

Thank you so much for joining us for our Charity Pairs in aid of Kidney Research UK and the British Heart Foundation both of which are charities really badly affected by the pandemic in terms of their funding capability.

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

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

**Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.**

<p>♠ A Q 10 3 2 ♥ A 10 5 3 ♦ A J 9 5 ♣ A J 9 5</p>	<p>♠ 8 7 6 5 4 ♥ Q 4 3 ♦ Q 9 8 ♣ 7 2</p> <p>♠ J ♥ A K 10 6 2 ♦ J 6 ♣ 10 8 6 4 3</p> <p>♠ K 9 ♥ J 9 8 7 5 ♦ K 7 4 2 ♣ K Q</p>
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If you are West and play the boards in order, you are in for a treat from boards 1 to 7: you average 16.4 high-card points!

But it may not be a total treat – there are some nasty problems coming up, and Board 1 is one of them. A lot depends on whether East opens with some variety of 2♥ bid. That would silence South, and E/W will not get any help in the play. In this scenario, West might head towards six of partner's minor, and 6♣ is a nightmare to play – it requires declarer to take the spade finesse; however the ruffing finesse is more convenient. Mind you, if North is on lead, and chooses a spade ...

If East passes, South will open 1♥, and now E/W have better chances in 6♣, because declarer will know where the ♠K is. It's still no picnic if the defence starts with a diamond – there is no entry to finesse spades, so declarer has to hope for a miracle: the spade king dropping, and South being unable to usefully ruff the good spade. And the miracle occurs.

Perhaps if South opens, it is more likely that E/W will end up in 3NT, and then it is all about overtricks.

I could write more, but perhaps we had better get onto board 2.

**Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.**

<p>♠ K ♥ A K Q 5 3 ♦ Q 9 3 2 ♣ A K 6</p>	<p>♠ A 7 6 3 2 ♥ 8 7 4 ♦ K J 6 ♣ Q 9</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ J 10 ♦ 10 8 7 5 ♣ J 7 5 4 3 2</p> <p>♠ Q J 10 9 8 4 ♥ 9 6 2 ♦ A 4 ♣ 10 8</p>
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If board 1 was difficult, this one is worse. South has enough interior spade strength to open 2♠, even at adverse vulnerability, and West doubles. What should North bid? It's an old story: 4♠ is much too much (even 3♠ is too much), but it might work brilliantly. That rides back to West who angrily doubles again, and East? It's a bit hard to expect East to pass the double with that lot – and yet it's the winning decision.

Against a club contract, South starts with a spade to North's ace; what should North do at trick 2? Looking at all four hands, a diamond switch is obvious, but it won't be obvious at the table because North will fear that East holds the ♦A. The bidding will probably tell North differently, but even without that help, a diamond switch is probably indicated, because if East has the diamond ace, then looking at the combined heart and club positions, it seems unlikely that North can ever get a diamond trick anyway.

As it stands, it's 9 or 11 tricks, depending on whether North finds the diamond switch.

**Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.**

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

This one is not so brutal for E/W – good judgment will suffice. West opens 1♦, East responds 1♥ – what should West do (with or without a 1♠ interpose by South)?

I think West has a minimum raise in hearts – that singleton ♠K is not worth much at all. If West does make a minimum raise (maybe with a support double if South bids 1♠), then E/W should remain safely in a partscore.

But if West bids his hand out, bidding 2♣, and then supporting hearts later, then East will have every right to try game, because that West auction shows a lot of extra values – and despite the friendly minors, North has 4♥ beaten in his own hand.

**Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.**

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

E/W should be able to find a way to a NT partscore, and it looks like 8 tricks on any sensible defence.

**Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.**

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

The vulnerability will probably keep N/S quiet, so it's three passes to West. Playing 15-17 INT, that West hand is way too strong for INT – the 5 card suit, aces and kings plus tens and nines. West should upgrade and that way 3NT is easily reached.

If West does open INT, then East has a borderline decision on whether to invite game – it's quite possible that E/W will languish in 2♥.

