

The ECatsBridge Summer Pairs Wednesday 5th July 2023



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.

Our thanks go to the commentators for the event – Julian Pottage for the Monday and Wednesday commentaries, Mark Horton did the ones for Tuesday and Thursday and Mark Mortimer wrote the Friday commentary ... and by now you will know if they got it right!

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	♠ K4	Dealer N
	♥ KJ85	Vul: None
	♦ 742	
	♣ J954	
♠ Q8732		♠ J65
♥ 72		♥ 943
♦ AK108		♦ Q3
♣ Q10		♣ K7632
	♠ A109	
	♥ AQ106	
	♦ J965	
	♣ A8	

Makeable Contracts

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

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

Playing a weak no-trump and four-card majors, South opens 1♥. North is maximum for the raise to 2♥ and happily competes to 3♥. South, with a balanced hand, should not be the one to take the bidding to the three level.

If North-South are playing a strong no-trump, South opens INT. Then West might overcall 2♠ to show spades and a minor. North doubles that for takeout and should pass South's 3♥.

In defending a heart contract, the defenders might crash honours in the diamond suit, particularly if they are playing reverse signals (the ♦3 being low). Fortunately, since East can ruff the third round with a worthless trump, that does not matter.

If East-West play in a spade contract, it will be natural for declarer to take the winning view in spades, starting low from hand. This is partly because entries to hand are easier to come by and partly because if you ruff a diamond in dummy, you cannot avoid three trump losers if South holds a doubleton honour. Going one down, even doubled, in 3♠ would be cheaper than conceding 140.

Board 2	♠ K2	Dealer E
	♥ A10	Vul: N-S
	♦ A8732	
	♣ KQ95	
♠ J109843		♠ Q765
♥ J		♥ K862
♦ 64		♦ J95
♣ 8762		♣ Aj
	♠ A	
	♥ Q97543	
	♦ KQ10	
	♣ 1043	

Makeable Contracts

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

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
2♠	Dble	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass	All Pass	

West has a very weak hand but at favourable vulnerability and facing a passed hand (when you know the opponents have game on), it pays to make life difficult for the opponents, which a weak jump overall often does.

North, with rather a moderate diamond suit, decides to double 2♠ rather than bidding 3♦. East, holding four-card spade support and aware of the vulnerability, jumps to 4♠ rather than waiting for North-South to decide on their own best contract. North has little choice but to take the money by doubling 4♠.

If North leads the ♥A against 4♠ doubled, a diamond switch will be essential to ensure a two-trick set. This should not be too hard to find. What would South have for a vulnerable opening bid without the ♦K? Indeed North should probably switch to a low diamond in case South has a doubleton king or king-queen doubleton. The spotlight will be in North again if declarer tackles the trump suit from hand. Partly because declarer would have finessed if holding the ♠A and partly because South needs the ♠A for the opening bid, North should duck. The penalty is thus 500 – inadequate recompense for a vulnerable game but better than 300 anyway.

If South plays in a heart contract, the appearance of the ♥J on the first round makes it easy to play the trumps for one loser. To make 11 tricks declarer does not need to guess to drop the ♣J offside since one club can go away on the ♠K.

Board 3	♠ K92	Dealer S
	♥ AK8	Vul: E-W
	♦ J842	
	♣ AK7	
♠ A1083		♠ QJ654
♥ J32		♥ 965
♦ 75		♦ 109
♣ 10632		♣ Q94
	♠ 7	
	♥ Q1074	
	♦ AKQ63	
	♣ J85	

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

West	North	East	South
		1♦	
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♦
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♠
Pass	6♦	All Pass	

System will determine the correct response to 1♦ on the North cards. Here I have assumed that 2NT is forcing, perhaps 16+. If you do not play that, North might make a 2♦ inverted raise if that is available, or perhaps invent 2♣ if no more natural forcing response is in the partnership's armoury. When South shows a rebiddable suit, North can reasonably envisage a slam. South's 4♠ is a cue bid and then 5♠ in response to the key card enquiry shows two key cards (the ♦A and the ♦K) as well as the ♦Q.

As the cards lie, 6NT and 6♦ are both on. 6♦ is the safer slam since you can normally avoid a club loser either if West has the ♠A or the ♥J falls in three rounds. In the former case you discard a club from the South hand on the ♠K and in the latter case you discard a club from dummy on the fourth heart.

In 6NT, since you cannot ruff the third round of clubs in a no-trump contract, you need more than one suit to lie well. If the ♠A is onside and the hearts play for four tricks, that will do it. If West has the ♠A but the hearts do not produce four tricks, you might get home if the ♣Q falls doubleton or if you can squeeze a defender in hearts and clubs. I am going to stick my neck out here and predict that North-South will score above average for bidding and making 6♦.

Board 4 ♠ K10 Dealer W
 ♥ AK10853 Vul: Bo10h
 ♦ 1065
 ♣ 106

♠ J7 ♠ AQ654
 ♥ J64 ♥ Q9
 ♦ 93 ♦ A742
 ♣ KJ9753 ♣ Q8

♠ 9832
 ♥ 72
 ♦ KQJ8
 ♣ A42

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

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

With a chunky four-card diamond suit, 2♦ seems the best action for South after East's 1♠ overcall. If no-trumps is right, it probably plays better from the North seat. Double would be my second choice, and possibly first choice for those playing a strong no-trump opening.

If East leads the ♣Q against 2♥ and declarer withholds dummy's ♣A, West does best to overtake with the ♣K and switch to a spade. If West does not overtake and East continues clubs, declarer can score an overtrick by finessing the ♥10; West cannot get in to lead a spade through – and it does not help East to hold up the ♦A. East can avoid this by switching to a diamond at trick two. Declarer cannot then safely duck/finesse a trump to East because West would score a diamond ruff, which would defeat 2♥.

Because West has long clubs but no definite entry and because West has a spade honour, you can make eight tricks in no-trumps – but you would not fancy a no-trump contract looking only at the North-South cards.

If West becomes declarer in a club contract, it is possible but not certain to make eight tricks even if North starts with three rounds of

hearts. You need to guess who holds the ten of clubs. Since North has it, you do best to ruff low in dummy. If, however, South held the ♣10, you would want to ruff with dummy's ♣Q and then finesse.

