

# ECatsBridge Simultaneous Pairs for Children in Need

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023



**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 **£1,277,280.68 ...** hopefully we will be a good bit more to that this year!

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 Monday and Friday, Brian Senior did the analysis for the Thursday session and Julian Pottage completes the crew, writing up the Tuesday and Wednesday 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	♠ 4	Dealer N
	♥ 975	Vul: None
	♦ K532	
	♣ KQJ42	
♠ 10986		♠ 7532
♥ KQJ		♥ 832
♦ Q4		♦ AJ76
♣ A987		♣ 106
	♠ AKQJ	
	♥ A1064	
	♦ 1098	
	♣ 53	

If playing a weak NT, that is what South will open and this should end the auction.

West will lead a spade, which declarer will win and play a club up. West will duck so declarer wins the club and ducks a heart. West will win and may return a spade, not knowing that declarer has everything in the suit. Declarer wins and plays a club, but West knows to win as declarer would not be playing this way if he had started with three clubs. Again, West may get out with a spade, and declarer ducks a second heart. Thanks to declarer's diamond spot cards, he cannot be prevented from coming to an overtrick from here.

A different line of play and defence might see declarer held to only seven tricks, so +120 should score very well.

If South's system requires a different opening bid, the contract will still often be INT, but sometimes played by North. It is hard to see E/W ever getting involved in the auction.

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

=====

Board 2	♠ K965	Dealer E
	♥ AKJ6	Vul: N-S
	♦ A109	
	♣ Q10	
♠ J4		♠ A1082
♥ 9753		♥ Q8
♦ 52		♦ K874
♣ KJ973		♣ A64
	♠ Q73	
	♥ 1042	
	♦ QJ63	
	♣ 852	

If East opens a weak NT, there will be two passes to North, who will double.

*The ECatsBridge Team are Anna Gudge & Mark Newton*

Mill Cottage Voy  
Stromness, Orkney KW16 3HX  
Tel: 01787 881920

Email: [anna@ecats.co.uk](mailto:anna@ecats.co.uk) \*\*\*\* Website: <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/>

As the cards lie, INT cannot be beaten, so those who stick it out for +180 should score very well. However, the wiser course with the West hand is to run to 2♣ by whatever method the partnership uses.

It is normal to play that, having doubled INT, N/S cannot defend two-of-a-minor undoubled. In other words, they must either bid themselves or double the opposing contract. That may not work out too well on this deal, but it is a big long-term winner. It is also normal to play that the double of the two-of-a-minor escape bid be played as being for take-out, with subsequent doubles being for penalty.

Here, if West runs to 2♣, North should double for take-out – to pass would be forcing and would imply some club length – else why no take-out double. South does not have a penalty pass of 2♣ doubled, so bids 2♦ and plays there.

I said that the method may not work out too well on this deal. May is the operative word, as 2♣ can be made for -90, while 2♦ can be defeated for -100, meaning that N/S would be better off defending. But that is at double dummy.

It is easy to let 2♦ make. Three rounds of clubs, for example, allows a ruff in the short trump hand. Drop the ♥Q, and declarer is in control. However, on a trump lead and that ruff can be prevented.

Similarly, 2♣ is a fairly comfortable spot if declarer is allowed to take heart ruffs in the short hand, but if the defence attacks trumps declarer will need a second spade trick to bring the total to eight.

Makeable Contracts

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

Board 3	♠ 96	Dealer S
	♥ 82	Vul: E-W
	♦ K65	
	♣ AQJ762	
♠ A103		♠ Q842
♥ J96		♥ AQ104
♦ AJ3		♦ Q84
♣ 9543		♣ K8
	♠ KJ75	
	♥ K753	
	♦ 10972	
	♣ 10	

Given a free ride, E/W will play in INT, East either opening INT or rebidding INT. Short of an inspired club lead, that will make in some comfort.

But, of course, E/W should never be allowed a free run. North could open 1♣ in third seat, which will see East double, South bid either 1♦ or 1♥, and West probably try INT, treating the four low clubs as a stopper because all alternatives look worse. INT by West is defeated by a low club lead or the ace, but becomes a comfortable spot if North leads the queen.

But West will not be left to play in INT, as North will rebid the clubs. If he declares 2♣, he just needs a successful spade play to claim eight tricks.

E/W can come to eight tricks in either red suit, though getting to 2♦/♥ is not easy, and getting to any failing contract will score badly at the prevailing vulnerability.

All the above will apply at many tables, but there is an alternative scenario, in which North opens 3♣ in third seat. The vulnerability is favourable and the bid puts pressure on the opposition, to whom the deal will belong far more often than not.

If 3♣ is left to play, it is down at least one, but East's shortest suit is clubs and he has opening values – most will double, though the fact that partner is a passed hand creates a slight concern that we are asking him to bid at an uncomfortably high level. And, speaking of uncomfortable, how will West feel when 3♣ doubled comes round to him?

Should West bid a three-card suit and risk playing a three-three fit? He can hardly bid 3NT with four low clubs, which leaves a pass with no semblance of a trump trick. Scary, I know,

but passing out 3♣ doubled is the most likely way to go plus on the board and, if E/W score -470, 'it's only pairs'.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 4      ♠ 1098      Dealer W  
                  ♥ J5      Vul: Both  
                  ♦ QJ542  
                  ♣ QJ3

♠ K752	♠ AQJ3
♥ Q8763	♥ AK10
♦ 6	♦ A1097
♣ K84	♣ 52

  

♠ 64	
♥ 942	
♦ K83	
♣ A10976	

E/W have a pretty good slam on this deal – 6♠ played by West to protect the club position. On a trump lead, for example, declarer wins the king, takes a diamond ruff, crosses to a top spade and takes a second ruff. He can draw trumps now and just needs a three-two heart split, a slightly better than 68% chance.

While the play is straightforward, getting to 6♠ played by West is an entirely different matter.

East is too strong for a 1NT opening so will open 1♦ or 1♠ according to system.

