ652
♥	K5	♥	A
♦	KQJ963	♦	72
♣	A7	♣	J854
	♠	108	
	♥	Q9843	
	♦	A8	
	♣	KQ96	

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

With a 9-card spade fit and values in reserve, East-West should easily reach the spade game. Possibly their challenge is stopping at a safe level. If their hands fitted better, without West's ♥K in effect totally wasted, they could be in the slam zone.

South happens to be on lead with the ♣K-Q and will surely lead a high club against a spade contract. The defenders thus make a club as well as the ♦A. On any other lead, declarer could set up the diamonds and lose just to the ♦A.

With their shape, East-West are most unlikely to play in no-trumps. If they do, they can make 11 tricks unless West declares and North leads a club.

Makeable Contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	1	-	-
S	-	-	1	-	-
E	2	5	-	5	5
W	2	5	-	5	4

=====

Board 9	♠	K543	Dealer N
	♥	K5	Vul: E-W
	♦	K74	
	♣	K843	
♠	1097	♠	QJ8
♥	10843	♥	J976
♦	AQ9	♦	8653
♣	Q102	♣	76
	♠	A62	
	♥	AQ2	
	♦	J102	
	♣	AJ95	

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	3NT

All Pass

If North-South play a weak no-trump, the auction is likely to be a simple 1NT-3NT. If a strong no-trump is in use, North opens 1♣ and system will determine South's best response. If an inverted raise (2♣) is available, that will be an option. If you play 2NT as natural and forcing, that would be good too. If not, a 1♦ response is unlikely to do much harm.

Since either defender will probably lead a heart, it is unlikely to matter which of North and South declares. As the cards lie it works better to play on spades – but it seems normal to play on clubs first. If clubs are 3-2 with the queen onside or if you catch a singleton queen on the right side, you will have nine tricks for certain and time to guarantee a tenth by playing on diamonds.

The upshot of playing on clubs is that the defenders normally score one trick in each suit. If declarer did play on spades, this would take out East's entry and give West a difficult discard on the fourth round of spades. Making an overtrick would then be possible.

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

=====

Board 10	♠	Q76	Dealer E
	♥	J97653	Vul: Both
	♦	10	
	♣	932	
♠	A943	♠	1085
♥	2	♥	K104
♦	Q8762	♦	KJ53
♣	764	♣	J105
	♠	KJ2	
	♥	AQ8	
	♦	A94	
	♣	AKQ8	

West	North	East	South
		Pass	2♣

Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

South does whatever shows a balanced 23 points and North transfers into hearts. I do not think K-J-5-3 is a good enough holding for East to double the transfer for the lead, though I guess someone will. If you play both 3♦ and 4♦ as transfers (and so raising the completed transfer as mild slam try), North bids 4♦ over 2NT.

The normal play in trumps is low toward the queen, which would pick up the suit for no loser if East held the king either doubleton or singleton. As the cards lie, the technically inferior play of finessing East for the king and ten succeeds. You are unlikely to find this play unless you are shooting for tops or West leads a trump – this sort of layout illustrates why it is often costly to lead a singleton trump.

A no-trump contract does not play at well. On a normal diamond lead the defenders must score four diamond tricks and a spade. Because the ♠Q is an entry to dummy and the ♥Q is onside, it will not matter whether South discards what would be the thirteenth club on the diamonds.

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

=====

Board 11	♠	108	Dealer S
	♥	K2	Vul: None
	♦	K92	
	♣	AK10764	
♠	AJ973	♠	Q6
♥	QJ	♥	108653
♦	J85	♦	AQ107
♣	Q83	♣	J9
	♠	K542	
	♥	A974	
	♦	643	
	♣	52	

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	Pass	Pass
1♠	2♣	All Pass	1♥

With the queen-jack doubleton not worth a full 3 points, West is not very close to having an opening bid. A one-level overcall is, however, fine.

Since the ♦A lies over the ♦K and the ♠A lies over the ♠K, 2♣ should fail by a trick.

What might allow 2♣ to make is if West tries to give East a spade ruff. This is because declarer will be able to discard a losing diamond on the ♠K (or at trick three if West leads away from the ♠A) and later pick up the trumps for no further loss. You cash one high trump honour, felling the jack, then cross to the ♥A. After that you cash the ♠K if you have not already discarded a diamond and finesse the ♣10. Having won trick two with the ♠J, West does better to switch to a diamond, ideally the ♦J, or to safe heart.

2♠ by West fails by a trick if South scores the ♠K overruffing the third round of clubs and North scores the ♠10 via a trump promotion on the third round of hearts.

