



The January Charity Pairs

Thursday / Friday 30 & 31 January 2025

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

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

If you haven't already done so, then please go to :

<https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/donations.asp> and donate whatever you can – but read this first :

<https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/BeforeDonating.asp> to make sure you don't add a "tip" to the donation – quite unnecessary in our view.

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

1

♠ KJ64
 ♥ 107
 ♦ 9653
 ♣ A32
 ♠ AQ53
 ♥ J985
 ♦ AJ87
 ♣ J
 ♠ 102
 ♥ A632
 ♦ 42
 ♣ KQ876
 ♠ 987
 ♥ KQ4
 ♦ KQ10
 ♣ 10954

 Dealer: North
 Neither Vulnerable

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

West opens 1♥ in Acol, 1♦ in 5 card major land. The effect of the differing methods is to place the likely final 2♥ contract in different polarities.

Theoretically eight tricks are the limit whoever declares, but played by west a spade lead into the ace/queen may allow an overtrick.

An overtrick may eventuate anyway, since unless south finds an early spade switch the diamond knave grows up for a spade discard in east, and the clubs can be ruffed good.

2

♠ J62
 ♥ J9874
 ♦
 ♣ AQJ104
 ♠ AQ954
 ♥
 ♦ KJ54
 ♣ 9876
 ♠ K
 ♥ AK10653
 ♦ Q97632
 ♣
 ♠ 10873
 ♥ Q2
 ♦ A108
 ♣ K532

 Dealer: East
 N-S Vulnerable

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

If north has a weak two suiter toy it may upset east, who normally gets to open 1♥, west responding 1♠. Even if north intervenes 2♣ east should still content himself with a simple 2♦. West will raise diamonds, possibly after south has supported clubs.

Now east is away to the races, and is liable to punt slam, or make some ace asking enquiry, confident N/S have the club ace.

Twelve tricks can be made in diamonds, but could be tricky if declarer not unreasonably plays on hearts rather than setting up dummy's spades, the 3:0 trump break complicating matters. Anyone managing twelve tricks, even in game, deserves a good board.

3

♠ A10732
 ♥ AQ6
 ♦ 10765
 ♣ 2
 ♠ K8
 ♥ 1052
 ♦ K943
 ♣ J964
 ♠ QJ6
 ♥ K9874
 ♦ AQ
 ♣ A105
 ♠ 954
 ♥ J3
 ♦ J82
 ♣ KQ873

 Dealer: South
 E-W Vulnerable

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

North might open a light non-vulnerable 1♠ in third seat, but more likely east will kick off with 1♥ or a strong NT.

1♥ will fetch either 1NT, or a 2♥ raise, depending on methods, and E/W are in some danger of getting too high.

No trump by east should make eight tricks, possibly nine on a low club lead, since two spades, three hearts, two diamonds and two clubs can score. Played by west a low spade lead provides a useful entry to play hearts, but best defence still takes six tricks.

2♥ looks more comfortable, since declarer can unblock diamonds, ruff a winning spade to dummy, and pitch a club on the diamond winner, before playing trumps.

4

♠ 942
 ♥ 9632
 ♦ KJ7
 ♣ KQ6
 ♠ AK
 ♥ 1084
 ♦ 109865
 ♣ J74
 ♠ Q10753
 ♥ KQ75
 ♦ Q
 ♣ A98
 ♠ J86
 ♥ AJ
 ♦ A432
 ♣ 10532

 Dealer: West
 Both Vulnerable

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

East will open 1♠, and after 1NT rebid 2♥, before being given preference back to spades.

It looks like eight tricks are the limit, despite the helpful heart position, but south could lead a club, ceding an extra trick, or north could get endplayed in the suit for the extra trick.

I suspect 140 will be a common enough E/W score.

