

ECatsBridge Simultaneous Pairs for Children in Need

Tuesday 11th November 2025



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 **£1,414,707.44** ... hopefully can add a good bit more to that this year, we are so close to one and half million -WOW!

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/donations.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: Mark Horton for his words of wisdom on Tuesday and Thursday, Brian Senior did the analysis for the Monday session and Julian Pottage completes the crew, writing up the Wednesday and Friday events. 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

Board 1 ♠ K1082 Dealer N
 ♥ J64 Vul: None
 ♦ AK642
 ♣ Q

♠ 73 ♠ AJ64
 ♥ K1082 ♥ Q975
 ♦ 9853 ♦ 7
 ♣ J97 ♣ A632

♠ Q95
 ♥ A3
 ♦ QJ10
 ♣ K10854

If North opens 1♦ and East doubles, South redoubles and West bids 1♥. If North then passes East might try a defensive raise to 2♥. Given the depreciation in value of opening bids, a restrained 2NT from South might be more popular than a jump to game.

If East does not double South responds 2♣ and will then have to choose between 2NT and 3NT.

On a heart lead, provided East puts in the ♥9 if declarer plays low from dummy,

there should only be eight tricks in notrumps.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 2 ♠ K Dealer E
 ♥ K986 Vul: N-S
 ♦ K983
 ♣ J743

♠ Q1083 ♠ 972
 ♥ AJ5 ♥ Q72
 ♦ 1075 ♦ J4
 ♣ 852 ♣ AKQ96

♠ AJ654
 ♥ 1043
 ♦ AQ62
 ♣ 10

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If East opens 1♣ South can choose between a double and 1♠. After 1♠ West responds 1NT and North has no obvious bid unless you think double is a possibility.

After a double by South if West bids 1♠ (a bit thin) North might try 2♥ which could easily close the bidding. The modern approach is to double 1♠ for take out, South being happy to pass that for penalties.

The advantage of playing in the higher scoring denomination (hearts) may be illustrated if East leads a top club. If East then switches to a heart declarer wins the second round of the suit, ruffs a club, crosses to the ♠K, returns to hand with a diamond, pitches a club on the ♠A, goes to dummy with a diamond and exits with a heart, finishing with nine tricks.

Were West to finish in 1♠ doubled, North can lead the ♠K and then switch to a diamond (or indeed anything) when declarer will be in a poor position as South can prevent any diamond ruffs being scored. Best defence will restrict declarer to five tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 3	♠ A73	Dealer S
	♥ AKJ63	Vul: E-W
	♦ A	
	♣ KQJ7	
♠ J8		♠ KQ965
♥ 1074		♥ Q985
♦ 952		♦ J103
♣ A6543		♣ 9
	♠ 1042	
	♥ 2	
	♦ KQ8764	
	♣ 1082	

If South can start with a weak 2♦ North may want to be able to respond with a forcing 2♥. When South rebids 3♦ North must choose between 3NT and 5♦.

The alternative approach for North is to respond 2NT, but when South shows a minimum (some pairs use 3♣ to do that) the problem remains the same.

If South does not open North's options will include 1♥, 2♣ and 2NT. In the case of the latter South can look for a 5-3 spade fit before settling for 3NT.

After 2♣*-2♦*-2♥*-2♠*-3♣ (as part of the Kokish Relay) South can bid 3♦, but North is likely to settle for 3NT.

If North starts with a Strong 1♣ East may be deterred from bidding by the vulnerability, and after South's 1♦ North rebids 1♥ (or perhaps 2NT) and will probably finish in 3NT.

5♦ cannot be defeated. On a spade lead declarer wins, unblocks the ♦A, cashes two hearts pitching a spade, ruffs a heart and draws trumps.

If East leads a spade honour against 3NT and declarer elects to win, it is then possible to unblock the ♦A and play three rounds of hearts. West can win with the ♥10 and cash the ♠J, but must then play a minor suit, allowing declarer to score 10 tricks.

Well done if you found a low spade lead.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 4 ♠ 87 Dealer W
 ♥ 9862 Vul: Both
 ♦ K543
 ♣ KQ7

♠ Q9 ♠ KJ2
 ♥ AQJ5 ♥ K1073
 ♦ Q9862 ♦ AJ7
 ♣ 92 ♣ J83

♠ A106543
 ♥ 4
 ♦ 10
 ♣ A10654

If West decides to open 1♦ East responds 1♥ and South can choose between 1♠, 2♠, 2♦ and 2♥. Over 1♠ or 2♦ West can bid 2♥, but bidding 3♥ over 2♠ or 2♥ is unlikely. (It would be useful to know what a double of 2♥ would mean – support, or interest in taking a penalty.) North has nothing to say over 2♠ but if East continues with 2NT West can support hearts.

