

ECatsBridge Simultaneous Pairs for Children in Need

Thursday 10th November 2022



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.

Some of you will have played Face-to-Face and others online but all the results will be included in the overall scoring as usual, so don't worry!

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 :

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

Many thanks indeed to Mark Horton for writing this set for us – I hope you found it interesting (and accurate!).

With very best wishes

Anna & Mark – the ECatsBridge Team

Board 1. None. Dealer North

♠ K 6 5	
♥ J 10 9 4 3 2	
♦ —	
♣ A K J 7	
♠ Q 9 3	♠ J 8 4
♥ Q 8 6 5	♥ K
♦ 9 8 7 5	♦ A J 10 6 4 3 2
♣ 6 4	♣ 5 3
♠ A 10 7 2	
♥ A 7	
♦ K Q	
♣ Q 10 9 8 2	

When North opens 1♥ East is sure to overcall. In this type of situation the more space you can take away the better, so 3♦ is the right move. If South then makes a negative double West can raise the ante, the choice being between 4♦ and 5♦. If West selects 4♦ then North can consider bidding 5♣, which should be enough for South to raise to 6♣. If West opts for 5♦ North can only pass and then South will have a decision. It's still possible that a slam will be reached, but you see how difficult the intervention makes things.

Change East's overcall to 2♦ and N/S have an extra round of bidding to play with, assuming West does no more than raise to 3♦. One's instinctive reaction to a 2♦ overcall might be to double, but 3♣ is a good alternative and here it should make 6♣ easy to reach.

Imagine that East were to pass over 1♥. Then the best response for South is 2♣ as there will always be time to bid spades later.

As you can see, there is nothing to the play in 6♣, declarer losing only a heart.

Should anyone play in 6♥ they will go down if they follow the percentage line for five tricks in the suit, which is to start with an honour from dummy. That works 37% of the time.

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Board 2. N/S. Dealer East

♠ 8 5	♠ Q 10 6
♥ K 7 6 3	♥ A J 8
♦ K J 7 5 2	♦ 10 4
♣ 10 9	♣ K J 7 4 3

♠ A J 9 2	♠ K 7 4 3
♥ Q 2	♥ 10 9 5 4
♦ 9 8 6 3	♦ A Q
♣ A 8 5	♣ Q 6 2

If East elects to open a borderline 1♣ West responds 1♦ (unless using '*the Walsh treatment*' in which case the initial response will be 1♥). If East rebids 1NT West has no reason to take another bid, but North might reopen with a double. Assuming South passes, West's best option is to bid 2♦. South ought to be allowed to double that for penalties, but that type of double is out of fashion.

If East doesn't open South might, with 1♣/1♦ being the most likely possibilities.

If South fails to put the ball into play it is not impossible that the deal might be 'thrown in' – which is not often the case when one side can make a game.

Those who subscribe to the 'rule of fifteen' will not be tempted to open the North hand. Where North opens 1♣ South responds 1♠ and then makes an invitational move over North's 1NT rebid.

If North raises 1♠ to 2♠ it is possible that 4♠ might be reached, but it is not certain to make.

If N/S reach 3NT then the situation in diamonds and the location of the major suit kings is such that there is no way to prevent nine tricks being scored.

Playing in spades declarer may have to find the unlikely line of playing for the club layout that exists.

Board 3. E/W. Dealer South

♠ J 6 4 3	♠ K 8 7 2
♥ A J 8 4	♥ K 3
♦ —	♦ A 9 6 4 3
♣ 10 9 8 6 2	♣ 7 5

♠ 9	♠ A Q 10 5
♥ Q 7 5 2	♥ 10 9 6
♦ J 8 7 5 2	♦ K Q 10
♣ A K J	♣ Q 4 3

Here's another marginal opening and you might see the bidding going 1♦-1♠-2♦-3♦ or 1♦-1♠-1NT-3♦. The alternative approach for North will be to use some form of check back after 1♦-1♠-1NT but only 3♦ is a makeable contract.

Suppose that North raises an opening bid of 1♦ to 3♦ and West reopened with a double. What should East do? It looks tempting to pass, hoping for a 'magic' -200, but provided declarer plays to ruff spades in hand there should be nine tricks and the club finesse is not required unless declarer allows East to play three rounds of trumps.

Board 4. All. Dealer West

♠ A K 5 2	♠ Q 10 9
♥ K 4	♥ 7 6 5 3
♦ 9 8 4	♦ Q 10 6 3
♣ 10 7 4 2	♣ A 5

♠ J 8 7 3	♠ 6 4
♥ A 2	♥ Q J 10 9 8
♦ K J 7	♦ A 5 2
♣ K J 8 6	♣ Q 9 3

There is no reason for East to open 1♥, but that might happen a few times. If South doubles and West redoubles North will bid 2♦ and if West doubles that East is likely to retreat to 2♥.

