

**The January Charity pairs, in association with the World Bridge Federation  
 Thursday 28th January 2021**

Our January Charity Pairs, raises funds for [UNICEF](https://www.unicef.org/) to help children in danger through the world. They need so much help now, not just because of war, famine, the need for medicines, clean water but now there is the added threat from the coronavirus. Please help us raise as much money as we can – send your donations to us and we will gather them together and pass them on to UNICEF from bridge players all over the world.

Just go to : <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/wbfcharity/payments.asp> and you will see how to do it ... there is no specified amount but we do suggest £3 per player if you can manage that !

**Help us to help these children who are in such need. Please. And please read the bit at the end of the commentary about future events (and to see the flower I have put there for you!)**

**Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.**

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

This deal is all about partnership style and agreements. Should East pass or pre-empt, and if you bid, should it be at the two-level or three-level? West needs to know what a non-vulnerable pre-empt will look like; if like this, his best bet is to play 3NT. As the cards lie, on the likely top club lead declarer might emerge with as many as 10 tricks. By contrast, 4♠ will be a disaster, and 4♥ will need some very good guesswork from declarer.

**Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.**

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

When East opens 1♦ and hears West double 1♥, he has a choice of ways to advance. INT showing 15-17 might be the matchpoint solution, but I prefer a simple call of 2♣. West will correct to 2♦, and now East might advance with 2NT, to paint the full picture. A diamond partscore handles well enough for nine or ten tricks, but a no-trump partscore on a top spade lead is no fun at all. East will do very well to bring home 120 and might do considerably worse.

**Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.**

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

Aces and kings are undervalued in the Milton Work point count scheme. Any North who opens 2NT will be grossly undervaluing his hand – this is a good hand in the range 23-24! South will show his spades, but will he try for slam if he finds a fit, or will he sign off in 4♠? Today 4♠ is high enough; in fact if the defence get the clubs going they might even threaten the game. But if declarer guesses trumps right on a non-club lead, he might make 12 tricks.

**Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.**

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

Many Easts will open 2♠, South will double, and West will pass, secretly crossing his fingers. Now what is North to do? Passing is a gamble, which would not pay off if declarer handles trumps correctly; though repeated heart forces might shorten declarer's trumps? If North does remove the double, best is to play no-trump, where eight tricks are a possible outcome against careless defence. Any suit contract by N/S will cost at least 200, surely.

**Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.**

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

When North opens a weak no-trump South's best bet is to use Stayman, and hope for the best. If West doubles to show a good hand E/W can start using the red-cards until they run out of them! N/S will struggle to take more than five tricks wherever they end up, which might well be in 2♥ on repeated spade leads. At this vulnerability, 500 will surely score E/W well. This is particularly since there is no game on for them.

**Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.**

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

East has far too much playing strength for a weak no-trump, though doubtless many will settle for this action, partly because of its preemptive effect. Regardless of whether he opens 1♣ or 1NT, the likely final contract figures to be 3NT by East, and South will have a choice of major suits to lead. On a top heart lead, declarer will set up a diamond and a heart trick, and come home with 10 winners. On a spade lead the defenders are ahead in the race, and can hold East to nine winners.

**Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.**

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

You'd expect East to double the 1♠ response by North to the 1♦ opening, and then when N/S bid to 4♠ he might pass and try to beat it. He might well be surprised to discover that only West's diamond stopper prevents his opponents making a slam! Even against the 4-0 trump break 5♣ might prove to be a paying sacrifice. E/W can take nine tricks in that strain with the minimum of effort, by ruffing two spades in West, and negotiating the heart finesse.

**Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.**

<p>♠ K 8 7 ♥ J 10 6 4 3 ♦ 8 4 ♣ Q 10 4</p> <p>♠ J 9 6 ♥ A 2 ♦ 9 6 5 2 ♣ K 5 3 2</p>	<p>♠ A Q 10 4 ♥ Q 5 ♦ A Q J 10 7 ♣ 8 7</p> <p>♠ 5 3 2 ♥ K 9 8 7 ♦ K 3 ♣ A J 9 6</p>
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South should stretch to double the 1♦ opening bid, after which West will respond INT, North will introduce his hearts, and E/W figure to come to rest in 3♦. On a heart lead (and who could blame South?) declarer has a painless route to 11 tricks. Indeed, with East declarer, no defence can manage a third trick, but bidding these cards to game would be beyond most of us. If N/S overcompete to 3♥, they rate to be set at least 200 against competent defence.

**Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.**

<p>♠ 4 ♥ Q J 6 3 ♦ A Q J 9 7 2 ♣ A 9</p> <p>♠ K Q J 3 ♥ A 8 ♦ 5 3 ♣ Q J 8 6 2</p>	<p>♠ 10 7 6 2 ♥ K 9 7 ♦ K 8 4 ♣ 7 5 3</p> <p>♠ A 9 8 5 ♥ 10 5 4 2 ♦ 10 6 ♣ K 10 4</p>
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North will open 1♦ and over his partner's call of 1♥ he will jump to 3♥ when West doubles (some might bid 4♦ to show the 6-4 hand-type, but most would prefer to have a trick more for that action). At the vulnerability E/W may simply sell out to their opponents in either 3♥ or 4♥. As the cards lie, 4♥ might seem easy; but repeated heart leads at every turn will promote an extra trump trick for the defenders. Few will find this defence, 1 prophecy!

**Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.**

<p>♠ Q 8 5 ♥ A J ♦ J 8 4 ♣ Q 10 6 5 3</p> <p>♠ K 4 ♥ K 9 5 3 ♦ K Q 7 3 ♣ A 7 4</p>	<p>♠ A J 10 7 3 ♥ 8 4 ♦ 9 6 5 2 ♣ J 8</p> <p>♠ 9 6 2 ♥ Q 10 7 6 2 ♦ A 10 ♣ K 9 2</p>
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At matchpoints when East responds 1♠ to 1♦ and hears his partner rebid INT it must be right to remove to 2♠ rather than to 2♦. Regardless of which contract is safer, at Pairs one must play the major. In 2♠, where the cards lie disgustingly well, declarer can take all the logical finesses and emerge with nine tricks without breathing too hard. Other strains score less well, or take fewer tricks, so +140 rates to score very nicely, thank you.

**Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.**

<p>♠ 8 3 ♥ 8 7 6 2 ♦ A 8 5 4 ♣ A 6 4</p> <p>♠ K 9 6 2 ♥ Q 10 9 5 ♦ Q J 2 ♣ 9 5</p>	<p>♠ A J ♥ A 4 3 ♦ 10 9 7 6 3 ♣ Q 3 2</p> <p>♠ Q 10 7 5 4 ♥ K J ♦ K ♣ K J 10 8 7</p>
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The N/S auction will be 1♠-INT-2♣-2♠ at many tables (indeed it is hard to see a serious alter native action unless you want to open the South cards 1♣. That would not be my choice, even if it does lead to a safer club partscore.) In 2♠ on a top diamond lead declarer does not really have the entries to play both clubs and spades from dummy. If he misgusses either clubs or hearts, he is going to be in a very bad way. +110 will therefore score N/S very well here.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

Everyone ought to be able to bid the E/W cards to 4♥, in the knowledge of a 5-3 fit. Some may prefer to play 3NT here, which is also a decent contract. In 4♥ the simple line is to play to organize a club ruff in dummy, then lead diamonds up to dummy hoping that the defenders solve your guess in spades. As the cards lie, 10 tricks should be the limit; but some will make 11, a smaller number only 9 tricks. 3NT can be held to nine tricks but +430 will not be uncommon.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

East really has a weak no-trump regardless of the 4-3-2-1 scale. But it will be much easier for E/W to reach a slam if East pretends he has a balanced 15-17 count. When South bids diamonds is it possible for E/W to reach 6NT? I doubt it; as West I might close his eyes and bid 6♥ if South intervenes over INT with a call in diamonds – and I might jump to slam even if South stays silent, I suppose. 1430 will be the norm here; 1440 will get all the matchpoints, and those missing slam will share a bottom.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

An auction such as 1♠-2♣-2♠-4♠ will be common here, though some pairs will find their way to the usual pairs Nirvana of 3NT – perhaps with West slipping in an anti lead-directional call in diamonds, somewhere along the way. Taking the spade finesse the ‘normal’ way will produce 11 easy tricks, but no more. Double-dummy there are 12 tricks, but in real life very few will find a route to a twelfth winner.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

If South opens INT (this call is a decided underbid) will be raised to 3NT with virtually a full top hinging on whether the ♠K will score trick one. If West leads a small spade declarer wraps up 13 tricks, thereby defeating all the sensible pairs who have bid to 4♥ and made 11 or 12 tricks, depending on whether they safety-played the heart suit in game. Anyone bidding to 6♥ will be almost as lucky as the pairs who played 3NT, and even more generously rewarded!

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

After a 3♣ opening by North East will double (who cares about diamonds?) South will bid 3♦, West will pass gratefully, and now will North work out that his side might be able to make game here? As you can see 5♦ (probably doubled) has 11 top tricks. Meanwhile East's beautiful hand is not worth all that much in hearts, where seven tricks look to be the limit. That is, unless the defence take their eye off the ball and help establish a club for declarer.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

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

When playing a weak no-trump, West has no choice but to open 1♦ and rebid 2♣ after the 1♥ response. East might give preference to 2♦ or gamble on a 2♥ rebid. Today in diamonds on a spade lead declarer may play for club ruffs in dummy; but it looks hard to come to more than seven tricks. By contrast, a heart partscore would be playable against 4-3 trumps. Not today, though; in fact E/W would do best in the one suit they will surely never bid – spades!