If West does not open and East bids 1NT (12-14/13-15) South is sure to bid, using whatever methods are available. Over a natural 2♠ West can double for takeout which will locate the heart fit.

If EW get to 4♥, there is some possibility that NS will elect to save in either 4♠ or 5♣, although the vulnerability is an issue.

NS can score nine tricks in spades and 10 in clubs, but taking a save will only show a profit if EW bid and make 4♥.

Suppose South leads the ♦10 against 4♥. Declarer wins with the ♦J and plays a heart to the jack. Playing a second trump now is fatal because of the 4-1 split. The winning line is to continue with a diamond to the seven, cash the ♦A and the ♥10 and play a spade. If South wins and switches to clubs, declarer ruffs the third round, cashes the ♠Q and plays a diamond, scoring the last three tricks on a crossruff.

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

=====

Board 5 ♠ A Dealer N
 ♥ 103 Vul: N-S
 ♦
 ♣ AKQJ1098754

♠ 10762 ♠ K953
 ♥ AJ7 ♥ KQ84
 ♦ Q1093 ♦ AKJ65
 ♣ 32 ♣

♠ QJ84
 ♥ 9652
 ♦ 8742
 ♣ 6

Here's a hand you won't see everyday of the week (North's distribution has a 0.000011% probability).

If North starts with 2♣, East will be surprised. The general idea with a good hand is to pass intending to bid on the next round, but perhaps this is the exception that proves the rule.

Playing one of the more complex defences, let's say TRAP, East can choose between 2♥, 2♠ and 2NT, respectively indicating two suits of the same colour, two suits of the same rank or two 'odd' suits. Let's say East starts with 2NT, promising clubs and hearts or spades and diamonds. When South passes West bids 3♥, showing better hearts than clubs, but also guaranteeing a bigger fit in spades or diamonds. If North then jumps to 5♣ East might double, but the partnership will need to be on very firm ground for West to remove that to 5♦.

Were North to open 5♣ East could double, but will West take it out?

Another possibility for North would be to gamble by opening 4NT, asking for specific aces. Over a response of 5♥ 6♣ must be

cold and if partner responds 5NT to show both red aces you can bid 7NT. If partner bids 5♣ to deny an ace you pass, so only 5♦, indicating the ♦A will be inconvenient.

On a practical note, if EW reach 5♦, North will have an opportunity to make a rare vulnerable save by bidding 6♣. It should perhaps be taken.

Does 6♣ have any chance of making?

After a top diamond lead declarer ruffs, and perhaps does best to exit with the ♥3. If West wins and switched to a spade it looks easy enough for one of the defenders to hold on to a winning heart, but you never know.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 6	♠ 754 ♥ J1086 ♦ AQJ2 ♣ J9	Dealer E Vul: E-W
	♠ AK108 ♥ AKQ52 ♦ 63 ♣ K3	♠ Q9632 ♥ 7 ♦ 985 ♣ Q754
	♠ J ♥ 943 ♦ K1074 ♣ A10862	

If West opens 1♥ East responds 1♠. At this point South might try overcalling INT to show the minors. If West then jumps to 4♠, North can consider bidding 5♦.

If West starts with a Strong 1♣, East responds 1♦. Those partnerships that use a double of 1♦ to show a major or minor two-suiter might have a chance of finding the save as West's 1♥ will make it clear that South has the minors.

If EW play in spades, declarer will always take at least 10 tricks.

If NS play in diamonds, declarer can get up to eight tricks in several ways. For example, if West starts with four rounds of hearts (to kill the ♥J) declarer overruffs East's ♦8 and can now play a low club, or cross to dummy to run the ♣J.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 7	♠ K963 ♥ Q3 ♦ Q954 ♣ 1042	Dealer S Vul: Both
	♠ Q102 ♥ 6 ♦ A1063 ♣ K9853	♠ AJ85 ♥ J752 ♦ J7 ♣ QJ7
	♠ 74 ♥ AK10984 ♦ K82 ♣ A6	

If South opens 1♥ North responds 1♠ and then passes South's 2♥ rebid. It would be tough for East to find a double at this point, but West might consider a double of 2♥ – not risk free, but a good move on this layout.