Where East passes and South opens 1NT that will buy the contract unless East decides to come in.

If South opens 1♣ North responds in a red suit depending on agreements and South rebids 1♠/1NT, again depending on system.

If West does not lead a heart INT can be made, while 2♥ by EW rates to go one down.

Board 5. N/S. Dealer North

	♠ J 10 8 7 6 3	
	♥ A K 10 4	
	♦ 6	
	♣ J 7	
♠ 5 4		♠ Q
♥ J 8		♥ 7 5 3
♦ 5 2		♦ A K J 10 9 8 7 3
♣ A K Q 10 6 5 3		♣ 4
	♠ A K 9 2	
	♥ Q 9 6 2	
	♦ Q 4	
	♣ 9 8 2	

Should North open?

With a modest suit and strong support for the other major I suspect the majority will not, but if North does open the defenders may have to be on their toes.

If North starts with 2♠ and East overcalls 3♦ South might try 4♠, although 3♠ looks a sounder alternative.

If North begins with a Multi 2♦ and East bids 3♦ South can resort to a 'Pass or correct' 3♥. The potential advantage of bidding 4♠ is that West might bid 5♣.

If NS play in spades the defenders can score four tricks, provided they cash a diamond and then play clubs.

If NS play in hearts the defenders can organise a spade ruff, as East discards the ♠Q on the second round of the club suit.

If EW play in five of a minor the defenders should be able to cash three tricks.

Board 6. E/W. Dealer East

	♠ 2	
	♥ Q J 7 3	
	♦ A Q 9	
	♣ K 9 7 5 2	
♠ A 10 4		♠ Q 9 8
♥ 6		♥ A K 10 5 2
♦ 8 7 4 2		♦ 10 6
♣ A Q 6 4 3		♣ J 10 8
	♠ K J 7 6 5 3	
	♥ 9 8 4	
	♦ K J 5 3	
	♣ —	

If East passes South can start with 2♠ or a Multi 2♦. North passes over the former and bids 2♠ over the latter. If EW get involved, they could run into trouble.

If South passes and West opens 1♣ East responds 1♥. South overcalls 1♠ and if East then bids 2♣ North will be happy to defend – although with best play the contract cannot be defeated.

The play in 2♠ should be straightforward. If the defenders start with three rounds of hearts West will ruff and exit with a diamond. Declarer wins and plays a spade to the jack which results in eight tricks.

If West plays in clubs and North leads a spade declarer wins and can play to ruff a diamond. That should ensure eight tricks.

Board 7. All. Dealer South

	♠ Q 10 6 3	
	♥ 6 3	
	♦ A K Q 9	
	♣ A Q 8	
♠ 8 7		♠ A J 4
♥ A Q 8 5		♥ K J 10 2
♦ J 10 6 4		♦ 8 5 3
♣ J 10 2		♣ 9 4 3
	♠ K 9 5 2	
	♥ 9 7 4	
	♦ 7 2	
	♣ K 7 6 5	

If North opens INT (15-17) that will end the auction.

If North starts with a strong 1♣ South responds 1♦ and North rebids INT. If South makes a move with 2♣ the spade fit is revealed.

If North starts with 1♣/1♦ South responds 1♠ and North jumps to 3♠.

If North opens 1♠ South raises to 2♠.

Once the spade fit is located it is possible that some pairs will stretch to 4♠.

If North plays in INT the theoretical maximum will be eight tricks, the defenders scoring four hearts and a spade.

If declarer can divine the trump position, there will be ten tricks in spades.

Board 8. None. Dealer West

♠ A 10 4 3	♠ 9 7
♥ A K 10 4	♥ 9 7 2
♦ A 4	♦ K 10 7 6
♣ Q 10 2	♣ 9 7 5 4

♠ Q J 8 6 5	♠ K 2
♥ Q J 8	♥ 6 5 3
♦ Q J 2	♦ 9 8 5 3
♣ J 6	♣ A K 8 3

If West starts with a strong INT that should end the auction.

If West opens 1♣ and East passes South may elect to let matters rest. The alternative is to bid INT when North will probably transfer to spades.

If East follows the modern tend and responds 1♦ West will rebid according to system.

If West begins with a strong 1♣ East responds 1♦ and West rebids INT.

If West starts with an Acol style 1♥ that might become the final contract.

If North leads a low spade against INT declarer takes South's king and plays three rounds of hearts. North wins and will probably try to cash the spades. When South discards on the third round, declarer is assured of seven tricks and as the cards lie, he may secure an eighth trick. If South holds on to three clubs, declarer will eventually play two rounds of diamonds and then play a club to the queen. South's best chance will be to pitch two clubs, hoping declarer does not guess to duck a club.

If West plays in hearts there will probably be eight tricks, although if South has strong nerves and plays low when declarer leads a club from dummy at some point the defenders might score an extra trick.