Board 5 ♠ J103 Dealer N
 ♥ Q5 Vul: N-S
 ♦ 105
 ♣ J109732

♠ 854 ♠ Q7
 ♥ KJ6 ♥ A9873
 ♦ Q986 ♦ KJ742
 ♣ K64 ♣ 5

♠ AK962
 ♥ 1042
 ♦ A3
 ♣ AQ8

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

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

Being non-vulnerable, East might venture a 1♥ opening – the reason for the pass is that the doubleton ♠Q is not pulling full weight. After two passes follow South's 1♠ opening, East has a further decision – whether to show two suits at once with a 2♠ cue bid or whether to hope to buy the contract in 2♥, knowing that it is likely to be possible to show the diamonds later.

Some people will open a strong no-trump on the South hand and then compete to 2♠ after East overcalls 2♥. Not everyone playing a strong no-trump would open INT with the South cards because some will decide that 17 points and a reasonable five-card suit makes the hand a little bit too good.

Defeating 3♠ is not easy. West needs to find an opening diamond lead for a start. Then, after

declarer wins with the $\heartsuit A$ and leads a low heart, West needs to duck. As East has bid hearts, perhaps that is not such a difficult play to find. After coming in with the $\heartsuit A$, East can then switch to the singleton club. This enables the defenders to score a club ruff as well as two hearts and a diamond.

If East-West declare, they can make nine tricks with either red suit as trumps by dropping the $\heartsuit Q$ doubleton offside (or by taking a backward finesse – running the $\heartsuit J$ and then the $\heartsuit 9$). Maybe declarer could manage to do this if South has shows 15-17 and has already turned up with the $\spadesuit A-K$ and both minor suit aces. If, as illustrated, South has opened 1 \spadesuit , I do not see why declarer would find this.

Board 6 \spadesuit A95 Dealer E
 \heartsuit Q542 Vul: E-W
 \diamonds Q754
 \clubsuit 64

\spadesuit J108763 \heartsuit 9 \diamonds AKJ9 \clubsuit J3	\spadesuit K4 \heartsuit KJ1076 \diamonds 3 \clubsuit AKQ107
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\spadesuit Q2 \heartsuit A83 \diamonds 10862 \clubsuit 9852	
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Makeable Contracts

	\clubsuit	\diamonds	\heartsuit	\spadesuit	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	3	4	4	4
W	4	3	4	4	4

=====

West	North	East	South
1 \spadesuit	Pass	1 \heartsuit	Pass
2NT	Pass	2 \clubsuit	Pass
		3NT	All Pass

With diamonds very well held and a modest six-card spade suit, West is likely to prefer a 2NT rebid to showing the spades again. Possibly it is a bit more attractive to rebid the spades if you play weak jump shifts, when a 2 \spadesuit rebid would be constructive. I cannot see much point in playing a 2 \spadesuit response to a 1 \heartsuit opening as pre-emptive – why pre-empt when your side has both majors?

Even if you do not get a helpful lead into the diamond tenace, you can make an overtrick in 3NT by knocking the ace and queen of hearts and guessing correctly in spades.

Making ten tricks with spades as trumps is fairly straightforward: just the $\heartsuit A$ and two trumps to lose. Indeed, if you receive an opening diamond lead, you can make an overtrick in 4 \spadesuit . If you play a trump to the king, North cannot afford to go in with the ace because that would kill South's queen – and after that you can play three round of clubs to discard the $\heartsuit 9$. In fact you can also make an overtrick after scoring the $\diamonds J$ at trick one by playing three rounds of clubs immediately. After ruffing the third round, North has no effective continuation. Playing ace and another trump would prevent you from ruffing a diamond in dummy but would leave you able to cash a fourth round of clubs in peace.

Board 7 \spadesuit KJ875 Dealer S
 \heartsuit J2 Vul: Bo10h
 \diamonds K84
 \clubsuit AQ5

\spadesuit 10 \heartsuit Q86 \diamonds AJ1096 \clubsuit K984	\spadesuit A6432 \heartsuit A75 \diamonds 2 \clubsuit J1032
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\spadesuit Q9 \heartsuit K10943 \diamonds Q753 \clubsuit 76	
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Makeable Contracts

	\clubsuit	\diamonds	\heartsuit	\spadesuit	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	2	2
S	-	1	-	2	2
E	3	-	1	-	-
W	3	-	1	-	-

=====

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 \spadesuit	Pass	Pass
Dble	Pass	2 \clubsuit	INT
Pass	2 \spadesuit	All Pass	Dble

With five decent spades and only a modest heart holding, North is likely to open 1 \spadesuit even if a weak no-trump is an option. Lacking a fourth heart, it is not clear-cut for West to

double South's INT response. 2♦ and pass are both reasonable alternatives. South does not fancy defending 2♣ so doubles, this being more flexible than 2♥ – if your partnership agreement is that all low-level doubles are for takeout unless defined otherwise then this is a takeout double.

Having already pushed their opponents up one level, it does not feel right for East-West to compete to 3♣. The law of total tricks also suggests that selling out to 2♠ is the right thing to do – but the computer says otherwise!

In a spade contract, with the aid of a winning guess in the heart suit, declarer can quite easily make four tricks in spades, two in clubs and one in each red suit. A club ruff in dummy could possibly be a ninth trick. If the play does start with three rounds of clubs, the defenders can stop the overtrick in 2♠ by taking the ace and low diamond and then letting the king of hearts score. This way West can get in with the ♥Q to give East a second diamond ruff.

If East plays in clubs, a trump lead works best. After North cashes two clubs and plays a third round, declarer can set up the diamonds for one loser by playing to the ace and then taking ruffing finesses. This results in nine tricks.

North-South do not do well in a heart contract as the defenders can crossruff.

Board 8

	♠ A963	Dealer W	
	♥ A9874	Vul: None	
	♦ 1053		
	♣ 10		
♠ QJ42		♠ K75	
♥ QJ65		♥ K	
♦ K4		♦ A9872	
♣ 653		♣ QJ98	
	♠ 108		
	♥ 1032		
	♦ QJ6		
	♣ AK742		

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

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

Looking at the table of

Makeable Contracts, my example auction does not do too well! How East-West get to spades I do not know! They might get to play in INT if a INT rebid would be weak; a INT rebid when the singleton is the king and partner has bid the suit seems fair enough. I have assumed that a INT opening would be weak, making a INT rebid strong and therefore not an option.

