

The ECatsBridge Summer Pairs

Friday 7th July 2023



Thank you so much for joining us for our Summer Charity Pairs in aid of Kidney Research UK and the British Heart Foundation both of which are charities that need as much funding as possible in order to continue their work.

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

We hope you enjoyed the hands and that they weren't too challenging – and whether or not you did well at least you can at least rest assured that you are helping to support two great charities.

The results are at <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/default.asp> and if you want more general information about the event and a link to make donations then just go to : <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/Summer-Pairs/default.asp>

Board 1	♠ AJ632	Dealer N
	♥ AQ85	Vul: None
	♦	
	♣ A1083	
♠ KQ10		♠ 54
♥ K976		♥ J1032
♦ K95		♦ QJ3
♣ J52		♣ KQ96
	♠ 987	
	♥ 4	
	♦ A1087642	
	♣ 74	

Board 2	♠ 1087	Dealer E
	♥ 743	Vul: N-S
	♦ 9653	
	♣ AQ9	
♠ AQJ6		♠ 432
♥ K109		♥ Q2
♦ A87		♦ KQJ1042
♣ J53		♣ 86
	♠ K95	
	♥ AJ865	
	♦	
	♣ K10742	

North will open a standard 1♠. With the East hand, its tempting to come in with a take out double despite only having 9HCP but the hand is shapely. Despite the long diamond suit headed by the Ace- South is way short of a 2♦ forcing bid, so the only viable option is a gentle raise of 2♠ here. If East has elected to double- West will naturally bid 3♥ and North will surely just bid 3♠- which is making on the lie of the cards. East now has a difficult decision to leave 3♠ in or punt 4♥. Sadly today- South will lead their Ace of diamonds, followed by an immediate ruff and three other losing tricks, going for -3.

Makeable Contracts

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

Many Easts will open a weak 2♦ here, which can be problematic in first position but is perfectly valid with such a good suit. Most Souths, with their Diamond void and shapely 2 suited hand in Hearts and clubs, will surely manage a takeout double. Without interference- West might have managed a 2NT Ogust enquiry over their partner's weak 2 opening. But here- South's double has rather given the game away and might be better just to make a simple raise of 3♦. North has a pretty grim hand, and to do anything other than pass might lead to big problems. In view of this- 3♦ is likely to be the final contract, which makes with the Spade finesse working today.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 3 ♠ Q108532 Dealer S
 ♥ J102 Vul: E-W
 ♦ 9
 ♣ KQ2

♠ K964 ♠ AJ7
 ♥ 4 ♥ A6
 ♦ A10874 ♦ KQ632
 ♣ A86 ♣ 1073

♠
 ♥ KQ98753
 ♦ J5
 ♣ J954

Most Souths will manage a pre-emptive 3♥ opening here. West's hand to my mind, even at vulnerability and with 11 HCP, is worth a takeout double here. North would be unwise to raise to 4♥ here (although some might!) with a high loser hand and will no doubt end in tears after inevitably being doubled for penalties by either East/West. If North refrains from 'Kamikaze' tactics- East has a clear bid of 5♦ in my opinion- making on a virtually marked Spade finesse with North.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 4 ♠ 52 Dealer W
 ♥ QJ9 Vul: Bo10h
 ♦ KQ84
 ♣ K1096

♠ AQ97 ♠ KJ63
 ♥ A854 ♥ 632
 ♦ AJ7 ♦ 653
 ♣ J8 ♣ 542

♠ 1084
 ♥ K107
 ♦ 1092
 ♣ AQ73

If West opens a Strong NT 15 to 17 here- it's very likely to be a very quick auction and will probably be passed out- making only 6 top tricks on a club lead. If West makes any other bid, dependent on their agreed system with partner, the bidding will take a very different course and the final contract will be difficult to

predict. Most East/Wests will find their Spade fit and the same for North/south in clubs. A battle in the Black suits will no doubt result in a diverse traveller at the end

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 5 ♠ 10863 Dealer N
 ♥ 4 Vul: N-S
 ♦ 9542
 ♣ Q1054

