



42nd Bermuda Bowl | 20th Venice Cup | 8th d'Orsi Trophy | 10th Transnational Open Teams

The WBF runs four Simultaneous Pairs each year to raise funds for Youth Bridge :

The dates for the next four are :

2015

Monday 17th & Wednesday 19th August

Monday 19th & Wednesday 21st October

Monday 14th & Wednesday 16th December

2016

Monday 14th & Wednesday 16th March 2016

There are different hands each day and clubs can play during the day or in the evening as long as security is observed.

In addition a Charity Pairs is held in January each year – the 2016 event will be run over 5 days from 25th – 29th January although clubs wishing to play on Saturday 30th may do so and they will be sent the Friday evening hands. The hands for Monday through to Friday will be different each day and again clubs can play during the day or in the evening as long as security is observed.

We hope your club will decide to join us for one or more of these events – just email anna.gudge@worldbridgefed.com if you wish to take part.

More information about these events can be found at

<http://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims>

World Championship Events

Information about the forthcoming World Youth Open Bridge Championships to be held in Opatija, Croatia and the World Bridge Teams Championships to be held in Chennai, India can be found at www.worldbridge.org

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The 29th World Bridge Contest

Friday 5th June 2015

of diamonds declarer will be doing very well to reject the club finesse.

Of course, if West fails to unblock the nine of diamonds on the first round of the suit declarer can afford to go wrong in clubs, as the diamond suit will be blocked.

Board 35, E/W/Vul, Dealer South,

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

Pairs using a strong club system will be happy to open the South hand 1♦ (and so will some adopting natural methods). When North responds 1♥ South raises to 2♥ and now North will want to investigate the possibility of a slam. However, South is not going to co-operate and it should be possible to stop in game.

For example after 1♦-1♥-2♥-2♠-3♦-4♣ South signs off in 4♥.

If South passes and North opens 1♣ the continuation 1♦-1♥-2♥ quickly leads to the heart game. If you are of a nervous disposition you might rebid more than 1♥ with the North hand.

An Acol player might open the North hand 1♥. Then South would have alternatives to consider; including some number of hearts, a jump to 3♦ (promising a heart fit) and a splinter bid of 4♣.

With no first round controls the hand is probably not worth 3♦ or 4♣ so South will make a limit raise in hearts when North will generally give up on any slam ambitions.

If North starts with a strong 1♣ and rebids 2NT over South's 2♦ then a bid of 3♥ will locate the fit, but might see North push too

hard. However, after 1♣*-2♦-2NT-3♥-4♣*-4♥-4♠ all will be well as long as South signs off in 5♥ (or if South bids 5♦ and North bids 5♥).

Unless the defenders are helpful declarer should be held to eleven tricks in a heart contract. For example on a trump lead declarer wins in hand and plays a diamond when East should take the ace and play a second trump.

Board 36, Game All, Dealer West,

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

If EW have no restrictions on suit quality then an opening bid of 2♠ or a Multi 2♦ is a possibility.

After 2♠ East can jump to game, while after 2♦* East can bid 2NT and then go on to 4♠ (if West is able to rebid 3♦ to show a bad/intermediate weak two in spades then East can jump to 4♠, protecting the ♦AQ for the moment).

If East is the declarer in 4♠ the best lead is a club as the defenders can then play three rounds of the suit forcing declarer to ruff and ensuring a trump trick for North.

However, in order to take more than ten tricks on a red suit lead declarer would have to play spades for no losers either by starting with a low one to the nine (which is the technical line) or by playing the jack. When North covers declarer wins and may elect to ruff a heart and then play a spade to the nine. After drawing the last trump declarer can discard four clubs, ruff a club and take the diamond finesse for all thirteen tricks - not a bad way to round off the event.

partner raise to the easy game.

If East starts with a Multi 2♦ then West faces a similar problem. One possible solution is to bid a 'Pass or correct' 2♥, intending to bid 3♥ over East's 2♠. This is not risk free, as it is just about possible that partner has a weak two in hearts and NS won't have the values to compete in spades.

If West resorts to the 2NT relay East's rebid will be systemic. Some pairs play that with a maximum East shows a feature - here that could be 3♦ - and if West bids 3♥ over that then East has an easy raise to game (and might even consider cue bidding 4♥).

If East has to bid 3♠ over 2NT to show a maximum with spades then West is not so well placed and will probably fall back on 3NT.

If East does not open the bidding then South might have something to say being third in hand, perhaps 1♠, or a 10-12 INT, or a strong club style 1♦.

After 1♠ West can bid 1♥ and if North raises to 3♣ East will have numerous possibilities. Simplest is to raise to 3♥ which sees West go on to the heart game.

If South starts with 1NT West can double, but it might be better to make a conventional bid, say 2♣ to show hearts and another suit. When East bids 2♥ West can continue with 3♦ and East corrects to 4♥.

The problem with doubling is that you might easily miss a heart fit - here if partner jumps to 3♠ you can only bid 3NT.

If South opens 1♦ then West's 1♥ overall might see East respond 1♠. If West then bids 1NT East will drive to 4♥.

If West is the one to open the bidding then you might see the sequence 1♥-1♠-2♦-3♥-4♥.

If West starts with a strong 1♣ then East responds 1♠ and raises West's 2♥ rebid, leading once more to 4♥.

If EW finish is spades then nine tricks are the limit.

3NT might score well.

After a club lead declarer wins, crosses to dummy with a diamond and plays a heart to the ten and an honour. Winning the next club declarer cashes the ace of hearts and has eleven tricks.

North can save a defensive trick by switching to spades rather than returning a second club.

If EW play in hearts declarer should take eleven tricks by playing hearts in the above mentioned fashion.

Board 34. N/S Vul. Dealer East

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

If North opens 2NT South will usually respond 3♣, asking about the majors (it will be for four or five card suits, depending on agreements) and then sign off in 3NT.

If North starts with a strong 1♣ then South will respond according to system, but it should be a case where all roads lead to 3NT.

What should East lead against 3NT?

It does not look attractive to start with a diamond, but as the cards lie only a low diamond lead is sure to give the defenders four tricks. (Leading a top diamond will block the suit, declarer having the choice of ducking or winning.)

If East leads a passive spade declarer wins in hand and will probably try the king of clubs. If East wins and switches to the king

The World Wide Bridge Contest



Message from

Gianarrigo Rona,

President, World Bridge Federation

Dear Bridge Friends

The World Wide Bridge Contest is a long-standing tournament in the World Bridge Federation's calendar; this is the 29th time it has been held. I do hope you all enjoyed this event and found the hands interesting and challenging – my thanks go to Mark Horton, one of our senior Bulletin Editors, for his excellent and entertaining commentary.