If South plays in hearts West has a nasty hand to lead from. Opting for a club will probably see declarer win and play two rounds of hearts. When West discards, declarer can try a spade to the king, East winning and playing two rounds of clubs. To record eight tricks, declarer must pitch a spade on this trick! It will then be possible to score four more heart tricks and a diamond. If declarer makes the mistake of ruffing and exiting with a spade, West wins and plays another club allowing

East to pitch a diamond, setting up a ruff in the suit.

If East plays in 3♣ South is likely to start with a top heart and then switch to a spade. Declarer wins in hand and plays clubs, South winning and exiting with a spade. Declarer puts up dummy's ♠Q, takes North's ♠K, draws trumps and continues with a low diamond. If South wins and returns a diamond declarer takes dummy's ♦A and cashes the remaining clubs. On the last of these, North, having been forced to part with the ♥Q, will be down to ♠96 ♦Q9 will now have to let go of a diamond allowing declarer to exit with a diamond, establishing a ninth trick.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 8	♠ 72 ♥ 1072 ♦ KQ8 ♣ AKJ52	Dealer W Vul: None
	♠ K65 ♥ KQ98 ♦ A9543 ♣ 10	♠ J1094 ♥ 3 ♦ J1062 ♣ 9763
	♠ AQ83 ♥ AJ654 ♦ 7 ♣ Q84	

If West starts with 1♦ North might be tempted to overcall 2♣. If East then scrapes up a raise to 2♦ South can double to show the majors. Assuming West then passes, North can try 2NT which South will be happy to raise to game.

If East leads the ♦J against 3NT, declarer is likely to be allowed to win. With West marked with most of the missing high cards, declarer should cash five rounds of clubs. That will force West to come down

to ♠K6 ♥KQ9 ♦A9. Now declarer plays a heart to the jack and West is endplayed in three suits. Playing two rounds of diamonds allows declarer to win and then play two rounds of hearts, forcing a return into the ♠AQ for 10 tricks.

If East decides to lead the ♠J, declarer can put up dummy's ♠A, cash two clubs ending in dummy and play a diamond to the queen. Then three more clubs turn the screw on West.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 9	♠ 982 ♥ 96 ♦ J10652 ♣ Q107	Dealer N Vul: E-W
	♠ AQ4 ♥ AKQ43 ♦ Q7 ♣ 932	♠ 63 ♥ 875 ♦ AK8 ♣ AKJ54
	♠ KJ1075 ♥ J102 ♦ 943 ♣ 86	

I would be willing to open a weak 2♦ with North's hand, which might cause EW some difficulty, but it is not likely to be a universal choice.

If East opens 1♣ South might overcall in spades, both 1♠ and 2♠ perhaps having supporters. After 1♣-(1♠) West can bid 2♠ and then bid 3♥ over East's 3♣. If East raises to 4♥ West is likely to move towards a slam, but it is unclear if a grand slam will be reached. Were the auction to continue 4♠-5♣-5♥ East can bid 6♦, but West might settle for 6NT.

An overcall of 2♠ by South might be more challenging, especially as EW will be

worried about bad breaks. Even so, a small slam should be reached.

If East opens INT (13-15/14-16/15-17) West can transfer to hearts. After INT-2♦*-2♥ I hope you have discussed what bids of 4NT and 5NT mean.

Is 4NT asking for keycards with hearts set as trumps, or quantitative with five hearts?

Is 5NT an old-fashioned grand slam force, or an invitation to bid 6♥/6NT with a minimum or 7♥/7NT with a maximum?

I consulted the *Acol Index* and *The Bidding Dictionary*, but both are silent on the matter.

I suspect that the majority would play INT-2♦*-2♥-4NT as quantitative, while INT-2♦*-2♥-5NT would be pick a slam.

If you also use INT-4♣*/4♦* as transfers to a major then after partner completes the transfer, 4NT should ask for keycards.

On this layout all the tricks are available in clubs, hearts or notrumps.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	7	4	7	4	7
W	7	4	7	4	7

=====

Board 10	♠ KQ754 ♥ AJ8 ♦ 2 ♣ A943	Dealer E Vul: Both
♠ 10 ♥ Q32 ♦ AJ1098 ♣ Q1062	♠ 63 ♥ 94 ♦ KQ653 ♣ K875	
	♠ AJ982 ♥ KI0765 ♦ 74 ♣	

South's hand is perfect for an opening bid that promises both majors. Using the methods described in *The Mysterious*

Multi, South opens 2♥ and North responds 2NT, which forces South to rebid 3♣. Then North bids 4♦, slam invitational agreeing spades. If South decides to cooperate by bidding 5♣ (perhaps a slight overbid) North is likely to drive to 6♠.