♠ KJ54 ♠ AQ72
 ♥ 10972 ♥ AQJ86
 ♦ 73 ♦ A
 ♣ 972 ♣ K63

♠ 9
 ♥ K53
 ♦ KQJ1086
 ♣ AJ8

East has lovely hand of 21 HCP and some might open 2NT here, which would be unwise technically. The singleton Ace of diamonds is not the main problem for such a strategy, more the 5 card Heart suit which really precludes a strong NT opening as the hand is not balanced. This leaves East with 2 options, take an optimistic view of their hand bidding 2♣ or else a pessimistic one and settle for 1♥. My preference would be the former as its generally a better idea to show big hands right away to assist partner in the decision making process. Most Souths will now come in with a 2♦ overcall. West has a meagre hand but, with both majors over partner's likely strong opening, is certainly worth a take out double. With 4 card support for partner's diamond overcall- North is certainly worth a raise to 4♦. The heart fit identified- most Easts will now confidently bid 4♥, which is regrettably one off owing to the precarious club position and an inevitable trump loser. Some Souths will understandably get the impression that 4♥ is making comfortably on the bidding and punt 5♦ which is one off also. I imagine that the battle of the red suits will result in yet another diverse traveller at the end!

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 6	♠ KQJ92	Dealer E
	♥ Q7	Vul: E-W
	♦ 852	
	♣ 632	
♠ A74		♠ 65
♥ A92		♥ K84
♦ AJ63		♦ KQ94
♣ KQ7		♣ AJ98
	♠ 1083	
	♥ J10653	
	♦ 107	
	♣ 1054	

This is an interesting deal- which somewhat reveals the structural weakness of the Acoll system in reaching cold minor slams. With the East hand- Acollites will open a weak 1NT almost 100% of the time and West, in turn, will make a direct raise to 3NT without much thought. End of story- the quickest auction in history and 11 easy tricks off the top! If East opens 1♦, even if not playing inverted minor raises, its difficult to imagine East/West not reaching the 6♦ slam in any bidding sequence. The play is not difficult but requires some care in drawing trumps, throwing a heart on the 13th club, ruffing the losing heart and just giving up a spade at the end for 12 tricks. I predict the vast majority will be in 3NT here and I suspect that the missed diamond slam will provoke a few 'what ifs' but hardly a mass conversion to other systems at the end! But brings up an interesting question however- is Acoll (beloved and known by all in our Fair Isle) always best for our collective Bridge health?! You decide.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 7	♠ J1073	Dealer S
	♥ 96	Vul: Bo10h
	♦ K542	
	♣ Q85	
♠ AKQ86		♠ 52
♥ AQ84		♥ KJ10532
♦ 10		♦ J76
♣ 743		♣ J2
	♠ 94	
	♥ 7	
	♦ AQ983	
	♣ AK1096	

There are a few Souths out there who might open 2NT here- the equivalent of the unusual NT in first position- showing both minors. Let's assume that most restrain from off centre tactics & open a standard 1♦ here (opening 1♣ would then invite a rebid of 2♦ but the hand is not strong enough for a reverse). West has a lovely hand concentrated in the majors and would do best to make a take out double here. North will certainly support their partner's diamonds - but to what extent? A pre emptive raise to 4♦ might not be a bad idea in the scheme of things. East now has a clear cut bid of 4♥ with their nice long suit over partner's double. 4♥ is making comfortably losing just 3 tricks in the minors on best defence. Should South now bid 5♦? Even at vulnerability doubled- the contract is only one off and a good sacrifice with 4♥ making. The traveller will be interesting at the end!

