ECatsBridge Simultaneous Pairs for BBC Children in Need

Wednesday 11th November 2026

Together we can …

… and by competing in this Simultaneous Pairs you have once again certainly shown that **together we can indeed do something to help make a difference** to children who really need our help. Over the past years we (well you) have helped raise an amazing **£1,474,766.47** … we are so close to one and half million -will we make it this year ? We are keeping our fingers crossed!

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

https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/currentdonations.asp

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

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

With very best wishes

Anna & Mark – the ECatsBridge Team

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Board 1	♠ AJ982 ♥ J6 ♦ 42 ♣ AK73	Dealer N Vul: None
♠ 54 ♥ AQ10942 ♦ AKQ ♣ 85		♠ 106 ♥ K53 ♦ J1076 ♣ J1062
	♠ KQ73 ♥ 87 ♦ 9853 ♣ Q94	

When North opens 1♠ South will raise according to agreements. A Bergen Raise of 3♣ allows West to overcall 3♥, while a jump to 3♠ applies more pressure, as West might be reluctant to venture 4♥.

Both sides have four defensive winners, so in theory nine tricks should be the limit in either major suit contract.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 2	♠ AJ873	Dealer E
	♥ 10	Vul: N-S
	♦ J982	
	♣ KQ5	

♠ 5		♠ K9
♥ Q6532		♥ KJ987
♦ A763		♦ K10
♣ 742		♣ AJ93
	♠ Q10642	
	♥ A4	
	♦ Q54	
	♣ 1086	

An old chestnut for those who play five-card majors and a strong notrump – do you open 1♥ or 1NT?

After 1NT West transfers to hearts, and North can bid 2♥ for takeout. If East then bids 3♥ South has to choose between 3♠ and 4♠. Jumping to 4♠ puts the question to EW. If they go on to 5♥ a hungry South might decide to double.

If South bids 3♠, West will at least think about bidding 4♥, assuming that partner does not have much wasted in spades.

If East starts with 1♥ West can jump to 4♥. If South has overcalled 1♠ North will bid 4♠. If South has passed North might adhere to the old adage that bidding 4♥ operates as a transfer to 4♠, although it would be very brave at the prevailing vulnerability.

It looks like there should be 10 tricks in hearts, a spade lead simplifying matters for declarer. There is one amusing possibility: if South leads the ♣6 North can play the ♣K. If declarer takes the ♣A and plays a heart South wins and switches to a spade, North winning and returning the ♣5. If declarer puts in the ♣9 South can win and will surely return a club for one down.

If NS play in spades and the defenders lead a heart declarer wins with the ♥A. Taking the spade finesse allows East to win and switch to diamonds, the third round ruff giving the defenders an extra undertrick.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 3	♠ 109874	Dealer S
	♥ K10	Vul: E-W
	♦ A4	
	♣ AQ82	

♠ J	♠ Q653
♥ J8764	♥ A93
♦ KQJ5	♦ 87
♣ J95	♣ K764

♠ AK2
♥ Q52
♦ 109632
♣ 103

If West opens 2♥ to show that suit and a minor North overcalls 2♠. Assuming East is not tempted to compete South must choose between raising to 3♠, bidding 2NT or passing. All of them are likely to end the auction.

Where West passes North opens 1♠ and South responds according to system. In Acol style, after 1♠-2♦-2♠ South might try 3♠. After 1♠-2♠ it would be a brave West who backed in with a double. After 1♠-1NT-2♣-2♠ North is likely to let matters rest.

If North plays in spades and East leads a diamond declarer wins with the ♦A and might cross to dummy with a spade and play the ♣10 for the ♣J, ♣Q and ♣K. If East continues with a diamond West wins and returns the ♦5. Declarer ruffs and if East discards the simple line is to play the ♥K. In due course declarer will play to ruff a club with the ♠A and the fall of the ♣9 will result in nine tricks being scored.

If South plays in notrumps and West leads the ♦K declarer wins and will probably play the ♠10 to the ♠A. When the ♠J appears declarer can continue with the ♦10. The fall of the ♦87 and the positions of the outstanding honour cards make declarer a favourite to record nine tricks, provided the spade finesse is taken.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 4	♠ 9	Dealer W
	♥ Q1072	Vul: Both
	♦ 9853	
	♣ AQ62	

♠ K62	♠ AJ1043
♥ AJ83	♥ 54
♦ AQ76	♦ 4
♣ J3	♣ K9854

♠ Q875
♥ K96
♦ KJ102
♣ 107

If West opens 1NT (13-15/14-16/15-17) East transfers to spades and then, facing 14-16/15-17 bids 3♣ (its also possible opposite 13-15, but pushy at this form of scoring).

When West starts with an Acol style 1♥ and rebids 1NT over East's 1♠ a checkback 2♣ locates the 5-3 spade fit.

Conclusion: some pairs will bid the spade game.