Where South does not open West might occasionally try a light 1♦. When North overcalls 1♠ NS are sure to reach at least 4♠. At this vulnerability East should be wary of trying for a save in 5♦.

When West does not open North starts with 1♠. If South responds with a 4♣ splinter, North can bid 4♦ and then decide what to do over South's 4♥.

If declarer can locate the ♥Q, everything in the garden will be rosy.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 11	♠ AKJ75 ♥ 8 ♦ AKQ86 ♣ K6	Dealer S Vul: None
♠ 10 ♥ J532 ♦ 10973 ♣ J1083	♠ 9863 ♥ 1097 ♦ 4 ♣ AQ742	♠ Q42 ♥ AKQ64 ♦ J52 ♣ 95

If North opens 1♠ and East overcalls 2♥ South can either raise spades directly, splinter in diamonds or make a fit bid in clubs (turn the ♣Q into the ♠Q and 6♠ is virtually gin). Were North to start with 2♣ there is every chance that NS will end up in 6♠.

If North begins with a Strong 1♣ East is likely to overcall, sometimes systemically. After say 1♣-(1♥)-2♣ West can raise hearts, but North can bid spades at any level.

It is hard to say if NS will bid 6♠, but the bottom line is that it is almost certain to fail.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 12

♠ 97	Dealer W
♥ 73	Vul: N-S
♦ KQ87	
♣ KJ542	

♠ AK63	♠ 54
♥ 62	♥ AKJ10854
♦ J1094	♦ A65
♣ A93	♣ 7

♠ QJ1082
♥ Q9
♦ 32
♣ Q1086

If West starts with INT (10-12/12-14) East may not be ambitious, transferring to hearts and then bidding game, but there is something to be said for making a splinter bid of 4♣ on the second round. With good controls but little in the way of trump support West has a close decision. Those who make a try with 4♠ are likely to see partner jump to 6♥. Another option for some will be for West to bid 4♦ over 4♣, the Last Train convention, showing some slam interest, but not guaranteeing a diamond control.

If East responds 4♣ to INT West has the option of rebidding 4♦ as outlined above.

If the bidding starts 1♣-1♥-1♠ East might keep the ball in play with a fourth-suit 2♦ before jumping to 4♥.

The situation will be similar if West starts with 1♦.

Thanks to the friendly disposition of the red suits 12 tricks are available in hearts.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	-	-	-	-
S	1	-	-	-	-
E	-	3	6	2	5
W	-	3	6	2	5

=====

Board 13

♠ A975	Dealer N
♥ J105	Vul: Both
♦ 752	
♣ K76	

♠ J6	♠ KQ1084
♥ AK76	♥ Q43
♦ K9643	♦ J10
♣ J10	♣ A82

♠ 32
♥ 982
♦ AQ8
♣ Q9543

If East opens 1♠ West responds 2♦. If East rebids 2♠ then a final contract of 4♠ is at least a theoretical possibility, but if East rebids 2NT then the nine-trick game is the likely resting place.

After 1♠-2♦-2♠-3♥ East can consider raising to 4♥.

If East starts with INT (12-14) West discovers that East has five spades but a final contract of 3NT is the likely outcome.

If East become the declarer in 3NT a club lead is fatal.

With hearts 3-3 and both diamond honours onside there should always be 10 tricks in a spade contract and 4♥ is also virtually certain to succeed.

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

=====

Board 14	♠ 862	Dealer E
	♥ A53	Vul: None
	♦ AQ9	
	♣ 10964	
♠ KJ107	♠ A54	
♥ Q6	♥ 10942	
♦ 432	♦ 10765	
♣ 8752	♣ AK	
	♠ Q93	
	♥ KJ87	
	♦ KJ8	
	♣ QJ3	

If East opens 1♣ West responds 1♠. Then a raise to 2♠ makes more sense than rebidding INT.

If East does not open and South starts with INT (12-14/13-15) North might go down an invitational route facing the latter.

Were South to open 1♣/1♦ North responds INT, ending the auction.

If East plays in INT and South leads a low heart declarer does best to play low from dummy, forcing North to win with the ♥A. Now a club switch is required to hold declarer to six tricks.

Although 2♠ should fail, there is one trap the defenders need to avoid. Imagine North leads a club, and declarer wins and plays a heart. If North wins and plays a second club declarer wins in dummy and plays a second heart. After winning the defenders play three rounds of diamonds, but must then be careful, exiting with a club rather than a third heart.