A 1♠ opening immediately gets the wrong hand playing the slam, of course and, unless West overbids and drives to game via a 4♦ splinter on a hand that is only really worth an invitational raise, East is too balanced to give serious consideration to slam.

A 1♦ opening sees West respond 1♥. Now East rebids either 1♠ or 2NT. While West can check back for a spade fit, he is not likely to look for slam when holding only 8 HCP and quite an ordinary-looking hand. Some may even get to 4♥ rather than 4♠ if the checkback sequence doesn't quite work out as it should. Anyone who ends up in a heart contract will be very fortunate because 12 tricks can be made

there, the same number as if playing in spades, but requiring the ♣A to be onside.

Congratulations to anyone who reaches the top spot of 6♠ by West. They will be richly rewarded in matchpoint terms.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	1	2	6	6	4
W	1	2	6	6	4

=====

Board 5      ♠ AJ10875      Dealer N  
                  ♥ 94      Vul: N-S  
                  ♦ Q74  
                  ♣ Q4

♠ K96	♠
♥ K108	♥ AQ62
♦ A95	♦ K82
♣ K1052	♣ AJ9876

  

♠ Q432	
♥ J753	
♦ J1063	
♣ 3	

North has a weak two bid and East an easy double. Swap around the vulnerabilities and South would have a routine pre-emptive raise to 4♠. Vulnerable against not, many will content themselves with a safer raise to only 3♠.

Over a raise to 3♠, West will try 3NT, which gives East a tough decision – does partner have sound values or has he stretched, and does he have the spades sewn up or just a single stopper?

Some will pass out 3NT, which could be right if West has a second spade honour and an honour fewer elsewhere. On the likely spade lead there will be 12 tricks without needing to pick up the hearts, and +490 may score OK, though those who pick up hearts and make all 13 for +520 will deservedly do better.

To do really well on the board, however, E/W will need a big penalty – defending 4♠ doubled for +800 – or to bid their cold slam.

At IMPs, when West bids 3NT there is no doubt that East should go on with 4♣, a clear slam try. Though West will suspect that the

king of spades will be of little value, four-card club support, an ace and two other kings, in context of what he might have had for his 3NT bid, is a pretty good hand, and he should cooperate, perhaps simply raising 4♣ to 6♣.

At matchpoints, East is on less firm ground in leaving behind what could be the best-scoring contract, as he will not want to play in 5♣ very often. I think he has sufficient playing strength to justify moving with 4♣ over 3NT, but it will not always work out very well.

#### Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-		-
S	-	-	-		-
E	7	3	5	-	
W	7	3	6	-	6

=====

Board 6	♠ J97	Dealer E
	♥ K54	Vul: E-W
	♦ K96	
	♣ KJ86	
♠ Q62		♠ 108543
♥ 83		♥ Q76
♦ AJ103		♦ Q82
♣ A754		♣ Q2
	♠ AK	
	♥ AJ1092	
	♦ 754	
	♣ 1093	

South will usually open 1♥ – the texture of the hand, with all the values in two suits, makes 1♥ look the better option even if playing a weak NT.

If West had a fourth spade, I would vote for a double but, at adverse vulnerability and with only three spades, I'd suggest passing – I know, I'm getting old.

What North responds will depend on system, but he will follow an auction which shows a three-card limit heart raise and South, looking at a minimum opening, should decline the invitation.

With the ♦A onside and the ♥Q in the natural hand to be picked up, 3NT can be made on any lead, though a winning club guess may be required. It is a pretty dreadful contract when you look at all that is needed, but some will bid

and make it, and will score quite a lot of matchpoints.

As for 3♥, it also is far from being secure. However, what looks to be normal play picks up the hearts without loss, and then declarer can afford two club losers, making +140.

An inspired low club lead beats 3♥, unless declarer is equally inspired, East getting a ruff then putting partner back in to ruff out the fourth club so as to ensure two diamond tricks.

#### Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 7	♠ AQ1065	Dealer S
	♥ 86	Vul: Both
	♦ QJ32	
	♣ A7	
♠ K4		♠ 932
♥ Q102		♥ AJ953
♦ 875		♦ AK
♣ 109532		♣ KJ6
	♠ J87	
	♥ K74	
	♦ 10964	
	♣ Q84	

There should be two passes to North, who will open 1♠. East overcalls 2♥ and South probably bids 2♠. West has some heart support but, with the ace of spades favourite to be sitting over the king, doesn't have enough to compete so will pass. North has no reason to go on, so it comes down to East, who has extras in high-card terms, but a very poor hand in distributional terms. With such a defensive-looking hand, with poor offence, East should leave the opposition to play 2♠.

The cards lie very favourably for N/S, and there should be little difficulty in coming to nine tricks for +140.

Should E/W ever buy the hand, they have eight tricks in a heart or club contract, but that will be a rare outcome, as North would take the push to 3♠ if necessary.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 8      ♠ A763      Dealer W  
                  ♥ 8                      Vul: None  
                  ♦ J10953

♠ K1054	♠ Q82
♥ KQJ7	♥ A10643
♦ A87	♦ 62
♣ 86	♣ 942

  

♠ J9	
♥ 952	
♦ KQ4	
♣ KQ1075	

If West opens a weak NT, most Norths will not have the methods to be able to get involved at this stage. East will transfer to hearts and, after a pass from South, West has an ideal hand with which to break the transfer, jumping to 3♥ to show a near maximum with four-card heart support.

If North passes, so will East, who is not close to going on to game. As the cards lie, there are nine tricks for a strong result of +140.

But, scary though it might be in the middle of what is still a live auction, now is the time for North to be brave and double 3♥ for take-out. The fact that E/W have shown a nine-card fit guarantees that N/S must have at least an eight-card fit themselves, and neither side is vulnerable. It's man or mouse time or, in these more enlightened times, perhaps that should be 'person or mouse time'.

If North doubles, South will respond 4♣. That wouldn't have been North's first choice, but he has to pass and hope for the best.

