

*The ECatsBridge
Summer Charity Pairs
Thursday 9th July 2026*



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.

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.

We are very grateful to our commentators – Julian Pottage for the Monday set, Iain Sime for Tuesday's commentary, Mark Mortimer did the Wednesday commentary, Mark Horton had the fun of doing Thursday's and Liz McGowan undertook Friday's. The great question is – did they get it right ?? or did you do better ?

You will see that although there are actually 32 boards in the set, we have only asked for a commentary on the first 28, as very (very) few clubs play boards 29-32 and we don't want to overburden our commentators! So only the hand analysis is provided for those boards.

The results are at <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/default.asp> and the link to make donations to the charities is :

<https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/donations.asp> - they are done through JustGiving and you will be able to see how much is raised there. If you are making a donation please check this page:

<https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/BeforeDonating.asp> which explains how to avoid that JustGiving "tip".

By the way, did you know we have a Facebook page ?

<https://www.facebook.com/ECatsBridge> ... do follow us so you can see what we are up to !

And keep enjoying your bridge won't you ...

All the best

Anna & Mark

The ECatsBridge Team

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Board 1

♠ KQ
♥ 8754
♦ J8732
♣ K7

Dealer N
Vul: None

♠ J54
♥ AKQ96
♦ AQ
♣ A53

♠ A1087632
♥ 2
♦ K6
♣ J92

♠ 9
♥ J103
♦ 10954
♣ Q10864

If West opens 2NT East should be thinking in terms of a possible slam. Some pairs play that a jump to 4♥/4♠ promises a hand with some hopes for slam and in that case West has enough to at least make a try with 5♣. When East responds 5♦ West can bid 6♠. Another possibility would be for West to rebid 4NT over 4♠, asking for keycards.

Some partnerships play that a jump to 4♦ shows a slam try in spades, and that should prove to be effective here.

If East/West don't have such agreements East can respond 3♥ as a transfer to spades and then continue with 4♦. After that West is sure to drive to 6♠.

If East/West play in spades and a club is led declarer wins, plays a spade to the ace and then cashes the top hearts discarding two clubs.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	1	2	5	6	5
W	1	2	5	6	5

=====

Board 2

♠ J1098
♥ Q3
♦ 864
♣ 10932

Dealer E
Vul: N-S

♠ 64
♥ K1087
♦ J107
♣ AK75

♠ K53
♥ A92
♦ AQ952
♣ Q4

♠ AQ72
♥ J654
♦ K3
♣ J86

If East opens INT (13-15/14-6/15-17) West looks for a heart fit before bidding 3NT.

Where East starts with 1♦ and rebids INT in the Acol style West raises to game.

The opening lead is critical. If South start with a spade the defenders will take four tricks. If South were to lead a heart declarer would have 11 tricks.

If the ♦K proves to be an entry, leading a spade has significant advantages. Apart from the small chance that partner's only points might be the ♠K there is also the possibility that they will include the ♠J, or that dummy or declarer will have started with a doubleton ♠K.

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

=====

Board 3

Dealer S
Vul: E-W

<p>♠ 10984 ♥ AK3 ♦ AQ982 ♣ 10</p>	<p>♠ J ♥ 762 ♦ KJ653 ♣ J753</p>	<p>♠ A7653 ♥ J84 ♦ 74 ♣ A84</p>
	<p>♠ KQ2 ♥ Q1095 ♦ 10 ♣ KQ962</p>	

If South opens 1♣ and West overcalls 1♦ North can only raise clubs if South has guaranteed length in the suit. If the answer to that question is yes, then 3♣ looks reasonable. If East then passes, West can reopen with a double and East has enough to jump to 4♠. If North cannot raise clubs, East can bid 1♠ giving East/West a chance to bid the spade game.

If West doubles 1♣ East is always going to bid spades (even trying 3♠ over 3♣) and a fair percentage of the field should be in 4♠.

Were South to start with a Precision style 2♣ (a six card suit is more popular) West doubles and North has an interesting choice. One option is to jump to 5♣, hoping that it will be a cheap save against a possible game.

If East plays in spades and South leads the ♦10 declarer can win with dummy's ♦A and play two rounds of spades. South wins, cashes another spade and switched to the ♣K, but declarer wins and plays the ♦7. When South discards the ruffing finesse against North is marked and declarer emerges with 10 tricks.