In theory NS can take seven tricks in notrumps, but that will require a good view in the heart suit, which declarer is

unlikely to take. Having said that, if West leads a minor suit (on a diamond lead declarer should be sure to play towards the ♣QJ3) and the defenders then stay passive (as opposed to switching to spades) declarer might get the hearts right.

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

=====

Board 15	♠ 542	Dealer S
	♥ Q2	Vul: N-S
	♦ KQJ943	
	♣ 74	
♠ KJ	♠ A6	
♥ A73	♥ 10986	
♦ A62	♦ 10875	
♣ Q9653	♣ A82	
	♠ Q109873	
	♥ KJ54	
	♦	
	♣ KJ10	

If South opens 1♠ (with four hearts and a control in all the side suits 2♠ feels wrong) it is possible that West might overcall 2♣, despite the poor quality of the suit and the lack of a sixth card. In that scenario the obvious move with North's cards is to raise to 2♠ although it is tempting to bid 2♦. In either case East is likely to compete with 3♣.

When West does not overcall North can raise to 2♠ opposite a five-card opening or bid INT if 1♠ is Acoll based. After 1♠-INT-2♥-2♠ West is unlikely to reopen with 3♣.

Barring a defensive accident, there should be eight tricks in spades and the same number in clubs.

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

=====

Board 16	♠ 8643	Dealer W
	♥ A873	Vul: E-W
	♦ 84	
	♣ J63	
♠ Q		♠ AJ107
♥ K10642		♥ QJ
♦ AK3		♦ 95
♣ KQ107		♣ A9854
	♠ K952	
	♥ 95	
	♦ QJ10762	
	♣ 2	

If West opens 1♥ and East responds 1♠ a possible continuation is 2♣-2♦*-3NT-4♣. Now an exchange of cue bids, 4♦-4♠, will probably see West jump to 6♣.

If East starts with a game forcing 2♣ response, West raises to 3♣. If East then tries 3♠ West bids 3NT, leaving East to decide if it is a good idea to continue the auction. With the ♥QJ it is tempting to keep the ball in play with 4♣.

If West starts with a Strong 1♣ East responds 2♣ after which there is every chance that 6♣ will be reached.

These auctions assume that South will not interfere. After 1♥-1♠, 1♥-2♣ or 1♣-2♣ suppose South enters the fray with 3♦. If West is tempted to bid 3NT that might bring proceedings to a halt. That is more likely to happen after a 1♠ response, as in the other two sequences West can either raise clubs or bid 4♦.

It is easy to score 12 tricks in clubs, and you can take the same number in notrumps unless North finds a spade lead.

Makeable Contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	6	1	5	3	6
W	6	1	5	3	5

=====

Board 17	♠ KJ93	Dealer N
	♥ A	Vul: None
	♦ AQ873	
	♣ AJ4	
♠ AQ		♠ 842
♥ KQ8543		♥ 102
♦ 654		♦ K92
♣ 53		♣ KI0962
	♠ 10765	
	♥ J976	
	♦ J10	
	♣ O87	

If North opens 1♦ and South responds 1♥ a jump to 2♠ is game forcing, South raising to 3♠ and then bidding 4♠ over North's probable 4♣.

If South does not respond to 1♦ West is likely to overcall 1♥, but North can double and jump to game over South's 1♠.

If North starts with a Strong 1♣ South responds 1♦. If West comes in with 1♥ North doubles and South responds 1♠. Now North's options include a jump to 3♠ (South has enough to raise to game) or bidding 2♥ before supporting spades.

If West leads a top heart against a spade contract declarer wins performace with dummy's ♥A and might try a low diamond. If East wins and plays a second heart declarer ruffs in dummy, plays a diamond to hand and a spade, finishing with 11 tricks.

After a minor suit lead by West, declarer should be restricted to 10 tricks.

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

=====

Board 18	♠ Q108632	Dealer E
	♥ 62	Vul: N-S
	♦ K	
	♣ J874	
♠ A4		♠ 95
♥ J107		♥ K53
♦ Q104		♦ J9753
♣ AQ1062		♣ K93
	♠ KJ7	
	♥ AQ984	
	♦ A862	
	♣ 5	

If South opens 1♥ West might overcall 2♣ (all the risky overcalls survive in this session). If North bids 2♠ there is every chance that the spade game will be reached.

If North passes over 2♣ South will reopen with a double and now North might try jumping to 3♠. (Were East to raise 2♣ to 3♣ South can still double after which you can make a case for North to jump to 4♠.)