Four Clubs can be beaten, as the defence can create a situation where declarer has to concede either an extra heart trick or a diamond ruff, but the defence is far from being automatic, and the contract will sometimes make. Four Diamonds cannot be beaten, and +130 will score very well indeed. Minus 50 may not be bad either, with 3♥ untouchable the other way. And we mustn't forget that many

tables will see West open with one of a suit and, depending on which suit that happens to be, it may not be as easy for N/S to compete effectively as after a 1NT opening and transfer.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

Board 9      ♠ Q8643      Dealer N  
                  ♥ Vul: E-W  
                  ♦ A764

♠ J52	♠ K109
♥ AK1074	♥ J8632
♦ J103	♦ 5
♣ 72	♣ AQ83

  

♠ A7	
♥ Q95	
♦ KQ982	
♣ KJ4	

N/S's system could have a big say in the outcome of this deal, on which N/S can make 10 tricks in a diamond contract and E/W 10 in hearts.

Say that South opens a strong NT – is it clear that E/W can get into the auction? West is too balanced for a 2♥ overcall, vulnerable against not, so North will get to transfer to spades. Will East double-high heart suit? Probably not. And after South completes the transfer, neither East nor West has a suit with which to compete at the three level, nor do they have spade shortage to suggest that a take-out double might be a good idea. So, a strong NT opening will often see South declare 2♠ for +110.

But it is as though we were playing a completely different board where South opens 1♦. West has a routine overcall and nothing North bids is likely to shut East out. There is no guarantee that 10 tricks will be made, but East has a raise to the cold heart game.

That is not quite the end of the matter, however, as North is void in hearts and has four-card diamond support. He might have made a fit-jump of 2♠ over the 1♥ overcall, so

showing a raise to 3♦ with a spade side-suit – though I doubt that this will excite South all that much – but, if all he did was bid a simple 1♠, will he now sacrifice in 5♦ over 4♥? Ten tricks are easy in 5♦, and it is not too much of a stretch to say that some will even be allowed to come to 11, making it the best possible type of sacrifice – one that makes.

#### Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 10    ♠ AK87632    Dealer E  
                  ♥ Q42                    Vul: Both  
                  ♦  
                  ♣ J97

♠ 4	♠ Q9
♥ J87	♥ 6
♦ 107642	♦ QJ985
♣ 10654	♣ AKQ82

  

♠ J105
♥ AK10953
♦ AK3
♣ 3

N/S have a slam in a choice of two suits. How easy it will be to get to the six level may depend on how much competition they face from E/W, and whether this hinders or actually helps to reach the slam by adding momentum to the auction.

East will open 1♦ and South overcall 1♥. Decision point one is West's. I would make a pre-emptive raise to 3♦ – would you? Say that West does bid 3♦, North has an easy 3♠ and East, who can see that the opposition have at least a game, may jump to 5♦ as an advance sacrifice. Technically, this should cost more than a N/S game, but East knows that his opponents have a fit and will not settle for a likely inadequate penalty, so this is not as dangerous as it sounds – and give West ♦Kxxx and out, and E/W have nine tricks.

If East does jump to 5♦, I would expect South to bid at least 5♠, and possibly 6♦. Either gets N/S to 6♠, with North worrying about the potential lack of a club control so not bidding Seven. He might, of course, try 6♦ over 5♠, and

South will know the ♣A is missing, so sign-off in Six.

With North declarer, East will try to cash two top clubs, so there will be no overtrick, something that there may well be if South declares a heart contract and East has not mentioned clubs at some point.

If West does not pre-empt at his first turn, North will be able to bid 1♠, East 2♣, and South cuebid 2♦ to force to game. West gets a second chance, now knowing that there is a double fit, but it is probably already too late to take enough bidding space away from N/S. North has a huge hand facing a game force and with the opposition bidding and supporting diamonds.

Slam should be reached at many tables. Will anyone achieve absolute par, saving in 7♣/♦ for –1400? And will anyone play 7♥ on a diamond lead?

#### Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 11    ♠ K8742                    Dealer S  
                  ♥ Q103                    Vul: None  
                  ♦ 73  
                  ♣ Q63

♠ A3	♠ J6
♥ A765	♥ J984
♦ Q852	♦ A10
♣ 1087	♣ AKJ95

  

♠ Q1095
♥ K2
♦ KJ964
♣ 42

There should be three passes to East, who may open INT whether playing either weak or strong NT. Yes, I know that 2-4-2-5 isn't one of the classical shapes for a INT opening, but the hand just looks like a NT opener to me.

Those who disagree with me will open 1♣, perhaps with the intention of rebidding INT should partner respond 1♠. Yes, a 2♣ rebid would be a reasonable alternative, it just isn't for me.

Anyway, after a 1♣ opening, South will overcall 1♦, West bid 1♥, and will North come in with 1♠ despite the lack of diamond support and knowing that the opposition have the balance of strength?

If North does join in with a 1♠ bid, South will be able to raise to 2♠, a contract which can be made with the aid of a couple of good but normal guesses. However, it is unlikely that N/S will be allowed to play the hand at such a comfortable level.

The key decision is likely to be whether East raises to 2♥, where available, or 3♥. If only 2♥, West is unlikely to look for game with an empty 10 HCP, while a raise to 3♥ will surely see West bid game.

Four Hearts is hard work and I suspect that, while it can be made, it will be defeated more often than not. Say that North leads a diamond, partner's suit. Declarer is looking at two heart losers, a spade and a diamond, and must reduce that number to three. Best is to win the ace of diamonds – the king is marked with South for the overcall – and immediately continue with the ten of diamonds. South wins the king but the queen is established for a spade discard.