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 8 ♠ K9 Dealer W
 ♥ AJ Vul: None
 ♦ J98
 ♣ KQ10863

♠ 76 ♠ 105432
 ♥ 106432 ♥ K985
 ♦ A4 ♦ 762
 ♣ AJ54 ♣ 7

♠ AQJ8
 ♥ Q7
 ♦ KQ1053
 ♣ 92

A tiny minority of Wests might open 1♥- but it would be verging on the criminal and an inevitable summons to defend yourself before the committee of your local club! Assuming the most Wests do the honourable thing and Pass, North will be get the ball rolling with a gentle 1♣. South now responds 2♦ (since this bid is forcing- they can show their nice Spade suit later). North now has a tricky decision- just bid 3♣ or stretch it a bit with a 2NT rebid. The latter would work out well here as South will, almost certainly, eventually raise to 3NT with their 14 count also. The lead coming from East will pose no problems for North declaring, with the Spade suit protected. On any lead-declarer will get an easy 9 tricks off the top with the necessary tempo to set up either of the long minors. Will be interesting to note how many pairs will reach the NT game played by North & how many will be content with a part score in the minors.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 9 ♠ AK98 Dealer N
 ♥ QJ104 Vul: E-W
 ♦ KQ8
 ♣ 62

♠ Q102 ♠ J73
 ♥ 72 ♥ A65
 ♦ AJ62 ♦ 109743
 ♣ K954 ♣ AJ

♠ 654
 ♥ K983
 ♦ 5
 ♣ Q10873

Those Norths of a North American persuasion will open a strong NT here with a balanced 15 count. Most Acolites will open 1♥ here- which would work out much better with a heart fit identified- proving that Acol certainly has its strengths! Despite the points being perfectly balanced between the hands 20/20- its difficult to imagine East/West making much of an impact in the auction- after South bids 2♥ uncontested with the chance of an overtrick.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 10 ♠ J104 Dealer E
 ♥ A3 Vul: Bo10h
 ♦ A9
 ♣ AQJ763

♠ Q8 ♠ K9762
 ♥ KQJ8 ♥ 952
 ♦ KQ1043 ♦ 62
 ♣ K8 ♣ 1042

♠ A53
 ♥ 10764
 ♦ J875
 ♣ 95

The auction will pass around to West- most of whom will open 1♦ with a few strong NT added in to spice things up a bit. To my mind- North is far too strong for a simple overcall of 2♣ here and would do best to make a takeout double. A lot of Easts may come in with a cheeky 1♠- despite their pitiful collection. South might now make a negative double to

show some values and the other major. Many a North will just settle for 3♣ here, wary of so much bidding going on with the added quip 'There seem to be a lot of points in this pack!'. Who can blame them with only 21 HCP points between the hands, but today the ♣ finesse is working and 3NT would have been a safe bet but I doubt many will take the gamble.

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 11	♠ A842	Dealer S
	♥ AQ105	Vul: None
	♦ 42	
	♣ K64	
♠ QJ106		♠ 75
♥ 64		♥ KJ73
♦ J73		♦ 10985
♣ Q973		♣ A105
	♠ K93	
	♥ 982	
	♦ AKQ6	
	♣ J82	

One of those cruel Bridge hands which is likely to end in disappointment despite the best of intentions. Most Acolites will open a standard weak NT with the South hand and most Norths, with both majors, will try a 2♣ Stayman enquiry. No major fit identified- the vast majority will end up in 3NT with a combined 26 HCP. But 3NT is more often than not, a major challenge for declarer, without long suits to establish and having to guess finesses, as is painfully the case with this deal. It would take either Genius or sub par defence to make 3NT here, but give it a go, and write to me afterwards for congratulations!

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 12	♠ KJ3	Dealer W
	♥ Q105	Vul: N-S
	♦ 107	
	♣ Q9765	
♠ Q75		♠ 862
♥ A		♥ KJ632
♦ KQ82		♦ 943
♣ AK1032		♣ J8
	♠ A1094	
	♥ 9874	
	♦ AJ65	
	♣ 4	

Most Wests will open a gentle 1♣ here, although how the auction will transpire afterwards is difficult to predict. Many Easts will quite reasonably bid 1♥ here but is hardly helping partner with a singleton King of Hearts. North/South may just about manage to identify their Moysian Spade fit and quite a few Wests will, as it happens, unwisely repeat their clubs with a 2♣ bid and North passing like a flash over it! This board may end up, yet again, with a lot of drowning of sorrows in the bar afterwards!