If South leads a club honour against 4♠ declarer wins, ruffs a club, comes to hand with the ♠A, ruffs a club and exits with a spade. In due course the diamond position will be exposed, and declarer should score 10 tricks.

Were South to start with an unlikely heart lead (the ♥10 say) declarer has to duck in dummy to be sure of 10 tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 4

♠ K964
♥ 7532
♦ K75
♣ J6

Dealer W
Vul: Both

♠ QJ2
♥ Q106
♦ A1084
♣ 1093

♠ A7
♥ KJ4
♦ J9632
♣ AQ4

♠ 10853
♥ A98
♦ Q
♣ K8752

If East opens 1NT (13-15/14-16/15-17) then 3NT is likely to be a popular contract.

Where East starts with 1♦ West will probably respond 1NT, putting North on lead against a notrump contract.

If East is the declarer and South leads a club the ♣10 is covered by the ♣J and ♣Q and declarer will probably play a diamond for the queen and ace. Playing a second diamond at this point will see North win and return a club, leaving 3NT dead in the water. Instead, declarer must play on hearts with the aim of securing two tricks in the suit. As the cards lie, declarer will have time to take the spade finesse and secure an overtrick.

Where West is the declarer North is likely to lead a major suit. If that is a heart South might find the play of winning and switching to a spade, which should hold declarer to nine tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 5

♠ K9763
♥ 64
♦ J875
♣ Q9

Dealer N
Vul: N-S

♠ A85
♥ K10
♦ 1094
♣ K10543

♠ Q2
♥ 983
♦ AKQ
♣ AJ862

♠ J104
♥ AQJ752
♦ 632
♣ 7

If East opens 1NT (14-16/15-17) many players might (despite the vulnerability) overcall 2♦, promising a major. If West doubles, North bids a Pass or correct 2♥. If West doubles that East might decide to defend, an excellent view at the vulnerability. The alternative for West is to bid 3NT.

If South does not overcall East/West should end up in 3NT.

The defenders should collect seven tricks against a heart contract and +500 is certain to be at worst a shared top.

If East is in 3NT and South leads the ♠J declarer will be sure of at least 10 tricks and if South has bid it will be routine to collect an eleventh.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 6

♠ AK52
♥ Q1084
♦ 4
♣ KQ85

Dealer E
Vul: E-W

♠ 8
♥ A7632
♦ K9762
♣ 107

♠ Q97
♥ 9
♦ QJ10853
♣ J92

♠ J10643
♥ KJ5
♦ A
♣ A643

Will anyone open the East hand with a weak 2♦? Were that to happen South can overcall 2♠ and if West raises to 3♦ North has an easy 4♦ bid, South signing off in 4♠.

Where East passes, South opens 1♠ and West is well short of the values for a two-suited overcall. If North decides to splinter with 4♦ South, with poor trumps and a slightly worrying singleton ♦A signs off with 4♠.

It's possible that some pairs will get to 6♠, but this will not be their lucky day.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 7

♠ J10965
♥ Q53
♦ 109
♣ 975

Dealer S
Vul: Both

♠ KQ
♥ A104
♦ 8764
♣ AK63

♠ 8732
♥ 9762
♦ AJ
♣ J42

♠ A4
♥ KJ8
♦ KQ532
♣ Q108

If South opens INT (13-15/14-16/15-17) West will be happy if a penalty double is available. If North retreats to 2♠ the East/West methods might allow them to play for a penalty, either via a direct penalty double from East, or a takeout double by West, converted by East. Neither defender has a wonderful trump holding but the lure of a *magic 200* is hard to resist.

If South opens 1♦ West's values suggest a INT overcall, but the lack of a stopper is a major concern. Even though the distribution argues against it some players might decide to double, when East will bid 1♥, probably ending the auction.

If West plays in INT and North leads a diamond South wins with the ♦Q and needs to find a spade switch as continuing diamonds allows declarer to arrive at seven tricks. If North decides to lead a spade the defenders should emerge with seven tricks.

If East plays in 1♥ and South leads a diamond honour declarer wins and plays a spade. With all the suits behaving it should be possible to secure eight tricks.

There is a double dummy defence to hold declarer to seven tricks in hearts, but as it requires South to lead or switch to the ♥K it can be discounted.