As you know, the World Bridge Federation is committed to the promotion of Youth Bridge, which we strongly believe represents the future of our wonderful sport. Because of this, it had been decided that any profits made from this event will be used specifically to assist the development of Youth Bridge. However, in view of the appalling disaster in Nepal we have decided that up to 5,000 Euro from the profits of the event should be donated to the Nepal Disaster Fund. We run other, quarterly event to raise funds for our Youth Projects which will include better teaching aids for countries trying to encourage young players, assistance for youngsters to attend World Championships and other initiatives to encourage youngsters

to learn bridge. If your club would like to know more about these, do please get in touch with us - just email anna.gudge@worldbridgefed.com and she will be pleased to help you.

The WBF Website, which is at www.worldbridge.org has details of the 2015 World Bridge Teams Championships to be held in Chennai, India. The World Transnational Open Teams Championship will be held, as always, in the second week, and we will welcome teams consisting of players who are bona fide members of their NBO. It is a really enjoyable and exciting event, giving players the opportunity of enjoying an tournament where they can play against or watch some of the greatest names in bridge today. Do give consideration to joining us – we would love to see you there!

Once again, thank you for taking part in the World Wide Bridge Contest – and please continue to enjoy your bridge.

With warm regards

Gianarrigo Rona

President, World Bridge Federation

Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

♠ A K Q 2
♥ J 8 6 5
♦ Q J 10 7
♣ 3

♠ 10 7 6 3
♥ 10 9 7
♦ K 8 6 5 3
♣ Q

♠ —
♥ A Q 4 3 2
♦ A 9 4
♣ A K 10 7 5

♠ J 9 8 5 4
♥ K
♦ 2
♣ J 9 8 6 4 2

If North opens 1♦ East will have to choose between a simple 1♥ or a bid that gets both suits into the picture immediately and for many that would be via 2NT, promising ♥+♣.

After 1♦-(1♥) South might just dredge up a response of 1♠ and after West raises to 2♥ North will have to choose between a direct spade raise and a splinter in clubs. Let's say that North opts for 3♠. Now East might try 4♣ and when West bids 4♥ North will be faced with a classic problem, to defend, hoping 4♥ will fail, or to bid 4♠ trusting it will be a good sacrifice.

If East overcalls 2NT South can only pass and when West bids 3♥ East will probably be tempted to go on to game.

I can't resist mentioning that using one of my favourite methods (described in detail in The Mysterious Multi) North could open 2♥, showing a limited three suited hand that always contains 4♥, which would be awkward for East.

If East plays in hearts then South is likely to lead a diamond when declarer will win in hand, cross to dummy with a club and play a heart. The percentage line for four tricks is to lead the seven, putting in the queen, but here South will win and probably return a spade. Now the best declarer can do is ruff, cash the ace of hearts and ruff a club. North overruffs, cashes the master trump and plays a spade, but declarer ruffs and has eight tricks.

Theoretically, there are ten tricks available in hearts, but declarer has to turn a few summersaults to record them.

The first essential is to play the seven of hearts to the ace. Then declarer ruffs a club, North overruffing and playing a top spade which declarer ruffs. After ruffing the ten of clubs declarer ruffs a spade, cashes the queen of hearts and then plays clubs. North can ruff and play a spade but declarer ruffs and has two winners to cash.

Well done if you managed ten tricks in hearts.

If NS play in spades then they will be doing well to take more than eight tricks. The best lead for West is a trump, but even after the ten of hearts East can win, cash a top club and then play the ace and another diamond. If declarer ruffs and plays on cross ruff lines West simply discards red cards at every opportunity and there will be no more than eight tricks. If declarer discards a club from dummy on the second round of diamonds West wins and must return a small trump.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

♠ 9
♥ A Q 8 5 4
♦ 10 5 3
♣ K 6 5 3

♠ K 10
♥ K 10 9 3
♦ J 9 7 6 4
♣ 9 7

♠ A 8 3 2
♥ J 6 2
♦ K 2
♣ A Q J 8

♠ Q J 7 6 5 4
♥ 7
♦ A Q 8
♣ 10 4 2

If East starts with a 15-17 INT then South is quite likely to overcall. The naturalist bids 2♠, the scientist a multilandy 2♦ promising one major.

If the auction starts INT-(2♠) West can double if it is for takeout. The important thing is that EW need to know the meaning of the double. You can get some expert opinions on this topic at:

a diamond, but declarer can go up with the ace and has seven tricks.

Clearly 2♥ is a good spot for EW, but not so easy to reach.

Board 3. I. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

♠ 9 6
♥ A Q 7 6 4
♦ A K 8
♣ 8 7 2

♠ Q 8
♥ K 5 3
♦ Q 6
♣ K J 10 9 6 4

♠ 7 4 3 2
♥ J 8
♦ J 9 5 4
♣ Q 5 3

♠ A K J 10 5
♥ 10 9 2
♦ 10 7 3 2
♣ A

When South opens 1♠ West overcalls 2♣ and North bids 2♥. If East passes (or makes a tactical raise to 3♣) South bids 3♥ and North goes on to game.

When East leads a club declarer wins and has plenty to think about.

Taking the trump suit in isolation the best line for four tricks is to run the ten, which works 73% of the time (and sometimes avoids a loser). However, declarer also has a couple of losing clubs that have to be dealt with, as well as a losing diamond and a dummy that is short of entries.

Suppose declarer runs the ten of hearts at trick two and East wins and returns a heart. Declarer wins in hand, ruffs a club, comes to hand with a diamond and draws the outstanding trump. Now cashing dummy's top spades results in twelve tricks, while taking a spade finesse means only ten.

If declarer prefers to play a heart to the queen at trick two it is then possible to ruff both losing clubs and cash the ace of hearts, using the ♦AK as entries. Once again declarer will need to get the spade right to score twelve tricks.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

♠ 9 8 6 3 2
♥ 7 2
♦ 10 7 4 3
♣ 9 7

♠ 10 5 4
♥ K J 10 9 6 5
♦ A K 8
♣ 3

♠ A J
♥ A
♦ Q J 5
♣ A K Q 10 8 6 5

♠ K Q 7
♥ Q 8 4 3
♦ 9 6 2
♣ J 4 2

When West opens 1♥ East will immediately think in terms of a grand slam. If East decides to ask for key cards West shows two and denies the ♥Q. Now East asks for side kings and West shows the ♦K. It is now reasonable to bid 7NT - if West has a singleton club the suit will come home 73% of the time (give West a void and that drops to 51%).