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 13	♠ 9	Dealer N
	♥ J9754	Vul: Bo10h
	♦ Q63	
	♣ KQJ9	
♠ AJ742		♠ KQ63
♥ 3		♥ K62
♦ K872		♦ 105
♣ 732		♣ A1086
	♠ 1085	
	♥ AQ108	
	♦ AJ94	
	♣ 54	

Some Norths may open a Lucas style 2 with a major/minor 5/4 shape and intermediate values but I, for one, am not a great fan as they are often as difficult for partner to assess as the opposition- which is not the intention! Therefore, most Acolite Easts will open a weak

NT here. West will try a transfer bid of 2♥, with their nice Spades and North might try a lead directing double with their 5, but not particularly, nice hearts. It would work out well here- because the result will be a battle of attrition in the majors. North/South actually have a makeable 4♥ contract and East/West have an easy 3♠ but 4♠ may prove to be an intuitive sacrifice. The traveller will be interesting at the end here.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 14	♠ 432	Dealer E
	♥ 432	Vul: None
	♦ J5	
	♣ 107532	
♠ 76		♠ KQJ9
♥ KQ8		♥ AJ6
♦ Q643		♦ A872
♣ AKJ4		♣ 86
	♠ A1085	
	♥ 10975	
	♦ K109	
	♣ Q9	

Acolites, dependent on style, will either open 1♦ here or 1♠ (my preference would be for the former, where opening the minor leaves more bidding space for exploration and for the chance of a reverse- but others may fairly disagree!). With no major suit fit identified- its difficult to imagine nothing other that the vast majority of East/Wests ending up in 3NT here. On any lead- a sound declarer should achieve 11 tricks with both a low play to the Queen of Diamonds and a simple finesse of the Jack of clubs at some stage.

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 15	♠ 963	Dealer S
	♥ KQ104	Vul: N-S
	♦ J	
	♣ AKQ42	
♠ 10754		♠ QJ8
♥ A		♥ J75
♦ 108653		♦ 972
♣ 983		♣ 10765
	♠ AK2	
	♥ 98632	
	♦ AKQ4	
	♣ J	

An exciting deal for North/South. Despite the poor quality of the heart suit- the vast majority of Souths will open 1♥ here (in fact- there are few other options with the singleton Jack of Clubs). North now has a golden opportunity to utilise the Jacoby 2NT convention- agreeing hearts as the trump suit and game forcing at least (this would have my vote for the 'Best in Bridge' as also referred to in a later hand today). The responding bids, however, are open to interpretation and dependent on partnership agreement. Other than a direct raise to game of 4♥ with a minimum- I, for one, prefer to use simple 'Italian' Methods with more promising hands and cue bid first round controls, shortages or a good second suit. Here, dependent on style- South would do well to show their singleton club with a bid of 3♣. North can now respond with an identical 3♦ to show their singleton and South could respond in turn with a cue bid of 3♠ showing a first round control in that suit. Now a 4NT Blackwood enquiry will reveal that only the Ace of Hearts is missing for an odds on slam. Nothing much to the play after declarer flushes out the Ace of trumps- with 12 easy tricks on top. I imagine that most North/Souths will reach the Heart Slam here with a combined HCP of 33- but will gain considerable Brownie points via an elegant Jacoby bidding sequence.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 16 ♠ K8432 Dealer W
 ♥ 105 Vul: E-W
 ♦ 76
 ♣ A853

♠ ♠ Aj
 ♥ AQJ9743 ♥ K62
 ♦ KQ32 ♦ A9854
 ♣ KJ ♣ Q96

♠ Q109765
 ♥ 8
 ♦ J10
 ♣ 10742

An exciting deal for East for East/West- but like 'Many Roads leading to Rome', often a similar case with bidding to slams. It's difficult to imagine most Wests opening anything other than a gentle 1♥ here. If playing 5 card majors-East could, yet again, utilise the excellent Jacoby 2NT convention. If so- West is now likely to display their spade void immediately with a bid of 3♠ and a succession of elegant cue bids to reach the heart slam. The second scenario would involve a simple 2♦ response and most Wests would surely just jump bid in hearts with a 3♥ bid to show the strength of their hand. The diamond fit also identified- the partnership will have the option of slam in either of the red suits. The trouble with this second line is that no form of Blackwood enquiry (apart from the rarely played & unwieldy 'exclusion' variety)- will reveal the Spade void or the fact that 2 Aces are missing- which may put some off a cold slam. Nothing much to the play, apart from losing the A♣ at some stage. For this reason- bidding 6NT will get a top score, but difficult to imagine many being in the NT slam with obvious fits in the red suits.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 17 ♠ 1094 Dealer N
 ♥ 9843 Vul: None
 ♦ 98
 ♣ AQ85