5

♠ 86
♥ 872
♦ 653
♣ 108643

♠ 1093
♥ AK64
♦ Q1087
♣ J5

♠ AQ72
♥ QJ953
♦ 94
♣ KQ

♠ KJ54
♥ 10
♦ AKJ2
♣ A972

 Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

East opens 1♥ and south doubles. West has (just) a 2NT bid, showing a sound raise to 3♥. North mops his brow and east bids 4♥, ending the auction.

South has an easy defence, simply cashing his winners, then exiting, eventually winning the spade king, for one off.

It is hard to see anyone letting 4♥ home. It just could be beaten two at some tables, south making both of his spade honours, though south should be end-played when he wins the first spade.

The few who manage to stop in 3♥ will get a great board. There could be some in the phantom of 5♣x, when south doubles 4♥ and north takes out. They lose 300.

6

♠ 7652
♥ K102
♦ A1032
♣ 64

♠ J10
♥ AQ986
♦ KJ7
♣ A103

♠ KQ3
♥ J543
♦ 64
♣ KQ82

♠ A984
♥ 7
♦ Q985
♣ J975

 Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

Assuming the defence do nothing silly the obvious contract of 4♥ by west boils down to guessing the diamonds right.

The standard play is to assume split aces, so when south turns up with the spade ace north is assumed to have the diamond ace.

Declarer will then finesse the diamond knave, scoring 620.

It looks like the vast majority will be in 4♥, and my guess is most will make it.

7

♠ J4
♥ 9
♦ K76542
♣ AQ62

♠ Q972
♥ KJ1074
♦
♣ K954

♠ AK6
♥ Q83
♦ QJ83
♣ J107

♠ 10853
♥ A652
♦ A109
♣ 83

 Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

Acolyte easts open 1NT in 4th seat and west transfers to hearts, or uses stayman. North may well double the 2♦ bid, or bid it allowing south to compete with 3♦ over E/Ws 2♥.

3♦ is an easy make, south ruffing two losing clubs, declarer only losing two trumps and two spades.

So E/W must bid on to 3♥ to get a plus score. Even with south getting a club ruff 3♥ appears comfortable, 140 or 170 eventuating. A forcing defence works better, but 3♥ is still makeable.

East's 5 card major 1♦ probably stops the suit being played by the opposition, instead west playing 2♥ or east 1NT. In theory 1NT is beaten, but it may not be.

8

♠ 1086
♥ 52
♦ J75
♣ 98654

♠ Q93
♥ 109
♦ 932
♣ AKJ103

♠ AK5
♥ AJ864
♦ Q864
♣ Q

♠ J742
♥ KQ73
♦ AK10
♣ 72

 Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

East opens 1♥, and west is worth 2♣. With such poor red suits he probably tries 2NT over east's 2♦ rebid, rather than 2♥, and finds himself raised to game. East probably bids 2NT over 2♥ anyway, so the same contract results.

3NT has nine top tricks, though declarer must not carelessly overtake the club queen. Indeed it is quite likely south finds himself under pressure in the red suits, being end-played to cede an overtrick.

Conservatives may play in 2♥. This looks as if it only makes eight or nine tricks for a poor score.

9

♠ QJ75
♥ AJ872
♦ A4
♣ J10

♠ A963
♥ 10954
♦ K632
♣ 7

♠ K104
♥ K3
♦ J87
♣ AK853

♠ 82
♥ Q6
♦ Q1095
♣ Q9642

Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

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

Any east foolish enough to overcall 2♣ after north's 1♥, deserves the penalty ensuing when this runs round to north who doubles, south converting to penalty with a pass.

More likely south will declare 1NT. West can credibly lead either spades or diamonds, and will probably select the former. Careful defence should now prevail, though the defence could slip and allow south to score tricks in clubs or diamonds.

This nice part-score hand demonstrates the folly of vulnerable overcalls on poor suits, and that you don't need to declare to get a plus score.

10

♠ 9752
♥ A98
♦ J1097
♣ A8

♠ A8
♥ J105
♦ K82
♣ K9654

♠ KJ10
♥ KQ76
♦ A4
♣ 10732

♠ Q643
♥ 432
♦ Q653
♣ QJ

Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

With trumps 3:3 4♥ is a lucky make. However E/W are far more likely to play 2NT or 3NT, particularly after an Acoll 1NT start.