2♦ fails after the defenders start with three rounds of clubs, North ruffing the third. South still has a trump trick and North two aces to cash after that. South should lead the middling ♣4 or maybe the high ♣7 on the third round so that North does not feel tempted to underlead the ♥A trying to put South in with the ♥K for a further club play. It does not matter if North underleads the ♠A because the ♠A will score later.

INT would be happier spot. On the normal lead of a low club, declarer has the time to set up the diamonds for an overtrick. A high club lead and a heart switch or an opening club lead and a heart switch works better defensively. Then the defenders could make three heart tricks to go with a spade, two clubs and (if declarer attempted to set up the diamonds) a diamond.

If South were to overcall 2♣, West would have a textbook negative double. Then, with four good clubs, East could leave in the double. On the ♦K lead, 2♣ doubled could go three down because West scores a ruff on the third round of diamonds. Declarer would just make five tricks in top cards and a long club.

Board 9

	♠ 6	Dealer N	
	♥ K7	Vul: E-W	
	♦ 10962		
	♣ A109742		
♠ KQJ854		♠ 1092	
♥ A1095		♥ J84	
♦ J8		♦ Q7543	
♣ 8		♣ K5	
	♠ A73		
	♥ Q632		
	♦ AK		
	♣ QJ63		

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

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

East would have found a raise to 2♠ without North's weak jump overcall. The hand has a lot of losers and only three spades, so not worth bidding 3♠ even in competition.

Knowing that the club finesse, if there is one, will be against the opening bidder, it seems reasonable for South to bid 3NT. If North has six of the nine clubs that South cannot see, there is a good chance that North has the ace of clubs.

The expression 'the operation was a success but the patient died' comes to mind. North does have the ace of clubs but the king of clubs is unexpectedly not with the opening bidder.

In 3NT declarer does best to hold up the ace of spades until the third round. This way if East switches to the wrong red suit after coming in with the king of clubs then the contract goes only one down. How does East know to switch to hearts rather than diamonds? The answer lies in the way that West plays the spades. After the king of spades holds, West should continue with the queen of spades on the second round, saving the jack on the third round. By first playing the higher card from equals West is giving a suit-preference signal for the higher-ranking red suit, namely hearts.

North-South do much better with clubs as trumps. With two diamond ruffs available in the short trump hand, you can make 5♣ even with the club finesse wrong. Of course, 5♣ would be hopeless if North had something like two low in each major and ace-king to six clubs... and then 3NT would be layout.

Board 10	♠ J9742	Dealer E
	♥ Q1097	Vul: Bo10h
	♦ 9	
	♣ 964	
♠ KQ1063		♠
♥ 2		♥ KJ854
♦ Q103		♦ K764
♣ K872		♣ AJ105
	♠ A85	
	♥ A63	
	♦ AJ852	
	♣ Q3	

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

West	North	East	South
	1♥	INT	
Dble	Rdbl	2♣	All Pass

East's opening, South's overcall and West's penalty double all seem textbook. I play that redouble of a penalty INT shows a five-card or longer-suit somewhere. Since East has bid hearts, North does not wish to suggest playing in hearts by showing the hand as two-suited. With the void in spades, East feels uncomfortable about defending 2♠ (doubled) and so bids again before North shows the spades.

South has a difficult lead against a club contract. The ♦A works well because South can continue with a diamond to give North a ruff. After that a heart switch and a second diamond ruff gives the defenders the first four tricks. Declarer can make the remainder by ruffing two hearts in the West hand to set up a long heart. East will have withheld the king of hearts on North's switch as South's lead and INT overcall make the location of the ace of hearts apparent.

North might well escape for one down in 2♠. The defenders can make two clubs, a heart, a heart ruff and two further trump tricks. With North-South vulnerable, it will make a big difference whether the contract is 2♠

undoubled or 2♠ doubled. 200 for East-West beats a club partial but 100 does not.

2♠ does not play so well from the South seat. An opening lead of either a high spade or the singleton heart puts the defenders a step ahead. On some lines West gets to discard one club on the king of hearts and another on the fourth round of diamonds, subsequently scoring the ♠10 on an overruff.

Board 11	♠ J103	Dealer S
	♥ A954	Vul: None
	♦ 95	
	♣ K532	
♠ AQ74		♠ K9865
♥ J32		♥ KQ10
♦ QJ7		♦ A864
♣ Q98		♣ 4
	♠ 2	
	♥ 876	
	♦ K1032	
	♣ AJ1076	

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

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

West has a terrible hand as hands with 12 points go, though being non-vulnerable I doubt that many people will pass. After East transfers into spades, I play that West would normally give a super-acceptance on any hand with four spades (3♠ being weaker than 2NT or a new suit). With the 4333 shape and soft values, West decides to treat the hand as having only three-card spade support and so simply completes the transfer. East's 3♦ (game forcing) rebid is slightly aggressive but 2NT would be slightly cautious and not convey the shape. West's jump to 4♠ is then a fast arrival bid. With nothing to cue bid, there would be little point in taking things slowly anyway.

If East-West play a strong no-trump then West opens 1♣ and raises the 1♠ response to 2♠, which will encourage East to bid 4♠.

The play in a spade contract should be uncontroversial. Since it is possible to ruff the fourth round of diamonds in the West hand after drawing North's trumps, it does not much matter how you play the diamonds. Ideally you would lead the jack from the West hand in the hope that North has a doubleton king and fails to cover. There is also the remote possibility that South has ten-nine doubleton.

East-West are unlikely to miss their spade fit but, if they do, the defenders will have more than one chance to lead or switch to clubs to defeat 3NT with ease.

A sacrifice in 5♣ doubled might escape for down 300 if declarer guesses well. The defenders need to attack diamonds from the East hand to ensure 500.

Board 12	♠ Q43	Dealer W
	♥ J853	Vul: N-S
	♦ 73	
	♣ A852	
♠ A5		♠ KJ76
♥ AKQ74		♥ 962
♦ AQJ2		♦ K1084
♣ 63		♣ J7
	♠ 10982	
	♥ 10	
	♦ 965	
	♣ KQ1094	

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	-	-	-	-
S	1	-	-	-	-
E	-	5	4	3	2
W	-	5	4	3	2

=====

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

With one suit (clubs) wide open and a convenient way to show both red suits, West will usually prefer to open 1♥ rather than 2NT.

East, who has only three small hearts, no aces and not a lot to spare above a minimum response, makes a 'fast arrival' jump to 4♥ after West's jump shift rebid. If the East hand were a fraction stronger, it would be right to raise diamonds because the chance of a slam would seem to be higher in diamonds – but when you are settling for game you want to play in the major.