If East elects to mark time, perhaps responding 2♣ (or an old fashioned 3♣) then West rebids hearts and East is just about certain to launch the Blackwood rocket.

I'll just mention that I have seen intrepid opponents come in with a Michaels cue bid of 2♥ on the North hand - easily brushed aside here.

Board 33. Love All. Dealer North.

♠ 10 4 3
♥ K Q
♦ 9 8 4
♣ 10 7 6 5 2

♠ 8
♥ A 10 6 4 2
♦ K Q 6 3 2
♣ A K

♠ Q J 7 6 5 2
♥ J 7 5
♦ A J 7
♣ 9

♠ A K 9
♥ 9 8 3
♦ 10 5
♣ Q J 8 4 3

If East opens 2♠ West has to decide if it is right to look for a game. Its a close decision and it could easily be right to pass. However, those who respond 3♥ will see

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East

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

If East is able to start with a 10-12 INT South is likely to double, ending the auction unless West decides to run, in which case the heart fit should come to light.

If East opens 1♦ South can overcall INT which might well end the auction.

If East passes then South can open INT with the same outcome.

Where East passes and South opens 1♠/1♦ North might respond 1♠ and then pass the INT rebid.

If North passes South's 1♠/1♦ then East has an easy double of 1♠ and can protect with INT over 1♦. After 1♠-Pass-Pass-Dble if South bids INT (perhaps a little dubious without a stopper in either major) then West can bid 2♥.

If South starts with a strong 1♠ then North responds 1♦ and South rebids INT.

If South plays in INT then it should not be too difficult for the defenders to hold declarer to six tricks. For example if the defenders start with four rounds of hearts East can switch to the ten of clubs (amongst other cards).

If East happens to be in INT doubled then South might lead a top club (many pairs play that the ace asks for attitude while the king calls for an unblock) and then switch to a top diamond. Declarer should duck that, and also duck the next diamond (on which North might unblock the nine). If South switches to a spade North can win and play

in hearts. If West now bids 2NT East tries 3♣ and we are back where we started.

If West is able to start with a strong 1♠ then North may well overcall when EW are much more likely to finish in 4♠ than 3NT.

Clearly 3NT is hopeless after a heart lead (otherwise declarer can play on diamonds) and 4♠ is not going to make as long as the defenders score a diamond ruff.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

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

East opens 1♠ and rebids 2♠ over West's 2♦, leaving West to choose between 3NT and 4♠.

I am not sure there is much to choose between these two alternatives, but what one can say is that if West is in 3NT it is essential for North to find a club lead. Otherwise declarer can play on diamonds and be assured of at least eleven tricks.

That is not quite the end of the matter, because if North leads the eight of clubs then South must put in the jack to hold declarer to nine tricks.

If East plays in spades then eleven tricks should be made.

On balance it is probably best to play in spades, as after 1♠-2♦-2♠-3NT I think North is quite likely to lead a club and there is a good chance South will find the play of the jack.

http://bridgeinindia.homestead.com/Steve_Robinson-Dt_6_ACBL-Doubles_after_Interference_to_your_INT_Opening_Bid.OCT-NOV.pdf

The same is true if the bidding starts INT-(2♦*). Now East needs to be sure what a double from West means, for example does it show diamonds, or does it suggest that West can double at least one of the majors?

After INT-(2♠)-Dble East will either elect to defend (which is tempting as one down will yield the 'magic 200') or bid 2NT.

If East's INT is 13-15 or 14-16 then West might adopt a more conservative approach and pass any overcall.

If East is out of range for INT and starts with 1♣ then South overcalls 1♠/2♠ according to taste and in either case West can double. After 1♠-(1♠)-Dble East is likely to bid INT while after 1♠-(2♠)-Dble East must choose between a Pass and 2NT.

If South plays in 2♠ the best lead for the defence is a club, when East wins and may well switch to the king of diamonds. If declarer wins and plays a heart to the queen a diamond can be discarded on the ace of hearts and after coming to hand with a diamond declarer can exit with a club and should come to seven tricks.

East can prevent that by switching to a low spade at trick two. West wins with the ten and plays a second club, East winning and playing two more rounds of clubs, West ruffing the last of them with the king of spades. That gives the defenders the first five tricks and East's ♠A83 will be worth two more holding declarer to just six tricks.

If North is declarer then that defence is no longer possible, so this time science might prove to be a little better.

If East plays in notrumps then eight tricks are not impossible. Say South starts with the queen of spades.

Declarer wins in dummy, takes a club finesse and plays a heart to the ten and queen. North is already awkwardly placed.

Exiting with ace and another heart is as good as anything, but declarer unblocks the jack from hand and after cashing a second heart repeats the club finesse. After cashing the ace of clubs declarer will know from South's discards if it is right to play ace and another spade, endplaying South.

Board 3. EW Vul. Dealer South.

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

If North opens 1♣ South responds 1♠ and will probably bid 2♥ over North's INT rebid, North giving preference to 2♠.

If North opens INT (it could be 12-14, 13-15 or 14-16) East might come in with a conventional bid, maybe 2♣ to show hearts and another suit, or perhaps 2♥ promising hearts and a minor.

After INT-(2♠*) if South passes then West bids 2♦, denying three card support for hearts when it would be a good view for East to pass.

Were that to happen South might keep the auction alive by bidding 2♠.

If NS play in spades the handling of the major suits will be the key factor.

Say West leads a club and East plays three rounds of the suit, West overruffing South's two (or five) and switching to a diamond for the queen and king.

If declarer gets everything right, advancing the jack of spades for the king and ace, playing a heart to the queen and ace, winning the diamond exit in dummy, ruffing a diamond, taking a trump finesse, drawing the last trump and then felling the jack of hearts there will be no less than nine tricks.

In the situations where East has bid (and possibly shown hearts) declarer might get the trumps right, but will be doing well to lose only one heart.

Were West to play in diamonds then at least eight tricks should be possible. For example on a club lead declarer wins in dummy and plays a spade, North winning with the queen and playing a second club. Declarer wins in dummy and plays another top club, pitching a heart if South refuses to ruff.

If South does ruff then declarer overruffs, ruffs a spade, ruffs a club, ruffs a spade and pitches a heart on the ten of clubs.

The only way to be sure of preventing nine tricks is for the defenders to start with a heart. Then declarer would be under pressure - for example winning with the ace and trying three rounds of clubs might see declarer take only six tricks.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

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

If West starts with a 15-17 INT then East will transfer to spades. With four card support and a maximum West might break the transfer, leading quickly to 4♠, but even after INT-2♥-2♠ East will bid 3♣ and West jumps to 4♣.