Board 9. E/W. Dealer North

♠ 9 5 4	♠ Q 10 8 6 2
♥ J 4	♥ A 9
♦ A 6 5	♦ 10 9 8 4
♣ A K 7 4 3	♣ Q 9

♠ K 3	♠ A J 7
♥ K Q 10 8 5 3 2	♥ 7 6
♦ K J 2	♦ Q 7 3
♣ 5	♣ J 10 8 6 2

If North opens 1♥ East overcalls 1♠ and South bids INT. If West now support spades (perhaps bidding 2♥ to show a decent raise) North is likely to rebid 3♥.

Another possibility is for West to jump to 3♣, showing that suit and a fit for spades, although ideally West would like to have a fourth spade.

Those pairs who play in hearts will discover that the perfect fit delivers ten tricks.

If EW get to play in spades they must avoid conceding -200, which will not be easy.

Board 10. All. Dealer East

♠ 9 8 7	♠ J 10 3 2
♥ A J 10	♥ K Q 7 6 3
♦ 8 5	♦ Q J 10
♣ K J 8 7 4	♣ 2

♠ Q 6 4	♠ A K 5
♥ 9 8 5 4	♥ 2
♦ A K 9 7 4 2	♦ 6 3
♣ —	♣ A Q 10 9 6 5 3

When South opens 1♣ North responds 1♦ and East might risk a skimpy 1♥ overcall. When South rebids 2♣ West bids 2♥. In yesteryear North might consider doubling for penalties, but nowadays that concept has fallen out of fashion. If North passes South might reopen with a double, despite having only three spades.

Were South to start with Precision style 2♣ North might respond 2♦ and then pass South's 3♣ rebid.

Despite the dreadful trump break, there should be nine tricks in clubs (and an inspired declarer

might make ten if West starts with two rounds of hearts by leaving trumps alone).

Board 11. None. Dealer South

	♠ 9 3	
	♥ A 8 6	
	♦ A J 5 4	
	♣ K 7 6 5	
♠ K J 2		♠ A Q 10 5 4
♥ K J 10 7 2		♥ 5 4 3
♦ 8 6		♦ K Q 7 3
♣ 10 3 2		♣ 4
	♠ 8 7 6	
	♥ Q 9	
	♦ 10 9 2	
	♣ A Q J 9 8	

If North opens a 12-14 INT East will overcall according to system. Given the number of defences that are available over INT that will result in a myriad number of auctions.

If East overcalls 2♠ South may be able to bid 2NT (either Lebensohl or a mildly aggressive Rubensohl) or make a natural bid of 3♣ depending on agreements.

That should ensure a competition between the black suits.

EW can score nine tricks in spades while NS take only eight in clubs. That suggests EW will need to double 4♣ to get a good score – not at all easy.

EW can score ten tricks in hearts, but there is no obvious way for them to discover their fit in that suit – unless West opens with a weak 2♥ or Multi 2♦.

Board 12. N/S. Dealer West

	♠ A J 4 3 2	
	♥ J 10 2	
	♦ Q J 9	
	♣ J 2	
♠ 9 8 7 6		♠ 10
♥ 8 7 6		♥ K Q 9 3
♦ 2		♦ K 10 8 6 4 3
♣ K 10 8 7 5		♣ Q 9
	♠ K Q 5	
	♥ A 5 4	
	♦ A 7 5	
	♣ A 6 4 3	

If East opens 1♦ South overcalls INT and North transfers to spades and then jumps to 3NT, offering South a choice of contracts. If you subscribe to the view that with three-card

support for partner's suit you should always play in the major, you bid 4♠. If you think that with a totally balanced hand you should play in notrumps you pass.

If West leads a diamond against 4♠ declarer plays dummy's queen, takes East's king with the ace, and draws trumps. Then the ♥J is covered by the queen and ace and declarer plays two rounds of clubs. If East wins this trick the contract is safe, but if West rises with the ♣K (a crocodile coup if East has not unblocked the queen) and plays another club declarer ruffs in dummy and East, down to ♥K3 ♦1086 is squeezed. Discarding a heart allows declarer to duck a heart and score an overtrick, while throwing a diamond sees declarer play two rounds of diamonds to endplay East.

If South plays in 3NT and West leads a club, there is more than one way to secure ten tricks. For example, declarer ducks two clubs, wins the third round, and cashes five spades. On the last of these East will be down to ♥KQ9 ♦K108 and be forced to pitch a heart. Declarer plays the ♦Q for the king and ace and then plays two rounds of hearts to force East to lead into dummy's diamond tenace.