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

=====

Board 12	♠	Q1095	Dealer W
	♥	A4	Vul: N-S
	♦	J109	
	♣	9654	
♠	K87643	♠	A
♥	Q82	♥	J10963
♦	643	♦	K52
♣	Q	♣	KJ108
	♠	J2	
	♥	K75	
	♦	AQ87	
	♣	A732	

West	North	East	South
2♠	All Pass		

If East-West play weak two openings, 2♠ from West probably begins and ends the auction. Lacking a fourth heart, South is a bit light to double, especially when vulnerable. If South did double, North might bravely pass or perhaps use Lebensohl (2NT) to get out to 3♣ (which would be one down with the ♦K onside but trumps 4-1).

With the ♦A offside and East's club values wasted facing West's singleton, a spade contract does not go too well. Declarer makes just four tricks and one in hearts to go three down in 2♠.

2NT is the best spot if North-South declare. Getting there is tricky. South does not have even half a spade stopper. A heart lead would work best, enabling the defenders to make five tricks (typically two tricks in spades and three in hearts). On a spade lead, declarer would have time to knockout the ♠A-K and finesse in diamonds to make nine tricks.

East-West stand a chance of making eight tricks if they manage to declare a heart contract. If South leads the ♣A or gets in at trick two with that card having led the ♠J, it will be necessary to put North in with the ♥A for a diamond switch to stop the eighth trick.

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

=====

Board 13	♠ K83	Dealer N
	♥ J543	Vul: Both
	♦ Q	
	♣ K9543	
♠ 952		♠ J106
♥ A987		♥ Q1062
♦ K95		♦ J102
♣ AQ10		♣ 762
	♠ AQ74	
	♥ K	
	♦ A87643	
	♣ J8	

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	INT	Pass	2♦
All Pass			

Vulnerable and facing a passed partner, a takeout double of 1♦ by West would be unwise. At matchpoints it is tempting for South to pass INT. The contraindication to doing so is the weak diamond suit, which will take time to set up in a no-trump contract.

The layout is friendly for declarer in a diamond contract. With both pointed suits breaking 3-3 and the ♣A onside, nine tricks are available.

Even if East leads the unbid club suit, INT by North should fail. Declarer makes just one trick in each minor and four in spades while the defenders can make four tricks in hearts, two in clubs and at least one in diamonds.

How East-West fare in a heart contract depends in part on how many diamond ruffs North scores. If North scores two ruffs, even 1♥ would fail. If North scores zero or one ruff, 1♥ could make.

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

=====

Board 14	♠ QJ3	Dealer E
	♥ AJ107	Vul: None
	♦ 742	
	♣ 864	
♠ AK107		♠ 86542
♥ K54		♥ 9862
♦ Q85		♦ K
♣ KJ10		♣ Q32
	♠ 9	
	♥ Q3	
	♦ AJ10963	
	♣ A975	

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♦
INT	Pass	2♣	2♦
2♠	3♦	3♠	All Pass

After South opens 1♦, West has a pretty much textbook INT overcall. Although the diamond stopper is not the best, the 4333 shape strongly suggests the INT overcall rather than a double. North, who is not quite strong enough to double, passes. With a weak hand and both majors, East uses Stayman. When the 5-4 spade fit comes to light, East reasonably competes to 3♠ over 3♦.

As it happens the cards do not lie well for a spade contract. With trumps 3-1 and the ♥A unexpectedly offside, there are six losers. Still, losing 100 is cheaper than conceding 110 or more in diamonds.

With the ♥K onside, and nothing horrible happening in the trump suit, 3♦ makes easily. West does best to cash one top spade and switch, ideally to a club, though any card lower than a six will do. If West were to switch to a heart, it would be necessary to lead a second heart when in with the ♦Q to cut declarer off from a possible fourth heart winner.

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

=====

Board 17	♠ 86	Dealer N
	♥ QJ932	Vul: None
	♦ 1095	
	♣ 1043	
♠ AKJ7532		♠ 1094
♥ 65		♥ A1084
♦ J83		♦ K64
♣ K		♣ Q65
	♠ Q	
	♥ K7	
	♦ AQ72	
	♣ AJ9872	

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♣
1♠	Pass	2♠	3♣
3♠	All Pass		

Facing a passed hand West could pre-empt as game is unlikely – but with the spade suit one has less reason to try to disrupt the opponents.