If West does not overcall and North bids 1♠ (it's a good hand for those who like to respond with a weak 2♠) South should probably raise to 2♠ (bidding 2♦ and then supporting spades should show a stronger hand). Followers of *Meckstroth's Law* will know what to do next with North's cards.

Where NS play in spades the defenders are likely to take a club trick and then play two rounds of spades. Thanks to the favourable position in hearts declarer will collect the rest of the tricks.

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

=====

Board 19	♠ K87	Dealer S
	♥ 9543	Vul: E-W
	♦ A965	
	♣ J3	
♠ 10942		♠ AJ5
♥ KQ107		♥
♦		♦ QJ108742
♣ 108762		♣ AQ9
	♠ Q63	
	♥ AJ862	
	♦ K3	
	♣ K54	

If South opens 1♥ North raises according to system. Bergen raises are popular and after 1♥-3♣ East can overcall 3♦. At this vulnerability North will probably let that go (it would be speculative for North to double 3♦ for penalties, although in this case it would work well enough). Were North to continue with 3♥ then West might be tempted to double.

If South opens 1NT East might overcall 3♦, ending the auction.

South has an awkward lead against a diamond contract. In a situation where North has shown heart support, South might be tempted to start with the ♥A. Declarer ruffs and plays the ♦10. If South wins it is essential to switch to a low club. A low spade allows declarer to put up dummy's ♠10, take the ♠K with the ♠A and play the ♠J. South must duck but a third spade endplays South. Similarly, if North wins the first diamond, switching to the ♣3 is required.

If NS play in hearts then declarer is unlikely to take more than seven tricks.

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

=====

Board 20	♠ Q10 ♥ J85 ♦ J4 ♣ QJ10963	Dealer W Vul: Both
♠ 53 ♥ A7642 ♦ A87 ♣ A52		♠ K92 ♥ Q1093 ♦ 632 ♣ K84
	♠ AJ8764 ♥ K ♦ KQ1095 ♣ 7	

If West opens 1♥ East raises according to system (with such a flat hand 2♥ looks enough, but a Bergen 3♣ might attract support). South is sure to bid something, but the best move is unclear. After 1♥-2♥ South can try 3♥ and the same bid is possible after 1♥-3♣*. North can only bid 3♠ and there the matter rests.

If West starts with INT (12-14) South will have more options, depending on the methods being employed, but a part score contract is the most likely outcome.

If NS play in spades declarer will be able to reach the North hand with the ♦J to run the ♠Q, collecting 10 tricks.

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

=====

Board 21	♠ 73 ♥ AJ ♦ 109843 ♣ AQ42	Dealer N Vul: N-S
♠ J1042 ♥ 954 ♦ Q52 ♣ 1093		♠ Q95 ♥ KQ108732 ♦ 76 ♣ 5
	♠ AK86 ♥ 6 ♦ AKJ ♣ K1876	

If North opens 1♦ and East overcalls 3♥ South doubles and then drives to slam after North's 4♣. After continuing with 4NT and discovering that North has the missing aces and the ♣Q South might be tempted to bid 7♣, hoping that North holds the ♦Q.

Unlucky.

Makeable Contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	6	6	1	4	4
S	6	6	1	4	4
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

=====

Board 22	♠ A10964 ♥ A9752 ♦ K7 ♣ 9	Dealer E Vul: E-W
♠ 52 ♥ Q1043 ♦ 108643 ♣ 76	♠ Q8 ♥ KJ8 ♦ J52 ♣ AK843	
	♠ KJ73 ♥ 6 ♦ AQ9 ♣ QJ1052	

If East opens INT (12-14/13-15/14-16) South can overcall using whatever methods are to hand to overcall and if the spade fit comes to light NS are sure to bid game.

If East starts with 1♣ South is likely to pass and if West responds 1♦ North can choose between bidding 2♣ and 2♦ to show the majors (using the cue bid to differentiate on the strength of the overcall or the suit quality for example).

With 4♠ virtually certain to be reached, it will be all about the overtricks. If declarer plays to ruff three hearts then 12 tricks can be made.

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

=====

Board 23	♠ 42 ♥ 108532 ♦ A1065 ♣ 76	Dealer S Vul: Both	♠ J9763 ♥ 9 ♦ Q8 ♣ AKQ103
	♠ 8 ♥ KQ6 ♦ KJ97 ♣ 98542		♠ AKQ105 ♥ AJ74 ♦ 432 ♣ J

If South opens 1♠ North responds 1NT and East probably overcalls 2♣. When South continues with 2♥, West raises to 3♣ and North competes with 3♥. These part score battles are often on a knife-edge as the players attempt to judge how high to compete. If East bids 4♣ and South is tempted to try 4♥ West might decide to double.