Board 13. All. Dealer North

	♠ 10 9 8 7 6 3	
	♥ 7 6	
	♦ —	
	♣ Q 8 5 4 2	
♠ Q		♠ K J 2
♥ A Q J 10 9 3		♥ K 8 5 4 2
♦ A Q 4 3		♦ 10 9 6 2
♣ 10 6		♣ 3
	♠ A 5 4	
	♥ —	
	♦ K J 8 7 5	
	♣ A K J 9 7	

I'm sure there are some players who will open the North hand, but at this vulnerability partner might expect a little more in the way of suit quality and high cards.

Where South opens 1♦ West overcalls 1♥. Now North might consider bidding 1♠. If East jumps to 4♥ South will bid 4♠. If West decides to bid on 5♦ is a possibility, as it will sometimes help partner to find the best lead. When East corrects to 5♥ South might double when it will be up to North to go on to 5♠.

If South starts with a strong 1♣ and West overcalls 2♥ North passes and East raises to

4♥. If South doubles North bids 4♠ and we are on familiar territory.

If West makes a conventional overcall, for example 2♦, promising hearts or the black suits, North passes, and East bids 2♠, indicating better clubs than spades, and guaranteeing a good fit for hearts. If South passes West bids 3♥ and now North might be deterred from introducing the spades. However, if South subsequently doubles North might bid spades.

The good news is that even if NS play in 5♣ there will be 11 tricks.

Board 14. None. Dealer East

♠ A J 10 8	
♥ K 10 5 4	
♦ J 10	
♣ 9 8 2	
♠ K 7 6 5 2	♠ Q 9
♥ 8 6	♥ A J 3 2
♦ A K 2	♦ Q 8 7 4 3
♣ J 6 5	♣ K 7
♠ 4 3	
♥ Q 9 7	
♦ 9 6 5	
♣ A Q 10 4 3	

If you consider 2-4-5-2 to be a notrump distribution East can open a 12-14 INT. West transfers to spades and then makes an invitational raise to 2NT.

If East opens 1♦ West responds 1♠ and then makes a decision over East's INT rebid. With a poor five-card suit there is an argument for passing, but my guess is that the majority will continue with some form of checkback.

If East opens 1♣ (for those who play that it can be used on this type of hand) the situation is much the same after 1♠-INT.

If East plays in notrumps and South leads a club declarer wins and establishes a spade for eight tricks. In theory, only a passive diamond lead gives the defenders a chance of holding declarer to seven tricks.

Board 15. N/S. Dealer South

♠ 7 6 2	
♥ A J 5 2	
♦ Q J 9 3	
♣ 10 6	
♠ 8	♠ A J 10 5 3
♥ 9 8 7 6 3	♥ K 10
♦ 10 7 6 5 2	♦ 8 4
♣ 4 3	♣ A 9 7 2
♠ K Q 9 4	
♥ Q 4	
♦ A K	
♣ K Q J 8 5	

If South opens 2NT North looks for a heart fit before settling for 3NT.

If South starts with a strong 1♣ and West passes North responds according to system, for example bidding 1♠ to show a balanced hand with 8+. One amusing possibility then would be for East to double to show spades and for South to redouble as a suggestion to play – much more fun than 3NT!

If West comes in over 1♣, perhaps bidding 1♥ to show two suits of the same colour North doubles and East passes. Assuming NS now find a route to 3NT it will be important for North to be declarer, as a heart lead by West should hold declarer to nine tricks provided East returns a heart at trick two.

Note that if East is on lead against 3NT and starts with a low spade, putting in dummy's nine results in 11 tricks.

Board 16. E/W. Dealer West

♠ A K J 10	
♥ 10 8	
♦ Q J 7 5	
♣ 7 5 4	
♠ 7 5 3	♠ Q 8 4 2
♥ A J 9 5 4	♥ Q 3
♦ 6	♦ 9 4 3
♣ Q J 9 6	♣ 10 8 3 2
♠ 9 6	
♥ K 7 6 2	
♦ A K 10 8 2	
♣ A K	

If we assume that the vulnerability will deter most West's from opening the bidding (2♥ to show that suit and a minor being the obvious possibility) North might open 1♦ (or INT). South might get excited over the former but with North having a sub-minimum opening it

should be possible to stop in game. After 1♦-1♥-1♠-2♣*-2♦ South might try a 'fifth-suit-forcing' 3♣, but should then bid 3NT on the next round.

Over 1NT South might start with 2♣ and then jump to 3NT over North's 2♠.

If South is the declarer in 3NT West needs to avoid a heart lead which presents declarer with a tenth trick. Of course, if South is greedy and then takes a spade finesse....

If North is the declarer and East starts with a club declarer is likely to take a spade finesse. Then East will need to find a switch to the ♥Q to hold declarer to nine tricks.

If 5♦ is the contract, the simple line is for declarer to play to ruff two hearts with the ♦QJ.