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

The N/S auction rates to start: 1♣-1♠-2♥; but what now? It depends a little on your methods, but North is not really worth more than a non-forcing 3♣ bid now. However, South has enough to bid 3NT, against which the defence do best to lead spades. Declarer will win the first spade and lead a club up, and will make ten tricks now. Note that on a non-spade lead South should get at least 660, so the right opening lead may salvage a respectable board for E/W..

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

The vulnerability may not prevent West from getting in his opponents' way too much, but this is still a very tough bidding problem for N/S. The club slam goes down on bad breaks, today, but in any event the best spot for N/S is 6NT by South, which has 12 top tricks if clubs break, and lots of chances if they do not. The best lead against that slam by West would be a low spade – any one who finds that should send details to his local paper!

**Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.**

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

N/S are balanced with a 4-4 fit and only a combined 24HCP. Will they bid to game, or will discretion be the better part of valour? Today, even with the club honours outside there is only +110 available on best defence. If North opens 1♣ and raises 1♥ to 2♥ that should end the auction – unless West balances with 2♠, far from absurd. He might get doubled there (E/W can do better in clubs, but may not be able to get there) or he may push N/S overboard.

**Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.**

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

The auction is likely to start with West opening 1NT in fourth seat (neither North nor East looks like an opening bid to ME). East will either invite to game or even drive to 3NT because of the playing tricks; three aces and the club ten make nine tricks likely. In 2NT on a spade lead West will duck ♠K, win ♠J, and knock out ♣A to come to eight tricks. Of course if South shifted to the ♥Q at trick two the defenders would take seven tricks. But who would do that?

**Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.**

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

You'd expect East to open 1♦, South to overcall 2♣, and West to jump to 3♦, preemptively, or perhaps to 4♦. Now North will surely bid the minimum number of spades, and play there. With the ♠Q misbehaving, N/S can take nine tricks and no more, so I'd expect to see E/W collecting 100 or 200 if they are brave enough to double, at many tables. E/W can also make 3♦, or even 2NT, so no doubt a few pairs will be doubled into game here.

**Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.**

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

In third seat North has a choice of suit-openings, but whatever he selects, South will surely pass. West can balance with 1♠, and N/S might then get a second chance to find their best fit. They can take 130 in clubs (declarer can discard diamonds from North on a forcing defence) while hearts can be held to eight tricks. But since spades makes an easy 110 for E/W, scores rate to be all over the place, and making contracts will be the exception rather than the rule.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

A 2♣ opening bid might see an auction such as: 2♣-2♦-2♠-2NT-3♥-5♥-? However, perhaps South should bid 4♣ over 3♥ – an unambiguous cue-bid for hearts. Now when North signs off in 4♥ South will feel he has done enough. If the defenders miss the diamond lead, declarer has a chance for 12 tricks by pitching a diamond on the top clubs, then taking a spade finesse to bring that suit in for no losers. 11 tricks in no-trumps will also score very well here.

Remember that we are planning to run other Charity events during the year – the **Charity Challenge** for 2021 will be raising money for two Cancer Charities, which have been so badly affected by COVID ... Cancer Research UK and Marie Curie with the funds split between them. That will be held from 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> March with different hands each day and we expect it will all be played online but we are getting used to that aren't we ☺

In July there will be the **Kidney Research Pairs** – again we are looking at running this for a full week, with different hands each night, starting on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> and with the last day on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> July. And we may include a second charity as we are doing for the Charity Challenge and split the funds raised between them. Maybe, just maybe, some clubs will be playing face to face by then, it would be lovely to think so, but in any case we can mix and match with the scoring to accommodate both online and face-to-face clubs. All part of the challenges we are facing at the moment!

Then comes November and our **Children in Need event** – maybe there is an even better chance of being back at the bridge table by then, I know we must all be looking forward to that. As ever, different hands each night and I am looking at the dates being Friday 5 November, then Monday 8<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>. We don't yet know when the BBC will be doing their CiN "night" but I am guessing it will either be 12<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> so our dates should be just fine.

Do keep an eye on the website – obviously we will publish the amounts raised for the various events, and of course it's quite different with individuals donating but hopefully we can raise some goodly amounts for charity – the charities are all having such a tough time of it at the moment, so hopefully by doing these events we can all help a bit.

Thank you for joining us, thank you for your support – really truly we appreciate it so much – and here's a lovely pink tulip to say thank you !



Best wishes

Anna & Mark  
The ECatsBridge Team  
[www.ecatsbridge.com](http://www.ecatsbridge.com)  
email: [anna@ecats.co.uk](mailto:anna@ecats.co.uk)