Holding the queen-jack-nine sequence North might reasonably lead a heart even though South has bid clubs. Here a heart lead (or a diamond lead and a heart switch) enables the defenders to make a trick in hearts as well as two in diamonds and one in clubs. This restricts a spade contract to nine tricks.

Since the spade suit is running and they have all other suits stopped, East-West can make 3NT – but it seems impossible for them to get there.

Although entries to dummy are problematic, South can escape for one down in 4♣, losing just one trick in each suit. If you ruff the second club, cash the ♣A and get to win the next trick with the ♣J, you need to knock out the ♣Q or duck a diamond – if you were to play the ♥K, East could hold up the ♥A and shut you out of dummy.

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

=====

Board 18	♠ A932	Dealer E
	♥ A2	Vul: N-S
	♦ 753	
	♣ K972	
♠ J8		♠ K654
♥ KJ9		♥ 1087654
♦ KQ62		♦ J
♣ AJ64		♣ Q10
	♠ Q107	
	♥ Q3	
	♦ A10984	
	♣ 853	

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
INT	Pass	2♥	All Pass

Playing a weak no-trump, West is too strong to open INT and opens 1♦ (or 1♣). Whether East should try for game facing 15-17 is debatable. West is minimum and would incline an invitation in any case.

If East-West are playing a strong no-trump, West opens INT and East transfers into hearts, again possibly inviting game.

If South is on lead against a heart contract and starts with a club, the defenders make a trick in each suit. Without a lead through the ♣A, declarer could knock out the ♦A and avoid a club loser. In the heart suit it is normal to finesse South for the queen.

If West is in INT, a spade or a diamond lead should stop any overtricks.

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

=====

Board 19 ♠ A6 Dealer S
 ♥ J1042 Vul: E-W
 ♦ Q92
 ♣ J975

♠ J7 ♠ K109852
 ♥ 985 ♥ A763
 ♦ K8 ♦ 63
 ♣ AKQ1042 ♣ 6

 ♠ Q43
 ♥ KQ
 ♦ AJ10754
 ♣ 83

West	North	East	South
			1♦
2♣	2♦	2♠	3♦
All Pass			

North has a tricky decision after West's overcall. Doubling for takeout is not all that attractive with a doubleton spade. If North did double, it is less clear that North-South would manage to compete to 3♦.

With the ♦K offside, 3♦ should fail by a trick. One way for the defenders to get their tricks is for West to cash two clubs and switch to a spade.

East-West might score better if they push on to 3♠ and guess well. If South leads the ♥K, declarer does best to win at once, which has the effect of blocking the hearts. Then the way forward is to cross to dummy with a club, optionally discard a loser on a club and then play a spade to the king. As South opened the bidding, it is far from obvious to put up the ♠K. If, as seems more likely, declarer finesses the ♠J, the defenders have various ways to take five tricks. The simplest of these is for South to cash the ♥K next.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 20 ♠ A1086 Dealer W
 ♥ 97 Vul: Both
 ♦ QJ5
 ♣ 10654

♠ J ♠ KQ973
 ♥ Q4 ♥ AKJ53
 ♦ K108764 ♦ A
 ♣ K873 ♣ QJ

 ♠ 542
 ♥ 10862
 ♦ 932
 ♣ A92

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Even though West is a passed hand, East's 2♥ rebid should still be forcing. After West rebids 2NT, East might continue with 3♥ if that is definitely forcing. I have suggested that East bids 3♣ (fourth suit forcing) to avoid any danger of being left in 3♥.

As East-West have no eight-card fit anywhere, they are likely to finish in 3NT. The defenders have various ways to secure three defensive tricks. Even if they do not make the theoretically optimal way to secure them, declarer may fail to take advantage. If for example North leads a club and South returns the suit, declarer would need to cash five rounds of hearts, leaving the diamonds blocked, to squeeze North for eleven tricks.

Making eleven tricks is easier with hearts as trumps. The defenders just make their two aces, communications being less of a problem for declarer.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 21 ♠ 97 Dealer N
 ♥ AK853 Vul: N-S
 ♦ A5
 ♣ KQ52

♠ A3 ♥ 62 ♦ Q62 ♣ A109643	♠ 864 ♥ J74 ♦ KJ10743 ♣ J
------------------------------------	------------------------------------

♠ KQJ1052 ♥ Q109 ♦ 98 ♣ 87	
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West	North	East	South
1♣	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
All Pass			

West scrapes up 1♣ opening. Without four spades, a heart stopper or club support, East does not have a convenient bid over 1♥. South has heart support but also a great spade suit, a suit surely worth showing. North, who had the values for a INT overcall but a slightly odd shape, shows both the extra strength and the club cover by jumping to 2NT. South then shows the heart support. At IMPs North would surely carry on to game – but the reward for bidding game is not so great at matchpoints.