Board 17. None. Dealer North

♠ A J 10 7 4 3	
♥ —	
♦ 10 9 8 6	
♣ A J 10	
♠ 2	♠ K 6
♥ 10 9 8 6 3 2	♥ A Q J 4
♦ A K 7 4	♦ J 5 3 2
♣ Q 3	♣ 8 6 5
♠ Q 9 8 5	
♥ K 7 5	
♦ Q	
♣ K 9 7 4 2	

If North opens 1♠ South raises according to system. If West introduces the heart suit (for example after 1♠-3♠-(4♥) East is sure to bid 5♥ over North's 4♠. Then North is likely to take the push to 5♠, although should South double 5♥ there is a case for passing.

If the defenders can hold declarer to eight tricks, -500 from 5♥ doubled will be an excellent result. To do that North needs to start with a diamond setting up a potential ruff, or play two rounds of clubs, allowing South to win and then find a diamond switch.

If North plays in spades and East avoids a heart lead declarer will need to find the ♣Q to score 11 tricks.

Board 18. N/S. Dealer East

♠ K 9 5	
♥ Q	
♦ K J 3 2	
♣ K 10 8 7 2	
♠ A Q 6	♠ 8 4 2
♥ A 9	♥ K 8 6 4 3 2
♦ A 8 6 4	♦ Q 10
♣ A Q 4 3	♣ 9 6
♠ J 10 7 3	
♥ J 10 7 5	
♦ 9 7 5	
♣ J 5	

If East opens 2♥ or a Multi 2♦ West will drive to game.

Where East does not open West starts with 2NT and 4♥ is likely to be reached.

This is one of those deals where the cards lie badly for declarer.

If South is on lead and starts with the ♠J the likely result is two down.

If North is on lead (after a Multi 2♦) even though leading anything other than a heart looks dubious declarer will still struggle. The only danger is that after say an initial spade lead declarer wins with the queen and plays a low diamond. North must go up with the ♦K and then avoid switching to a club.

Board 19. E/W. Dealer South

♠ A J 10 7 5	
♥ Q 4	
♦ 8	
♣ J 9 6 3 2	
♠ 8 3	♠ K Q 4 2
♥ 10 6 5	♥ K J 9 7
♦ K J 5 4 2	♦ A 6
♣ A 7 5	♣ Q 10 8
♠ 9 6	
♥ A 8 3 2	
♦ Q 10 9 7 3	
♣ K 4	

There is every chance that North will open the bidding, a tactical 1♠ or a systemic 2♠ being the obvious options. East can overcall 1NT over the former and (more dangerously) 2NT after the latter. With a decent five-card suit West has enough to at least invite game over 1NT and will probably try 3NT after a 2NT overcall.

If North does not open the bidding and East starts with a 15-17 1NT West has a close

decision, but will probably elect to pass, following the principle that there is usually no need to press for thin games at pairs.

If East opens 1♥ and West responds INT that should end the auction, and that will also be a possibility where East starts with 1♣.

If South leads the ♠9 against a notrump contract declarer wins with the queen, cashes the ♦A and plays a diamond to the jack. When North discards, a heart to the jack will probably hold. If declarer then plays the ♥K South wins and continues with a spade, North winning and exiting with the ♠J. Declarer wins, crosses to the ♥10, cashes the ♣A and plays a club to the ten which results in an overtrick. Not easy, but not impossible.

Board 20. All. Dealer West

♠ J 9 7 4	
♥ 6	
♦ Q 8 6 5 3	
♣ A K 4	
♠ A Q 5 2	♠ 6 3
♥ K J 8 7	♥ Q 9 4 3
♦ 9 7	♦ A J 4
♣ Q 10 8	♣ 9 7 6 2
♠ K 10 8	
♥ A 10 5 2	
♦ K 10 2	
♣ J 5 3	

If West starts with a 12-14 INT North might come in with something to show spades and another suit. When East passes South has an awkward hand – if partner is strong game is a possibility, but otherwise there is a danger of getting too high. If South guesses to bid just 2♠ everything should be fine, but apart from 2NT that is the last safe spot.

Where North takes the view that it is wrong to come in over INT (both long suits are weak) West is likely to be left to play there.

If West opens 1♣ North might overcall 1♦, although once more the suit quality is an argument against it. If East passes over 1♦, South's response of INT should end the bidding. If East tries 1♥ then West will raise to 2♥. That will pinpoint at most a singleton heart in North's hand enabling South to compete with 3♦.

2♠ is a comfortable spot for NS. West can set up a potential diamond ruff, but that will only give the defenders five tricks. The strongest

defence is to lead a heart. If declarer wins, crosses to dummy and plays a spade, West wins and plays a second heart which gives the defenders trump control and should result in one down. Declarer can counter this by playing a diamond to the queen and subsequently taking the diamond finesse. If the defenders keep playing hearts declarer is one step ahead and has a chance of scoring nine tricks.