There is nothing complicated to the play, NS making eight tricks in hearts and EW 10 in clubs.

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

=====

Board 24	♠ QJ754 ♥ 95 ♦ Q102 ♣ A74	Dealer W Vul: None	♠ 986 ♥ AKJ4 ♦ A7 ♣ J1083
	♠ K3 ♥ Q8732 ♦ K85 ♣ KQ9		♠ A102 ♥ 106 ♦ J9643 ♣ 652

If West opens 1♥ North overcalls 1♠ and East raises according to systemic agreements, which should result in the heart game being reached.

If West starts with 1NT (12-14/13-15) East can look for a major suit fit.

On this layout declarer will score 11 tricks in hearts.

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

=====

Board 25 ♠ K853 Dealer N
 ♥ 653 Vul: E-W
 ♦ 10732
 ♣ 76

♠ J109 ♠ A62
 ♥ K974 ♥ Aj8
 ♦ J64 ♦ Q95
 ♣ Q108 ♣ AKJ9

♠ Q74
 ♥ Q102
 ♦ AK8
 ♣ 5432

If East opens 1♣ West responds 1♥ and East rebids in notrumps according to agreements, with 3NT sure to be reached. In the old days of Acol 3NT promised a balanced 19, while modernists use it to indicate a long running suit, with 2NT promising 18-19. With everyone responding at the drop of a hat, keeping the bidding low is eminently sensible.

If East starts with a Strong 1♣, West responds systemically and 3NT should again be the final contract.

If South starts with three rounds of diamonds declarer, having unblocked the ♦Q at trick two, wins in dummy, runs the ♠J and can later repeat the finesse, finishing with nine tricks when the heart finesse loses.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 26 ♠ 10876 Dealer E
 ♥ K853 Vul: Both
 ♦ 52
 ♣ AQ4

♠ J942 ♠ AQ
 ♥ 10 ♥ AQ974
 ♦ QJ107 ♦ K3
 ♣ 9853 ♣ KJ107

♠ K53
 ♥ J62
 ♦ A9864
 ♣ 62

If East opens 1♥ and West responds 1♠, East's rebid will depend on partnership agreements as discussed on the previous deal. Here stopping in 2NT is a good idea.

If East starts with a Strong 1♣ West responds 1♦ and now East can rebid 1NT to show a powerful balanced hand (whether that is better than rebidding 1♥ is matter for the theorists).

If East declares a notrump contract South is likely to lead a diamond. Declarer wins with the ♦K and plays a back a diamond, South winning and exiting with a diamond. If declarer continues with dummy's ♣9 North should go up with the ♣A and switch to a low heart. When the ♥Q holds declarer can play two rounds of spades, South winning with the ♠K. If South now exits with the ♥J declarer should be held to eight tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 27	♠ AJ	Dealer S
	♥ Q109864	Vul: None
	♦ 7	
	♣ Q543	
♠ Q10873	♠ 9652	
♥ 2	♥ AJ53	
♦ AKQ10964	♦ 2	
♣	♣ AK107	
	♠ K4	
	♥ K7	
	♦ J853	
	♣ J9862	

If West opens 1♦ and North overcalls 1♥ East doubles. South will usually pass, but some partnerships play a that a double at this point indicates a high heart honour, the idea being to help partner with the opening lead. When West rebids 1♠ East might be mildly excited, but the bidding should not go beyond 4♠.

The situation will be similar if North overcalls 2♥.

Everyone should record 11 tricks in spades.

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

=====

Board 28	♠ AK75	Dealer W
	♥ QJ7	Vul: N-S
	♦ K832	
	♣ J5	
♠ Q962	♠ 8	
♥ AK63	♥ 92	
♦ 7	♦ Q1064	
♣ 10942	♣ KQ8763	
	♠ J1043	
	♥ 10854	
	♦ AJ95	
	♣ A	

If North opens INT (12-14/13-15/14-16) East is perhaps not quite worth 3♣ (but that might not deter everyone).

Given a free run, South can look for a major suit fit after which 4♠ is likely to be reached.

If East does overcall 3♣ South can double and then take a decision over North's 3♠.

If North opens 1♣ promising 2+♣, it should not be difficult to locate the spade fit.