How do the defenders take four tricks against a heart contract? It is not good enough for East to lead the singleton ♣J and West to return a club. If that happens, declarer draws the remaining trumps in two rounds, discards a diamond from dummy on a top club and knocks out the ♠A. Instead West needs to switch to a diamond or somehow East leads a diamond initially.

West would be likely to lead a diamond against a spade contract by South making it easier for the defenders to score four tricks. The ♣A followed by a club ruff would also be good enough.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 22 ♠ KQ109 Dealer E
 ♥ A2 Vul: E-W
 ♦ 10985
 ♣ 1073

♠ J753 ♥ Q8743 ♦ KQ4 ♣ K	♠ A6 ♥ J10 ♦ J7632 ♣ QJ86
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♠ 842 ♥ K965 ♦ A ♣ A9542	
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West	North	East	South
1♥	Dble	Pass	1♣
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

While it would not be impossible for this deal to be a pass-out, I doubt that will happen at many tables. The player most likely to open the bidding is South, who is non-vulnerable and whose singleton is the ace and so still has a reasonable value despite being in a short suit.

After West's 1♥ overcall it is common to play that 1♠ by North shows five spades while double shows four, hence the double. South's 1♣ thus merely shows tolerance for spades.

2♠ is a good contract North-South on the 4-3 fit. Indeed, unless the defenders start with two rounds of trumps, declarer might ruff two diamonds in the South hand for an overtrick.

The alternative contract of 3♣ could make exactly, with three trumps and the ♠A to lose. It might fail if declarer twice plays up to the ♠K-Q, East having ducked the first round smoothly.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 23 ♠ 106 Dealer S
 ♥ J83 Vul: Both
 ♦ AQ10986
 ♣ K2

♠ A943 ♠ K872
 ♥ K9754 ♥ AQ6
 ♦ 72 ♦ 43
 ♣ 95 ♣ A1064

 ♠ QJ5
 ♥ 102
 ♦ KJ5
 ♣ QJ873

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♦	Dble	2♣
2♥	Pass	Pass	3♦
3♥	All Pass		

North in my view is a little bit flat to open 3♦ in third seat vulnerable. East has an easy double and West, with five hearts and some values, feels comfortable about competing to 3♥.

The final contract should be the same if North did open 3♦ as East is just worth a takeout double and West is not too strong for a simple 3♥.

The play in a heart contract is straightforward, or at any rate it is with both major suits 3-2. Declarer loses one trick in each black suit and two in diamonds.

Even in a spade contract the defenders would not need to take their two diamond tricks straight away because South has a doubleton heart and can interrupt the run of the heart suit before declarer discards anything.

3♦ would fail by a trick with five top losers.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 24 ♠ 97542 Dealer W
 ♥ J64 Vul: None
 ♦ AKJ
 ♣ 98

♠ 3 ♠ J10
 ♥ KQ3 ♥ A875
 ♦ 75432 ♦ Q86
 ♣ Q1076 ♣ A542

 ♠ AKQ86
 ♥ 1092
 ♦ 109
 ♣ KJ3

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

As on board 7, North would like to have a 'two and a half spades' card in the bidding box. Although having five-card support is good, the rest of the shape is poor and the ♥J may be worthless. South needs to exercise discipline in passing 3♠: this hand has little distributional strength either.

If the defenders cash three heart tricks, declarer will need to judge to play East for the ♣A rather than the ♣Q. The theory of 'split aces' does not work here.

If West starts with a club and East returns the suit, declarer obviously can make nine tricks – but trying to make ten by finessing either the ♣J or the ♦J results in making only eight.

Since North-South have the boss suit, East-West are unlikely to buy the contract. If they do, they are likely to lose a ruff somewhere (in diamonds if some other suit is trumps) as well as a spade, two top diamonds and a club.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 27 ♠ Q1032 Dealer S
 ♥ K7 Vul: None
 ♦ AQ8
 ♣ A1053

♠ J98 ♠ K54
 ♥ AQ1052 ♥ 984
 ♦ J93 ♦ K542
 ♣ QJ ♣ K94

 ♠ A76
 ♥ J63
 ♦ 1076
 ♣ 8762

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	2♠
All Pass			

Playing a weak no-trump and four-card majors, North opens 1♠. With five decent hearts West makes a protective 2♥ overcall. South, despite being very flat, competes to 2♠. The hand's flat shape and the knowledge that West could not open dissuade East from competing further.