If West is the declarer in a spade contract and North leads a heart declarer takes South's ♥K with the ♥A. It's possible to cross to the ♠A and play a diamond to the queen, hoping to be able to discard a heart. The alternative is to play a club. If North takes the ♣A and does not cash the ♥Q declarer might then take the diamond finesse, hoping to dispose of the heart loser.

If North cashes the ♥Q and then exits with a club declarer wins with the ♣K, comes to hand with the ♦A, pitches a club on the ♥J and then crossruffs the minors, easily coming to ten tricks.

If East is playing in spades South might start with the ♣10 covered by the ♣J, North taking the ♣A and switching to a heart for the king and ace. If declarer continues with a spade to the ten South wins and plays a heart, North winning and continuing with a heart. Declarer ruffs and, as the cards lie, now needs to take the diamond finesse to record ten tricks. It will also be necessary to take the club finesse.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 5	♠ J86 ♥ A1076 ♦ 1032 ♣ Q76	Dealer N Vul: N-S
♠ 1042 ♥ 5 ♦ Q976 ♣ KJ842		♠ AQ ♥ 32 ♦ A854 ♣ A10953
	♠ K9753 ♥ KQJ984 ♦ KJ ♣	

Although 5422 is not an ideal shape, there will doubtless be many who will open the East hand 1NT (12-14/13-15/14-16). If South overcalls 2♣ to show the majors and West doubles (usually played as suggesting the minors) North's 2♥ will see South bid 4♥ (or even 4♣!?). The interesting decisions will follow if East decides to bid 5♣ and South then tries 5♥. Holding three aces, East is likely to double rather than bid 6♣.

If East opens 1♣ and South overcalls 2♣ West might raise to 3♣. That probably won't stop North from bidding 3♥ and we will be back on familiar territory when South goes on to game.

If East opens a Precision style 1♦ and South overcalls 2♦ West passes and when North bids 2♥ East might try 2NT, suggesting at least nine cards in the minors. South might then try jumping to 4♣, attempting to show the distributional strength of the hand.

There will be 11 tricks in hearts unless declarer goes wrong in diamonds (if East tries underleading the ♦A after winning a trick with the ♠A 12 tricks are possible).

If EW play in clubs they should record 10 tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 6	♠ 643	Dealer E
	♥ Q642	Vul: E-W
	♦ 102	
	♣ 10873	
♠ KQJ2		♠ 1085
♥ J8		♥ A75
♦ AQ6		♦ 9754
♣ AK52		♣ Q96
	♠ A97	
	♥ K1093	
	♦ KJ83	
	♣ J4	

If South opens 1NT (10-12/12-14) and West doubles, North might initiate a scramble, a pass asking partner to redouble after which North bids 2♣. The problem with scrambling is that you are a level higher. Here, even if NS locate their heart fit they will be no better off than if they were in 1NTx.

If North passes after West's double, East has enough to defend. If South decides to run, bidding 2♣ then redoubling if it is doubled will locate the heart fit.

Finding a route to 3NTas EW after South opens 1NT will not be easy.

If South opens 1♣ West doubles and when East responds 1NT West has an easy raise to game.

If the opening bid is 1♦, West doubles. East will not like the idea of bidding 1NT without a diamond stopper. If 1NT is ruled out 2♣ is safer than bidding a three-card major (partners tend to get excited). Here nothing bad will happen, as West will probably jump to 3NT.

With 3NT making, losing 500 in a doubled 1NT/2♥ might prove to be a bargain.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 7	♠ K		Dealer S
	♥ AQ4		Vul: Both
	♦ QJ982		
	♣ K765		
♠ 764			♠ A10983
♥ 1087532			♥ K
♦ 63			♦ A
♣ A2			♣ Q109843
	♠ QJ52		
	♥ J96		
	♦ K10754		
	♣ J		

If North opens 1♦ East has three possibilities; to overcall 1♠, 2♣ or 3♣ (promising spades and clubs). Overcalling 1♠ sees South support diamonds, choosing between 2♦ and 3♦. East might bid 3♣ over 2♦, but can hardly bid 4♣ over 3♦.

If East overcalls 2♣ and South raises diamonds East can introduce the spades.

Overcalling 3♣ sees South bid 3♦. Then East must decide if the distribution justifies another bid. With more than half the high cards in short suits I'm not sure it is. If East does bid 3♠ South might be tempted to double.

If EW play in spades and South leads a diamond declarer wins and does best to tackle the side suit, playing a club to the ace and a club. If North tries ducking South ruffs, but declarer is in control, ruffing the diamond return, ruffing a club, returning to hand with the ♠A, ruffing a club and exiting with a heart. The defenders get the ♥A and two more trumps but declarer has nine tricks.

Leading the ♣J will not help the defenders as long as declarer takes dummy's ♣A and continues the suit, again leading to nine tricks.