Declarer wins the spade switch and plays the ♦Q and, whether or not North ruffs, away goes the spade. When declarer regains the lead, he can play ace and another heart, and the king and queen will fall together on the second round, after which a club finesse brings home 10 tricks.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 12	♠ J84	Dealer W
	♥ A542	Vul: N-S
	♦ AQ10	
	♣ 943	
♠ A		♠ KQ10652
♥ K83		♥ J7
♦ 8742		♦ 3
♣ KQ1086		♣ J752
	♠ 973	
	♥ Q1096	
	♦ KJ965	
	♣ A	

West will open 1♣ and East respond 1♠. With nine cards in the unbid suits and 10 HCP, many Souths will double and North will love his red-suit holdings and should jump to at least 3♥ and maybe 4♥ – after all, partner has invited us to bid at adverse vulnerability, so should have sound values.

Four Hearts is a lucky make as, just looking at the N/S hands there are three spades to be lost plus at least one trump. However, when we take a look at the E/W hands we discover a spade blockage which prevents the defenders from cashing more than one of their spade winners, and the contract is home unless declarer plays West for both heart honours and so allows East to gain the lead with the jack. With the spade position surely marked, taking a double finesse into the East hand doesn't look like the right play, so that will be a play which is rarely chosen.

However, talk of what will happen in 4♥ may be premature because, apart from the fact that some will not get to game, might not East save in 4♠ over 4♥? The vulnerability suggests a save, while the length in partner's club suit also suggests declaring rather than defending.

To be sure of beating 4♠, the defence must find its club ruff. If South leads a heart, North will have to win and find the club switch, which will be tough to do.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 13	♠	KJ9862	Dealer N
	♥	10	Vul: Both
	♦	K5	
	♣	AKJ9	
♠	AQ104	♠	53
♥	J853	♥	AK
♦	AQ43	♦	J976
♣	4	♣	Q8763
	♠	7	
	♥	Q97642	
	♦	1082	
	♣	1052	

At many tables North will open 1♠ and South pass. With no ideal bid and a good spade holding, West may well decide to defend against 1♠. That looks like down one for -100.

Some Souths will respond light in hope of finding a better spot than what could, for Acol players, be a four-one fit. They will respond 1NT, and now West has the wrong shortage for a take-out double so should pass.

North's rebid is an important one, with 2♣, 2♠ and 3♠ all in the picture.

Two Spades will end the auction and South's efforts will just have added an extra -100 to his side's result.

Three Spades will also be passed by South, and an enterprising West might double for penalties and pick up a juicy +800.

Two Clubs will be passed round to West, who will now have the right shortage and so can double. East should pass out 2♣ doubled, and that is a couple down. It is, I suppose, also possible that North will rebid 2♣ but then continue with 2♠ over 2♣ doubled. Will West now find a penalty double?

What should North rebid over a 1NT response? The technical way to bid the hand is to rebid 2♣, and if South gives preference back to 2♠, to invite game by going on to 3♠. That describes the shape and strength of the North hand perfectly. It does, however, run the risk of being left to play in a lower-scoring partscore than that reached by a spade rebid, and this is matchpoints, after all. There is no absolute, black and white answer to the question.

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

BOARD 14	♠	AJ865	Dealer E
	♥	1073	Vul: None
	♦	K104	
	♣	75	
♠	43	♠	KQ7
♥	Q654	♥	82
♦	753	♦	A986
♣	KJ64	♣	Q1098
	♠	1092	
	♥	AKJ9	
	♦	QJ2	
	♣	A32	

Some will open the East hand, some will not. The vulnerability, with both sides going down only in fifties, is the most favourable at which to become declarer should the deal be a competitive partscore. That suggests opening a borderline hand to get in the first blow.

East has only a balanced 11 HCP, but those high cards are good ones, in that there are no loose jacks or queens, and there are honour combinations in both black suits, where the high cards back each other up. I would open, either a weak NT, or 1♣, according to my agreements.

If East opens 1NT, South may double. If that ends the auction, South will lead a top heart, take a look at dummy, and maybe switch - but to what, the ♦Q or the ♠10? It is easy to see how declarer might escape for down only one, which is no great disaster with N/S able to come to eight tricks in either major.

If East opens 1♣, that will often not promise a genuine club suit in many pairs' modern methods. That is good news for South, who has just enough for a 1NT overcall, but would have preferred a better club holding. Some, particularly if playing against a pair whose 1♣ opening is genuine, may prefer to make a take-out double.

A 1NT overcall may well see North drive to game. North will certainly transfer to spades, and will then rebid either 2NT or 3NT. South



will decline the invitational bid, but of course will have to choose which game to play facing the jump to 3NT.

Two No Trump by South may get home at some tables, but neither 3NT nor 4♠ should be close to making. E/W will be very happy and will score very well if they go plus.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 15	♠	KJ	Dealer S
	♥	AJ1065	Vul: N-S
	♦	K2	
	♣	8532	
	♠	1086542	♠ AQ3
	♥	KQ94	♥ 873
	♦	A9	♦ 875
	♣	9	♣ AK64
	♠	97	
	♥	2	
	♦	QJ10643	
	♣	QJ107	

Flip the vulnerabilities around and I would be tempted to open 3♦ on the South cards. Vulnerable against not, I'd be happy to open a weak 2♦, if available, but 3♦ might be a shade too much.

If South opens a weak 2♦, it would be aggressive for West to overcall on the ten-high suit and only 9 HCP. The problem is not that 2♠ might be a terrible contract but that East will expect more and, when 2♠ can be made, will raise to a game which does not make. Not on this layout, I hasten to say, as 4♠ is easily made on the actual deal.

So, if South does open 2♦, there may be two passes to East, who has the high-card strength to double but far from ideal distribution. Nonetheless, I would expect most Easts to double, and now West has an easy jump to 4♠ – indeed, West might even cuebid 3♦ and follow through with 4♠ to show a hand too good to just jump to game. This will not, of course, excite East, but the main point is that the spade game is easily reached.

Where South does not open the bidding, West again has an ugly choice – open 1♠ on 9 HCP including a bare ace, or 2♠ on a ten-high suit with such a good heart holding? Better to pass, I think, though I know that many will be tempted.