Since clubs is the only unbid suit, North probably leads a club despite holding an unsupported ace in the suit. South encourages vigorously, enabling the defenders to cash the first two tricks. North makes a trump trick later.

If the bidding is different, with East not having bid spades (this could happen if, playing five-card majors, East raises 1♥ to 2♥) then North might lead a spade. Declarer can finesse the jack at trick one, draw three rounds of trumps, unblock the ace of spades, cross to dummy with a diamond and discard a club on the king of spades. This results in an overtrick.

In a diamond contract, there is no need to lose a trick to the jack of hearts because you can ruff the fourth round of hearts in the East hand.

If West opens 2NT and East simply raises to 3NT then North might lead a heart! Declarer finds out the hearts are not running and can see that declarers in 4♥ are bound to make at least ten tricks. Settling for nine tricks in 3NT is thus going to result in a poor matchpoint score, so you have to risk the spade finesse.

Board 13	♠ AQ42	Dealer N
	♥ AK109	Vul: Bo10h
	♦ 54	
	♣ A62	
♠ K10		♠ 73
♥ QJ753		♥ 82
♦ AQ983		♦ J72
♣ 3		♣ KQJ1095
	♠ J9865	
	♥ 64	
	♦ K106	
	♣ 874	

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

West	North	East	South
	1♥	All Pass	

This is not a good deal for those playing a weak no-trump and four-card majors. If North opens 1♥, it is entirely possible that the other three players will pass. Being vulnerable, East does not have enough shape to make a 3♣ weak jump overcall despite the good suit. South, with only four points, is a bit light for a response. West, looking at five hearts and knowing that North-South are vulnerable, is happy to defend.

If North-South are playing a strong no-trump then North opens 1NT and South transfers into spades. North, with a maximum and four spades, makes a super acceptance, perhaps 3♥ to show the source of tricks, though possibly choosing a different action if (as is quite likely) West doubles 2♥.

1♥ could fail if East were to make the bizarre decision to lead a diamond. On the more normal lead of a club honour, declarer can just about scramble seven tricks – West quickly runs out of safe exit cards.

You can make ten tricks in a spade contract if you read the clubs as 6-1 and win the first club, subsequently arranging for West to give you a ruff and discard. In real life, making nine tricks (losing two tricks in each minor) will be a more common result.

3♦ by West should two go down. One path to six defensive tricks is with two top hearts, a spade, two heart ruffs/overruffs and a club.

East-West can make eight tricks with clubs as trumps if declarer avoids getting overruffed on the third and fourth rounds of hearts.

Board 14 ♠ J62 Dealer E
 ♥ 953 Vul: None
 ♦ 9832
 ♣ J95

♠ K10875 ♠ Q93
 ♥ A10642 ♥ KQJ
 ♦ 10 ♦ AKJ
 ♣ 63 ♣ A1082

 ♠ A4
 ♥ 87
 ♦ Q7654
 ♣ KQ74

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	2	1	6	6	4
W	2	-	6	6	4

=====

West	North	East	South
		2NT	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Showing 5-5 in the majors facing a 2NT is tricky. The transfer into spades followed by the 4♥ rebid shows the shape but means you cannot play in 3NT if opener is 2-2 in the majors. Despite holding three really good hearts, East probably goes back to 4♠ in case West has longer spades.

South leads a high club against a spade contract. Declarer wins at once and hastens to cash two top diamonds to dispose of dummy's remaining club. If it was convenient to have the lead in dummy, you probably start trumps low to the queen, catering for the jack of spades with South or the singleton jack with North. As it is, because you do not want to force dummy to ruff or risk blocking the hearts or running into a heart ruff, it is more logical to start trumps from hand. It does not seem unreasonable to start with the queen: by playing South for the jack of spades you can conveniently cater for a 4-1 break. As the cards lie, if you guess to finesse North for the jack of spades, you make twelve tricks while what seems the more normal play results in only eleven.

If hearts are trumps, North probably leads a diamond rather than a club. You are likely to draw trumps and, when all follow to the king and queen, you can choose which hand wins the third round of trumps. You could choose to overtake the jack with the ace on the third round and then run the ten of spades – the chance is higher that North has A-J-x-x than that South has the singleton jack. You are slightly more likely to take the winning view in spades if hearts are trumps – but again it is not obvious why you should do so. If you decide to play the defender with the doubleton heart for the jack of spades, you will out of luck.

Board 15 ♠ AQ9 Dealer S
 ♥ K95 Vul: N-S
 ♦ KJ95
 ♣ KQ9

♠ K754 ♠ 10
 ♥ Q6 ♥ A102
 ♦ A87 ♦ 106432
 ♣ A1084 ♣ J753

 ♠ J8632
 ♥ J8743
 ♦ Q
 ♣ 62

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

West	North	East	South
			Pass
INT	Dbf	2♣	2♠
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

If West opens a weak INT, North has plenty enough for a penalty double. In my usual methods East has choice between redouble (to show a five-card or longer suit somewhere) and 2♣ (two suits including clubs). I have gone with the latter.

South would have an easy pass over a redouble but does not really want to risk having to defend 2♣. Maybe a takeout double with so few values would be OK – but North might jump to 3NT or something. All in all, it is

difficult to show the shape without overbidding.

If East-West play a strong no-trump, West opens 1♣. Then North, being strong by a fraction for a INT overcall, doubles. Even though the 1♣ opening might be a three-card suit, I think I would raise to 2♣ on the East hand rather than allow South an easy 1♥ bid. Over 2♣ South has a similar problem to the one in the example auction – how to show the shape without suggesting more values.

If South plays in spades, it is fairly straightforward for the defenders to collect five tricks. West can cash the minor-suit aces and exit passively with either minor with a low trump.

If hearts are trumps, there is a danger that West will not make a spade trick because there are going to be so many discards available on North's winners in the minor suits. The only sure way for the defenders to collect five tricks against a heart contract is if West leads a spade. Then East can score a spade ruff.

East-West can make 2♣ by setting up the diamonds. With the heart suit frozen, the defenders do not get more than two tricks in each minor and a spade.