♠ K753 ♠ A8
 ♥ A ♥ K107
 ♦ QJ10763 ♦ A54
 ♣ J7 ♣ K10642

♠ QJ62
 ♥ QJ652
 ♦ K2
 ♣ 93

Most Acolites will open a weak NT with the East hand. True- the hand is not totally balanced, but opening 1♣ here may lead to problems with rebids. If East opens 1NT- many Souths may want to show their majors with a Landy style 2♣ bid. To my mind- here is an ideal opportunity to utilise this elegant and non aggressive convention/intervention over a NT opening. With their 11 HCP & promising Diamond suit- West may be best to keep it simple & just gamble on an immediate raise to 3NT (there are other options such as bidding a Lebensohl style 2NT over a potential Landy intervention or a 2♠ bid, without intervention, showing a long minor). On any lead- declarer should romp home with 9 easy tricks in NT, with the chance of an overtrick or 2 with the tempo allowed to set up both minor suits.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 18 ♠ AJ Dealer E
 ♥ Q95 Vul: N-S
 ♦ AKQ2
 ♣ Q1085

♠ 108 ♠ 652
 ♥ AK4 ♥ 7632
 ♦ 109765 ♦ J84
 ♣ KJ3 ♣ A92

 ♠ KQ9743
 ♥ J108
 ♦ 3
 ♣ 764

South appears to have an ideal weak 2♠ opening here and I imagine most will opt for it. West is not strong enough for a takeout double and would be most unwise to overcall 3♦ with a suit headed by the 10, but a few who play their Bridge in vain hope of what their partner might/might not have, may be tempted ! Now North, with their lovely 18 count and 2 top honours in spades, is ideal for a 2NT Ogust style enquiry. Dependent on the style of responses- South will show a minimum hand and the final contract of 3♠ will be a safe one. Those who get carried away will bid to 4♠, ending in disappointment with 4 inevitable losers.

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 19 ♠ KJ8 Dealer S
 ♥ K93 Vul: E-W
 ♦ A532
 ♣ 652

♠ 953 ♠ AQ10642
 ♥ 64 ♥ 875
 ♦ KJ ♦ 9864
 ♣ KQ10987 ♣

 ♠ 7
 ♥ AQJ102
 ♦ Q107
 ♣ AJ43

Most Souths will open a gentle 1♥ here and most Wests, a simple overcall of 2♣ in turn.

North could try an Unassuming Cue Bid raise of 3♣ here showing a good raise in partner's Hearts. Many an East will come in with a 2 or 3♠ bid, dependent on how the auction has progressed. Tricky for both sides on this scrappy deal, as part score in both their respective majors is making but bidding to game will result in a minus score and disappointment for all parties concerned.

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 20 ♠ QJ1094 Dealer W
 ♥ AJ10 Vul: Bo10h
 ♦ J109
 ♣ AJ

♠ 6 ♠ K82
 ♥ KQ543 ♥ 976
 ♦ ♦ 65432
 ♣ K1097632 ♣ Q5

 ♠ A753
 ♥ 82
 ♦ AKQ87
 ♣ 84

A very interesting hand in both bidding and play terms. Would you open 3♣ with the West hand? Looks very tempting at first sight but there's a very big problem with such a powerful second suit in hearts headed by the king and queen. The 7/5/1 shape is attractive in itself but often at Bridge you have anticipate the consequences of your opening bid and here is a classic case of 'what if' and probably just reluctantly biting the bullet with the West hand and passing (at least as an opener with the clear chance of entering the auction later). Let's therefore just assume that North kicks off with an obvious 1♠. South can now utilise the excellent Jacoby 2NT convention (would certainly get my vote for one of the most elegant and yet practical at the same time, but open to many different interpretations in the responding bids) showing a good raise in partner's major suit opening and forcing to game at least. North, with an above minimum opening, could cue bid their Ace of clubs as a