If North/South play in a doubled spade contract the traditional lead of a trump will turn out badly as declarer can win and play a second round of the suit, emerging with at least eight tricks.

One way to defeat 2♠x is for East to start with two rounds of diamonds. If, having won, declarer plays two rounds of trumps West wins and plays a third diamond. If declarer ruffs and draws trumps the South hand will be squeezed.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 8

♠ J953
♥ 108
♦ J92
♣ AJ96

Dealer W
Vul: None

♠ Q74
♥ AJ65
♦ KQ
♣ Q743

♠ 1082
♥ Q97432
♦ A765
♣

♠ AK6
♥ K
♦ 10843
♣ K10852

If West starts with INT (12-14/13-15/14-16) East transfers to hearts. Despite the possibly wasted ♥K South might bid 2♥ for takeout. If West doubles that to indicate a fit, East will compete when North bids 2♠, but it is unlikely that game will be reached. Having said that, were East to rebid 3♦ over 2♠ West might take a rosy view of the red suit honours.

If West opens 1♣ and East responds 1♥ South doubles and West supports hearts. Followers of *Meckstroth's Law* (when partner freely supports your six-card major bid game) will be on to a winner here.

On this layout, anyone playing in hearts should collect 11 tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 9

♠ 9763
♥ AQJ65
♦ 95
♣ 84

Dealer N
Vul: E-W

♠ KJ102
♥ K108
♦ A
♣ AK653

♠ A54
♥ 97
♦ KJ862
♣ Q102

♠ Q8
♥ 432
♦ Q10743
♣ J97

If North opens with a bid that promises both majors East/West might struggle. For example after 2♥ (as explained in *The Mysterious Multi*) West might fall back on bidding 2NT, which at least conveys the strength. On this occasion East has an easy raise to 3NT.

Where North passes initially, assuming East does not start with 1♦ West will open 1♣ and the final contract should be 3NT by West, especially if North has overcalled 1♥.

If West's 1♣ is the strong variety it should not affect the outcome, but if North makes an overcall to show the majors, it might influence the play.

Without any opposition bidding declarer in 3NT will hope to get the spades right. It would be nice to postpone the decision as who to play for the ♠Q, but the entry position is such that it might not be possible to do that.

The most interesting case arises if North leads the ♥Q (especially if North has shown both majors). Declarer wins and will appreciate that if North has queen to four spades he can never do better than three tricks in the suit. If he wins the ♥K and takes an immediate spade finesse through North he will go down. Most likely declarer will win, cash five clubs and the ♦A and then cross to the ♠A. At this point if North has come down to two spades and the ♥Aj declarer can exit with a heart for 11 tricks, or guess to play a spade for 12.

If North has not bid and does not lead the ♥Q declarer is likely to do the right thing in spades and emerge with 11 tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 10

♠ Q864
♥ Q5
♦ A74
♣ KJ97

Dealer E
Vul: Both

♠ KJ10
♥ K7
♦ QJ932
♣ 1054

♠ 9753
♥ 983
♦ 105
♣ 8632

♠ A2
♥ AJ10642
♦ K86
♣ AQ

If South opens 1♥ North responds 1♠. If South rebids 3♥ North can bid 4♣ and then bid 4♥ over South's 4♦. After that start North/South might reach 6♥.

Were South to rebid 2NT there is no obvious reason for North to do anything other than raise to 3NT.

On this layout as long as South is declarer 12 tricks are available in hearts and notrumps – and even clubs!

If East held the ♠K and West were to lead the suit against 6♥ declarer would be likely to go down, relying on the trump finesse. If declarer unblocked the clubs, cashed the ♥A, crossed to the ♦A and played the ♣KJ discarding a spade and a diamond 6♥ could be made. Another possibility would be to cash the ♣A, overtake the ♣Q pitch a spade on the ♣J, and run the ♥Q.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 11

♠ A1083
♥ Q6
♦ KQJ5
♣ 852

Dealer S
Vul: None

♠ J97
♥ J4
♦ A103
♣ KQ743

♠ K
♥ AK10983
♦ 642
♣ AJ10

♠ Q6542
♥ 752
♦ 987
♣ 96

If West decides to open 1♣ and North passes (I know some players who would overcall 1♦) East responds 1♥. If West rebids 1NT East might employ some form of checkback before settling for 4♥. If West rebids 2♣ East is awkwardly placed. 2♦ would be forcing but is not attractive. Were the auction to continue 2♠*-3♣ you would need to be sure that you have established a game forcing situation. The best move is to jump to 3♠, a splinter in support of clubs. If West was then brave enough to bid 4♦ East will probably move towards 6♣.