If South finds a low spade lead declarer wins and plays two rounds of clubs. Now the defence of withholding the ♣K is a winner. South ruffs, cashes the ♠QJ and exits with a diamond, restricting declarer to eight tricks.

Leading a heart might also hold declarer to eight tricks in spades, provided North switches to the ♠K and then finds the ducking play in clubs.

If NS play in diamonds they will probably lose a trick in each suit.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 8	♠ J7632 ♥ AJ953 ♦ 6 ♣ J7	Dealer W Vul: None
♠ 54 ♥ 7 ♦ K94 ♣ AKQ9642		♠ K8 ♥ KQ62 ♦ AJ82 ♣ 1083
	♠ AQ109 ♥ 1084 ♦ Q10753 ♣ 5	

If West opens 1♣ North might overcall 2♣. If East decides to bid 3NT West will be happy to display the dummy.

Some players might decide to open the West hand 3NT, ending the auction. Treating the clubs as a solid suit is a matter for the individual conscience.

If West is in 3NT and North leads a low heart declarer has at least ten tricks. There is a double dummy way to make 11, declarer cashing dummy's ♦A and then running the clubs, keeping ♠K8 ♥K6 ♦J in dummy. The last club, discarding dummy's ♦J will be too much for South, down to ♠AQ ♥10 ♦Q10. Discarding a diamond is out of the question, while parting with a heart allows declarer to play two rounds of diamonds, the ♠K scoring at the end. Pitching the ♠Q allows declarer to duck a spade.

If North makes the textbook lead of the ♥A against 3NT it should not be difficult to switch to a spade for two down.

If East is in 3NT the winning defence will be much harder to find, although if North is known to hold the majors it is possible, South leading the ♥4, North winning and finding the switch.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 9	♠ A72 ♥ 84 ♦ J42 ♣ Q10865	Dealer N Vul: E-W
♠ J109843 ♥ K7 ♦ A10 ♣ 974		♠ K5 ♥ AQ63 ♦ K9863 ♣ AK
	♠ Q6 ♥ J10952 ♦ Q75 ♣ J32	

If East opens 1♦ West responds 1♠ and then probably bids 4♠ over the 3NT rebid. It is unusual to conceal a four-card major, but if you are playing Acol a reverse into 2♥ is not forcing, even though it promises a powerful hand. If you play that a jump to 3NT promises a running diamond suit you have to follow a different route.

If East opens 2NT (19-20) West will again have to choose between playing in spades or notrumps.

If East starts with a strong 1♣ West makes a positive response in spades (perhaps via a 1NT inversion). As before the final destination will be either 3NT or 4♠.

If EW play in spades declarer is only going to lose two trump tricks and score +650.

If EW play in notrumps 11 tricks will be made after a heart lead. Otherwise the best declarer can hope for is ten tricks (and the line to do that is not without risk). For example, North leads a club declarer wins in dummy, comes to hand with the ♥K and plays the ♠J, putting up dummy's ♠K and then attacks diamonds.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 10	♠ 8765	Dealer E
	♥ 9732	Vul: Both
	♦ 652	
	♣ Q4	

♠ AQ9		♠ J3
♥ AKJ6		♥ 854
♦ AQ8		♦ KJ9
♣ A53		♣ J10762

	♠ K1042	
	♥ Q10	
	♦ 10743	
	♣ K98	

If West opens 2♣ and rebids 2NT East might look for a five-card heart suit before settling for 3NT.

If West starts with a strong 1♣ the final contract will still be 3NT.

Suppose North leads a spade against 3NT. Declarer plays dummy's ♠J for the ♠K and ♠A and will want to broach the club suit. On this layout a low club towards dummy will probably see North take the ♣Q after which declarer has enough entries to dummy to finish with 12 tricks.

If North follows with the ♣4 South wins and probably returns a spade. Declarer wins, cashes the ♣A and lives happily ever after with +690.

Given unlimited entries, you can tackle the club suit by playing the ♣J, scoring four tricks just over 27% of the time. Starting with a low club offers a 93% chance of three tricks, and also gives you some chances of securing four, as happens here.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	6	4	5	3	6
W	6	4	5	3	6

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Board 11	♠ AK92		Dealer S
	♥ Q4		Vul: None
	♦ QJ8		
	♣ J1053		
♠			♠ J85
♥ K108753			♥ A96
♦ 9752			♦ AK1063
♣ A86			♣ K7
	♠ Q107643		
	♥ J2		
	♦ 4		
	♣ Q942		

If South opens 2♠ North raises to 4♠. Even though East knows partner is likely to be short in spades (possibly void) it is still a brave decision to take a bid. Doubling will see partner bid 5♥.

If South starts with a Multi 2♦ North bids a '*Pass or correct*' 2♥ after which East will do something depending on agreements. As it happens, East's action (Double, 2NT or 3♦) should result in at least game being reached. (6♦ is perhaps a possibility after a 3♦ overcall.)