5 card majors may manage to stop in 3♣ after east opens the suit.

Even if the defence lead spades, rather than diamonds, there is still time to find the killing diamond switch against 3NT, as declarer needs to lose the lead three times to establish nine tricks.

Those stopping in part-score will do well, though some might be allowed home in 3NT on a spade lead and continuation.

11

♠ J
♥ 4
♦ A108752
♣ AQJ95

♠ KQ964
♥ KJ1097
♦
♣ K82

♠ 10752
♥ AQ52
♦ K93
♣ 76

♠ A83
♥ 863
♦ QJ64
♣ 1043

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

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

Whoever declares here will score well after west opens 1♠ and north shows his minors. N/S easily make 5♦, when one of two finesses succeeds, so the hands with high card superiority are the ones who need to sacrifice - E/W.

It is not guaranteed that N/S will bid 5♦ over west's unbeatable 4♠, so the scores could well range from 420 E/W to 550 N/S.

There is little in the play of any contract so it all boils down to bravery in the bidding, with those wests judging to take out 5♦x at least avoiding a joint bottom.

12

♠ 9
♥ K7
♦ Q87
♣ KQ107652

♠ KJ876542
♥ A2
♦ A63
♣

♠ 10
♥ 98643
♦ J1052
♣ J43

♠ AQ3
♥ QJ105
♦ K94
♣ A98

Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

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

Another high level bidding problem, with south having to decide what to call after west's 4♠, he either having opened it or having bid it over south's 3NT, north having overcalled 1♠ with 2♣. Most south's will double 4♠.

With short spades and a seven card suit north does best to take out to 5♠ - otherwise he only collects 500.

Care is needed in the play after the spade ace takes the opening lead, and trumps prove to be 3:0. Declarer needs to pull just one top trump in hand, then knock out the heart ace. If west wins, and tries a spade declarer can ruff high, then take the marked trump finesse.

If declarer errs by pulling trumps, west can duck the first heart, and dummy is entryless, with west holding the diamond ace.

13

♠ 642
♥ 4
♦ AQ753
♣ AK107

♠ A75
♥ K1082
♦ 962
♣ Q98

♠ Q3
♥ AJ963
♦ 1084
♣ 532

♠ KJ1098
♥ Q75
♦ KJ
♣ J64

Dealer: North
Both Vulnerable

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

North opens 1♦, south responds 1♠ and north rebids 2♣. South is a bit stuck if playing fourth suit game forcing. Having fitting cards with partner maybe this is still the best approach, and will find the 5:3 fit spade game.

Some may languish is 2♦, scoring poorly. Others will declare spade part-scores.

The defence are hamstrung defending spades. If they play trumps, denying heart ruffs, the diamonds provide enough discards. If they don't declarer can ruff two losing hearts in dummy.

14

♠ KJ9432
♥ Q5
♦ J64
♣ A2

♠ 8
♥ KJ76
♦ 975
♣ K10865

♠ AQ65
♥ A3
♦ 1032
♣ Q743

♠ 107
♥ 109842
♦ AKQ8
♣ J9

Dealer: East
Neither Vulnerable

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

When west opens a weak NT north presumably bids 2♠. East should compete at love all. Double is the most flexible bid, and assuming west doesn't pass for penalties should find E/W's club fit, which looks like an easy 110.

Some norths may be allowed to declare 2♠, and should only lose a club, two hearts and two trumps.

This love all part-score battle will as usual be won by those managing to declare.