If West starts with 1♦ in Precision style the auction might continue 1♥-1NT-2♣*-2♦*. If East then jumps to 3♥ West is likely to raise to 4♥.

If West opens 1NT (10-12/12-14) East transfers to hearts and probably settles for game.

Twelve tricks can be taken in hearts or clubs, and anyone who plays in 3NT will survive, taking 12 tricks if North leads a top diamond.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	1	-
S	-	-	-	1	-
E	6	1	6	-	5
W	6	2	6	-	5

=====

Board 13

♠ J10864
♥ KJ872
♦ A75
♣

Dealer N
Vul: Both

♠ A7
♥ 943
♦ 10432
♣ K1032

♠ Q93
♥ Q5
♦ Q98
♣ AQ974

♠ K52
♥ A106
♦ KJ6
♣ J865

If North decides to open 1♠ East, with a poor suit and primarily defensive cards should give no thought to overcalling. After 1♠-2♣-2♥-3♦*-3♥ South bids game in a major, 4♠ in case North happens to be 6-5.

Some players may be able to open as North with a bid that promises a weak hand with both majors. In that case it is less likely that South will move towards game.

Where North passes initially East might open INT (12-14). Now North can reopen with whatever gadget is to hand (I know of one pair who use a double to indicate a major or minor two suiter) 2♣ for the majors being a popular choice.

If East opens 1♣ West will probably respond INT. North can bid 2♣ over that to show the majors.

If North ends up declaring a spade contract and East leads a diamond, putting in dummy's ♦J is followed by a club ruff and the ♠J, covered in turn by the queen, king and ace. Declarer wins the diamond return in dummy and plays a spade to the eight, East winning and exiting with a diamond. Declarer wins, draws the outstanding trump and is on the heart guess for 11 tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 14

♠ Q74
♥ J87
♦ 9762
♣ K62

Dealer E
Vul: None

♠ 85
♥ KQ9642
♦ 104
♣ QJ10

♠ KJ92
♥ A3
♦ AQJ5
♣ 853

♠ A1063
♥ 105
♦ K83
♣ A974

If East opens 1NT (13-15/14-16/15-17) West transfers to hearts and might then make a try for game facing one of the stronger ranges.

If East starts with an Acol style 1♠ West must choose between 1NT and 2♥ (Sandra Landy told me that in the early days of Acol you did not need 9 points for a two-level response). After 2♥ East rebids 2NT and West might push on to game, hoping the hearts will be useful. It looks aggressive, but a six-card suit is a powerful weapon facing a strong no trump type.

If South is on lead against a heart contract a diamond will cost a vital trick.

If East is in 3NT and South leads a spade declarer will take North's ♠Q with the ♠K. If declarer cashes six hearts and then runs the ♦10 the contract should fail. Playing a club at trick two allows North to win and return a spade, but declarer will be sure of nine tricks. Playing matchpoints it is tempting to try for more and those who do will probably be in good company.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 15

♠ Q43
♥ Q6
♦ AK9643
♣ 53

Dealer S
Vul: N-S

♠ K986
♥ AJ5
♦ QJ105
♣ 104

♠ A7
♥ 984
♦ 8
♣ KQJ9862

♠ J1052
♥ K10732
♦ 72
♣ A7

Assuming South has nothing to say, and West does not open a 10-12 INT North can choose between 1♦ and a 'weak' 2♦. If East overcalls in clubs West might try 3NT, especially after 2♦-(3♣).

If West opens 1♣ and North overcalls 1♦ East might bid 2♦, promising a limit raise or better. If West rebids 2NT East is sure to go on to game.

On this layout 3NT cannot be defeated.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 16

♠ K102
♥ Q754
♦ 1076
♣ AQ4

Dealer W
Vul: E-W

♠ Q8743
♥ K2
♦ J983
♣ J5

♠ J5
♥ 983
♦ AKQ2
♣ 8732

♠ A96
♥ AJ106
♦ 54
♣ K1096

If South is the one to open the bidding a 12-14 INT will probably end the auction.