Were West to be out of range for INT and start with a strong 1♣ then given a free run East responds 1♠ (or INT for those pairs who reverse the meaning of 1♣ and INT) and 4♠ will be reached in short order.

If North comes in over a strong club, perhaps bidding 1♠ to show two suits of the same rank then EW will need to know what they do after interference.

If East doubles and South bids 3♠ saying 'I prefer diamonds to clubs, but have a better fit in one of the majors' and West doubles then East will do well to bid 3♠ which West will raise to game.

In Acol land West can open 1♠ when the spade game is sure to be reached in short order.

It might produce an exciting auction, as if North doubles 1♠ and East jumps to game South might be tempted to bid 5♥ which West will probably double.

It should not be difficult to take ten tricks in spades.

Imagine East is the declarer and South leads a diamond.

Declarer wins with dummy's ace, takes two rounds of spades and then plays on clubs. Even laying down the ace of clubs which South can ruff only results in the loss of three tricks.

Just about the only defence to allow declarer to score and overtrick would be for South to lead a heart and for North to win and return a club.

To complete the picture sacrificing in hearts might well prove to be a triumph for NS, as to get five tricks West has to start with the ace of diamonds then give East a ruff and get in with the ace of spades to deliver a second ruff.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

♠ 876
♥ KJ8
♦ 82
♣ AQ854

♠ J109
♥ A10
♦ A64
♣ KJ1072

♠ KQ54
♥ 9763
♦ KQ109
♣ 9

♠ A32
♥ Q542
♦ J753
♣ 63

I don't think the North hand is worth an opening bid, but after 1♣ East might double

This strikes me as a tough deal, where maybe a little bit of guesswork will be needed.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

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

If South happens to be in a position to open a 10-12 INT then North responds 2♦* and South bids 2♥, which will end the auction unless East reopens with 3♦.

Otherwise North is likely to open 1♥ and when East overcalls 2♦ South doubles. North will probably rebid 2♥, although I suspect a few players might try 2♠.

If North plays in 2♥ then East has a very awkward hand to lead from. On a diamond lead, say declarer wins in dummy, cashes the ace of hearts and plays a heart to the jack?

East wins and plays two more rounds of diamonds, forcing declarer to ruff and the contract should be two down.

It might be better to postpone any decision in trumps.

If declarer plays on spades East wins and continues diamonds, forcing declarer to ruff. West takes the next spade and exits with a club and East wins and returns a club. Declarer must win in hand, cash a spade, and can then play the king of hearts and a heart to the ace. Even if the queen does not appear declarer will lose only one more trick.

West can upset this plan by pitching a spade on the third round of diamonds. In that event the declarer will have to choose between the heart finesse and cashing the two top honours.

If North happens to play in 2♣ and East leads a diamond declarer should duck, win the next round and play a trump. East wins and forces declarer with a diamond and West wins the next trump and returns a club. East wins the king and exits with a club and declarer wins in hand, crosses to the ace of hearts and plays a spade. When West wins and returns a heart declarer will need a winning guess if West has kept two clubs. If declarer wins the first diamond then in theory 2♣ can be defeated.

West must go in with the king of spades on the first round of the suit and play a diamond. East overtaking and playing a third round. Then East can win a spade and play a fourth diamond forcing dummy to ruff. As long as West keeps four hearts declarer will need to guess the hearts for seven tricks.

If East plays in 3♦ then eight tricks should be the limit.

If South starts with two rounds of hearts North wins and switches to a club. If declarer misguesses the defenders are already sure of five tricks (declarer will be able to get rid of a spade on the jack of clubs) but even if declarer goes right in clubs there will still be five losers.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

If West opens 1♣ East responds 1♠. If West then rebids 2NT East can bid 3♣ and leave West to choose between 3NT and 4♠. (If West bids 3♠ East will go on to 4♠.)

If North decides to overcall | ♥ East bids | ♠ and South bids 2♣* promising a good raise

West. The best solution might be to pass and when North responds 2♦ and South passes West can double, which might produce a very good result.

If EW manage to reach 4♠ then declarer should not lose more than a spade, a heart and a club - and were North to lead a heart one of those losers would vanish.

Defending 2♦ doubled there are some traps the defenders must avoid.

First, if East decides to lead a trump it has to be one higher than the two, which is hardly obvious. Otherwise declarer can win cheaply in dummy and play a heart. With the ♦Q10 intact there will be no chance of a subsequent trump promotion, which can happen in certain situations and declarer should emerge with five tricks.

The other danger is that the defenders might start with three rounds of spades. After ruffing the third if East exits with a trump declarer wins in hand and exits with a club. If West wins and returns a club declarer wins and plays a third round of the suit. Now whatever the defenders try declarer will take five tricks.

However, +500 should score well, as it is far from easy to reach a making game on the EW cards.

It's worth mentioning that if EW finish in 3NT then only a diamond lead is guaranteed to beat the contract - for instance after a heart lead declarer wins with dummy's ace and plays on clubs. One way or another there should be nine tricks.

For example, say North takes the second club and switches to a diamond. South wins (declarer pitching a heart) and now has a choice.

A second heart allows declarer to win and play three rounds of spades.

A second diamond is ducked (a spade goes from dummy) and if North plays a third round declarer can win and return the

suit, taking two spades, two hearts, two diamonds and three clubs.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East

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

Unless South happens to start with a weak 2♦ (when North might resort to asking for keycards before taking a stab at 6NT) North will be the one to get proceedings underway.

Pairs who have firm agreements about suit quality for weak openings might be on firmer ground.

If North opens 2♣ then South will respond according to systemic agreements. After an old fashioned 3♦ response North bids 3♥ and South continues with 3♠.

Suppose at this point that North jumps to 4NT?

Does that notionally agree spades and ask for key cards, or, with no suit agreed does it simply ask for aces?

If North starts with a strong 1♣ and South responds 1♦ then North might continue with 2♥ (a systemic issue to be sure) when the bidding will continue 3♦-3♥-3♠, reaching the position outlined above.

If South responds 2♦ then North bids 2♥ and South continues with 2♠.

In all these situations it is far from clear how best to develop the auction.

In practical terms I suspect North is likely to bid 6NT, hoping it will have a play.

With the diamonds behaving there are no problems.

when West is very likely to take a shot at 3NT after South responds in a red suit.

With North passing most of the time East can also consider a marginal opening but I would only feel comfortable if I could start with 1♦ in a Strong Club system, or show a limited three suiter via 2♥ (I refer you to the commentary on Board 1).