If North is declarer in a spade contract and East leads a heart the defenders will score the first three tricks, but declarer will then be able to pick up West's trumps, while ruffing a club, and with the ♥10 providing a discard the diamond finesse will deliver a tenth trick.

A club lead is more testing. Having won in dummy declarer must not play a spade to the ace and ruff a club, as the 4-1 trump split will be impossible to deal with. If declarer runs the ♠J at trick two and then continues with the ♠10 for the queen and king, it is then safe to play the ♥Q, West winning and exiting with the ♣10. Having ruffed in dummy declarer can continue with a low heart and should come to 10 tricks.

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

=====

Board 29	♠ J765	Dealer N
	♥ 103	Vul: Both
	♦ J2	
	♣ J6432	
♠ K32	♠ 9	
♥ J85	♥ AQ962	
♦ Q1064	♦ AK875	
♣ 987	♣ Q10	
	♠ AQ1084	
	♥ K74	
	♦ 93	
	♣ AK5	

If East opens 1♥ and South overcalls 1♠ West can raise to 2♥ facing a five-card suit or bid INT facing a four-card opening. In either case if North drags up a spade raise, it will make it easy for South to go on to 3♠ over East's 3♦.

If South prefers to overcall INT and West decides to bid 2♥, South will be doing well to continue with 2♠.

Both sides can score nine tricks in their respective major.

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

=====

Board 30	♠ K	Dealer E
	♥ A10765	Vul: None
	♦ J8532	
	♣ 87	
♠ 52	♠ AJ103	
♥ J2	♥ 984	
♦ 974	♦ KQ	
♣ Q96542	♣ AKJ10	
	♠ Q98764	
	♥ KQ3	
	♦ A106	
	♣ 3	

If East opens 1♣ and South overcalls 1♠ West can consider jumping to 3♣ if that is a weak raise. (If you are facing a possible

2+♣ opening you might be mildly nervous about going down that route.) If North held a second spade a double, showing the other two suits and tolerance for spades would be a possibility, but the singleton ♠K might act as a deterrent.

If East starts with a Strong 1♣ South is sure to overcall. After a natural 1♠ East can rebid INT which might become the final contract. If South can overcall conventionally, for example by bidding 1♦ to show a decent hand with spades, North can respond 1♥. If East then tries INT South can compete with 2♥.

On this benign layout it is easy to secure 10 tricks playing in hearts. There are only eight tricks available in spades, and EW can collect nine in clubs.

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

=====

Board 31	♠ AQ942	Dealer S
	♥ J107	Vul: N-S
	♦ A3	
	♣ K42	
♠ K10	♠ J85	
♥ K653	♥ 84	
♦ QJ109	♦ 764	
♣ 1083	♣ AQ976	
	♠ 763	
	♥ AQ92	
	♦ K852	
	♣ J5	

If North opens 1♠ South responds according to agreements – this is just about worth a limit raise of 3♠.

If North opens INT (12-14/13-15/14-16) South will pass over 12-14, maybe look for a major suit fit over 13-15 and certainly enquire over 14-16.

On the face of it there are only nine tricks available in spades, but the defenders may need to exercise some care. Suppose East leads a diamond and declarer win with the ♦A and runs the ♥J. If West wins that (ducking is a good move) and plays a second diamond (a club switch is essential) declarer wins in dummy, plays a spade to the queen, cashes the ♠A, plays a heart to the queen, ruffs a diamond and then plays the winning hearts before exiting with a spade to endplay East.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 32 ♠ A943
 ♥ AKJ5
 ♦ 63
 ♣ K106

♠ 6
 ♥ Q62
 ♦ KQJ7
 ♣ AJ874

♠ Q8
 ♥ 983
 ♦ 9852
 ♣ Q532

Dealer W
 Vul: E-W

♠ KJ10752
 ♥ 1074
 ♦ A104
 ♣ 9

If West opens 1♣ North overcalls 1NT, leaving East to choose between passing, doubling (a bit thin) or bidding 2♠.

If North is left to play in 1NT the defenders will struggle. If East leads the ♠J declarer wins with dummy's ♠Q and can play a club to the ten followed by the ♣K. If West wins that declarer might even finish with eight tricks.

On a club lead declarer can win with the ♣10 and play a spade towards the queen, more or less ensuring seven tricks.

If East plays in 2♠ and South leads a diamond declarer can win in dummy and play a spade to the king followed by a low spade which will result in eight tricks being scored.

The winning lead is a heart – provided North plays four rounds of the suit enabling South to score a ruff, after which North's two trump tricks will ensure one down.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====