Board 16	♠ 762	Dealer W
	♥ 982	Vul: E-W
	♦ 8652	
	♣ Q96	
♠ J4		♠ A53
♥ 107654		♥ QJ3
♦ QJ4		♦ A97
♣ AK10		♣ J732
	♠ KQ1098	
	♥ AK	
	♦ K103	
	♣ 854	

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

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

At adverse vulnerability, with poor spot cards and poor shape, East is rather reluctant to open a weak INT. The solution (1 third seat) would sometimes be to open your longest suit with a view to passing any response – but opening a jack-high suit does not seem like a good idea.

West, with a ten-high heart suit, does not fancy a 2♥ overcall. A takeout double would be possible – but quite likely to result in playing in a 4-3 fit in one of the minors. Having passed already, East is quite happy to reopen with INT when North is unable to respond to South's 1♥ opening. I have then assumed that a transfer would be available and that West chooses to use it.

If the bidding starts with three passes, which it not necessarily will, and North-South play a strong no-trump then South opens INT and plays there.

2♥ should make exactly. The defenders make two trump tricks and one in each side suit.

INT should not make whether East or South declares. While superficially it looks like East can make seven tricks in INT by way three hearts, a spade, a diamond and two clubs, there is a snag. South starts with a top spade and runs the suit when in with the first top heart. Dummy can discard a club and a diamond without pain – but finding another discard on the fifth spade is problematic. Once a heart goes from dummy, declarer loses one of those seven potential tricks and finishes a trick short. If South is in INT, an opening heart lead puts the defenders a step ahead and it is fine for West to discard two diamonds.

Board 17 ♠ Q62 Dealer N
 ♥ AK104 Vul: None
 ♦ 1098
 ♣ K63

♠ 9754 ♠ J83
 ♥ J85 ♥ 9763
 ♦ KQ ♦ 7532
 ♣ 7542 ♣ 109

 ♠ AK10
 ♥ Q2
 ♦ AJ64
 ♣ AQJ8

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	6NT
All Pass			

If you play a weak no-trump, this is immediately a simple matter of arithmetic. Facing North's 12-14, South adds 21 to give a combined range of 33-35, enough for small slam but not for a grand slam.

If you play a strong no-trump and South decides to respond 1♦ to 1♣, North rebids 1NT and South makes the same calculation. Realistically South is always bidding a slam with 21 points facing an opening bid.

If nobody has bid hearts, East is likely to lead a heart. Able to score four heart tricks for certain, declarer can count twelve top tricks. A thirteenth will only come about if East has the king-queen of diamonds and fails to split honours. Perhaps the thing to do is to lead the nine of diamonds, as you might with 9-8-7-(x). There would be some possibility that East would duck in case you were planning to let the nine run, losing to the ten. As the cards lie, West has both diamond honours and, so long as you do not miscount your tricks and take two diamond finesses, you score exactly twelve tricks whatever.

If East avoids the heart lead (perhaps West is on lead and leads a black suit, most likely a

spade), you can count only eleven tricks. One way to try for the twelfth is to take two finesses in diamonds, which would succeed if East held either the king or queen. There is a better chance that East has one of two diamond honours than that West holds the jack of hearts. If your aim is to make twelve tricks, there is another approach. Having taken one losing diamond finesse, cash all your remaining black winners and three rounds of hearts. If the jack of hearts falls, you do not need to finesse again in diamonds. There is a slight danger of going two down if West has the guarded jack of hearts and both diamond honours – but it is probably right to risk this.

Board 18 ♠ 1086 Dealer E
 ♥ QJ73 Vul: N-S
 ♦ 5
 ♣ J10965

♠ AJ95 ♠ Q742
 ♥ 1064 ♥ 98
 ♦ K1082 ♦ AQJ3
 ♣ KQ ♣ A87

 ♠ K3
 ♥ AK52
 ♦ 9764
 ♣ 432

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

West	North	East	South
		1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

If East-West play a weak no-trump and Stayman, the auction is likely to go as shown. If a strong no-trump is in use, East opens 1♦ (or 1♣) and West responds 1♠. In that case East raises to 2♠ and again the contract is 4♠, though this way with West as declarer.

With East as declarer, South surely starts with a top heart and continues the suit. The question is then how best to play the trumps. You do not want to finesse the nine on the first round and risk going down even if the suit splits

3-2. Either you lead the queen or you finesse the jack.

As the cards lie, if you lead the queen of spades, South covers and North will score a trick with the ten whether you do or do not finesse on the second round. If instead you start low to the jack, you have a guess on the second round. If you think North started with a doubleton ten, you come to hand and lead the queen on the second round. If you think South started with a doubleton king, you cash the ace. On balance I think I would start with the queen because this not only picks up the suit if South has three spades including the king and ten but also if North has the singleton eight or the singleton ten.

If West is declarer, North might lead the singleton five of diamonds. If North has led a diamond even though East bid the suit, declarer will have a good idea that it is a singleton. Knowledge of short diamonds in the North hand makes it more attractive to play South for a doubleton king of spades. I suppose you could consider playing ace and another spade in case North has a doubleton king (when you lose a trump but not a diamond ruff) but South is more likely to have that holding, so far from preventing a ruff, cashing the ace will expose you to it.

Board 19	♠ 2	Dealer S
	♥ A1043	Vul: E-W
	♦ K1073	
	♣ AK92	
♠ A863		♠ KQJ10754
♥ Q6		♥ K98
♦ AJ9		♦ 6
♣ Q654		♣ J10
	♠ 9	
	♥ J752	
	♦ Q8542	
	♣ 873	

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

West	North	East	South
INT	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

West opens a weak no-trump and East makes a simple transfer into spades. Then I think West should make a super acceptance that shows the four-card spade support but does not indicate a maximum – apart from the two aces, the values are soft and something is bound to be wasted. North was planning to double 2♠ for takeout but sees less reason to bid over West's jump to 3♠. East would have gone on even if West had simply bid 2♠ and has an easy raise of 3♠ to game.

If East-West are playing a strong no-trump, West opens 1♣. Again the singleton spade means that North has no convenient bid on the first round. Assuming East makes a simple 1♠ response, West raises to 2♠ and North is able to double. After East bids 4♠, South might decide at the prevailing vulnerability to try 5♦. With three goodish diamonds, West should double 5♦ rather than give East the option to bid 5♠.

In defending 4♠, North should manage to score two top clubs and the ace of hearts without difficulty. It seems hard to see how these winners will run away, making 620 a common score.