Against 3NT by West, North may well find the winning spade lead (East having bid hearts). That should hold declarer to 9 tricks, despite the friendly club position – the defence being able to win two spades and two hearts. On another lead, declarer can take up to 11 tricks.

**Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.**

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

A slam tossup here, and North will have to stay off a heart (and spade!) lead to have a chance of beating 6♠.

**Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.**

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

One final monster for West before a break. I'd open 2♣, mainly because if I open 1♦, and partner doesn't maroon me in 1♦, bidding say 1 of a major, no rebid by me can remotely do justice to my hand.

After 2♣, East will probably push the hand to slam, and the matchpoints will be in 6NT. By East ... the hand record tells us that there is a 5 trick difference between declaring NT from East or West. (Of course, one can easily construct a hand where there is a 13 trick difference depending on position: just give a defender a 13 card suit and put his partner on lead against 7NT – that's the hand you get dealt in hell.)

There are differing play problems in each of the slams.

In notrumps, South had better lead the club ace. If not, declarer is going to make an overtrick.

In hearts, the same applies. Declarer has a choice of who to finesse for the ♥Q, but the odds are to get it right – because a first round finesse against South concedes a trick when anyone has singleton queen (whereas cashing the king first picks up all singleton queens).

In 6♦ by West on two rounds of clubs, declarer has a nasty decision – draw trumps and play North for the heart queen, or don't draw trumps and play three rounds of hearts, hoping that diamonds are 2-2. Once again, the percentage play is to get this right, as a 2-2 diamond break is less than the 50% odds on the finesse.

**Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.**

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

This is a tight matchpoint decision between 4♠ and 3NT. 3NT will work well because of the friendly hearts.

**Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.**

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

4♥ is easy here, but the real key to the hand is whether N/S can find the save in 4♠. After 1♠ – double, should South chirp 2♠? If so, then North will certainly try 4♠. If not, then all is not lost ... perhaps North will take another bid. Still, it's easiest if South gets his hand, such as it is, off his chest at once. I like 2♠!

**Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.**

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

A revolting misfit for everyone, particularly E/W. The key is for both East and West to hate their void in partner's suit, and stop bidding ASAP.

**Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.**

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

North faces a familiar dilemma in the bidding after West opens 1♠. Should he bid 2♥ or double? Double is safer, but it can lead to missing an 8-card heart fit. On this setup, a 2♥ overcall could lead to disaster if East guesses to pass and West re-opens with a double.

The key to resolving the bidding decision might lie in South's original pass. With just an 11 count, can North reasonably expect to buy the contract in hearts when South has a fit? If the answer is no, then it's better to double (or even pass) than take the risk of a 2♥ overcall. If South were an unpassed hand, then a 2♥ overcall would be more attractive.

If North doesn't put his head on the chopping block, then E/W should have no difficulty reaching the top spot of 4♠, making 11 tricks.

**Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.**

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

In first seat at favourable vulnerability, most Wests will try 3♦. Then a sensible continuation would be 4♥ by North, 5♦ by East, 5♥ by South, all pass.

If N/S decide to double 5♦, there is an unlikely defence to beat it 800: club lead (or top spade followed by a club), club ruff, heart underlead (gulp!) to the jack for another club ruff. I expect this defence to be found by approximately no pairs!

There is interest in the play in hearts as well. The defence must force one of South's entries before declarer has time to play on clubs. Otherwise, the 5<sup>th</sup> club will set up for the 12<sup>th</sup> trick (there are three entries in trumps, due to East's singleton 10). So the defence must either start with 2 rounds of diamonds, or play a trump. A black suit lead or switch is a disaster.

**Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.**

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

E/W might get to 4♥ on momentum here, despite the fact that they have only 20 HCP. When East opens 1♥, and South overcalls 2♦, West reckons he has a pretty good hand and bids 3♣, and 4♥ will soon be reached.

North will need to realise that his 11 points are mainly garbage and neither double 4♥ nor bid 5♦. The doubleton ♥QJ is a real warning sign.

