

ECatsBridge Pairs for BBC Children in Need Wednesday 14 November 2018 Session No 6143



Well ... another year has gone by and here we are again with another edition of the Children in Need Pairs. We really hope 2018 will be a very special year as with your help and a following wind, as they say, we rather hope to hit the one million pound mark ... wouldn't that be amazing? Since we started running this event, you have between you all raised a staggering £956,122.84. Can we do it? Only time will tell but we believe and hope that the answer is yes!

For this set the commentator was Mark Horton - Did he get it right I wonder? Our thanks go to him as always - we really appreciate the effort that goes in to writing these commentaries.

So ... did you win? or did you have a disaster? Or just, as we hope, an enjoyable evening's bridge helping to raise money for a wonderful cause?

Thank you all for coming along to your clubs and supporting us - we really hope you had fun and enjoyed the hands. I hope they weren't too difficult, but equally not too easy either. I haven't actually looked at them myself, just ran the dealing program and winged them off to the commentators. And Mark doesn't play bridge at all (never has!) so they wouldn't mean a thing to him!

Take care - and continue to enjoy your bridge

With our very best wishes

Anna & Mark

Anna Gudge & Mark Newton
The ECatsBridge Team
anna@ecats.co.uk
<https://www.ecatsbridge.com>

Board 1. Dealer North. Vulnerability None

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

After the bidding starts 1♦-1♥-2♦ South has a number of options, choosing between 2♠, 3NT and 4♥. I recall Terence Reese writing that Qx was a good holding for notrumps, and on this occasion South may do well to abandon the scientific 2♠ or the straightforward 4♥. If you play in 4♥ you must lose two clubs and a trump, but 3NT played by South will score ten tricks.

Board 2. Dealer East. Vulnerability NIS

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

If South opens 1NT and West overcalls 2♥ North will have options depending on the partnership's agreements. A method that is gaining in popularity is Rubensohl, where in this case a bid of 2NT would show a club suit with at least invitational values. Assuming NS finish in 3NT and West leads a heart declarer wins in hand and will probably try cashing the top clubs. When the queen fails to appear declarer will need to cash the ♦K and take finesses in both pointed suits. If declarer takes only one top club and then finesses in diamonds and spades West can be squeezed and eventually thrown in to lead into the split club tenace for an overtrick. Wouldn't that be something!

Board 3. Dealer South. Vulnerability E/W

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

If West opens 1♦ North overcalls 1♥ and East raises to 2♦. If South now doubles, showing the unbid suits with some tolerance for hearts West will probably continue with 3♦. If North then bids 3♥ East will have to double to get a good result - by no means automatic. Playing in diamonds declarer wins the heart lead and now has a shot at ten tricks. That requires declarer to run the ♠J, cross to dummy with a club and play a diamond. South wins and the defenders play two rounds of hearts, declarer ruffing, drawing the outstanding trump, cashing the ♣K, crossing to dummy with a trump and running the ♠J, ending play North.

Board 4. Dealer West. Vulnerability All

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

If West opens 1♠ North has no sound move and East responds 2♣ and then rebids 2NT over West's 2♠, ending the auction. Suppose South leads the eight of diamonds and North wins with the ace and switches to the ♣8? I saw David Price do this in an analogous situation against a certain Geir Helgemo, who, without pause for thought went up with the jack. That's something to remember; but lesser mortals will start with a top club and declarer will be on the road to nine tricks.

Board 5. Dealer North. Vulnerability NIS

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

If North opens 1♦ South will have to choose between responding 1♥ and 4♥. The latter is generally played a promising an eight-card suit, but showing no great ambition and with a one-loser suit and two outside controls (the value of the diamond void is uncertain) it looks right to start with 1♥. After 1♦-1♥ West comes in with 1♠ and if East raises to 2♠ South bids 4♥. Now West's best move is to defend. A black suit lead ensures the defeat of 4♥ because declarer has no quick entry to dummy to dispose of a losing spade. After a club to the ace and a club return West ruffs and plays a spade. After a spade lead West takes the ♥A at trick two and switches to a club.