North will open 1♥ and, East, again with far from ideal distribution, will scrape up a double. Though much of West's high-card strength is in the suit opened over him, he can hardly bid less than 4♠, so once again the top spot is reached.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 16	♠	10	Dealer W
	♥	K76	Vul: E-W
	♦	KJ9742	
	♣	J74	
	♠	AJ53	♠ K9862
	♥	10	♥ Q52
	♦	Q1053	♦
	♣	AQ53	♣ K10962
	♠	Q74	
	♥	AJ9843	
	♦	A86	
	♣	8	

West will open 1♣ or 1♦ according to style and system. The decision about which minor to open will have a significant effect on how the auction progresses.

If West opens 1♦, that will silence North, but the double fit in the black suits may not come to light. East will respond 1♠, East will raise, and East will bid game based on having a distributional hand.

If West opens 1♣, North can jump to 2♦ and now it will be handy if E/W play fit-jumps, such that a jump to 3♠ here is natural but also shows club support. If not playing this method, East has to choose whether to show the spades, or to show the club support. I would guess that, where fit-jumps are not an option, more people will bid spades than will support clubs. This could be because the 1♣ opening didn't

actually promise a genuine club suit, or simply to give East a chance to become declarer.

This is quite a big double-fit deal, and a fit-jump would tell West that immediately. It would also have the benefit of putting pressure on South, who has diamond support but also a very respectable heart suit. If he gets that into the game, N/S might well push E/W to the five-level.

N/S have a cheap save against 4♠, so it will be necessary for E/W to take the push to 5♠ if N/S save in 5♦♥. The good news is, however, that 5♠ is a comfortable make.

Makeable Contracts

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

BOARD 17

♠	9	Dealer N
♥	AJ872	Vul: None
♦	A83	
♣	J853	
♠	KQ107432	♠ A85
♥	K6	♥ 103
♦	95	♦ KQJ102
♣	97	♣ 1062
	♠ J6	
	♥ Q954	
	♦ 764	
	♣ AKQ4	

South can open a weak NT in third seat, and West overcall 3♠, in principle, pre-emptive. Will that shut North out of the auction? Surely not. While a take-out double is a plausible alternative, North is more likely to close his eyes and bid 4♥. That is a big winner as the passed hand facing a minimum weak NT makes the heart game cold.

The fact that 4♥ is cold is unlikely to matter in this auction, because East has ace to three spades and little defence to a heart contract, so should save in 4♠. If someone finds a double, that is still only -300 against -420.

If South opens 1♣, West again has a 3♠ overcall, but this time North is much more likely to double. If East passes, South will bid 4♥, though there is no guarantee at this level

that the negative double will prove to include four hearts. On this occasion it does, so as we have seen the heart game is cold. East, however, may raise to 4♠ in front of South, who will then pass. North may double for a second time and South, with no reason to imagine that anything can be made at the five level, will leave it in.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 18

♠	J9754	Dealer E
♥	5	Vul: N-S
♦	2	
♣	AKQ1098	
♠	Q10	♠ K832
♥	Q109	♥ 862
♦	K1098	♦ J654
♣	6542	♣ 73
	♠ A6	
	♥ AKJ743	
	♦ AQ73	
	♣ J	

With hearts ruffing out to produce five winners, N/S can make 7♣. Good luck to anyone who bids that – it isn't a good contract, but a three-three split or doubleton queen does take it up over 50%.

I say that 7♣ is not a good contract despite being a better than 50% shot. The reason is that there are other ways to score well on this deal without risking a very bad result when 7♣ is not successful.

For example, there is 3NT, preferably played by South, though it doesn't actually matter. Whatever the lead, declarer can come to 11 tricks for +660, often via an endplay on West.

Second best, and possibly a more practical option, is 4♥, where again 11 tricks can be made, this time for +650. With others stopping in 5♣, or even 4♠, there are plenty of ways to score poorly on the deal.

And finally, and probably the place you would actually like to play, seeing just the two hands, there is 6♣. Here, only four heart tricks are

required. Declarer can win the spade or diamond lead, play three rounds of hearts, ruffing, and if the queen has not appeared, cross to the ♣J to the a second heart ruff. Now draw trumps, and there are 12 tricks, this line of play requiring only that neither clubs nor hearts split worse than four-two.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	7	2	5	4	5
S	7	3	5	4	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

=====

BOARD 19	♠ 74	Dealer S
	♥ K1096532	Vul: E-W
	♦ A3	
	♣ 95	
♠ 109852		♠ KQ
♥ AJ4		♥ 87
♦ J104		♦ Q98
♣ K3		♣ AQ7642
	♠ AJ63	
	♥ Q	
	♦ K7652	
	♣ J108	

There will be two passes to North who, with a seven-card suit and only 7 HCP, has a normal 3♥ opening. If he is left to play there, which is a strong possibility, there are two hearts, two clubs and a spade to be lost for down one. It isn't impossible that at a few tables declarer will be allowed to set up diamonds for a spade pitch, but this would be poor defence.

If East comes in over 3♥, presumably with a 4♣ overcall, he turns what was about to be a small plus score into a small minus score, as there are no making contracts available to E/W at this level. Worse, West has enough to go on, probably by raising 4♣ to 5♣, but conceivably with 4♠. Both these games are fated to go down three on accurate defence.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 20	♠ Q865	Dealer W
	♥ AQ9876	Vul: Both
	♦ 7	
	♣ A9	
♠ 107		♠ J9432
♥ K2		♥ J43
♦ AK1065		♦ 94
♣ J1074		♣ K82
	♠ AK	
	♥ 105	
	♦ QJ832	
	♣ Q653	

West will probably open 1♦ and North overcall 1♥. Some Easts will pass as they have only 5 HCP, but with a five-card spade suit to show most will bid 1♠.

If East bids 1♠, South can bid INT and North is likely to rebid a quiet 2♥ and play there. With the kings of hearts and clubs onside for declarer, straightforward play produces 10 tricks. Swap the kings round, and only eight tricks would be available, so 4♥ is not a great contract – it just happens to make.