If South does not open and West starts with 2♥ North might double. If East bids 4♥ South bids 4♠, leaving East to consider the merits of doubling, or bidding 5♦/5♥.

If West starts with a Multi 2♦ and North doubles, East can bid 2NT as a forcing inquiry. Assuming the heart fit comes to light South might back in with 4♠.

If NS play in a doubled spade contract they can be held to seven tricks if the defenders score a club ruff.

If EW play in hearts or diamonds they are sure to take 12 tricks and might occasionally collect all 13.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 12	♠ 96	Dealer W
	♥ K97	Vul: N-S
	♦ AKQ	
	♣ AQ962	
♠ A1073		♠ Q852
♥ J42		♥ AQ1053
♦ 10874		♦ 3
♣ 43		♣ K108
	♠ KJ4	
	♥ 86	
	♦ J9652	
	♣ J75	

If North opens 1♣ East overcalls 1♥ and West raises to 2♥. If North decides to rebid 2NT South will do well to retire to 3♣, not so easy where 1♣ might be based on a two-card suit.

If North starts with a strong 1♣ the normal thing for East to do is pass, hoping to bid on the next round, suggesting reasonable values. For instance, 1♣-(Pass)-1♦-(Pass)-1NT-(2♣*)-Pass-(2♠).

If East overcalls immediately (either 1♥ or something to indicate the majors) a fit is located.

If EW play in spades, the number of tricks secured will depend on how declarer approaches the spade suit (assuming no help from the defence). Although it is theoretically possible to take 10 tricks, nine is more likely.

If EW play in hearts declarer should manage eight tricks, but scoring nine will require a good view in the spade suit. For instance, after a trump lead by South declarer has to play a spade to the ten.

If NS play in clubs and East leads a diamond declarer wins and must play a spade to the jack. If West wins and switched to the ♥2 declarer must play low. If West returns a diamond East can ruff, but declarer should emerge with nine tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 13	♠ Q83 ♥ K ♦ AKQ3 ♣ 98542	Dealer N Vul: Both
♠ 10 ♥ 9642 ♦ J8542 ♣ J73		♠ J92 ♥ AJ108 ♦ 976 ♣ A106
	♠ AK7654 ♥ Q753 ♦ 10 ♣ KQ	

If North opens 1♣ South responds 1♠. North is not strong enough to reverse into diamonds, so raising to 2♠ is the practical approach. South might then make some overtures towards slam, starting with either 3♣ or a splinter of 4♦, but it should be possible to stop safely.

If South makes a transfer response of 1♥ North can bid 1♠ to promise three-card support and the spade game will be reached.

If North starts with 1♦ and rebids 2♣ (in Precision style, promising at least nine cards in the minors) South can continue with 2♥, North jumping to 3♠ to show the shape and strength. South might be tempted to ask for keycards at this stage, but will then have to settle 5♠.

There should always be 11 tricks in spades.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 14	♠ J93 ♥ J ♦ Q5 ♣ A986532	Dealer E Vul: None
♠ KQ6 ♥ 10854 ♦ A109 ♣ 1074		♠ A874 ♥ A972 ♦ K6 ♣ KQJ
	♠ 1052 ♥ KQ63 ♦ J87432 ♣	

If East starts with a 15-17 1NT West might not bother to look for a heart fit because of the distribution, raising directly to 3NT.

If East opens an Acol style 1♥ West raises according to system. If East then rebids in notrumps, West might again prefer the nine trick game.

If East begins with a strong 1♣ and West shows a balanced positive East might look for a major suit fit, which increases the chance that 4♥ might be the final contract.

If West happens to be the declarer in 4♥ and North leads two rounds of clubs, South's ruff will ensure one down.

If the contract is 3NT, declarer will usually collect 10 tricks. Even if South avoids a diamond lead declarer can play on hearts, losing two tricks in that suit along with a club.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 15	♠ Q76	Dealer S
	♥ 87652	Vul: N-S
	♦ K1063	
	♣ 2	

♠ KJ83		♠ 54
♥ AJ		♥ K1043
♦ 87		♦ AJ4
♣ AQ843		♣ J975
	♠ A1092	
	♥ Q9	
	♦ Q952	
	♣ K106	

Is the South hand worth an opening bid? Starting with 1♣ might see West try 1NT. After looking for a heart fit East, following the principle that a contract is generally easier to play when you know where most of the missing high cards are located, can bid 3NT.

If South opens 1♦ West might overcall 2♣, despite the poor suit quality/length. If North raises to 2♦ East has a reasonable hand, but it's hard to find an alternative to bidding 3♣ (unless you think 2NT is a possibility). There is no reason for West to bid on at this form of scoring.

When South does not open the bidding and West starts with 1♣ East responds 1♥ and then supports clubs after the 1♠ rebid. Even if East jumps to 3♣ West is unlikely to go on.