15

♠ 103
♥ Q1084
♦ AK86
♣ K92

♠ K52
♥ AK76
♦ 1032
♣ Q54

♠ A98
♥ 3
♦ QJ54
♣ AJ763

♠ QJ764
♥ J952
♦ 97
♣ 108

Dealer: South
N-S Vulnerable

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

Playing Acol west is awkwardly placed after opening 1♣ and getting a 1♥ response. 2♣ is his only sound bid, as 1NT or 2♦ promise extra values. East will probably try 2NT, and will play there. 5 card majors should rebid 1NT, probably raised to the same 2NT.

On anything but a diamond lead declarer cannot set up nine tricks without ceding five, as he must lose the lead three times in diamonds and clubs.

It looks as if east will be held to 120 as south will surely lead a major, but some west's may manage 150 when north leads fourth best of his longest and strongest. Who knows - some may bid and make game, though others could do so and go light.

16

♠ QJ986
♥ 974
♦ 1095
♣ 64

♠ 752
♥ 52
♦ 87632
♣ J87

♠ AK4
♥ QJ1063
♦ K4
♣ A102

♠ 103
♥ AK8
♦ AQJ
♣ KQ953

Dealer: West
E-W Vulnerable

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

Assuming west opens 1♥ this runs to south who must double (1NT showing 10-13). He then rebids 1NT or correctly 2NT (18-20 in the protective seat) over north's 1♠, hurriedly passed.

South's no trump contract makes only six tricks on the obvious top heart lead, so it looks like N/S will go minus at many tables - indeed even 2♣ ought to be beaten, should south select this underbid.

A handful of wests may open a strong NT. South is probably best to defend this. Most wests will get home, but those norths who realise they are unlikely to enjoy their spade suit could lead a club. This strikes gold, the defence managing seven tricks before declarer. West has to keep king/other diamond. After his clubs south exits in spades to end-play him.

17

♠ J632
♥ K5
♦ Q2
♣ A9542

♠ 875
♥ J8764
♦ 863
♣ 76

♠ A1094
♥ 2
♦ J74
♣ KQ1083

♠ KQ
♥ AQ1093
♦ AK1095
♣ J

Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

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

Although south has a shapely 19HCP he shouldn't get carried away when north drags up a passed hand two level response. With only limited fits in both main suits and a maximum of 30 or so HCP the auction should settle in 3NT by north, or 4♥ or 5♦ by south.

10 tricks are the limit in no trump on a club lead, probably found by east.

Double dummy twelve tricks can be made in diamonds and eleven in hearts via a first round heart knave finesse through west, but few will find this.

In real life 420 is likely to be the limit in hearts and 400 in diamonds, so the no trumppers will top the traveller.

18

♠ AKJ108764
♥ Q102
♦ 6
♣ 10

♠ 9
♥ 74
♦ Q1052
♣ AJ9754

♠ 52
♥ 985
♦ A9874
♣ Q32

♠ Q3
♥ AKJ63
♦ KJ3
♣ K86

Dealer: East
N-S Vulnerable

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

When south opens 1♥ north will get excited. Hopefully he will be able to show his spades, then check for aces.

I can foresee some blasting slam, and the odd one may succeed if the defence fail to take their two aces immediately.

A strong NT by south makes life easier, since there is a transfer available, saving space.

The odd west may make a weak jump in clubs, but this really shouldn't affect the auction too much, and the traveller should be largely 650s N/S.

19

♠ KQ743
♥ Q972
♦ 7
♣ 974

♠ J8
♥ AJ106
♦ AKJ532
♣ 3

♠ A962
♥ 83
♦ 1084
♣ J1082

♠ 105
♥ K54
♦ Q96
♣ AKQ65

Dealer: South
E-W Vulnerable

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

When south opens his weak NT, west may double with his good suit, plus an entry. The defence can take the first eight tricks, for 300. Even if south gets a diamond trick, it doesn't really help, since the clubs fail to behave.

North is likely to take out a double to spades, and is certainly in with chances of making eight tricks. West is unlikely to defend 2♠, instead declaring 3♦, which should come home, perhaps with an overtrick.

Playing 5 card majors south opens 1♣, west overcalls 1♦, and north essays 1♠. With no great fit N/S may let west play the comfortable 2♦ when east raises.