5♦ doubled should fail by three tricks. The easy route to five defensive tricks is for West to switch to the queen of hearts early in the play. Declarer was to win with dummy's ace to avoid having two natural heart losers – but East then has the king of hearts as an entry to give West a heart ruff.

Board 20	♠ J52	Dealer W
	♥ 10974	Vul: Bo10h
	♦ 1094	
	♣ J73	
♠ A93		♠ K4
♥ KQJ3		♥ 52
♦ QJ732		♦ K865
♣ 8		♣ K10942
	♠ Q10876	
	♥ A86	
	♦ A	
	♣ AQ65	

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

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

In deciding how high to raise diamonds, East has a bit of a betwixt and between hand. The values combined with the shape make the hand a bit good for a simple raise but an aceless nine points would usually be bit of a stretch for a limit jump raise. I have gone with the latter.

South has to take some positive action over 3♦. With five spades and only three hearts, a 3♠ overcall seems better than a takeout double.

3♠ should fail by two tricks. The defenders can make two tricks in each major easily enough. They are also due to make a club trick and either a second club trick or a club ruff.

The play in a diamond contract is straightforward. The defenders make three aces but nothing else.

Board 21 ♠ K652 Dealer N
 ♥ Vul: N-S
 ♦ A654
 ♣ Q10952

♠ 108	♠ A97
♥ 102	♥ A8643
♦ J1087	♦ Q92
♣ KJ743	♣ A8

♠ QJ43
 ♥ KQJ975
 ♦ K3
 ♣ 6

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	INT	2♥
All Pass			

With values in every suit and a moderate heart suit, I have indicated that East would open 1♥ even if a weak no-trump opening is available. A further factor is that East has fourteen points rather than twelve or thirteen. While you do not always need to have a rebid prepared facing a passed hand, you do not really want to be passing the response when you have fourteen points because game is not totally out of the equation.

After the INT opening, South is likely to have a choice between a natural 2♥ overcall or showing both majors (a Landy 2♣ for most). With a really good heart suit and the two-card length disparity between the suits, treating the hand as single-suited will probably be the choice of the majority.

If East-West are playing strong no-trump and five-card majors, East opens 1♥ and there is no danger that South will declare a heart contract. Indeed East might play in 1♥ doubled or West in 2♣ doubled after North makes a reopening double (or doubles a INT response).

South can make 2♥ in comfort. Indeed unless West leads a spade or East returns a spade at trick two (having won the first trick with the ace of clubs) an overtrick results because West does not score a spade ruff. In real life West might well lead the ♦J, in which case declarer can avoid the spade ruff.

A spade contract should yield ten tricks, with just three aces to lose – although North is void in hearts, you are not going to manage to avoid a heart loser.

Board 22 ♠ 32 Dealer E
 ♥ 985 Vul: E-W
 ♦ K87654
 ♣ 95

♠ KJ64	♠ A7
♥ AKQ3	♥ 107
♦ A3	♦ J2
♣ K43	♣ AJ108762

♠ Q10985
 ♥ J642
 ♦ Q109
 ♣ Q

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	7	1	5	4	7
W	7	1	5	4	7

=====

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♠	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♣	Pass
7♣	All Pass		

With ten point in high cards including two aces, the East hand is definitely a 1♣ opening rather than a 3♣ opening. West might have a forcing 2NT response available. Even if it is an option, there seems little harm in starting with a simple 1♥ response. West's jump raise to 4♣ is forcing and gives East space to cue bid. 4♠ shows a spade control while denying a diamond control.

After West asks for key cards with 4NT, East announces possession of two key cards and the ♣Q, the seventh club providing justification for this – if the partnership has a ten-card club fit, it is unlikely to matter if the queen is missing. Since East already denied possession of the ♦K with 4♠, West might not bother asking for kings with 5NT. Perhaps on a slightly different auction West would not be sure.

West cannot quite count thirteen tricks but can see excellent prospects thereof. If East has the queen of spades, the jack of hearts or seven clubs then there should be thirteen tricks on top. If not, there is the possibility of a spade finesse or perhaps a squeeze. Maybe if you are bidding the grand slam you should go the whole hog and bid 7NT.

In the play the only consideration is which defender is more likely to hold three clubs because you can cater for a 3-0 split so long as you cash the right top honour first. With trumps actually 2-1, it does not matter.

Board 23 ♠ QJ1085 Dealer S
 ♥ 5 Vul: Bo10h
 ♦ J109
 ♣ K1052

♠ K64 ♠ A72
 ♥ QJ9632 ♥ 104
 ♦ AK32 ♦ Q764
 ♣ ♣ QJ93

♠ 93
 ♥ AK87
 ♦ 85
 ♣ A8764

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

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

With pure values, three defensive tricks and the honours in the longest suits, South will generally open the bidding despite being vulnerable. Following West's 1♥ overcall, North's 1♠ will show five (or more) spades for many pairs. South rebids the clubs even though the suit is poor. Double from West is then a better action than 2♦. East is unsure whether to show heart tolerance or to introduce the diamonds. With four moderate diamonds and aware of the matchpoint scoring, East bids 2♥.

When North competes to 3♣, East would bid 3♦ if North-South were not vulnerable – but defending seems better with opponents vulnerable.

The 4-0 trump split means that South goes two down in 3♣, losing two trump tricks as well as the ace-king in the pointed suits.

West can make an overtrick in 3♥ whatever the lead. North probably leads the ♠Q – but even on a club lead declarer can retain control. You ruff the ace of clubs but discard if South continues clubs after getting with a top trump.

Ten tricks are also available in a diamond contract. Club forces on dummy will secure a third trick for the defenders.

Board 24 ♠ A109863 Dealer W
 ♥ 92 Vul: None
 ♦ 1073
 ♣ J9

♠ J5	♠ 4
♥ 1085	♥ QJ73
♦ KQ62	♦ J954
♣ 5432	♣ AK76

♠ KQ72
 ♥ AK64
 ♦ A8
 ♣ Q108

Makeable Contracts

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

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♠	Dble	4♠
All Pass			

I have had East make a takeout double of North's 2♠ opening because neither side vulnerable is the ideal time to compete. In practice East might go quietly. South has plenty for a raise to 4♠ whatever East does.

Making exactly ten tricks in 4♠ will be a common result because it matters not whether East cashes two clubs straight off or switches to one of the red suits at trick two.