If East makes a transfer response of 1♦ West bids 1♠. If East then bids 3♣ West might risk bidding 3♦, looking for a stopper.

Were West to open 1NT (13-15/14-16/15-17) there is some chance that 3NT will be reached.

The fate of 3NT will depend on a number of factors. An opening bid by South will assist declarer, especially when it comes to tacking the club suit. Combined with the opening lead, it might be enough for declarer to get home.

If North leads an unlikely club declarer will be virtually assure of nine tricks and will only need a correct view in spades to get up to 10.

After a diamond lead declarer will win the third round with the ♦A (assuming South puts in the ♦9) and play dummy's ♣J for the king and ace. If declarer now takes the top hearts ending in dummy and runs the ♣7 there will be nine tricks thanks to the fall of the ♥Q.

If South has not opened, declarer might not pick up the clubs, but on the other hand North might lead a heart after which declarer, with four heart tricks assured, will be able to give up a club and might even record an overtrick.

When West plays in a club contract it should be a question of 10 or 11 tricks, depending on how declarer tackles the trump suit.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 16			Dealer W
	♠ 963		Vul: E-W
	♥ 943		
	♦ A3		
	♣ KQ542		
♠ QJ104			♠ 72
♥ KQ6			♥ 752
♦ J1096			♦ KQ542
♣ 98			♣ AJ7
	♠ AK85		
	♥ AJ108		
	♦ 87		
	♣ 1063		

If East opens 1♦ and South doubles West might try redoubling, suggesting a maximum pass (the alternative is to raise diamonds). North can bid 3♣ over 2♦, but were West to bid 3♦ North is unlikely to bid 4♣. A responsive double is a possibility when South would be doing well to pass.

When East passes initially and South opens 1NT that should end the auction.

If South starts with 1♣ North raises according to agreements, probably ending the auction.

If South is in 1NT and West leads the ♠Q, a smooth duck by South might sometimes see West continue with the ♠4, which costs the defenders a trick. It should not be enough for declarer to make the contract (East can win the first club and switch to the ♦K, removing dummy's entry).

If South plays in clubs and West leads the ♠Q declarer wins, plays a club for the king and ace and ducks the spade return, West winning and switching to a diamond. Declarer takes dummy's ♦A, cashes the ♣Q and then plays two rounds of spades, discarding dummy's remaining diamond, a neat loser on loser play that should see declarer collect eight tricks.

If EW play in diamonds they should score eight tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

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Board 17	♠ AK3	Dealer N
	♥ K102	Vul: None
	♦ 8	
	♣ KQ8752	
♠ 10		♠ QJ865
♥ J9743		♥ A865
♦ K953		♦ AJ62
♣ 1064		♣
	♠ 9742	
	♥ Q	
	♦ Q1074	
	♣ AJ93	

If North opens 1♣ and East overcalls 1♠ South can only raise if partner has promised club length. After 1♣-(1♠)-3♣-(Pass) North might try 3NT.

If East doubles a 1♣ opening and South raises, West might stretch to bid hearts, possibly encouraging East to bid 4♥ over 3NT.

If North's 1♣ is strong and East passes (hoping to be able to show a reasonable hand by bidding on the next round) South might respond 1♦ (the start of an 'impossible negative' sequence). When North rebids 2♣ South jumps to 3♥ showing 8+ points and a singleton heart. Then North would bid 3NT.

The impossible negative has fallen out of favour, some partnerships using an immediate response of 1♥ to show any hand with 8-11 points. Another idea is to use a response of 2♥ to indicate any 4441.

If East makes a conventional overcall of 1♣, for example 1♠ to show two suits of the same rank, South doubles and West bids 2♦, promising better diamonds than clubs, but also suggesting a bigger fit for one of the majors. If North then bids 3♣, East might be tempted to bid 3♥, paving the way for a possible save over 3NT.

3NT is easy enough, while there are three unavoidable losers in a club contract. 4♥ is a good spot for EW. On this layout the defenders need to lead a trump to stay one step ahead. For instance, if South leads the ♣A declarer ruffs and plays a spade, North winning and switching to a heart. Declarer takes the ♥A, cross ruffs the back suits and then plays the established ♠Q discarding a diamond, another diamond going on the ♠J.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 18	♠ KQ98732		Dealer E
	♥ J3		Vul: N-S
	♦		
	♣ A432		
♠ J4			♠ A65
♥ Q865			♥ AK102
♦ AQ9762			♦ KJ83
♣ 5			♣ J10
	♠ 10		
	♥ 974		
	♦ 1054		
	♣ KQ9876		

If East opens 1NT (14-16/15-17) West responds 2♣ and North overcalls 2♠. When East bids 3♥ West raises to game.

If East opens an Acol style 1♥ West responds according to systemic agreements and North bids spades. Here too 4♥ should be reached.