The play in 4♥ can follow many different paths. East will lead his singleton club at some stage, and South has a really tough decision to make. The one thing he should not do is hesitate and then play low. This gives away the position of the ace, and declarer is quite likely to end up with 11 tricks. So as South, you either steel yourself to play low smoothly, or prepare to go up with the ace.

**Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.**

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

A constructive bidding problem for N/S. If North opens 1♥ in 4<sup>th</sup> seat, what should be his

rebid after South responds 1♠? 2♣ (if forcing), 3♣ and 2NT would all be in the mix.

If it starts: 1♥ – 1♠ – 3♣, South's rebid is a puzzle. 3♦ (fourth suit), 3♥ (false preference) and 4♣ (the honest raise) are all in the picture. Strangely the honest but non-matchpoint-oriented 4♣ should deliver a maximum result as North now rebids 4♥ with his solid 5-card suit, and South has a comfortable pass. 4♥ is a splendid contract in the 5-2 fit and must make 11 tricks, even if East hits on a spade lead.

Speaking of spade leads, that is the winning lead against North's 3NT, allowing the defence to unravel their four tricks. It would be a fine lead to make after the auction: 1♥ – 1♠ – 3♣ – 3♦ – 3NT. This sort of auction reveals North's spade shortage, and the lead through dummy's suit becomes quite attractive.

Maybe therefore, getting back to North's original rebid, a 2NT bid might work well – South raises to 3NT, and East has little choice but to lead a diamond, delivering the 10<sup>th</sup> (and maybe 11<sup>th</sup>) trick to declarer. In this case, the non-descriptive 2NT rebid works well.

#### Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

This is a delicate hand for N/S, which is often the case when the minor suits are in play. A lot depends on West's action in 2<sup>nd</sup> seat: pass, 2♥ or 3♥?

It's not too easy for N/S to get to the winning contract of 3♦ (particularly difficult if West opens 3♥), and their best practical result might be to let West play hearts. That's not easy for either North or South to achieve, if the opening bid is 2♥. North's lead will have an effect against hearts: a club lead will allow 8 tricks to be gathered (or even 9 if South continues clubs).

I think my auction would be 2♥ by West, pass, pass and a re-opening 3♣ by South, all pass. Deep Finesse makes 3♣ with a precise series of

plays that few humans will be able to duplicate. The more likely way to make 3♣ is for West to not lead a heart.

#### Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

I suppose most North's will bid 4♥ here, and the lie of the cards is not friendly. 9 tricks will be the usual result, or 8 tricks if East can somehow find a red-suit lead.

#### Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

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

Three finesses deliver 4♠ here, but I wouldn't expect too many pairs to get there. It's most likely if they are pushed there by N/S.

North, with the weakest hand at the table, can help his side here. Suppose East opens 2♠, and it proceeds 3♥ by South, 3♠ by West. North needs to take a negative view of his ♠K sitting under the opener, and quietly pass. A 4♥ bid risks either East bidding 4♠ or West doubling, neither of which will do N/S's score much good.

**Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.**

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

Technically this is a part-score deal but it is easy to see how N/S might think it's a game deal. The challenging auction for them is 1♠ - 2♣ - 2♠ - 3♦. Now if East passes, South might try 3♠ and North 3NT.

How should you play the clubs in in 3NT (and also other contracts)? Suppose East leads a spade to 3NT to the king and ace. You want to keep West off the lead, so a sensible line is to play a club to the king. This will lead to an extra undertrick, but imagine East-West's clubs being switched. A similar view could be taken in suit contracts, with East more likely to hold the club ace based on his opening bid.

**Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.**

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

4-card overcall anyone? Should East overcall 1♦ with 1♥? This is a really bad layout for it: the likely upshot would be a 3♥ contract down two for a near bottom.

A good pointer to NOT overcalling 1♥ is the flat shape (another is the unfavourable vulnerability!). The East hand is not one you want to get involved with in the auction.

An uncontested auction probably ends quietly in 2♦, although a greedy South might rebid the spades ("it's matchpoints partner!"). A spade contract works beautifully, because of the delightful split in trumps.

**Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.**

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

E/W make an easy 11 tricks in hearts here, but the main interest is what happens if South plays a doubled spade contract.

First of all, West should not lead the diamond queen, because having ♠AQ9, he is not interested in ruffs. The club king is the standout lead. Declarer takes dummy's two aces, and is at the cross roads – how to spend his one and only play off dummy?

That's an excruciating decision, and any declarer who plays a diamond to the KING will deserve applause (or else West should hold his cards back!). But it makes some sense: if diamonds are 2-2, it's a guess, but if West has singleton ace, playing a diamond to the 10 doesn't really help.

**Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.**

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

It's easy to see how E/W could get stranded in a 6-card fit here. After 1♣ by North, 1♥ by South, West bids his suit, and no-one else has anything to say. Getting to spades looks difficult, despite 9 tricks being available there.

**Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.**

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

I suspect that a lot of N/S pairs will get to a spade part-score here. East opens 1♦, South doubles (much more attractive than a INT or 2♣ overcall, in my opinion), and North competes in spades.

Danger lurks at every corner for those Norths who declare in spades. On a diamond lead, you must win with the ace (seems correct, as East won't have ♦KQ). But then, it looks natural to play on clubs, and the sky will fall in. East wins ♣A, cashes his good diamond on which West discards his last club, and now two club ruffs can follow. 8 tricks.

So it turns out that N/S will do well to find notrumps here.

**Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.**

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

A normal auction is for South to respond INT to his partner's takeout double of 1♥, and for the auction to end there.

If West ignores the vulnerability and puts his head on the block by rebidding 2♥, N/S should be able to chop it off. North's choice of lead against 2♥ is not a nice one: it seems just that leading the ace of his longest suit works best.

**Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.**

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

Deep Finesse says I of something makes by someone. But it may never get that high: after three passes, should South open?

The Pearson count (for deciding 4<sup>th</sup> seat openings) says: add your high-card-points to the number of spades, and if the answer comes to 15 or more, then open the bidding. For South, the Pearson count is 11+4 = 15, so it's an opening bid. But it sure doesn't look like one!

Well, perhaps East opens in third seat – at least that hand has some shape. That might just enable E/W to get to the top scoring contract of INT.

**Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.**

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

East has a fair non-vulnerable overcall after North's INT, but at these colours, I expect an uncontested INT-3NT auction.

The choice of leads is difficult. At IMPs, perhaps a heart lead is the best chance of defeating the contract. At matchpoints, the heart lead is in more danger of giving up an extra overtrick. In theory, that is what occurs here, although declarer needs to take a good view – not holding up in hearts - to win 11 tricks.

**Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.**

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

Another 1-level thriller! South will often declare INT, and accurate defence (club lead, spade shift) will defeat this two tricks for +200 and lots of matchpoints.

**Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.**

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

We are in a rut – more 1 level stuff. But that's the beauty of matchpoints: there is equal scope for a good score on this hand as the next deal which produces three grand slams.

This time it's East-West's turn to try INT, via 1♥ – INT. North doesn't really have a comfortable way into the auction, but an intrepid 4-card overcall of 1♠ is possible.

Against an uncontested INT auction, South will lead an unfortunate diamond, which delivers 7 tricks (3 diamonds, 2 clubs and 2 aces).

So North is indeed best off overcalling, which might get his side to 2♠, a contract that is rather difficult to beat. And if E/W compete beyond 2♠, they will certainly go minus.

**Board 28. NIS Vul. Dealer West.**

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

The grand slam is a fantasy here, of course. In fact, very few pairs will reach a slam of any form, even though 6♣ and 6♦ are fine contracts.

North should perhaps open 1♣, despite the 10 points, because of the good suit and two aces. That might get South slightly interested. A possible auction is 1♣ – 1♥ overcall, 2♦ by South, and 3♣ by North. Even then, it's a bit rich of South to do anything other than 3NT. It's the old matchpoint conundrum: difficult to leave 3NT behind for a minor suit contract.