start with a 4♣ bid and South could respond in turn with 4♦ and North completing the display of controls with 4♥ (wow- this auction is running as smooth as honey!). A Blackwood 4NT enquiry will now reveal that South has the Ace of Spades and 6♠ will be the probable final contract. On an inevitable club lead from the East hand (after West probably shows them at some stage in the auction- a diamond at trick one would be even better with an immediate ruff by West with their singleton 6 of spades!) declarer rises with the Ace of clubs & after successfully finessing out the K of spades from East, can count 12 top tricks. But every cunning declarer would hope for the whole lot here and sense a golden 'Squeeze' opportunity. By cashing the remaining trumps & running the long diamonds- West will be feeling the pressure on the last diamond, Down to the king of clubs and the king/queen of hearts many a West, understandably unsure as to the whereabouts of the club queen, may fatally let go one of their top hearts allowing declarer to win both their ace/jack of hearts and a lovely 13 tricks into the bargain. Genuine Squeezes, being comparatively rare, are the stuff of newspaper columns and, quite rightly, bestow widespread adulation upon the successful exponent! But even the more common 'Pseudo' non-genuine variety as here, is probably worth bragging to family and Bridge friends about in the pub afterwards!

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 21	♠ AJ963	Dealer N
	♥ J4	Vul: N-S
	♦ J6	
	♣ 10982	
	♠ K2	♠ Q1085
	♥ AK10	♥ Q87
	♦ AQ85	♦ 732
	♣ A743	♣ QJ5
	♠ 74	
	♥ 96532	
	♦ K1094	
	♣ K6	

Some Norths may opt to open some form of ludicrous 'Lucas 2 style' opening here with a major/minor 2 suiter and intermediate values- well, all I can say, if you must! For those wisely wary of such dubious tactics- the auction is very likely to be passed out to West in 4th position, most of whom will surely bid 2NT with their lovely and balanced 20 HCP. East will try a Stayman 3♣ bid enquiry and, with no major fit identified, the vast majority of the field will reach the safe contract of 3NT. With both minor suit finesses working and if you get the Spade suit right for 3 tricks, achieving a magic 11 tricks all in for a good score.

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 22	♠ KQ954	Dealer E
	♥ 972	Vul: E-W
	♦ A5	
	♣ 643	
	♠ J86	♠ 7
	♥ AQJ64	♥ 853
	♦ KQJ9	♦ 1064
	♣ 7	♣ J109852
	♠ A1032	
	♥ K10	
	♦ 8732	
	♣ AKQ	

South will get the ball rolling with either a strong NT opening or else 1♦/1♠, dependent on style. If you're playing Acol and opt to open 1♠- life will be very easy for you when partner

makes an invitational raise to 3♠. Taking an optimistic view of their hand, most Souths will now just bid 4♠. Not much to the play and an easy 10 tricks for declarer forced to lead away from their King/ten of hearts eventually, after losing an inevitable diamond.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 23 ♠ AQ874 Dealer S
 ♥ 10 Vul: Bo10h
 ♦ 1063
 ♣ KQ63

♠ K9652	♠ J3
♥ 4	♥ J9732
♦ 972	♦ AQJ
♣ A1052	♣ J98

♠ 10
 ♥ AKQ865
 ♦ K854
 ♣ 74

Most Souths will kick off with a gentle 1♥ bid here. To make a simple overcall of 1♠ with the rickety suit would be risky- but many Wests will do just that, including me! North is now silenced from showing their nice Spades also and has no real option than bidding 1NT in this potential bidding sequence. The interesting options for South now are either, just to pass 1NT or repeat their hearts with a bid of 2♥. What would you do- either could be right or wrong?! The bad Heart break is not insurmountable with such good intermediaries and most declarers should romp home with 8 tricks here. But with a marked Spade finesse, a NT contract will be nothing to resent also.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 24 ♠ 109432 Dealer W
 ♥ J10853 Vul: None
 ♦ 8
 ♣ 97