Those who bid 4♥ will score very well, as will anyone who bids and makes 3NT, though the latter game can be defeated.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 21	♠ KJ1095	Dealer N
	♥ AJ42	Vul: N-S
	♦ K9	
	♣ AQ	
♠ 84		♠ Q62
♥ 10953		♥
♦ 1072		♦ AJ8654
♣ KJ102		♣ 9764
	♠ A73	
	♥ KQ876	
	♦ Q3	
	♣ 853	

When North opens 1♠, some Easts will make a weak jump overcall of 3♦. That will not quite shut out the opposing heart fit as South has just

enough to bid 3♥ and, if South can make a forcing bid at the three level, North is way too good to simply raise to game with his 18 HCP and good four-card trump support.

North could cuebid 4♦ to say just that, but as a practical matter it will be difficult for South to co-operate as there is no space between North's 4♦ cuebid and a 4♥ sign-off. In other words, over 4♦ South has to make a committal bid, whether he signs-off in 4♥ or goes past game to show slam interest. If there was space for partner to cuebid below game, the 4♦ cuebid approach to the North hand would be a more attractive option.

The simple and practical approach to the North hand is to simply ask for key-cards. In response to 4NT, South will show two key-cards plus the queen of trumps, and North will bid the small slam.

Six Hearts is on the spade guess and, with East having made a pre-emptive overcall, declarer will be inclined to play West for the missing queen. That, alas, leads to down one.

But East will often have led ace and another diamond against 6♥ and west may have signalled an odd number of diamonds. Coupled with the four-nil heart break, declarer may have reason to believe that West actually has one more red card than does East, meaning that East has slightly more space in which to fit the missing queen.

It's a close decision how to play the spades, so well done to those who get it right and chalk up an excellent +1430, and commiserations to those who get it wrong.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 22 ♠ Q10974 Dealer E  
 ♥ 854 Vul: E-W  
 ♦ 963  
 ♣ Q9

♠ 632	♠ A
♥ KJ1062	♥ Q73
♦	♦ AQ5
♣ A10753	♣ KJ8642
♠ KJ85	
♥ A9	
♦ KJ108742	
♣	

East opens 1♣, South overcalls a simple 1♦, ruling out a bigger diamond bid so as not to shut out his own spade side-suit.

This is another opportunity for West to make a fit-jump, 3♥ this time to show a raise to at least 4♣ with a heart side-suit. Even if 1♣ did not promise real clubs, a 2♥ fit-jump is the best way to get both suits into the auction.

There is also the option, facing a genuine club suit, of making a 3♦ splinter bid, showing diamond shortage and club support.

Whichever way West tackles the problem of getting across his hand to partner, at some point he will have to show the club support and diamond shortage, and that should excite east sufficiently that 6♣ is reached. When there is no heart ruff, the slam proves to be cold for a handy +1370.

Six Hearts also makes, but only when played by East, so that there can be no club ruff.

And if E/W do get to a making slam, is there anything N/S can do about it? Well, if they have been active enough in the auction, they may be able to find a sacrifice in either 6♣ or 6♠, both of which are down four for -800. It isn't impossible that this will happen, as South will surely come again to at least the four level as is necessary.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 23	♠ A87	Dealer S
	♥ 75	Vul: Both
	♦ J762	
	♣ 10862	
♠ Q10543	♠ 92	
♥ Q86	♥ K32	
♦ 98	♦ AQ105	
♣ J73	♣ AK95	
	♠ KJ6	
	♥ AJ1094	
	♦ K43	
	♣ Q4	

The heart suit makes the South hand a little too good for a weak NT, but it follows that the hand becomes good enough for a strong NT.

If South opens a strong NT, there will be two passes to East. Should he double, holding a hand of similar strength to the one sitting over him? It doesn't have to work out well to do so, but today is a good day and, even after West's opening spade lead costs a trick, it is not difficult to defeat the contract and pick up a handy score.

If South opens a weak NT, East will have an automatic double.

If South opens 1♥, North may pass or may respond INT. A generation ago, very few would have responded on an empty five-count, but more and more people are willing to do so as time goes on.

Whether or not North responds INT, East is likely to double, though the doubleton spade is a worry. And, sure enough, West bids spades in response to the double.

If West was able to respond 1♠, East will be able to continue with INT, showing a hand in the next range of strength up from a balancing INT overall. West can then choose to repeat the spades and declare 2♠, or pass and be dummy in INT.

Two Spades can be beaten by a trick, but will sometimes make for +110. INT, however, is quite secure, and East may even come to an overtrick for +120, beating all those who do not defend a N/S contract and collect +200 or more.

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

BOARD 24	♠ KJ7	Dealer W
	♥ AK73	Vul: None
	♦ 543	
	♣ Q108	
♠ A105	♠ Q842	
♥ 865	♥ Q10	
♦ K10	♦ A9872	
♣ AK943	♣ J6	
	♠ 963	
	♥ J942	
	♦ QJ6	
	♣ 752	

If West opens a weak NT, that will be that. If North leads a top heart, the defence can take four heart tricks, but have no good attack after that, so declarer can play on clubs for seven tricks.

A low heart opening lead gives a trick, as declarer puts up the queen and it scores. Now the defence must be careful not to concede a ninth trick.

If West opens 1♣, North will double and East bid 1♦ or 1♠ according to system. South will be happy not to have to get involved and will pass, and West will rebid INT. This looks to be another of those hands which might be treated as either a weak or a strong NT, and the INT rebid will accordingly show the reverse of that.

If West has upgraded the hand to a strong NT because of the good club suit and the fact that the hand contains no loose jacks or queens, East will probably drive to game, which will not be a success.

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

BOARD 25     ♠ 1095     Dealer N  
                  ♥ K862     Vul: E-W  
                  ♦ 7  
                  ♣ A10542

♠ 84  
 ♥ QJ109     ♥ A7543  
 ♦ AJ964     ♦ Q1085  
 ♣ J763     ♣ K9

♠ AKQJ7632  
 ♥  
 ♦ K32  
 ♣ Q8

There will be two passes to South. With eight and a half tricks in his own hand, South's mind may well turn to a possible slam, however, to allow slam exploration means opening at the one level – or two level if playing Benjaminised Acol or, indeed, old-fashioned Acol twos. And that offers an opportunity for the opposition to get into the auction at a relatively non-committal level, and they could easily have a very cheap save.