If West plays in INT North leads a diamond and declarer will be unlikely to take more than five tricks.

If North plays in diamonds nine tricks should be taken – the defenders can score two spades and a spade ruff along with the ♦A.

Board 21. N/S. Dealer North

♠ K J 9 5 4 3	
♥ J	
♦ A J 6 5	
♣ 10 8	
♠ A Q 7 2	♠ 8 6
♥ K 4	♥ Q 9 7 6
♦ 10 8 7	♦ K Q 9 4 2
♣ K 7 6 4	♣ J 5
♠ 10	
♥ A 10 8 5 3 2	
♦ 3	
♣ A Q 9 3 2	

If North opens 1♠ South responds 2♥ and then bids 3♣ over North's 2♠. That will see North try 3NT which South will probably pass.

It's a classic misfitting deal where everyone is likely to get too high and plus scores will be in short supply.

Here's how the play might go in 3NT:

East leads the ♦Q and switches to the ♣J for the queen, king and ten. West returns the ♦10 for the jack and king and declarer wins the next diamond, cashes the ♣8 and plays the ♥J to dummy's ace. As long as West unblocks the ♥K declarer will be held to six tricks.

Board 22. E/W. Dealer East

♠ 9 5	♠ A K 7 6 3
♥ J 9 5 4	♥ A 10
♦ Q 7 4 3	♦ A 5 2
♣ J 5 3	♣ A 9 7

♠ Q 10	
♥ K Q 7 3	
♦ K 9 8	
♣ K Q 8 6	

♠ J 8 4 2	
♥ 8 6 2	
♦ J 10 6	
♣ 10 4 2	

If East opens 1♠ and West decides to respond 1NT East will advance to the hopeless game.

If West does not respond North can choose between 1NT and double – South will not be ecstatic about either of them and meanwhile East will double or redouble depending on North's selection.

If East opens 2NT that will end the auction.

If East starts with a strong 1♣ West responds 1♦ and can then pass East's 1NT. If East rebids 1♠ and West bids 1NT East raise will push EW overboard.

If East is on lead against 1NT doubled a low spade sees North win (the queen is best) and probably try a top club. East wins and continues with another low spade. Declarer must put up dummy's jack and run the ♦J when six tricks should be taken.

If East plays a notrump contract South will probably lead the ♦J, declarer winning with the ace and playing three rounds of spades. South wins as declarer throws a heart from dummy. If South continues with the ♦10 and it holds a club switch will go to the queen and ace. Now declarer must avoid playing a spade, as South will win and exit with a diamond. North wins and plays a top heart and the best declarer can do is win and cash a spade, which squeezes dummy.

Declarer does best to exit with a diamond. North wins and plays a top heart but declarer wins and plays a heart to the jack. North can win, but declarer must score two more tricks.

As is often the case, these low-level contracts can be full of twists and turns.

Board 23. All. Dealer South

♠ J 10 6 5 4 2	♠ 9
♥ J 7 3	♥ Q 10 8 6
♦ K J 4	♦ 9 7
♣ 4	♣ A K J 8 5 3

♠ K 3	
♥ A K 4 2	
♦ A 8 5	
♣ 10 7 6 2	

♠ A Q 8 7	
♥ 9 5	
♦ Q 10 6 3 2	
♣ Q 9	

If West opens 2♠ or a Multi 2♦ North can double. After a double of 2♠ South might elect to play for penalties, especially if a natural 2NT is not available. Over a double of a Multi 2♦ East will bid 2♠. If NS now use a double of 2♠ as being for takeout with say three/four hearts, South passing relies on partner re-opening if West passes to show spades.

The other possibility for South is to jump to 3NT.

If West does not open and North bids 1NT East may want to join in, although that is not without risk facing a passed partner. Most defences are major suit orientated so one option for East would be to bid 2♣ to show hearts and another suit, East perhaps bidding 3♣ on the next round.

With a reasonable five-card suit South has the values for an invitational sequence that also checks out the possibility of finding a spade fit and that should result in 3NT being reached.

In 3NT everything hinges on the diamond suit. The percentage play is to cash the ace and then play low to the ten. Here the 61% chance of four tricks fails and so will the contract.

Board 24. None. Dealer West

♠ K 10 8 4 3 2	
♥ 3	
♦ 6 3	
♣ K Q 4 3	
♠ Q 9 6	♠ 7
♥ A 10 4	♥ K Q J 9 7 6
♦ Q 2	♦ K J 10 4
♣ A J 9 7 6	♣ 8 5
♠ A J 5	
♥ 8 5 2	
♦ A 9 8 7 5	
♣ 10 2	

If West opens a 12-14 INT North can overcall 2♠. If East now bids 4♥ South is likely to try 4♠.

If West starts with 1♣ and North overcalls 1♠/2♠ the auction is likely to proceed along similar lines.