If South opens 1♣ North responds 1♥ and South raises to 2♥. At IMPs North might continue, but at matchpoints one tends not to look for close games.

If West leads a spade against INT declarer takes East's ♠J and will probably play a club to the queen followed by a heart to the jack. It should not be too difficult for West to switch to a diamond.

If North declares a heart contract East is likely to cash two diamonds and switch to a heart. West will win and exit with a heart after which the early appearance of the ♣J will ensure 10 tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 17

♠ 963
♥ A865
♦ 83
♣ J954

Dealer N
Vul: None

♠ QJ108742
♥ K9
♦ 10
♣ 1082

♠ AK5
♥ Q4
♦ J96542
♣ 73

♠
♥ J10732
♦ AKQ7
♣ AKQ6

If East opens 1♦ and South overcalls 1♥ West will probably bid 1♠ and North will raise to 2♥. Although that does not promise much, South is likely to look for a slam. If East raises to 2♠ jumping to 4♠ as Exclusion Blackwood will locate a keycard in North's hand, which is just about enough for South to take a chance on 6♥.

If East does not open South starts with 1♥ and West probably overcalls 2♠. If North dredges up a raise to 3♥ South can again jump to 4♠.

The other possibility will be to jump to 5♥ to enquire about the quality of partner's trumps. Holding ace to four North can raise.

There is nothing significant in the play.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 18

♠ A85
♥ Q9
♦ A75
♣ AK963

Dealer E
Vul: N-S

♠ KJ6
♥ KJ
♦ J642
♣ 10875

♠ Q10743
♥ A653
♦ K83
♣ Q

♠ 92
♥ 108742
♦ Q109
♣ J42

If East opens 1♠ West raises to 2♠. That simple start leaves North with a problem. The shape is wrong for a double and 2NT is usually played as promising a two-suited hand. 3♣ is a possibility, although you would prefer a stronger/longer suit. North could pass, although one rarely scores well when the opposition are left to declare at a low-level. On balance 3♣ is probably best, sometimes pushing the opponents to the three-level.

If East does not open and North starts with 1NT (15-17) East can back in with something to show the majors, West bidding 2♠.

If North opens 1♣ East overcalls 1♠. If West raises to 2♠ that will end the auction unless North tries a speculative 2NT.

If East/West play in spades and the defenders lead a trump declarer might play to ruff a heart in the short hand, or play on diamonds, hoping that the suit is breaking and that the ♦A is onside. On this layout most lines will result in eight tricks being scored, but there are some traps. For example if South leads a spade and declarer plays an honour from dummy North can duck. If declarer then plays three rounds of hearts it is vital to ruff with dummy's remaining honour. Although North can overruff and continue with two rounds of clubs declarer ruffs and plays a low diamond, establishing a diamond trick as the cards lie.

If North plays in clubs and East leads a spade declarer ducks. If West switches to a trump declarer wins and might try a low diamond. If East takes the ♦K continuing spades should restrict declarer to eight tricks.

If North plays in notrumps a spade lead puts the defenders on course for six tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 19

♠ AK96
♥ QJ10972
♦ J5
♣ 8

Dealer S
Vul: E-W

♠ Q8543
♥ 5
♦ 982
♣ A742

♠ 72
♥ K864
♦ K7643
♣ QJ

♠ J10
♥ A3
♦ AQ10
♣ K109653

If South opens 1♣ North responds 1♥ and then makes an invitational jump to 3♥, South raising to game.

If South starts with 2♣ in the Precision style North will probably respond 2♦ in case South has four spades, then bid 4♥ over South's 2NT rebid.

Were South to open 1NT (12-14/13-15/14-16) North will probably respond 2♣ intending to jump to 4♥ unless the response is 2♠.

If North plays in hearts East will do well to find a club lead, which will hold declarer to 11 tricks. After say, a spade lead if dummy's ♠J holds declarer can come to hand with a top spade and play the ♦J which will result in the losing club vanishing on the third round of the suit. Declarer then crossruffs the black suits, losing only to the ♥K.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 20 ♠ K10732 Dealer W
 ♥ 1086 Vul: Both
 ♦ 102
 ♣ A92

♠ Q ♠ A984
 ♥ QJ7432 ♥ K9
 ♦ Q75 ♦ AKJ964
 ♣ 1074 ♣ 8

♠ J65
 ♥ A5
 ♦ 83
 ♣ KQJ653

If West opens 2♥ East will raise to game, probably directly or occasionally via a 2NT relay.