If East begins with a strong 1♣ and West responds 2♦ North overcalls 2♠. If East raises to 3♦ West can bid 3♥ and the heart game is reached. Were East to bid 3♠ over 3♥ a bid of 4♣ by West might be enough for East to move towards the heart slam.

Barring an unlikely diamond lead by South, or a brilliant lead of the ♣2 by North, there will be 12 tricks for those who play in hearts.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 19	♠ K		Dealer S
	♥ J943		Vul: E-W
	♦ 9874		
	♣ A1064		
♠ AQ1086543		♠	
♥ Q6		♥ A108752	
♦ J		♦ AQ103	
♣ 52		♣ KJ9	
	♠ J972		
	♥ K		
	♦ K652		
	♣ Q873		

West's opening bid will almost certainly end the auction.

With an eight-card suit 4♠ is more likely than 3♠, despite the vulnerability.

Suppose North leads the ♦8. Declarer wins with dummy's ♦A, ruffs a diamond and cashes the ♠A. To arrive at 10 tricks, declarer needs to make a winning guess in clubs and find South with a singleton ♥K.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 20	♠ 4	Dealer W
	♥ 3	Vul: Both
	♦ AKJ652	
	♣ KJ874	
♠ J652		♠ Q1098
♥ AQ1064		♥ J5
♦ Q4		♦ 1098
♣ 65		♣ A1093
	♠ AK73	
	♥ K9872	
	♦ 73	
	♣ Q2	

Assuming West does not start with something to show a weak hand with both majors North opens 1♦ and rebids 2♣ over South's 1♥. That leaves South to choose between an immediate 3NT and a fourth-suit 2♠, the latter catering for a possible 1-3-5-4 hand with partner.

If West leads a low heart against 3NT, declarer wins with the ♥K and does not have a losing option.

Were West to lead a low spade declarer would win with the ♠A and probably play a diamond to the jack. When it holds a club towards the queen will be good enough for nine tricks and were East to go up with the ♣A and return a spade declarer would finish with 12 tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 21	♠ K1094	Dealer N
	♥ Q5	Vul: N-S
	♦ K65	
	♣ AQJ3	

♠ 7		♠ 62
♥ AK106		♥ 9874
♦ 742		♦ AQJ93
♣ 87642		♣ 95
	♠ AQJ853	
	♥ J32	
	♦ 108	
	♣ K10	

If North opens 1NT (13-15/14-16/15-17) South transfers to spades and then bids game.

If North opens 1♣ and East overcalls 1♦ South bids 1♠. When North raises to 2♠ South might sometimes try bidding 3♦, hoping North can bid 3NT.

If North begins with an Acol style 1♠ South, depending on agreements, might jump to game.

If West is on lead against 4♠ a top heart followed by a diamond switch should see the defenders collect four tricks.

If East is on lead against 4♠ only a heart will do the job.

If East is on lead against 3NT, a heart lead followed by an immediate diamond switch allows the defenders to take the first seven tricks, East winning with the ♦J and going back to hearts for another diamond return.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 22	♠ 2	Dealer E
	♥ AK106	Vul: E-W
	♦ J9	
	♣ A105432	
♠ KJ109		♠ Q765
♥ 85		♥ Q932
♦ 1065		♦ Q742
♣ Q987		♣ K
	♠ A843	
	♥ J74	
	♦ AK83	
	♣ J6	

If South opens 1NT (12-14/13-15) North is likely to look for a heart fit before settling for 3NT.

If South starts with 1♣ and rebids 1NT over North's 1♥, 3NT is likely to be the final contract. Were South to rebid 1♠ (not usually a possibility without real clubs) it might affect the play, but not the final contract which would still be 3NT.

After a 1♣ opening many pairs employ transfers. The bidding might start 1♣-1♦*-1♥* and given that South will have promised at least 3♥, playing in 4♥ becomes a possibility.

If South opens 1♦ North responds 2♣ and then bids 3♥ over South's 2NT. It's a close decision, but preferring 4♥ to 3NT is probably the way to go.

If South is in 3NT West has an awkward hand to lead from, especially if South has opened 1♣ and mentioned spades. Leading any suit other than a diamond should be enough to defeat the contract. On the lead of the ♦5 declarer has to guess to play dummy's ♦9, which will give declarer the possibility of taking four tricks in the suit. Along with three hearts and the black aces that is enough for game.

4♥ is not a bad spot, but it may require careful play.

If North is the declarer and East leads a spade declarer takes dummy's ♠A and plays two rounds of clubs (starting with the ♣J would give West the chance to go wrong by covering with the ♣Q). West wins and switches to a heart, but declarer wins, ruffs a club, ruffs a spade, comes to hand with a diamond, ruffs a spade with the ♥K, comes to hand with a diamond, ruffs a diamond and plays a club, scoring the ♥J en passant.