West's initial pass (with the ♥A-Q) should help declarer in 2♠ to take the winning view in the spade suit, using the ♠A as an entry for finessing the ♠10. It is possible to reach dummy again with the fourth round of clubs to take the diamond finesse – though in practice East will often run out of exit cards and have to lead a diamond when in with the ♣K.

If North-South play a strong no-trump, North might buy the contract in INT. The lead of low card in any suit other than diamonds should defeat INT. Perhaps the poor spot cards in the diamond suit will warn East to forget about 'fourth highest of your longest and strongest'. Even after a diamond lead, declarer might go wrong by playing West for the ♠K. With West has declarer, 2♥ is makeable. The defenders cannot readily score more than one trick in diamonds to go with two in spades and one trick in each rounded suit.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 28 ♠ Q8 Dealer W
 ♥ Vul: N-S
 ♦ J10542
 ♣ A98763

♠ 9652 ♠ K74
 ♥ AK93 ♥ 10854
 ♦ Q8763 ♦ A9
 ♣ ♣ Q1054

 ♠ AJ103
 ♥ QJ762
 ♦ K
 ♣ KJ2

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	INT	All Pass	

In response to South's 1♥ opening North is too weak to bid a new suit at the two level and so makes the INT 'dustbin bid' response. South has no reason to disturb this: North would have responded 1♠ if holding four spades.

With hearts bid but clubs unbid, East is quite likely to lead a club against INT. Declarer can win cheaply and does best to finesse the ♣J at trick two - leading the ♠Q to finesse in spades instead does not work so well. Sooner or later the defenders will be stuck for safe leads and eight tricks may well result.

North-South do far better in a club contract. Declarer can escape for one loser in diamonds and one in clubs by ruffing two diamonds in the South hand and taking the spade finesse. While it might seem that taking two ruffs in the South hand will leave East with two trump winners, an endplay can transform two losers into one.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 29 ♠ J1075 Dealer N
 ♥ AQ3 Vul: Both
 ♦ Q
 ♣ K7432

♠ 43 ♠ KQ986
 ♥ K1086 ♥ J97
 ♦ 7543 ♦ AK106
 ♣ AJ5 ♣ 8

♠ A2
 ♥ 542
 ♦ J982
 ♣ Q1096

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	1♠	2♣
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	3♣
All Pass			

East has a sound overcall and support for all suits apart from clubs, which the second-round double conveys quite well. As the diamonds are so much better than the hearts, I would not mind 2♦ as East's reopening action instead. With their nine-card club fit, one of North or South needs to take the push to 3♣.

If East gets the defenders off to the best start by cashing a top diamond and switching passively to a heart, declarer will be doing well to emerge with nine tricks. The route there is to knock out the ♣A, finesse West for the ♣J (not so far fetched as East made a takeout double of clubs) and exit with the third round of hearts. Eventually East has to make a losing lead, either setting up dummy's ♦J or a spade trick for North.

Despite the 4-1 break, East-West can make 2♦. They lose two tricks in each red suit and the ♠A.

West might make 2♥ – but only with an inspired view in the spade suit if the defenders are on their toes.

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

Board 30 ♠ KJ4 Dealer E
 ♥ Q86 Vul: None
 ♦ AQJ84
 ♣ 63

♠ Q865 ♠ A3
 ♥ J743 ♥ AK1095
 ♦ 65 ♦ 97
 ♣ A82 ♣ K1097

♠ 10972
 ♥ 2
 ♦ K1032
 ♣ QJ54

West	North	East	South
		1♥	Pass
2♥	3♦	3♥	All Pass

For a three level overcall North would really like to have a six-card suit – but letting the opponents play quietly in 2♥ (if that is their plan) is unlikely to result in a good score – and North is certainly happy to attract a diamond lead against a heart contract. With their nine-card heart fit, East-West take the push to 3♥.

In a heart contract, since West can ruff the fourth round of clubs if need be, declarer's only (albeit significant) concern is playing the trumps without loss. Given the known diamond length already in the North hand, I do not see why declarer would expect to find three trumps there as well – so cashing the ace-king is normal. This does not necessarily mean going down, however. If South did not win the second round of diamonds and switch to a spade, North could be vulnerable to an endplay, forced to open up the spades or give a ruff and discard.

With trumps 2-2 and the ♠Q onside, a diamond contract plays well for North-South with nine tricks available.

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