East-West would probably be making a big mistake if they sacrifice in five of a minor. The defenders have four top winners and must come to a club trick. In addition North can score a productive heart ruff. They would thus go down 500 even without the ruff, 800 with it. Of course, if the effect of bidding up to five of a minor is to push North-South to 5♠ then East-West will do well – but the North-South hands are too balanced for them to do that. Remember the adage, 'the five level belongs to the opponents.'

Board 25 ♠ AK8 Dealer N
 ♥ KQJ53 Vul: E-W
 ♦ 954
 ♣ AK

♠ Q107	♠ J4
♥ 4	♥ A1072
♦ J3	♦ AQ62
♣ J1098654	♣ Q72

♠ 96532
 ♥ 986
 ♦ K1087
 ♣ 3

Makeable Contracts

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

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

Many pairs these days play 5-card Stayman and I think I would open 2NT on the North hand even if I was not playing it. With a weak hand including five spades and a singleton, South transfers into spades and then passes.

East's most likely lead against 3♠ is a club. Declarer wins that, cashes two top trumps and drives out the ace of hearts. Although the hearts are 4-1, the ♦A is inside so there are just three losers in the red suits to add to one in trumps.

If South has in a spade contract, West might lead the singleton heart. In that case the defenders take two aces and two heart ruffs but nothing else.

If hearts are trumps, superficially it appears that the defenders have five winners – two in each red suit and one in spades – but in practice they cannot readily make them all. A way for declarer to avoid a second diamond loser is to set up the spades, using the ♦K as an entry to cash a long spade.

The fate of a 2NT contract depends very much on the lead. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that East will decide to lead a heart.

Because this costs not only the second defensive heart trick but also concedes a valuable tempo, declarer can make nine tricks after a heart lead. A club lead works best but this is not so easy to find looking just at the East cards. 2NT goes two down on a club lead. Declarer has time to make two tricks in each suit apart from diamonds but cannot make anything else.

Board 26 ♠ A9 Dealer E
 ♥ KQ105 Vul: Bo10h
 ♦ J1073
 ♣ K92

♠ Q8753 ♥ A87 ♦ K6 ♣ Q106	♠ 1042 ♥ J64 ♦ Q9854 ♣ 54
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♠ KJ6 ♥ 932 ♦ A2 ♣ AJ873	
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Makeable Contracts

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

=====

West	North	East	South
		Pass	INT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

If North-South are playing a weak no-trump, South opens INT and, after looking for a 4-4 heart fit via Stayman, North raises to 3NT.

If North-South are playing a strong no-trump, South opens 1♣, West overcalls 1♥ and North doubles. Then South rebids INT and North raises to 3NT.

With a five-card suit and plenty of possible entries, West is sure to lead a spade against a no-trump contract. However, if West continues leading spades when in both with the queen of clubs and the ace of hearts then declarer might score eleven tricks. These would be three tricks in each major suit, four in clubs and one in diamonds. At some point

West would need to switch to a diamond, which will make the entry situation difficult for declarer if nothing else.

If West has passed throughout, as is likely to happen if South has opened INT, there is some possibility that declarer will decide to finesse dummy's ten of hearts on the second round (West having twice ducked smoothly). In that case there is no overtrick in 3NT.

If North-South play in a suit contract, they cannot make any more tricks than they can in no-trumps. It is hard to see why they would choose to play in a 4-3 heart fit when they have the spades well stopped in any case. Playing in five of a minor is rarely attractive when 3NT is playable, especially at matchpoints.

Board 27 ♠ J83 Dealer S
 ♥ 7 Vul: None
 ♦ 85
 ♣ QJ106532

♠ AQ97 ♥ J942 ♦ J642 ♣ 9	♠ 1064 ♥ A105 ♦ AKQ97 ♣ AK
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♠ K52 ♥ KQ863 ♦ 103 ♣ 874	
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Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	1	5	3	5	5
W	1	5	3	5	5

=====

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	3♣	3NT	All Pass

Third in hand and non-vulnerable, North should definitely pre-empt. I know some people who would open 4♣ on these cards but 3♣ seems normal. You do not want to get too carried away at equal vulnerability even when you know the opponents have game on.

With a good hand, the clubs doubly stopped and a source of tricks, East has an easy decision to overcall 3NT. The fact that West is a passed

hand, making a slam unlikely, also helps. South will consider sacrificing in 4♣, though usually it is best to hope that the pre-empt has already done its job.

In 3NT declarer can see nine top tricks. At matchpoints of course overtricks are important. With long clubs in the North hand, it is possibly more attractive to play on spades, where the finesses are against South, than on hearts, where the finesses are against North.

If declarer in 3NT broaches spades by leading the ten, it is important that South covers. If the ten runs to the jack, the queen-nine become equals and declarer cannot go wrong. By covering the ten with the king, declarer will have a guess on the third round whether to put up the nine or whether to finesse the seven.

A sacrifice in 4♣ doubled is not close to being cheap. The defenders can take one trick in hearts and two in each other suit for an 800 penalty.

Board 28 ♠ K10 Dealer W
 ♥ Q52 Vul: N-S
 ♦ QJ1085
 ♣ 532

♠ 976 ♥ A1098 ♦ A7 ♣ Q1096	♠ Q854 ♥ 7643 ♦ 93 ♣ K87
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♠ AJ32
 ♥ KJ
 ♦ K642
 ♣ AJ4

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

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

Playing a weak no-trump and four-card majors, South opens 1♠ in fourth seat. North is fraction light for a 2♦ response even in Acoll so

responds 1NT. South might pass 1NT because the intermediates are so poor. In real life, most will go with the field and raise to 2NT. With 8 points facing about 17 or 18, North has an easy decision to go to 3NT.

If North-South are playing a strong no-trump, South opens 1NT and reluctantly goes on to game after North invites.

If North is declarer, East surely leads a heart. In this case knocking out the ♦A produces nine certain tricks. You can make ten tricks if you finesse East for the ♠Q and eleven tricks if East discards a spade on the diamonds and you finesse.

If South is declarer in the same contract, West might well lead a club even though it is a minor because generally it works best to lead a suit in which you do not have the ace. Declarer captures the ♣K with the ♣A at trick one and knocks out the ♦A. The best West can do is to continue with the ♣Q and another club. There would be a chance the ♣J falls doubleton or that East has the card. Even if not (as is the actual situation) this sets up a club winner for West to cash when in with the ♦A.