If West starts with a Multi 2♦ East will probably ask with 2NT and 4♥ will be reached.

Where West, not happy with the suit quality, does not open East bids 1♦ and South overcalls 2♣. If West introduces hearts North might try 2♠. If East then bids 3♦ it might end the auction. Were South to raise to 3♠ West would do well to continue with 4♦, which would encourage East to go on to game, making a control showing 4♠ bid along the way.

If East is in 4♥ North might lead a trump. When declarer plays dummy's ♥K it is easy to miss the killing defence which is to duck! After that declarer cannot avoid the loss of three club tricks along with the ♥A. Well done if you spotted that!

5♦ is impregnable.

4♠ might be a good save against 5♦ (and possibly 4♥) but requires some care in the play. If East cashes a diamond and switches to a club declarer wins in dummy and plays a spade for the queen, king and ace. If East now switches to the ♥K declarer must duck, win the next heart and then exit with a diamond (or cash the ♠J before exiting).

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

=====

Board 21

♠ QJ984
♥ K5
♦ 9543
♣ 107

Dealer N
Vul: N-S

♠ K1052
♥ QJ8
♦ K87
♣ K62

♠ A6
♥ A9763
♦ A106
♣ 543

♠ 73
♥ 1042
♦ QJ2
♣ AQJ98

If East opens 1♥ South might risk 2♣, despite the lack of a sixth card in the suit. With such a flat hand there is a case for West to prefer the notrump game.

Were East to start with INT (10-12/12-14) West might pass opposite the former and make an invitational raise opposite the latter. Back in the day when Marx-Sharples transfers were de rigueur in the UK, West would respond 2♦ and then rebid 2♠ over 2♥, either invitational or the start of a Baron sequence with a strong hand, West showing that by bidding suits up the line over a minimum 2NT bid. A five card suit and three aces is enough for East to bid game (the hand rates 13.15 on the Kaplan Rubens Hand Evaluator).

If the final contract is 3NT by West and North leads a club (South having overcalled) declarer may duck the first round, win the spade switch with the ♠K and play the ♥Q. If North ducks declarer has a guess on the next round, but is sure to take at least nine tricks. If North covers the ♥Q declarer wins with dummy's ♥A and might play a heart to the eight on the next round. (The technical play is to cash the ♥J, assuming that North won't cover unless holding specifically ♥K10.) Then there is time to lead a club towards the king for a tenth trick.

If East is in 4♥ it will be essential to avoid a trump loser.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 22

♠ A954
♥ K103
♦ 983
♣ 873

Dealer E
Vul: E-W

♠ Q103
♥ Q9654
♦ 7
♣ K1064

♠ KJ82
♥ A72
♦ AJ1042
♣ J

♠ 76
♥ J8
♦ KQ65
♣ AQ952

If East opens 1♦ South might risk 2♣. West is not strong enough to bid 2♥ and is a spade short for a negative double. If West passes and East reopens with a double West is almost certainly going to bid 2♥ rather than risk defending 2♣x.

If South does not overcall West responds 1♥ and East's best move is to raise to 2♥. (Geir Helgemo who told me that if you rebid 1♠ and then support hearts you promise a better hand.)

If East/West play in hearts and North leads a club, South will take the ♣A and switch to a spade. If North ducks that declarer wins and might think it is a good idea to play trumps. However, that will at best result in eight tricks being taken, even if South does not unblock the ♥J under the ♥A. If declarer cashes the ♦A, ruffs a diamond and ruffs a club he can then play two rounds of hearts. The defenders can prevent another club ruff, and force out declarer's last trump with a diamond, but declarer will be able to cash the ♣K and then play spades (either the ♠A will already have been played, or North will have only spades left) for +140.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 23

♠ A864
♥ J103
♦ J
♣ J9753

Dealer S
Vul: Both

♠ K53
♥ A87
♦ AQ32
♣ 842

♠ J107
♥ 964
♦ 109865
♣ A6

♠ Q92
♥ KQ52
♦ K74
♣ KQ10

If South opens INT (13-15/14-16/15-17) that should be the final contract.