Most of the time it will be West who will open 1♣ and rebid 1NT over East's response, ending the auction.

Another possibility is for West to start with a 12-14 or 13-15 INT. With both majors East might be tempted to try Stayman, bidding 2NT when West replies 2♦.

If North leads a club against a notrump contract then declarer has an easy route to eight tricks by winning with dummy's nine and forcing out the ace of spades. There are ways to take nine, but they involve playing for spades to be 3-3 and scoring four diamond tricks, which is not going to happen.

If West has bid clubs North may be reluctant to lead one. A spade is very much in accordance with modern theory and here it should hold declarer to eight tricks.

Board 6. EW Vul. Dealer East

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

If East opens 1♥ and South overcalls 1♠ North will be surprised.

After 1♥-(1♠) West will either raise to 2♥ (much easier in a five card major system) or make a negative double. In either case North will have to decide upon the best tactical approach.

I would be inclined to jump to 4♠ taking away some bidding space, but it will not stop East from bidding again.

If West has raised to 2♥ East might try 4NT over 4♠ intending to bid 5♦ over West's possible 5♣.

The trouble with that sequence is that it would be asking a lot for West to go on to 6♦.

East might consider bidding 5♠ over 4♠. If West then bids 6♣ East bids 6♦ which West should be happy to pass (but might not).

Another possibility would be for West to bid 5NT over 5♣ which should suggest both minors (and for some will be 'pick a slam').

If West has doubled 1♠ then East is better placed and can bid 5♠ over 4♠ with more confidence.

If South does not overcall West will be choosing between a raise to 2♥ and 1NT (which might have conventional overtones for many).

After 1♥-(Pass)-2♥ or 1♥-(Pass)-1NT North is going to bid and I'll assume that 4♠ is the popular choice.

The situation is not much different for East - again 5♠ might be the way to go.

If EW reach a slam it will be tempting for NS to save in 6♣, especially for North in the situations where South has overcalled.

Going four down in 6♣ doubled will only cost 800 against the 1370 that 6♦ (or an unlikely 6♣) will score.

This might be the most interesting scenario:

1♥-(Pass)-2♥-(4♠)-5♠-(Pass)-6♣-(Pass)-6♦.

Now if South passes and West corrects to 6♥ South might view to pass, hoping there are two defensive tricks. However, as there is no guarantee that West will bid over 6♦ my guess is that South will bid 6♠.

Maybe that will goad East into bidding 7♦?

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

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

If South opens 1♥ West will choose between an off centre double and a slightly flawed 2♦ (a sixth diamond would be handy).

After 1♥-(Dble) if North bids 2♣ East will come in with 2♠, when West will at the very least make some sort of try, perhaps bidding 3♣ or just raising to 3♠. In either case East is likely to decline the invitation.

After 1♥-(2♦) North has nothing to say. If East decides to raise to 3♦ West might bid 3♠, but then East would be sure to go on to game.

If West decides to pass over 1♥ and North responds INT South will rebid 2♥. Now, how do you play a double from West? If it is for take out then it works like a dream as East will bid 2♠.

If North responds 2♣ (the approach of some Acol players) and South rebids 2♥ the question remains the same.

Playing in spades is not much fun for EW unless they can stop in time.

If East is declarer South leads a diamond and the defenders should have no trouble scoring five tricks via a red suit cross ruff.

If West is declarer North leads a heart and South wins and returns a high heart for North to ruff. As long as North switches to a diamond and there is no defensive accident in the trump suit then the defenders will collect five tricks.

However, if EW play in 3♠ and are -100 they may pick up some points as it is virtually

impossible to defeat 2♥ (West would have to lead a low diamond and then East would have to switch to a trump).

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

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

If West opens 1♣ North overcalls 1♥ and East bids 1♠. If South joins in with 2♦ North might raise to 3♦ but East will surely try 3♠, ending the auction.

If West were to start with a Strong Club type 2♣ then North overcalls 2♥ (dangerous, but the sort of risk one more or less has to take at Pairs) and East bids spades. I would be happy with 2♠, but I daresay some will try 3♠.

If West starts with a Pass and North opens 1♥ then East bids spades, 1♠/2♠ according to taste. South could bid a non forcing 2♦ after a 1♠ overcall, but would have to pass over 2♠.

Were North to open a 12-14/13-15/14-16 INT then East would bid 2♠ (or start with a Multi Landy 2♦). Then South might be able to bid a Lebensohl 2NT, correcting North's 3♠ to 3♦.

Not so easy for those who play Rubensohl, where South would like to bid 3♣ over 2NT as a transfer to diamonds, but is a little short of the invitational values that are usually required.

If the bidding does follow that route then West might go on to 3♠.

If EW play in spades then declarer will need to locate the jack of hearts, which will be much easier if North has opened the bidding.

If West is able to start with INT then East can use whatever tools are available - the simple option is to respond 3♠ and then pass West's 3NT rebid.

If EW play in notrumps the lead might be critical - if North leads a diamond declarer will have a vital extra trick to add to the eleven that are on top.

If North leads a heart (passive leads against notrumps are all the rage at the moment) then declarer will have to decide if it is right to take a diamond finesse in the hope of scoring the extra trick.

Notice that declarer can't afford to test the spades by starting with the king, as that would remove a vital entry.

If EW play in spades South might well lead a diamond, again delivering an extra overtrick. Absent a club lead declarer will face the same issue - is it right to take the diamond finesse?

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

If North opens 1♣ and rebids 2♣ over the response of 1♠ then South will be choosing between 2NT and 3♣. North can happily pass 2NT, but might be tempted to take a shot at 3NT over 3♣.

If North starts with 2♣ then South can respond 2♠ and pass North's rebid of 3♣. Is there any chance of nine tricks in 3NT?

If South is declarer and West leads a diamond declarer can get up to eight immediately by playing dummy's ten, but

there is no real hope of another trick.

If North is declarer then East might lead a top heart. It will then be essential to switch to a spade at trick two. West wins and can return either red suit to be sure of defeating the contract.

If East starts with a low heart declarer can win and return a heart and if East wins and switches to a spade declarer will only need to get the diamonds right if West returns that suit.

5♣ is swiftly dispatched by three rounds of hearts.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

If North opens 1♦ and South passes then West can either bid 1♠ or double - in either case East is likely to bid INT.

After (1♦)-Pass-(Pass)-1♠-(Pass)-INT if West bids 2♣ then East might show some strength by bidding 2♦, continuing with 2♠ over West's 2♥. Now there is a reasonable chance that 4♠ will be reached.