E/W should go plus here, but the size is in question.

20

♠ AJ86
♥ AK96
♦ 2
♣ Q1064

♠ KQ7
♥ Q75
♦ 10543
♣ AKJ

♠ 9432
♥ J10842
♦ K8
♣ 97

♠ 105
♥ 3
♦ AQJ976
♣ 8532

Dealer: West
Both Vulnerable

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

Acolyte wests open 1♦ and north doubles. South passes. On a trump lead west only makes four tricks, losing 800, so does best to redouble. East can play 1♥ now, which can certainly make, though may not. N/S will hardly let 1♥ play, and will presumably declare their club fit, probably making 130. If they try no trump instead, the lack of south entries mean even eight tricks are a struggle.

Some wests will open a strong NT, and east will transfer to hearts. Assuming south doubles, and west bids 2♥, north may well decide to defend, assuming a misfit.

In fact N/S can make 4♣, if they can find that strain, but may be just as well off trying to get 100s from 2♥.

21

♠ KQ10875
♥ 83
♦ 975
♣ J10

♠ 2
♥ AJ106
♦ AJ103
♣ A963

♠ J43
♥ Q74
♦ Q8642
♣ 42

♠ A96
♥ K952
♦ K
♣ KQ875

Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

North has a classic weak two or Multi in spades. South will bid 4♠ over the former and 4♥ over the latter (pass or correct). West will double. This could result in either E/W making 5♦ with the red suits behaving, or 4♠ being doubled for penalties.

4♠x looks as if it only has three losers if the heart lead is missed, but dummy can be forced to ruff diamonds, killing the club winners, and can be held to eight or nine tricks.

If south is the opener with 1♠, west may pass, north bid 1♠ and south raise. Now E/W may never get into the auction, though west should double 2♠ for takeout, declaring at least a part-score.

Looks like a wide range of scores on this one.

23

♠ AQ862
♥ J7
♦ AK10873
♣

♠ K75
♥ AQ842
♦ 9
♣ 10532

♠ 103
♥ K1093
♦ Q4
♣ J9864

♠ J94
♥ 65
♦ J652
♣ AKQ7

Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

South will pass at most tables, and north has to decide how to bid his hand. Perhaps best is to open 1♦, reverse into spades, then rebid the suit, getting the 5:6 shape across. Others will open 1♠, pretending to be 5:5.

The end result is that some will declare 5♦, some 4♠. Assuming the oppo manage to cash their hearts declarer makes 5♦ when the spade finesse wins, the other losing spades going on clubs. 4♠ appears to make an overtrick if the 10 can be pinned, but declarer has no dummy entry without help, so must lose to the king, and scores only 620.

The traveller will range from 600s to the unfortunate 710s conceded when east selects the spade ten as his opening lead.

22

♠ Q7
♥ 10
♦ AKQ943
♣ QJ42

♠ J854
♥ J643
♦ 765
♣ AK

♠ K6
♥ K9752
♦ J2
♣ 9765

♠ A10932
♥ AQ8
♦ 108
♣ 1083

Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

After three passes and north's 1♦ N/S could settle in 2♦ after south's preference. East might now protect with 2♥, since N/S seem limited.

However, this could provoke the oppo into bidding the cold 3NT, which may be missed otherwise.

Some norths will rebid 3♦ rather than 2♣, and this will surely result in 3NT by south.

5♦ makes on the nose, and 3NT seems to make an overtrick so, as often, the no trumpers may top the traveller. I suspect many may miss the games as it usually pays to conservative at Pairs.

24

♠ Q10
♥ Q82
♦ K83
♣ KQJ73

♠ KJ5432
♥ 654
♦ 94
♣ 96

♠ A76
♥ AK7
♦ AQ10
♣ A1054

♠ 98
♥ J1093
♦ J7652
♣ 82

Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

If west opens a weak two or Multi he is going to be mighty nervous awaiting the dummy when raised to game. However, east's rock-crusher means only overtricks are at stake.