That proves to be the case on this deal. If South opens 1♠, will West make a take-out double? The point-count is minimal for such an action, but the distribution is perfect, and it proves to be a big, big, winner for E/W. North can raise to 2♠, but East might jump to 4♥, and West will be very tempted to go on to 5♥ over South's 4♠ as he can see that the latter must surely be making and that N/S are very likely to take the push to 5♠ if need be.

As it happens, 5♠ is making, so no harm is done by going to the five level, but on a different layout there might be only 10 tricks available yet N/S still go to the five level. Also, while it doesn't matter on this deal, a bid from East may help West with the opening lead against a spade contract.

Whilst accepting that I might miss a slam once in a while, I favour opening 4♠ with the South hand. It will be a brave West who will commit to the five level by doubling such a high-level opening bid, so South will be left undisturbed, and West will have a blind lead.

#### Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 26     ♠ Q852     Dealer E  
                  ♥ K7     Vul: Both  
                  ♦ Q4  
                  ♣ Q8765

♠ 93     ♠ AK74  
 ♥ AQJ9532     ♥ 1064  
 ♦ K108     ♦ J9  
 ♣ 9     ♣ AKJ2

♠ J106  
 ♥ 8  
 ♦ A76532  
 ♣ 1043

If East opens 1♣, West is a bit too good for an immediate 4♥ response so will start with a simple 1♥. If East now rebids 1♠, a delayed 4♥ from West does a better job of getting across the potential of the hand. East will be close to making a move towards slam after the 1♠, 4♥ combination, but there were stronger options available to West – using fourth-suit forcing followed by 3♥, for example – and there could be three losers, meaning that the five level isn't quite safe, so settling for game is the long term winner.

If East opens a strong NT, West can transfer to hearts then jump to 4♣, splinter, showing slam interest with short clubs. With half his hand in the club suit, East will quickly sign-off.

If East opens 1♣ and rebids INT, West can again jump to 4♣ as a self-agreeing splinter – there are other routes to support partner's clubs so this auction is available to show the heart slam try type. Again, East should sign-off in game.

And finally, if East opens 1♠, West will respond 2♥ and East raise to game. This is not the finest of advertisements for Acol, as slam bidding would be far easier if opener could make a forcing raise to 3♥ – that is one of the reason why many experts play two-over-one game-forcing – but, as they say, it is what it is, and West is left guessing whether to carry on towards slam or settle for a safe game.

There is one possible solution to that last problem. After 1♠ – 2♥, opener could rebid 2NT, 15-19 balanced, with the possibility that the hand could have heart support but be too strong to just raise to game. If West now rebids 3♥, East can cuebid 3♠ to show willingness to explore slam, and the partnership can exchange cuebids.

We would not wish to be in slam on this deal, with the possibility of a heart loser and one or two diamonds. On a club lead, declarer could gamble by finessing the jack, but it looks more normal to win the ace and take the heart finesse. That loses, and now North must get out with a major-suit card to leave declarer needing the diamond guess for an overtrick.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 27     ♠ A107     Dealer S  
                   ♥ Q54     Vul: None  
                   ♦ 83  
                   ♣ AJ865

♠ Q53	♠ J9642
♥ A103	♥ K862
♦ AK952	♦ J6
♣ K3	♣ 102

                  ♠ K8  
                   ♥ J97  
                   ♦ Q1074  
                   ♣ Q974

If West opens a strong NT, East can use scrambling Stayman, responding 2♣ then bidding 2♠ over the 2♦ response. The ace of clubs is offside, but the ten of spades is onside and hearts are three-three, so eight tricks is the normal outcome.

If West opens 1♦, East will respond 1♠ and West rebid 2♥. West will give preference to spades, and once again many tables will see East declare 2♠ for +110.

N/S have a paying save in 3♣, where only three rounds of diamonds, which creates a trump trick for E/W, holds declarer to eight tricks. They can get there easily enough if North

overcalls 2♣ over a 1♦ opening, though I would not recommend a two-level overcall on what is essentially a minimum weak NT with a moderate suit.

If I came in over 1♦ with the North cards it would be with a take-out double. Yes, it would be nice, when so minimal in high-card terms, to have at least one four-card major, but the double offers more flexibility than the overcall, hence looks a much safer option.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 28     ♠ J1032     Dealer W  
                   ♥ KJ10     Vul: N-S  
                   ♦ 873  
                   ♣ 942

♠ Q654	♠ A97
♥ 873	♥ Q95
♦ AJ106	♦ KQ2
♣ Q3	♣ AKJ10

                  ♠ K8  
                   ♥ A642  
                   ♦ 954  
                   ♣ 8765

East opens 1♣ in third seat and rebids 2NT over the 1♦ or 1♠ response (according to system). West will now raise to game.

Some Easts will open at the two level according to their system, either 2NT or, a relatively new idea played by some experts, 2♦ showing 18-19 balanced. West may go through is version of Stayman. Or may just raise to game, thinking that there might be the same tricks in NT as in spades even if there is a four-four fit. Whatever the route, everyone should end up in 3NT, and it would be strange were East not the declarer.

Were you taught to lead fourth-highest of your longest and strongest against a NT contract? Well, sticking rigidly to that approach is overdoing it, but it is the winning choice on this deal.

If South leads the two of hearts to North's king, North will return the jack. If the two was an honest card, there is no point in ducking, so

declarer covers, hoping to block the suit. That hope is realised when South wins the ace but must then continue with a low heart to the ten and it is up to North to find a switch. A clever South will have returned the six at trick three, and North will spot that the four is missing, so should read the six as being suit preference for spades. Declarer shouldn't risk running that, as North has no reason to touch the spade suit other than as an attempt to put South in.