North-South can make ten tricks with diamonds as trumps regardless of the lead or who declares – but if East leads a club then you will need to play a spade to the king and finesse the jack of spades early so as to avoid losing two club tricks.

Board 29 ♠ A43 Dealer N
 ♥ QJ104 Vul: Bo10h
 ♦ Q4
 ♣ 10865

♠ KJ109 ♥ 7 ♦ KJ10863 ♣ A4	♠ 82 ♥ K653 ♦ A72 ♣ QJ72
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♠ Q765
 ♥ A982
 ♦ 95
 ♣ K93

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

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

Some would jump to 2NT on the second round with East cards, partly on the basis that no-trump bids should never have a one-point range (precisely 11 as East is a passed hand). West would probably retreat to 3♦ over that, making 3♦ the final contract just the same, though some players love playing in no-trumps at matchpoints and would leave 2NT.

In a diamond contract, the defenders must score at least the two aces. North's natural heart lead gives nothing away and it is safe to continue hearts. Declarer can ruff the second heart, cross to dummy with the ♦A, run the ♣Q and then finesse the ♠J. North can then ensure a third defensive trick either by exiting with the ♦Q, which makes ruffing two spades in dummy impossible or by holding on to the ♦Q and ruffing in with it on the fourth round of spades.

If the contract is 2NT, since East has bid hearts, South should manage to avoid a heart lead. I do not much mind whether you lead a spade or the unbid club suit. In either case North will get in with the ♠A at some point and switch to the ♥Q. The defenders are thus pretty sure to make a spade trick and four heart tricks.

If declarer in 2NT decides to finesse South for the ♦Q, the defenders will score a diamond trick as well as five tricks in the majors. There seems no obvious reason to do that, especially as East is not particularly flush with entries.

Board 30

♠ A	Dealer E
♥ K1084	Vul: None
♦ K9	
♣ A98654	
♠ 108	♠ Q9764
♥ 97632	♥
♦ AJ	♦ 87542
♣ QJ102	♣ K73
♠ KJ532	
♥ AQJ5	
♦ Q1063	
♣	

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	2	5	3	3
S	1	2	4	3	3
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

=====

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Focussing on the majors, South rebids 2♥ rather than the more economical 2♦. A particular reason for rebidding 2♥ is that North cannot respond 2♥ to 1♠ without five hearts, which means South needs to strain to show a four-card heart suit. Here, with four good hearts, it is not a strain anyway.

If North-South are playing the 2♣ response as creating a game force then North would have a forcing raise of 2♥ to 3♥ available and might choose to do that. With only 27 high card points and eight trumps between them, it should not be too difficult to judge that this is not a slam deal.

If you have long weak trumps, it can be a good idea to lead a trump to cut down on the opposing cross-ruffing potential. Such is the case here. After a trump lead at trick one and a second trump lead when in with the ♦A, declarer can make only ten tricks: two top spades, two trumps, one diamond, one club and the remaining four trumps on a cross-ruff. If West starts with something else (the ♣Q no doubt), declarer can make an extra ruffing winner for an overtrick.

3NT is not a good contract, making courtesy of the friendly diamond layout.

Board 31 ♠ K Dealer S
 ♥ 1042 Vul: N-S
 ♦ Q854
 ♣ A7643

♠ AJ98742 ♠ 653
 ♥ K6 ♥ AQ853
 ♦ K2 ♦ A7
 ♣ K9 ♣ Q82

 ♠ Q10
 ♥ J97
 ♦ J10963
 ♣ J105

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

West has a close decision whether to rebid 2♠ or 3♠. Because of the matchpoint scoring I have gone with 2♠. If West does rebid 2♠, East also has a close decision whether to bid 3♠ or 4♠. As it happens it does not matter whether West or East are cautious. They will reach game whatever. The confidence with which they do so might, however, affect the opening lead.

If East-West are playing a two-level change of response as game forcing then West definitely rebids 2♠ (because a jump would show a very good suit) and East raises 2♠ to 4♠ to indicate a minimum 'fast arrival'.

North's lead against a spade contract is likely to determine whether declarer makes eleven tricks or twelve. Cashing the ace of clubs stops twelve tricks. On any other lead, declarer can win, cash the ace of trumps and play four rounds of hearts. One club goes away on the third heart and the other on the fourth round as South ruffs with what is a natural trump winner anyway.

As the cards lie, so long as you keep the ♦A as an entry to dummy, you also make twelve tricks by playing on hearts without cashing the ace of trumps. This is because if South ruffs the fourth heart, you discard as planned and the remaining trumps will both drop under the ace, while if South discards and North ruffs then you can finesse against South. This alternative line is inferior because if South is the one with the singleton picture card or if someone was able to ruff with the singleton ten of spades then you would lose two tricks.

Board 32 ♠ Q962 Dealer W
 ♥ AQ8 Vul: E-W
 ♦ AK10
 ♣ A94

♠ A8 ♠ K10754
 ♥ K4 ♥ 76
 ♦ Q9763 ♦ J5
 ♣ KQJ3 ♣ 10762

 ♠ J3
 ♥ J109532
 ♦ 842
 ♣ 85

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

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

After West makes a natural 1♦ opening, North is a bit too strong for a INT overcall and starts with a double. North was intending to rebid INT over South's 1♥ but doubles when West bids again. The second double simply shows extra strength and denies four-card heart support. South would like to compete to 3♥ but fears North will take the bid seriously.

If East-West play a strong no-trump then West, with values in every suit, might open INT. Many pairs do not play a penalty double of a strong no-trump, so North has to pass. East transfers into a spades, which again stymies North.

With West as declarer in a club contract, the defenders cannot get at all their tricks – South can never get in to lead a heart through the king. The result is that declarer can draw trumps and set up the diamonds, thereafter discarding hearts from dummy on the long diamonds. Indeed, if North does not cash the ace of hearts, an overtrick could result because the run of the diamonds catches North in a pretty trump squeeze... If North bares the ace of hearts, you can ruff a heart in dummy to set up the king. If North keeps two hearts and hence only more spade than East, you can ruff out the spades.

If South declares a heart contract, the defenders can (with the trump position as it is and a club ruff giving a safe means to enter the South hand) make at most four tricks. They might not even get those if West fails to switch to diamonds early. If West were to lead the king of clubs and continue the suit, declarer can draw trumps, knock out the ♠A, cash two diamonds and endplay East in spades.

West would be one down in 2♠ with two tricks in each pointed suit and one trick in each rounded suit to lose.