Were South to be the declarer in 4♥, a trump lead would force declarer to win in dummy. The double dummy winning line is to play a low club, unblocking the ♣J when East wins with the ♣K. Declarer takes the spade return and plays a club to the ten, East ruffing and returning a spade. Declarer ruffs in dummy and plays a club, East scoring just one more trump trick.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 23	♠ 73	Dealer S
	♥ 1052	Vul: Both
	♦ 108	
	♣ Q109843	

♠ J10642		♠ KQ5
♥ KQJ6		♥ 9743
♦ KQ92		♦ A543
♣		♣ 52

♠	A98
♥	A8
♦	J76
♣	AKJ76

If South opens 1NT (15-17) and West overcalls 2♣ to show the majors East will probably bid 3♥. If West decides to go on to 4♥ South might be tempted to double.

If South starts with 1♣ and West doubles North can raise to 2♣, East bidding 2♥. If South continues with 2NT North retreats to 3♣. West will probably take a bid, but there is no certainty that 4♥ will be reached.

If West prefers to overcall 1♠ and North bids 2♣, East can either support spades or double to show the unbid suits (usually promising at least tolerance for spades). If West then bids hearts East might go on to game.

If South's 1♣ is strong and West plays a waiting game, passing and then showing the majors after South's 1NT rebid, East can jump to 3♥. Even so, its not easy for West to go on to game.

If West overcalls the strong club immediately a fit is sure to be located, but reaching game will not be easy.

If EW play in hearts and the defenders lead clubs declarer should be held to 10 tricks, losing a spade and two trumps.

Playing in 4♠ delivers an important overtrick.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 24	♠ 42	Dealer W
	♥ Q10752	Vul: None
	♦ J94	
	♣ 1054	

♠ J863		♠ Q1075
♥ A63		♥ K9
♦ 532		♦ A1087
♣ AQ7		♣ 986

	♠ AK9	
	♥ J84	
	♦ KQ6	
	♣ KJ32	

In the modern era it has become fashionable to open the West hand. After 1♣, if East responds 1♦ South can bid 1NT and North transfers to hearts. If East bids 2♥ over 2♦ it should suggest four spades. If East ignores the diamonds and responds 1♠ South can still bid 1NT, but now West has an easy 2♠.

After a transfer response of 1♥ West can bid 2♠ to show a minimum with four-card support (even if South bids 1NT).

If West opens 1NT (10-12) and South doubles, North bids 2♥. If East doubles that (takeout in the modern fashion) West bids 2♠.

Where West passes and Soth is left to open, a 15-17 INT will see North transfer to hearts. If East is brave enough to bid 2♥ for take out the spade fit will be located. That will also be the case if East passes over the transfer and then doubles 2♥ on the next round.

With NS making eight tricks in hearts and EW the same number in spades this deal is all about the bidding battle.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 25	♠ A8	Dealer N
	♥ KQ102	Vul: E-W
	♦ J104	
	♣ J863	

♠ KQ643	♠ J1092
♥ J743	♥ 85
♦ K2	♦ 8653
♣ AK	♣ 1075

♠ 75
♥ A96
♦ AQ97
♣ Q942

If North opens a 10-12 1NT and South passes, West might double. If North redoubles EW will need to bale out in some way. Depending on agreements it should not be too difficult to find the spade fit.

Were North to start with 1♣, West will overcall when South responds 1♦, bidding either 1♠ or 1NT. If West prefers the latter and South doubles, EW will need to look for safer ground.

If NS are employing transfers after a 1♣ opening South's response will be conventional depending on agreements. If that happens to be 2♠, promising a balanced 11-12 with no major West can double. If North now finds a 3♣ bid (not obvious) EW will be doing well to go on to 3♠.

As on the previous deal, the play has no significant role. NS should score nine tricks in clubs, with EW having the same number available in spades.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 26	♠ 2	Dealer E
	♥ 9753	Vul: Both
	♦ AJ10954	
	♣ J9	
♠ Q10953		♠ J76
♥ Q		♥ K108642
♦ KQ7		♦ 6
♣ KQ104		♣ 532
	♠ AK84	
	♥ AJ	
	♦ 832	
	♣ A876	

If East opens 2♥ and South bids 2NT North might be tempted to raise, hoping the diamonds will be enough.

If South doubles 2♥ North can bid 3♦ to show some values. With only one sure stopper in hearts and no supporting diamond honour South might be inclined to let matters rest.

If East starts with a multi 2♦ the situation does not change much, although here a 2NT overcall is more likely than a double.

Where East does not open and South starts with 1NT (14-16/15-17) West might intervene. What happens after that will depend on agreements. For example, after 1NT-(2♠*) North might be able to bid 3♣, a transfer to diamonds with at least invitational values.