4♠ requires careful play. If the defenders start with two rounds of hearts declarer ruffs, crosses to dummy with a spade and plays a club. If West ducks, declarer wins, plays a diamond to the ace and a second club. West wins, cashes a diamond and exits with a heart. Declarer ruffs, ruffs a club with dummy's ♠J and then plays a spade to the ten.

Board 25. E/W. Dealer North

♠ K 9	
♥ 7 5	
♦ J 10 7 6 2	
♣ K J 8 6	
♠ A J 10 7	♠ 5 4 3 2
♥ Q 10 2	♥ A K 9 4
♦ 8 3	♦ Q 9 4
♣ A 10 7 5	♣ Q 3
♠ Q 8 6	
♥ J 8 6 3	
♦ A K 5	
♣ 9 4 2	

Despite the trend towards lighter opening bids East has at best a marginal opening. If the first three players pass West has a decision. With a decent holding in the highest-ranking suit West might decide to open. After 1♣ East responds 1♥ and when West rebids 1♠ jumps to 3♠.

If North overcalls 1♦ East doubles and if South raises to 2♦ West can bid 2♠.

If West plays in spades and the defenders start with three rounds of diamonds declarer ruffs, crosses to dummy with a heart and takes a losing spade finesse. If North exits with a heart

declarer wins in dummy and takes a second spade finesse. Now playing a club towards the queen secures a ninth trick, as does drawing the outstanding trump first.

Board 26. All. Dealer East

♠ 7 6 5 4 3	
♥ 10 6 2	
♦ 7 4	
♣ 8 5 4	
♠ A K Q J 10	♠ 9 2
♥ A K 3	♥ Q J
♦ 8 6	♦ A K Q 10 9 3
♣ Q 7 6	♣ J 10 3
♠ 8	
♥ 9 8 7 5 4	
♦ J 5 2	
♣ A K 9 2	

When East opens 1♦ South might overcall 1♥, although it could backfire if North is on lead. Imagine that West were to drive to 6♠ (or 6NT). South might double to suggest that North does not lead a heart, but you can see it is a possible disaster waiting to happen.

If West responds 1♠ East rebids 2♦. Now West might temporise with 3♣ and then press the accelerator when East bids 3♦, asking for keycards and then bidding 6♠ (or even 6NT).

The old-fashioned approach for West would be to respond 2♠ and then decide what to do when East rebids 3♦. Bidding 3♥ is a possibility, but that increases the likelihood of a club lead.

There is nothing to the play on this deal – everything hinges on North's choice of opening lead.

Board 27. None. Dealer South

♠ Q J 3	
♥ K 9 8 4 3	
♦ K 10 6	
♣ 10 9	
♠ 6 4	♠ A 10 7
♥ Q 7 2	♥ A J 10 6 5
♦ Q 5 4	♦ A J 8 7
♣ K Q 8 4 3	♣ 6
♠ K 9 8 5 2	
♥ —	
♦ 9 3 2	
♣ A J 7 5 2	

South might open 2♠ if that shows spades and a minor. If North raises to 3♠ East will do well to resist the temptation to bid 4♥. On the other hand, if North does not raise and East

bids 3♥ it will be hard for West not to raise to game.

Where South passes initially, East opens 1♥ and now South can either overcall 1♠ or bid 2♥ to show spades and a minor. After 1♥-(2♥)-3♥ if North bids 3♠ East might be tempted to double.

Despite the 5-0 trump break it is relatively easy to score nine tricks in hearts. Declarer can play to ruff a spade in dummy and when the ♥Q is covered by the king and ace a club towards dummy ensures nine tricks. If South does not take the ♣A declarer wins in dummy and plays the heart seven for the eight and ten and then plays the ♦A followed by the jack. North wins and exits with a diamond, but declarer wins in dummy, ruffs a club and exits with a diamond to endplay North.

If South takes the ♣A and exits with a diamond declarer wins in hand, cashes a heart and exits with a low heart. North wins but has no good move.

If NS play in spades declarer will be doing well to score seven tricks. Here is one possibility: West leads the ♥2 and declarer ruffs and plays a spade to the queen, East winning and exiting with a spade. If declarer wins in dummy and runs the ♠10 West wins and plays the ♥Q for the king and ace. Declarer ruffs and tries to cash the ♣A but East ruffs and plays the ♥J. Declarer ruffs, but cannot hope for more than six tricks.

Board 28. N/S. Dealer West

<p>♠ 9 8 3 ♥ K 10 9 4 ♦ K J 7 6 ♣ Q 3</p>	
<p>♠ 5 ♥ Q 6 2 ♦ A 10 9 8 4 ♣ A K 8 7</p>	<p>♠ A K 10 2 ♥ J 8 7 5 3 ♦ 3 ♣ 9 6 5</p>
<p>♠ Q J 7 6 4 ♥ A ♦ Q 5 2 ♣ J 10 4 2</p>	

If West opens 1♦ East responds 1♥. If South overcalls 1♠ some players will be able to make a support double to show three hearts. Where that is not available, West might raise to 2♥. If North competes with 2♠ East has enough to continue with 3♥ (and will know what to do if South bids 3♠).