At some tables north may open, and east double. East rebids 2NT over west's 1♠ and raises west's 3♠ to game.

Eleven tricks are available double dummy in spades and no trump, though the no trumpers would be wise to take a losing spade finesse, ensuring the spade suit runs. This holds the contract to 430.

The traveller should be topped by those taking eleven tricks in spades, but some may discard wrongly and let extras through.

25

♠ AJ103
♥ AQ
♦ Q1074
♣ J83

♠ Q652
♥ 9652
♦ 632
♣ 92

♠ K9
♥
♦ A985
♣ AKQ10654

♠ 874
♥ KJ108743
♦ KJ
♣ 7

Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

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

When north's weak NT is doubled south doesn't know how many hearts to bid. Game is the answer, but I suspect few will bid more than 3♥.

East will not take hearts lying down, and is likely to bid to at least 4♣ himself, in danger of pushing the opponents into the cold 4♥ game.

5 card majors open 1♦ in north, and east overcalls in clubs. The same level decisions occur, as south presumably bids his hearts.

Par is for E/W to lose 300 in 5♣x over south's game, but I suspect that will not happen too often.

26

♠ 1054
♥ KJ92
♦ Q854
♣ J6

♠ AKQ86
♥ 103
♦ 1076
♣ A98

♠ 3
♥ AQ874
♦ J9
♣ Q10432

♠ J972
♥ 65
♦ AK32
♣ K75

Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

Few south's will open vulnerable, so west will open 1♠, and east's 1NT may well be passed out. The cards lie sufficiently well that the defence can do no better than take a club and four diamonds.

A few easts may deem their hand worthy of a two level response, and are in danger of getting too high if they try to show both suits.

4♣ can be made, but anyone playing hearts will do well to make nine tricks, with only eight theoretically available.

There could well be a few minuses E/W, the top probably being +150.

27

♠ 8
♥ K108
♦ Q10
♣ AK109743

♠ AKJ10532
♥ Q7
♦ J93
♣ 6

♠ 764
♥ AJ654
♦ A874
♣ 2

♠ Q9
♥ 932
♦ K652
♣ QJ85

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	-	-	-	-
S	2	-	-	-	-
E	-	3	3	6	-
W	-	3	4	6	-

North will overcall west's 1♠ with 2♣. East, playing Acol, has a choice of 2♥, or possibly a sputnik double. Playing 5 card majors 3♣ is best, showing a sound raise in spades.

The result is likely to be a competitive auction, with west bidding 4♠, and north advancing to 5♣.

Most wests will go on to 5♠, though the winning bid is double - declarer in 5♣x can lose two aces, two hearts and a heart ruff, ceding 500, against the 480 available in spades.

The same nice lie of the cards means 6♠ is actually unbeatable, if unbidable, with the heart king onside and the suit 3:3. The third round of spades is an entry to dummy's hearts.

28

♠ QJ
♥ Q87
♦ AQJ5
♣ AK32

♠ K975
♥ AK10
♦ 1096
♣ J96

♠ 1086
♥ J9654
♦ K4
♣ 875

♠ A432
♥ 32
♦ 8732
♣ Q104

Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

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

The auction is likely to proceed 1♦ (or 1♠), south responding 1♠, and north rebidding 2NT.

Some souths will pass, and get a good board when east leads hearts and has an entry in diamonds. Indeed declarer is lucky to make a heart trick at all.

It looks like the traveller will be topped by 120s, with the 110s in diamonds close behind. Those bidding the poor 3NT will do badly, unless the defence slip up by failing to lead their longest suit.

This concludes a set with a fair bit of competitive action.

Ave HCP	N 9.89	S 10.29	E 9.75	W 10.07	Balanced	N 12	S 18	E 14	W 15
Voids/singletons	N 2/12	S 0/6	E 2/8	W 4/8	7+ suit	N 3	S 1	E 1	W 2