If West starts with a double and then bids 2♣ over INT East might raise, imagining that West is slightly stronger.

If North starts with 1♣ then then East might overcall 1♦. If West then bids 2♣ followed by 2♠ over East's 2♦ rebid then there is again a chance that the spade game might be reached.

If North opens a 10-12/12-14 INT then South might try a tactical 2♣, which would certainly make like interesting for

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East

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

If West opens 1♦ North can overcall INT, which may well end the auction unless East feels like doubling or bidding 2♥.

Obviously on this layout double is a potential winner, but it would be an aggressive action.

If West opens INT (12-14, 13-15 or 14-16) then North can double. East has no reason to bid but South will probably take flight. If NS play in 2♠ they might get a decent result.

If North is left to play in INT East's natural lead is a heart, West winning and returning the suit. The best declarer can do is play on spades, but say the defenders duck, win the next spade and clear the hearts. If declarer exits with a spade East wins, cashes two hearts and exits with the queen of diamonds. Declarer wins with the king but will only score one club trick for two down.

The lead to avoid is the queen of diamonds. Declarer wins and plays on spades as before. In the six card ending, declarer, down to three cards in each minor, exits with a diamond and West wins. Cashing a second diamond sets up declarer's six, but exiting with a club allows declarer to put in the nine or queen and score two club tricks at the end for six tricks.

If West plays in INT North might lead a top heart. Declarer wins and returns a heart. Best defence is for North to win and switch to the queen of spades. If declarer wins in hand and plays a diamond North goes in with the king and plays a second spade and

when the ten loses to the jack South can return a club and declarer is held to seven tricks.

The route to eight tricks requires declarer to duck the queen of spades (or win with dummy's king and play a heart) win the next round and clear the hearts. After winning the spade exit and cashing dummy's hearts declarer runs the queen of diamonds and the only other trick for the defence will be the ace of clubs. Difficult to be sure.

If South plays in 2♠ then West is likely to lead a trump, East winning with the king and returning the queen of diamonds. Declarer wins and plays a second trump and West wins and can play three rounds of diamonds, killing dummy's six, which East ruffs. That is certain to hold declarer to seven tricks.

However, as the cards lie the defenders would have to make a serious mistake to allow declarer to emerge with an eighth trick (they can even allow declarer to score a trick with the six of diamonds).

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South

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

If West opens 1♣ and rebids INT over a response of 1♥ then East can relay with 2♣ to discover that West is minimum without three spades before choosing between 3NT and 4♣.

If East responds 2♠ then West rebids 2NT and the situation has not changed much.

If West opens 1♦ in a strong club base then East might be more inclined to play in spades, in case there no club stopper.

If NS are allowed to play in diamonds then the defenders will need to make sure they don't allow declarer to set up a spade for heart discard, the easy way to do that being to play three rounds of the suit to kill the queen of spades.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North

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

If South starts with a strong INT (or 13-15/14-16) North transfers to hearts and there matters rest.

If South starts with an Acol style 1♠ then North bids INT which should end the auction.

2♥ is a very interesting contract to play and defend.

Say West starts with the jack of diamonds?

Declarer wins in dummy and must choose between taking an immediate club finesse or playing a heart to the jack, which offers a 61.77% chance of losing only two trump tricks.

After a trump to the jack and queen West plays a second diamond and now the defenders must come to five tricks, two spades, two hearts and a diamond.

If declarer takes the club finesse at trick two dummy can be re-entered with a diamond, the club finesse repeated and a spade discarded on the ace of clubs.

Now declarer needs to play a trump from hand, but which one?

As the cards lie the jack is best, but reverse the location of the missing heart honours

and the king is the winner.

If declarer exits with the king of hearts East wins, cashes the queen of diamonds (West pitching a spade) and returns the ten of spades. West wins with the queen, plays a club and the defenders must score two more trump tricks.

Exiting with the jack of hearts leaves the defenders with no winning option - if West wins with the queen it is clear that there is no good move, for example exiting with a club will see declarer ruff in dummy pitching a spade from hand and play a heart. East can win, cash a diamond and play a spade, but that will be the last trick for the defence.

If West plays low on the jack of hearts East wins with the ace, cashes the queen of diamonds and plays the ten of spades, but when West wins with the queen and exits with a club declarer ruffs in dummy, pitching a diamond from hand and then pitches a spade on the master diamond (it does not help East to ruff in). West can ruff, but now the queen of hearts will fall under the king and declarer has nine tricks.

If North plays in notrumps then eight tricks are likely - after a club lead declarer wins in dummy and does best to play a heart immediately (it would be a big mistake to cross to hand with a diamond removing a vital entry).

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East

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

If South opens 1♦ North responds 2♣ and then bids 3NT over South's 2♦ rebid.

Despite North's initial response East might

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

lead a low club and declarer will take West's jack with the queen and cash four rounds of diamonds, coming down to ♠Q107 ♥A6 ♣K97.

When the last diamond is cashed West will have to find a discard from ♠962 ♥KJ7 ♣6. Discarding a spade allows declarer to pitch a heart and then play a low spade when a winning guess (putting in the ten) leads to ten tricks, while a losing one (putting in the queen) leads to eight.

If West parts with a heart and declarer does the same and then plays a spade to the ten East wins and can exit with a heart, when declarer has only nine tricks.

Declarer can improve on that by pitching a spade and then playing two rounds of hearts. West wins and plays a club, but after taking two tricks in the suit East has to lead a spade and declarer has the rest.

West's best shot is to pitch the six of clubs. Now to get up to ten tricks declarer must throw a club and then duck a heart. If East wins and returns a heart, declarer wins, plays a spade to the ace and a spade to the ten. East wins with the king, but cannot avoid surrendering two more tricks.

That's a tough line for declarer to find.

Suppose East decides to lead the queen of hearts at trick one?

Declarer ducks the first heart, wins the second round and plays on diamonds. When the last one is cashed West will be down to ♠962 ♥KJ and does best to pitch the ♣J.

If declarer pitches a club and plays a spade to the ten East wins and exits with a low club to hold declarer to nine tricks.

The difficult route to ten tricks is for declarer to throw his remaining heart, cash the ace of spades and play a spade to the ten. East wins, but with only clubs left will only score the ace.

Well done indeed to those who take ten tricks.

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

If South passes (I'll come back to that) and West opens INT East transfers to hearts. When 2♥ comes round to South then I'm willing to bet that (almost) everyone will bid 2♠, which should end the auction.