♠ AKJ6	♠ Q
♥ 6	♥ AK972
♦ J7643	♦ 1092
♣ Q82	♣ KJ105

♠ 875
 ♥ Q4
 ♦ AKQ5
 ♣ A643

Would you open with the West hand? At non-vulnerability, 1♦ seems fair enough but this is far from being a great opening hand and maybe rebidding problems later (as it happens not here- as partner has a good hand). Such a slim opening- would also give North an opportunity for a shapely Michaels Cue bid of 2♦- showing both majors despite their 1 HCP hand! However the auction transpires- East/West are likely to discover that they almost have the points for game with a combined 24 HCP, despite much of a fit in anything, leading to an inevitable NT contract. 3NT is actually a safe bet, with a bit of work to do in establishing the black suits. I imagine that many however, will be understandably cautious and play safe here.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 25 ♠ 102 Dealer N
 ♥ J103 Vul: E-W
 ♦ AKJ76
 ♣ 543

♠ KJ9865 ♠ Q
 ♥ K98 ♥ 752
 ♦ 5 ♦ 1043
 ♣ AKQ ♣ 1098762

♠ A743
 ♥ AQ64
 ♦ Q982
 ♣ J

The auction is very likely to be passed out to South in 3rd position. 4441 Shaped hands can be highly problematic but here the singleton Jack of Clubs is a positive in finding a fit at a low level. Therefore, to open 1♦ here would work out well as North/South have immediately identified a 5/4 fit in Diamonds! Most Wests will surely just overcall 1♠ with their lovely suit & promising 16 count (sadly partner has little to encourage such potential- but more below!). North will show their diamond suit- however the auction has transpired. East has a terrible hand and could make a total punt 'on balance of probability' (the technical excuse amongst good Bridge players for total abominations at the table!) bid of 3♣ here, which happens to land on its feet. If so, the auction will be a battle in the minors, being difficult to predict which side will win.

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 26 ♠ K109 Dealer E
 ♥ A9 Vul: Bo10h
 ♦ Q1086
 ♣ AQ107

♠ J ♠ A87652
 ♥ J532 ♥ 64
 ♦ 94 ♦ K753
 ♣ KJ8632 ♣ 5

♠ Q43
 ♥ KQ1087
 ♦ AJ2
 ♣ 94

Most Easts will open a standard and perfectly valid, in this instance, weak 2♠ here at vulnerability. South is not strong enough for a take out double or any subsequent 'Lebensohl' style enquiry, so would be best to just make a simple overcall of 3♥. From their perspective- the North hand looks like a safe bet in NT with a 3NT bid to play. I imagine that the majority of the field will be in a NT game here, with a few others in the less obvious and percentage heart game. Double dummy suggests a slam in NT- but let's not go there in terms of what declarer has to guess right or either conduct a study of those rare geniuses at Bridge- who are said to have been born with 'Xray' vision!

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 27 ♠ Q3 Dealer S
 ♥ AJ764 Vul: None
 ♦ QJ
 ♣ 10643

♠ 1098 ♠ 654
 ♥ 83 ♥ K105
 ♦ A963 ♦ K1042
 ♣ Q972 ♣ AK8

♠ AKJ72
 ♥ Q92
 ♦ 875
 ♣ J5

In first position- South doesn't have a great hand but the spade suit looks promising and a gentle opening of 1♠ here looks reasonable

enough. North is also borderline for a 2♥ bid with such a rickety hand and potentially useless QJ in Diamonds, but again their major suit is promising so I imagine many would bid 2♥ here. East might just about manage a take out double here- but its a risky strategy if a minor fit is not on the cards (luckily there is here- in Diamonds). If South bids 3♥ (they have little other options) it will end in disappointment for North as declarer, inevitably going for minus one. One of those hands where borderline decisions all round will result in a diverse traveller at the end!