If South does not overcall West's best move is to raise to 2♥. Rebidding 2♣ and then supporting hearts would show the shape, but also suggest a stronger hand.

If East plays in hearts and South leads a club declarer wins in dummy. It is easy enough to score nine tricks, by playing to ruff a spade in dummy, but there is a hidden route to ten. Declarer cashes the top spades, then plays a diamond to dummy's ace, ruffs a diamond and then plays a heart. South wins and exits with a club and declarer wins in dummy, ruffs a diamond, ruffs a spade, ruffs a diamond and ruffs a spade. North can overruff, but East's ♥J will be the tenth trick.

Board 29. All. Dealer North

<p>♠ 7 6 3 ♥ 8 ♦ 10 7 6 ♣ J 9 8 6 5 2</p>	
<p>♠ A 5 2 ♥ A J 10 6 3 ♦ 9 8 ♣ K 10 4</p>	<p>♠ 10 4 ♥ K 5 4 2 ♦ A J 5 4 3 2 ♣ 7</p>
<p>♠ K Q J 9 8 ♥ Q 9 7 ♦ K Q ♣ A Q 3</p>	

If East opens a weak 2♦ South will be in an uncomfortable position. A double is probably the best option and now North will probably bid 2NT asking South to bid 3♣. That presupposes that West does not bid over the double – if West bids 2♥ East will be delighted to raise and now there is a good chance that West will continue to 4♥.

If East starts with a pass and South opens 1♠ West has a marginal overcall – a sixth heart would make life simpler. If West does overcall East will surely raise to game.

If South starts with a strong 1♣ West's action may be motivated by systemic agreements. For example some pairs use a double in this position to show a reasonable hand with a heart suit (1♦ would show spades). In that scenario East might be tempted to bid 4♥.

Were South to open 2NT EW would be left to defend.

If EW play in hearts everything will probably turn on how declarer tackles the trump suit.

With little to go on declarer might decide to play the opening bidder for the ♥Q.

Board 30. None. Dealer East

♠ A K 7 5	
♥ K 7	
♦ K Q J 9	
♣ K 7 4	
♠ J 10 8 3	♠ 9 6
♥ 10 4 3 2	♥ A J 8 6
♦ A 5 4 3	♦ 10 7 6 2
♣ 9	♣ J 6 5
♠ Q 4 2	
♥ Q 9 5	
♦ 8	
♣ A Q 10 8 3 2	

If South opens 1♣ North responds 1♦ and sees partner rebid 2♣. If North decides to ask for keycards and South bids 5♣ to show one, North will have to let matters rest. The situation will be the same if South starts with a Precision style 2♣ and then rebids 3♣ over North's artificial 2♦.

If South does not open it increases the chance that NS will play in 3NT.

Although the play is straightforward there is one interesting point.

Imagine South is in 3NT and West leads a heart for the king and ace. Declarer wins the second heart and cashes six clubs. On the last of these West will be down to ♠J1083 ♥10 ♦A and have to pitch a heart. If declarer reads the position a spade goes from dummy and playing a diamond delivers an eleventh trick.

Board 31. N/S. Dealer South

♠ A K Q J 10 6	
♥ 5 3	
♦ 4	
♣ J 5 4 2	
♠ 9 3 2	♠ 5 4
♥ A 10 8	♥ K 6 4
♦ J 9 7 3	♦ A Q 8 6 5
♣ 7 6 3	♣ A 10 9
♠ 8 7	
♥ Q J 9 7 2	
♦ K 10 2	
♣ K Q 8	

Assuming South passes North opens 1♠. If East overcalls 2♦ (not ideal lacking a sixth diamond) South can bid 2♥ and West raises to 3♦. Now North's 3♠ will probably silence everyone.

It's possible that South might try 3NT, but it will not be a triumph.

Playing in spades North rates to lose four tricks.

Board 32. E/W. Dealer West

♠ 8 6	
♥ Q 8 2	
♦ 10 9 6	
♣ 10 7 6 4 3	
♠ 10 9 5 4	♠ Q J 7 3
♥ 6 5	♥ A K J 4 3
♦ 7 5 3	♦ K J 4
♣ A K Q J	♣ 5
♠ A K 2	
♥ 10 9 7	
♦ A Q 8 2	
♣ 9 8 2	

When East opens 1♥ West responds 1♠ and then goes on to game over East's 3♠ rebid.

Now the spotlight will be on North. A diamond lead will defeat 4♠ - anything else and declarer should score ten tricks.