If South opens an Acol 1♥ North responds 1♠ and passes the INT rebid.

West has an awkward lead. Starting with a passive club will see East win with the ♣A (declarer unblocking the ♣Q) and probably switch to a diamond, West winning with the ♦Q. At this point it will be clear that East cannot have an entry for another diamond play through declarer, and West may as well clear the diamonds, ensuring the defenders collect seven tricks.

If West leads a low diamond declarer wins with dummy's ♦J and will probably play a club (as opposed to a heart, which happens to work best on this layout). East needs to go up with the ♣A and continue diamonds, an eventual spade switch by East setting up a seventh trick for the defence.

Leading a low spade does not work.

Were West to lead the ♦A to look at dummy, the defenders would be one step ahead, but that's a tough ask.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 24

♠ KJ8 Dealer W
 ♥ 95 Vul: None
 ♦ AQJ103
 ♣ A106

♠ A7642 ♠ Q53
 ♥ 1073 ♥ KQ
 ♦ 764 ♦ 52
 ♣ 72 ♣ KQ8543

♠ 109
 ♥ AJ8642
 ♦ K98
 ♣ J9

If North opens INT (13-15/14-16/15-17) some players may overcall with East's cards, especially where they have a conventional bid that promises a single suited hand (such as the double in DON'T). South will want to follow an invitational sequence opposite 13-15 or 14-16, and insist on game facing 15-17.

When East does not overcall South transfers to hearts and then raises to 3♥
 invitatively or bids 4♥.

If the defenders lead clubs against a heart contract they should take four tricks, West's ♥10 being promoted by a third round of clubs.

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

=====

Board 25

♠ K2
♥ A
♦ K652
♣ J98762

Dealer N
Vul: E-W

♠ Q105
♥ J98
♦ QJ73
♣ 1054

♠ AJ73
♥ K76542
♦ A9
♣ Q

♠ 9864
♥ Q103
♦ 1084
♣ AK3

If North opens 1♣ and East overcalls 1♥ South doubles. If West, with a defensively orientated hand does not raise to 2♥, North's 2♣ might end the auction (although then West might have a change of heart). If West raises hearts at any point East will compete to 3♥ if necessary.

If North is allowed to play in clubs, a good view in diamonds will deliver nine tricks.

If East is in hearts and South starts with the top clubs declarer ruffs and plays a heart to the eight and ace. The club return is ruffed, and another heart sees South win and exit with a heart. If Declarer now plays the ♠10 and North covers declarer will be held to nine tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 26

♠ 8
♥ KJ10876
♦ 10542
♣ 64

Dealer E
Vul: Both

♠ 1063
♥ Q94
♦ A96
♣ J932

♠ 9542
♥ 53
♦ QJ83
♣ Q107

♠ AKQJ7
♥ A2
♦ K7
♣ AK85

If South opens 2♣ and rebids 2NT North's next bid will depend on agreements. They will include a transfer to hearts followed by a bid of 4♦ (the suit is dreadful, but it gets the distributional nature of the hand across). A transfer followed by 4♥ showing no slam interest is another possibility. An immediate jump to 4♥ suggesting a six-card suit and mild slam interest is another idea. A jump to 4♣, showing a six-card heart suit with mild slam interest is also a possibility.

On this layout declarer is likely to make 6♥. Winning a club lead, cashing the ♥AK and then playing spades, hoping to be able to discard all dummy's diamonds will not work on this layout.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 27

♠ AJ10654
♥ A972
♦ 32
♣ K

Dealer S
Vul: None

♠ KQ93
♥ Q10543
♦ KQ7
♣ A

♠ 72
♥
♦ A954
♣ QJ109754

♠ 8
♥ KJ86
♦ J1086
♣ 8632

If West opens 1♥ North overcalls 1♠ and East bids 2♣. If West rebids a strong 2NT the practical bid for East is to jump to 5♣, hoping that partner does not have too many wasted values in hearts.

Were West to open 1NT East could jump to 5♣, again hoping the heart void will not be wasted. Another possibility would be for East to bid 2NT as a transfer to clubs over North's spade overcall, intending to jump to 5♣ on the next round.

Declarer will be pleased with the layout in the club suit!