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 28

♠ A10732	Dealer W
♥ QJ6	Vul: N-S
♦ KJ93	
♣ 8	

♠ KJ85	♠ 6
♥ A94	♥ K10
♦ 74	♦ Q10862
♣ A762	♣ KQJ103

♠ Q94
♥ 87532
♦ A5
♣ 954

This could be an interesting auction dependent on partnership bidding methods. Most Acollites will open a standard weak NT here (some might pass fearing punishment- but they should ask themselves why they've decided to play Acoll in the first place?!). Even at vulnerability- most Norths would be tempted to bid 2♠ here & hope for the best that partner can provide them with a little something. Now over to East- assuming that North overcalls spades- what to do? If you've decided to adopt the Lebensohl convention (although many good players still dismiss it for one reason or another) now would be a perfect time to utilise it with a singleton Spade and 5/5 shape in the minors and bid 2NT. West now obliges with a relay bid of 3♣- which East passes like a flash! Some unwise North/Souths will go on competing in

Spades but will end in tears for an inevitable minus 200 at the end.

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 29

♠ Q94	Dealer N
♥ Q32	Vul: Bo10h
♦ 108	
♣ KQJ95	

♠ A763	♠ 5
♥ AK10	♥ 9654
♦ AJ95	♦ K7643
♣ A8	♣ 1043

♠ KJ1082
♥ J87
♦ Q2
♣ 762

Some might open 1♣ with the North hand- well what can I say? Probably best to hide in a corner after the end of the session to avoid the wrath of partner! Assuming that the auction passes sensibly to South in third position, I imagine most will open a reasonable weak 2♥ here. According to most modern thinking- West, with their lovely 20 count and stop in Spades to 4, has a clear cut bid of 3NT here, which is making safely on a favourable diamond position. With the silly scenario of North opening the bidding with 1♣ here- it's anybody's guess how the auction might transpire and could lead to the 'wrong' decision at Bridge becoming the right one as East/west miss out on their game contract!

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 30 ♠ 953 Dealer E
 ♥ 109862 Vul: None
 ♦ K92
 ♣ 32

♠ J108 ♠ A
 ♥ Q ♥ J7543
 ♦ Q8754 ♦ J1063
 ♣ J1054 ♣ AQ9

♠ KQ7642
 ♥ AK
 ♦ A
 ♣ K876

To open 1♥ with the East hand with such a rickety suit or indeed punt INT with a singleton Ace of Spades would be verging on the 'hope and pray' variety! (although more seriously- could be a contender to enter later in the auction as it transpires here). Assuming that South kicks things off with a standard 1♠- the bidding is very likely to be passed out again to East- who is now ideal for a takeout double. Even if East/west identify their diamond fit- most North/Souths will surely win the day in a part score Spade contract.

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 31 ♠ K1032 Dealer S
 ♥ K6 Vul: N-S
 ♦ Q6
 ♣ AJ643

♠ A ♠ QJ98
 ♥ AQ742 ♥ J83
 ♦ A8752 ♦ J9
 ♣ 72 ♣ K985

♠ 7654
 ♥ 1095
 ♦ K1043
 ♣ Q10

West will open a standard 1♥ here and most Norths will manage a takeout double in turn, with the other major. Even if not playing 5 card majors- the majority of Easts will oblige with a jump raise to 3♥ and I imagine a lot of Wests (after South passes without much to provide)

will take an optimistic view of their hand and bid 4♥. Sadly today, making however will prove very challenging without a few slip ups from the defence.

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 32 ♠ 5 Dealer W
 ♥ A83 Vul: E-W
 ♦ Q653
 ♣ A10862

♠ Q3 ♠ J9762
 ♥ J10952 ♥ 6
 ♦ 98 ♦ AJ1074
 ♣ KJ74 ♣ 95

♠ AK1084
 ♥ KQ74
 ♦ K2
 ♣ Q3

On the final board, the hands very much belong to North/South. Assuming the East/West don't go in for in for technically unsound weak 2 style openings (either a Lucas 2 from West or an ill advised weak 2 diamond bid with a 5 card major), south will kick things off with 1♠. North is worth a response of 2♣ and South could reverse with a 2♠ bid to show the strength of their hand. The likely final contract will be 3NT- making 9 tricks on a double club finesse.

Makeable Contracts

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