The above defence forces declarer to settle for the nine top tricks, but many Souths will lead a club if the suit has not been bid. Now declarer can cash all eight minor-suit winners before deciding whether to risk a spade lead towards the queen, or perhaps exiting with a heart in hope of an endplay. The defence shouldn't slip up, it being natural for both defenders to come down to three hearts and two spades, but there will be one or two declarers who come to an overtrick and a lot of matchpoints.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 29     ♠ 94     Dealer N  
                  ♥ KQJ106     Vul: Both  
                  ♦ Q854  
                  ♣ 106

♠ QJ10	♠ 752
♥ 843	♥ A972
♦ AK97	♦ J3
♣ Q75	♣ 9843

                 ♠ AK863  
                  ♥ 5  
                  ♦ 1062  
                  ♣ AKJ2

There will be two passes to South, who opens 1♠. An Acol player may stretch to respond 2♥ but will regret it as South will rebid 3♣, game-forcing, and any game should be defeated. For most, Acol-players or not, the North hand will be a 1NT response, and South will rebid 2♣. Now North can introduce the hearts without fear of sounding stronger than is actually the case. North bids 2♥ and South should pass – he has, after all, no more distribution than he has already shown, while

going on with 2NT when holding no diamond stopper and when there could be a combined 20 or 21 HCP would be ridiculous.

If North can draw trumps and ruff out the spades to create discards for a couple of the diamond losers, he can make 10 tricks, but, of course, the defence can attack diamonds in a timely fashion to come to a fourth trick. The simplest way to ensure that fourth defensive trick is simply by collecting a diamond ruff.

Plus 140 in 2♥ should be a common result, while anyone who finds a way to 2NT will probably come to +120 and +110 in 2♠. There will, of course, be plenty of tables where the outcome of these various contracts will be different.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 30     ♠ K98432     Dealer E  
                  ♥ KJ10     Vul: None  
                  ♦ 964  
                  ♣ 7

♠ A	♠ 1076
♥ 9632	♥ AQ85
♦ 82	♦ KQ7
♣ Q109643	♣ J85

                 ♠ QJ5  
                  ♥ 74  
                  ♦ AJ1053  
                  ♣ AK2

If East opens a weak NT, South will probably double and West run to the safety of the six-card club suit. I favour a jump to 3♣, which should be played as pre-emptive here, as the deal probably belongs to the opposition and this puts pressure on their auction in a way that a simple 2♣ does not.

Say that West does jump to 3♣, North may think that a competitive 3♠ is insufficient and instead jump to 4♠, which is down one. Over a simple 2♣, N/S should have the methods to permit an invitational sequence, passing the final decision on to South.

If East opens 1♥, West will be able to make a pre-emptive heart raise, with a similar effect to that described above, but not many pairs open



1♥ with weak NT types, so let's move on to what happens if East opens 1♣, not promising genuine clubs. South is likely to overcall 1♦, and West should ignore the four-card heart suit and jump as high as is sensible in the partnership methods in clubs. That will usually be the three level and, once again, taking bidding space away from the opposition forces them to guess. Indeed, it will be a brave North who will introduce the spades at all at this level as 3♠ would surely be forcing for most pairs. Perhaps North will double 3♣ then decide what to do at his next turn?

N/S make 3♠ but the defence to beat 4♠ is not too taxing and +140 should score well. Meanwhile, if E/W can go plus, that should score well for their side.

#### Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 31 ♠ K1087 Dealer S  
♥ A8 Vul: N-S  
♦ J72  
♣ 10942

♠ AQ92 ♠ J65  
♥ 972 ♥ Q543  
♦ A8643 ♦ K109  
♣ 5 ♣ 873

♠ 43  
♥ KJ106  
♦ Q5  
♣ AKQJ6

South opens 1♣ and West overcalls 1♦. North responds 1♠ and East raises to 2♦. Now South has extra values and a second suit to show, so bids 2♥. West will often pass and North give preference to 3♣. If that ends the auction, there are 10 easy tricks for a safe +130.

If West competes with 3♦ over 3♣, a risky enterprise with such a weak trump suit and limited values, he can be held to seven tricks, meaning that anyone who can find a double will score very well for their +300. However, as South has shown a shapely hand, presumably containing at least five clubs, North is more likely to take the push to 4♣ than to make a penalty double.

#### Makeable Contracts

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

=====

BOARD 32 ♠ AJ97 Dealer W  
♥ 943 Vul: E-W  
♦ AJ6  
♣ AJ9

♠ 105 ♠ 6432  
♥ AJ ♥ KQ8752  
♦ K108743 ♦ 2  
♣ K65 ♣ 82

♠ KQ8  
♥ 106  
♦ Q95  
♣ Q10743

When West opens 1♦, North will often overcall INT. East can compete with 2♥, which is no longer forcing after the INT overcall, and that puts South in a bit of a quandary. He had been about to raise, probably to 3NT, but the heart bid, in a suit where he has no help for partner, suggests that this may not be the wisest move.

The winning combination now would be for South to make a take-out double and North leave it in – down two for – but who would find that?

More plausibly, if playing Lebensohl South can bid a forcing 3♣, North bid 3♥ to ask for a stopper, and South sign-off in 4♣, which can be passed. If South doesn't like to stress that mediocre club suit to such an extent, he could instead cuebid 3♥ himself. The problem now would be that, when North bid 3♠ if South went on with 4♣, that would sound to be forcing, and South would not like to end up in 5♣ with so many potential losers. Better would be to pass 3♠ and let partner play the four-three fit partscore.

Three Spades can be made, with no tenth trick because there are entries to the South hand for late in the play, when there will be club winners and no way to get at them.

As for 4♣, the play is more straightforward than that in 3♠, with the third defensive trick

most obviously coming by way of three rounds of hearts, which allows West to over-ruff the third round.

Plus 140, then is the best plausible result for N/S, with +130 also scoring OK. Minus scores should not be good for N/S.

Makeable Contracts

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

=====