If West starts with 1♦ then East will choose between an 'old fashioned' (but not necessarily bad) Pass and a 'modern' 1♥. Having penned a Bols Bridge Tip entitled 'Don't be afraid to Respond' you may guess which has my support.

Where East passes South has an easy 1♠, but after 1♦-1♥-INT-2♥ it is not so clear for South to bid 2♠ (although you probably should).

If West starts with a strong 1♠ East responds 1♦ and then South might come in with 1♠, which should see NS end up in some number of spades.

If South opens 1♠ (and the trend is inexorably moving in the direction of this style of opening bid) then West has an awkward hand. Despite all those points it is dangerous to overcall 2♦, but I daresay that will be the popular choice. What should North do then?

It is not out of the question that despite the modest distribution North will jump to 4♠, relying on the principle that with an opening bid facing an opening bid you should bid game.

There are holes all over the place, but on this layout it will be hard to avoid taking ten tricks in spades.

2♣. Now South might like to bid 2♥, but can only consider it if it is non forcing. An alternative is a negative double, which is fine as long as you don't play that it promises both majors.

If South decides to pass and West raises to 3♣ then North might venture a reopening double which will see South bid 3♥. With such well placed diamonds East will have a tough decision - to go on to 4♣ or hope to beat 3♥.

If NS play in hearts then nine tricks should be the limit. The only danger would be if West cashed the queen of clubs and then switched to a spade. If declarer puts in dummy's nine East wins and returns a trump. Declarer must win, ruff a club, take a second round of trumps, play a spade to the queen, cash the ace and ruff a spade before playing a diamond. East will win, but have to surrender a diamond trick or give a ruff and discard.

If EW play in clubs then NS should collect four tricks, two in each major:

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

Using an opening bid of 2♦ to designate a weak hand with diamonds is quite popular, but not everyone would elect to use it on the North hand because of the four card major on the side.

If North does open 2♦ the spade fit might get lost unless South is willing to bid 2♠. After 2♦-(Pass)-2♠ West will want to bid - a double gets both suits into the picture, but if North jumps to 4♠ then East will be doing well to bid 5♣.

If South passes over 2♦ and West bids 2♥ East raises to 3♥ and West goes on to game. Another option for North is to open 1♦, very much in accordance with the modern approach of opening at the drop of a hat. When South responds 1♠ West doubles and North raises to 2♠. East has enough to bid 3♣ and if South jumps to 4♠ then West will go on to 5♣. When North passes initially South will surely open. Facing a passed partner the objection to starting with a weak opening with a four card major on the side is less of an issue, so South can start with 2♠, a Multi 2♦ or even 1♠. After 2♠ West will have to choose between 3♣, 3♥, an off centre double and an understrength 4♣ (Leaping Michaels, promising clubs and hearts). North is likely to jump to 4♠ (the vulnerability is the only issue) and it will be up to East to make a decision. It's easy to raise to 5♣ if West has bid 3♣ or 4♣. It's possible to bid 5♣ (or 4NT) if West has doubled, but if West has bid 3♥ then East will do well to bid 4NT, offering West a choice of contracts. After a Multi 2♦ West can bid 2♥. Now North can double for takeout and if East bids 3♥ (or 4♥) then South can consider bidding 3♠ or 4♠. If South opens 1♠ West can bid 2♠ and if North raises spades East can bid 5♣. There are eleven easy tricks in clubs, and ten in hearts. On the other hand NS can score nine tricks in spades. The defenders will need to score a diamond ruff, but if West starts with a top club then it should not be difficult to find a diamond switch. Then West can win the first round of spades and put East in with a heart.

then declarer has a (difficult) chance for an overtrick.

After winning the opening lead declarer cashes seven rounds of clubs. West has to keep three diamonds, otherwise declarer can simply duck a diamond, but that means that West can only keep three major suit cards.

If they are two spades and a heart declarer can pitch a diamond from dummy on the last club, cash the ace of spades, cross to dummy with a heart and endplay West with a spade.

If they are three spades declarer cashes the last club pitching a diamond, takes the ace of spades and crosses to the ace of hearts, forcing West to come down to a spade and the ♦KJ when a spade executes the endplay as before.

Board 19. EW Vul. Dealer South.

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

When South opens 1♠ West might come in with a double. If North then raises to 2♠ East can bid 3♦ and South goes on to 3♣. If East competes further with 4♦ then North might double, hoping for +200.

If West passes, then North will either raise to 2♣ or bid INT. East might come in with 2♦ over INT, but bidding 3♦ over 2♣ is quite a stretch.

If NS play in spades then taking nine tricks will be straightforward - more than that will require some assistance from the defenders.

If EW play in diamonds and South leads a top spade declarer wins in hand and will

probably play a club. If South goes in with the king and cashes a spade it will look tempting to continue with a top heart, but if declarer wins in dummy, plays the queen of clubs, covered and ruffed, crosses to dummy with the ace of diamonds and then plays the ten, running it if not covered, then ten tricks are possible. If North covers the ten of diamonds then declarer will need to exit with the jack of hearts after drawing the outstanding trump.

Suppose South withholds the king of clubs?

North wins with the ace and plays the jack of spades. South should overtake it and exit with the nine of diamonds!

Now declarer cannot score more than nine tricks.

If South fails to overtake then North will be employed at an early stage, and as long as declarer gets the trumps right then ten tricks will be made.

Getting the diamonds right will depend on the inferences that are available to declarer from the bidding - for instance declarer may place South with six spades and so assume North has the diamond length.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

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

At the risk of repeating myself here is yet another deal where an opening bid of 2♥ to show a limited three suiter might come in handy.

After 2♥ East would overcall 3♣ and when South bids 3♥ West competes with 4♣.

Where North opens 1♦ East overcalls

If West starts with three rounds of clubs one way is to win in dummy pitching a diamond, draw trumps, play a heart to the queen and duck a heart.

If EW are allowed to play in 2♥ then North needs to avoid a club lead, which surrenders a trick, although even +100 rates to be a poor result for NS.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

If North opens 1♦ and rebids 2♣ over the response of 1♠ then South will usually bid 2♥, fourth suit forcing, which will see North continue with 2NT/3NT according to how far 2♥ is forcing. After 1♦-1♠-2♣-2♥-2NT South can bid 3♣ but even if North then bids 3♦ the bidding is unlikely to go beyond 3NT when South bids 3♠.

Some Acol players will be happy to rebid INT (15-16) despite the singleton spade, leaving South with an easy raise to game.

East has a tough lead against 3NT.

After a low spade declarer can put in the jack and then consider how best to play the diamonds. The best chance for four tricks is to play the four, intending to cover West's card, but here this 32.78% chance fails and declarer will probably end up with ten tricks.