On this layout, declarer should make 3NT. On a heart lead declarer wins and plays the ♦8, intending to run it. If West plays an honour declarer must duck. When the ♦8 holds declarer ducks a diamond and has nine tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 27	♠ AJ852	Dealer S
	♥ A62	Vul: None
	♦ A	
	♣ K853	
♠ KQ76		♠ 94
♥ J54		♥ K8
♦ J954		♦ 8632
♣ 102		♣ QJ974
	♠ 103	
	♥ Q10973	
	♦ KQ107	
	♣ A6	

If South opens 1♥ North responds 1♠ and sees partner rebid 2♦. A fourth-suit 3♣ elicits a 3NT reply and now North can bid 4♥, expecting partner to bid on with extra values.

If South passes initially and North opens 1♠ a response of 2♥ will see North bid game.

On this layout 11 tricks are available in hearts. As it happens the same number can be taken in notrumps although it requires some dexterity after a club lead. Declarer wins, unblocks the ♦A and plays two rounds of hearts. After winning the club continuation declarer cashes three hearts and a diamond. In the four-card ending South has ♠103 ♦Q10 and needs to play two rounds of spades to force West to lead into the diamond tenace.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 28	♠ AQ9	Dealer W
	♥ Q973	Vul: N-S
	♦ Q87	
	♣ A64	

♠ K75		♠ 82
♥ 106		♥ J42
♦ AKJ1062		♦ 943
♣ J8		♣ K10732

♠	J10643
♥	AK85
♦	5
♣	Q95

If West opens 1♦ and North passes East should respond 1NT. If South passes West rebids 2♦ and now South can reopen with a double which may (or may not) see NS reach a game contract. If North responds 3♥ to the double South has enough to bid game.

Some players will double an opening bid of 1♦ with North's hand. If South responds 2♦ North bids 2♥ and South advances to game.

Were West to open with a tactical 1NT (10-12/12-14) South bid something to show the majors and North will bid game. If East decides to transfer to clubs over 1NT NS might be shut out and collecting undertricks at 50 a time will not compensate for the missed game.

On this layout declarer should be able to record 11 tricks spades or hearts.

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 29 ♠ Dealer N
♥ Q10874 Vul: Both
♦ A108752
♣ K3

♠ K1053		♠ AJ9764
♥ J3		♥ K
♦ 94		♦ 63
♣ A9752		♣ QJ64
	♠ Q82	
	♥ A9652	
	♦ KQJ	
	♣ 108	

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 30 ♠ Q65 Dealer E
♥ K4 Vul: None
♦ AJ10742
♣ Q7

♠ 1098		♠ AKJ32
♥ AJ7		♥ 109
♦ Q6		♦ 53
♣ AK1083		♣ J965
	♠ 74	
	♥ Q86532	
	♦ K98	
	♣ 42	

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 31 ♠ 43 Dealer S
♥ K54 Vul: N-S
♦ 93
♣ AQ9752

♠ AKQ75 ♠ J108
♥ 983 ♥ A62
♦ AKQJ4 ♦ 85
♣ ♣ KJ1084

♠ 962
♥ QJ107
♦ 10762
♣ 63

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	2	5	3	6	5
W	2	5	3	6	5

==========

Board 32 ♠ K109743 Dealer W
♥ Vul: E-W
♦ QJ75
♣ KQ4

♠ QJ6 ♠ A52
♥ K874 ♥ 96
♦ 64 ♦ 1082
♣ A865 ♣ J10732

♠ 8
♥ AQJ10532
♦ AK93
♣ 9

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 33 ♠ A9872 Dealer N
♥ AKQJ87 Vul: None
♦
♣ J2

♠ 103 ♠ QJ5
♥ 942 ♥ 65
♦ KJ103 ♦ AQ842
♣ K1065 ♣ A73

♠ K64
♥ 103
♦ 9765
♣ Q984

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 34 ♠ KJ1086 Dealer E
♥ 83 Vul: N-S
♦ 974
♣ K63

♠ Q52 ♠ 43
♥ A10 ♥ QJ764
♦ J862 ♦ Q
♣ A1087 ♣ QJ954

♠ A97
♥ K952
♦ AK1053
♣ 2

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 35	♠ Q107	Dealer S
	♥ 3	Vul: E-W
	♦ AJ87	
	♣ KQJ75	

♠ A4		♠ J32
♥ K1074		♥ AQ982
♦ KQ64		♦ 1053
♣ 1032		♣ A9
	♠ K9865	
	♥ J65	
	♦ 92	
	♣ 864	

Makeable Contracts

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

==========

Board 36	♠ 65	Dealer W
	♥ AKQ74	Vul: Both
	♦ Q8763	
	♣ 4	

♠ A83		♠ QJ1074
♥ 65		♥ 83
♦ AK952		♦ 4
♣ AJ9		♣ KQ1075
	♠ K92	
	♥ J1092	
	♦ J10	
	♣ 8632	

Makeable Contracts

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

==========