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 28

♠ J742
♥ 75
♦ A10653
♣ 64

Dealer W
Vul: N-S

♠ AQ10965
♥ J10
♦ 7
♣ A1073

♠ 83
♥ Q8643
♦ 984
♣ 852

♠ K
♥ AK92
♦ KQJ2
♣ KQJ9

If West opens 1♠ and East dredges up a response of 1NT South doubles. If West rebids 2♣ North can bid 2♦ after which South might continue with 2♠. Were North to then bid 2NT South could continue with 3♦, but the practical move is to jump to 5♦.

If West rebids 2♠ North might bid 3♦, but if North passes South doubles again. When North then bids 3♦ South will have something to think about.

When East does not respond to the opening bid West might try bidding 2♣ over South's double but North will bid 2♦ after which it is a question of whether the diamond game will be reached.

If North/South reach 5♦ and East leads a spade West wins and switches to a heart. Declarer wins in dummy, draws trumps and plays a club for the king and ace. When West exits with a heart declarer wins in dummy, ruffs a heart, ruffs a spade and plays the ♥9 intending to ruff it. West, down to ♠Q ♣1073 is squeezed in the black suits.

A resourceful defender might try ducking the ♣K. If declarer continues with the ♣Q West wins and exits with a heart. Now the squeeze no longer operates. However, declarer has a countermeasure. When the ♣K holds declarer cashes a second heart and only then plays the ♣Q. If West wins there is no good exit, but ducking allows declarer to ruff a heart and then play a spade, discarding the ♥9! West wins, but must set up an extra black suit winner for declarer.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 29

♠ KJ54
♥ KQ98
♦ J
♣ K954

Dealer N
Vul: Both

♠ Q109632
♥ 63
♦ 542
♣ 108

♠ A87
♥ AJ10
♦ A973
♣ QJ2

♠
♥ 7542
♦ KQ1086
♣ A763

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 30

♠ 8762
♥ 53
♦ A1095
♣ Q92

Dealer E
Vul: None

♠ KJ4
♥ A9
♦ Q763
♣ 10743

♠ AQ105
♥ Q10762
♦ KJ
♣ A6

♠ 93
♥ KJ84
♦ 842
♣ KJ85

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 31

♠ AQ97
♥ 7
♦ KJ108
♣ KQ92

Dealer S
Vul: N-S

♠ 10
♥ A62
♦ A743
♣ AJ1083

♠ K6432
♥ J10943
♦ Q5
♣ 7

♠ J85
♥ KQ85
♦ 962
♣ 654

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 32

♠ Q64
♥ J1097
♦ KJ82
♣ 98

Dealer W
Vul: E-W

♠ A72
♥ Q642
♦ 10
♣ J10432

♠ K83
♥ AK8
♦ AQ9654
♣ Q

♠ J1095
♥ 53
♦ 73
♣ AK765

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 33

♠ K10732
♥ KJ94
♦ Q983
♣

Dealer N
Vul: None

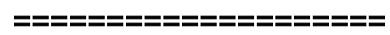
♠ Q9
♥ 7532
♦ J7
♣ AKQ103

♠ AJ
♥ A86
♦ AK10654
♣ J5

♠ 8654
♥ Q10
♦ 2
♣ 987642

Makeable Contracts

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



Board 34

♠ AJ654
♥ 7
♦ AQ95
♣ AJ7

Dealer E
Vul: N-S

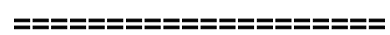
♠ K9
♥ AKQJ53
♦ 10843
♣ 5

♠ 83
♥ 10986
♦ 762
♣ K964

♠ Q1072
♥ 42
♦ KJ
♣ Q10832

Makeable Contracts

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



Board 35

♠ KJ74
♥ AK2
♦ AK
♣ J732

Dealer S
Vul: E-W

♠ AQ8
♥ 1087
♦ Q985
♣ 1098

♠ 965
♥ 4
♦ J107632
♣ Q65

♠ 1032
♥ QJ9653
♦ 4
♣ AK4

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	5	1	6	5	6
S	5	1	6	5	6
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

=====

Board 36

♠ AK
♥ A632
♦ QJ98
♣ KQ4

Dealer W
Vul: Both

♠ 986532
♥ KJ
♦ K2
♣ 1095

♠ Q74
♥ 104
♦ A7653
♣ J73

♠ J10
♥ Q9875
♦ 104
♣ A862

Makeable Contracts

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

=====