If declarer plays a diamond to the queen, the ♦9 with East allows four diamond tricks to be secured. West can win the third round of the suit and return a heart, but if declarer takes the ace, cashes two diamonds (pitching a heart and a spade from dummy) then plays a club to the jack two rounds of

spades will squeeze East in the round suits for twelve tricks.

A pretty line, but one not without risk.

The best lead for the defence is a heart honour. Declarer wins with the ace and may try a club to the jack. When that holds playing a diamond to the queen will result in eleven tricks.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

If North opens 1♣ East has no reason to bid, but I have noticed a trend towards doubling with this type of hand. If South redoubles West bids 1♦ and when South bids 1♥ North raises and South can consider going on to game based on the quality of the trumps and the useful looking ♣Q10

After 1♣-1♥-2♥ South is in the same position.

If North starts with 1♦ then East is sure to pass and then after 1♥-2♥ South may be less inclined to take any further action.

If North begins with a 12-14 INT then South will use Stayman and then raise North's 2♥ to 3♥.

Playing in hearts a diamond is likely to be led by either defender. After cashing two diamonds East will probably switch to a trump. Declarer takes three rounds and then plays a spade to the king. To have any chance of holding declarer to nine tricks East must duck smoothly, when declarer will need to make a winning guess next time spades are played and that will be much easier if East has doubled 1♣.

Board 14, Love All, Dealer East.

♠ A Q 5
♥ 2
♦ K J 8 5 2
♣ K 8 6 2

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

There will be a few Easts who can start with 2♣, weak with spades and a minor. If South doubles that for takeout then West raises - both 3♣ and 4♣ will be in the picture. Over 3♣ North can bid 3NT but over 4♣ North will choose between Double and 4NT.

Defending 4♣ doubled will net +800 if South leads a diamond and then switches to a trump when in with a heart, North taking two rounds and then returning a low diamond.

Bidding 4NT will probably see South bid 5♣ which should make in comfort.

If South opens 1♣ there will be the odd West who makes a nuisance bid of 1♥. If North then bids 2♦ East can raise to 2♥, when North might decide to bid 3♥ and pass South's 3NT.

In the majority of cases where West passes, North will respond 1♦ and now East might try 1♠. This will give NS an opportunity to discover what the meaning of a double by South is - is it take out or some strong balanced hand with an eye to a possible penalty.

If East passes South rebids 1♥ when North might simply jump to 3NT.

Those pairs who find a route to 3NT should score well.

If East leads a spade declarer wins in hand, crosses to the queen of clubs and plays the four of diamonds for the queen, king and ace. Winning the spade return declarer is

already sure of ten tricks, and taking the heart finesse will lead to eleven.

If declarer is confident that West is not the type to have played the queen of diamonds from ♠Q9 then playing a diamond to the seven will lead to twelve tricks.

Board 15, N/S Vul, Dealer South.

♠ 8 7
♥ K J
♦ 10 7 6 4
♣ A K 10 7 5

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

♠ A Q J 9 6
♥ A Q 10 6
♦ K J 5
♣ 8

If South opens 1♣ and North responds 2♣ then a 2♥ rebid will see North bid 2NT, which South will raise to game.

If North is prevented by system from responding 2♣ and has to start with 1NT then that will lead to North declaring 3NT.

If South starts with a strong 1♣ and West is tempted to bid, perhaps trying 1NT to show ♠+♦ or ♥+♣ then North doubles and EW are in big trouble and are sure to concede a huge penalty wherever they finish up. If they play in hearts they can be held to just three tricks by perfect defence.

Where West passes North responds 2♣ and rebids 2NT over South's 2♣, which will lead to the notrump game.

How many tricks can declarer gather in 3NT?

If South is the declarer and West leads a diamond declarer takes East's queen with the king, crosses to dummy with a heart and takes a spade finesse.

When that holds declarer might be tempted to return to dummy with a heart to repeat the spade finesse, but when the suit fails to break there will be no more than eleven tricks.

Declarer can improve on this by postponing the second spade finesse, instead playing the jack of diamonds. Say West wins and exits with a club. Declarer wins in dummy, cashes a heart and the other top club and then takes the spade finesse. When declarer cashes two hearts the second of them will find West, down to ♠105 ♦98 in an impossible position.

A diamond lead resolves the situation for South, but when North is declarer and East leads a heart declarer can win and play a diamond, which transposes into the line already mentioned, or take a spade finesse, come to hand with a heart and then play a diamond.

Well done if you collected twelve tricks.

Board 16, E/W Vul, Dealer West.

♠ A K 10 8 6 5
♥ A 3 2
♦ 5 4
♣ 7 3

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

♠ J 7 2
♥ Q 10 8 7
♦ 7 6 2
♣ J 10 4

If West opens 1♣ North overcalls 1♠ and East is not quite good enough to take any action (although one sees players bid 1NT in this situation). When West reopens with a double (even if South bids 2♣) East can bid notrumps and West will raise to game.

If West's 1♣ is strong East can double any intervention by North to show a scattering of points and it should be straightforward to reach 3NT. For example, after 1♣-(1♠)-Dble-(2♣) West can bid 3♣ and East bids 3NT.

There is nothing special to the play - declarer will take nine or ten tricks, depending on how the defence unwinds and the view declarer takes in the heart suit.

Board 17, Love All, Dealer North.

♠ 2
♥ A Q 10 3
♦ J 5 4 2
♣ Q J 9 3

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

♠ K 8
♥ K 8 6 5
♦ Q 10 8 7
♣ 10 6 2

If North opens the bidding (you can refer back to the commentary for deal number one) 1♣ (or 1♦) East overcalls 1♠ and South doubles. Now West can jump to 4♣ (a splinter bid of 4♦ does not look right).

If North starts with a pass East opens 1♠ and West raises according to system and mood - my guess is that 4♣ will get the majority vote.

What is clear is that missing 4♣ will be expensive in terms of matchpoints, as there are ten easy tricks.

Board 18, N/S Vul, Dealer East.

♠ A K
♥ 7 4
♦ 8 5
♣ K Q 10 7 6 3 2

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

♠ 9 8 7 4
♥ A 6 3 2
♦ A Q 4
♣ A 8

If South starts with 1♦ then West might overcall 1♠. If North is able to bid a forcing 2♣ South will have to rebid 2♥ and now North will probably jump to 3NT.

If South is able to open 1NT (12-14 or 13-15 or 14-16) then North simply jumps to 3NT.

There are eleven top tricks in 3NT but if West has bid spades and East leads one