Board 6. Dealer East. Vulnerability E/W

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

If West opens third in hand the choice will be between 1♦, 2♦ or 3♦. North can double any of those after which it is quite likely NS will reach 4♥. Were East to open 2♥ (hearts and a minor) West would be able to bid a 'Pass or correct' 3♣ when NS might not bid at all. If NS do play in hearts the defenders are likely to start with three rounds of diamonds. If declarer ruffs and East pitches a second spade declarer does best to play the ♥Q revealing the break. Declarer wins the spade return, takes a marked heart finesse and then plays spades for nine tricks.

Board 7. Dealer South. Vulnerability All

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

South has a classic Yarborough. If West opens INT and North doubles East redoubles and North bids 2♥ which East will probably double. If West opens 1♣ and North bids 1♥ East has to choose between 2♣ and 2NT. As it happens there is no defence to the notrump game but defending 2♥ doubled might be more profitable, although it requires some care. East needs to find a diamond lead, declarer winning and playing a low heart. West wins and returns a diamond, declarer winning and exiting with a club. West wins, cashes a diamond and exits with a club. Declarer ruffs and plays the ♥K but East wins, cashes the ♥J and exits with a club for -500. The key defensive point is to leave the majors well alone.

Board 8. Dealer West. Vulnerability None

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

If West opens 2♥ or a Multi 2♦ North has an easy 2NT, ending the auction (the KR Hand Evaluator rates the South hand at just 4.30). If West passes and North opens 1♠ South responds INT and then passes North's raise to 2NT. If North opens 1♠ East overcalls 1♠ and North's 1NT rebid probably ends the auction. Suppose East leads the ♥Q against a notrump contract? There is a route to eight tricks, but it involves playing East for the ♠10 (declarer finessing the nine) and also the ♣KQ10 (in some lines declarer has to unblock dummy's ♣9). It looks very tough to me, so well done if you found a winning line.

Board 9. Dealer North. Vulnerability E/W

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

If South opens INT the winning action for East will be to re-open - for example 2♣ to show the majors allowing West to bid 2♥. NS might survive if North can double for take-out, and then bid 3♦ over South's 3♣. Were the bidding to start 1♣-1♦ it would be a bit thin (but probably successful) for East to double. After 1♣-1♦-INT-Pass East might consider bidding 2♦ for take-out. 3♦ is easy enough, declarer drawing trumps at the first opportunity and then playing on spades - with hearts 4-4 there are nine tricks. 3♥ is tougher - if the defenders lead spades declarer ducks, wins the second spade, plays a club for the king and ace and must now play the ♣J - not obvious as the natural line is to take two rounds of trumps. The best lead for the defence is a trump - then declarer will almost certainly go down.

Board 10. Dealer East. Vulnerability All

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

If West opens 1♥ North overcalls 1♠ and South raises - with such a flat hand and a dubious heart value 2♣ might be enough. If West then doubles East bids 3♣ and West probably goes back to hearts, ending the auction.

Playing in hearts declarer ruffs the second spade and might play a club to the jack, hoping to pick up a possible ♥K with South. Although the finesse loses declarer ruffs the spade return and can play the ace of hearts, followed by the queen, the losing diamond going on the fourth round of clubs. Those who gamble on East holding reasonable club values plus 1/2 hearts and bid a game will be the big winners here.

Board 11. Dealer South. Vulnerability None

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

If West opens 1♣ North overcalls 1NT and South transfers to hearts and then bids 3NT. After a club lead declarer wins the third round pitching a heart from dummy and might now play a diamond to the ace and a diamond, revealing the 5-1 split. Now a spade to the queen sees West win and cash a club, but declarer can pitch a diamond from hand, win the heart exit with the queen, cross to dummy with a diamond and pick up the spades to emerge with nine tricks.

Board 12. Dealer West. Vulnerability N/S

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

I suspect a few players will open 3♣ which should end the auction unless South reopens with a double that will almost certainly lead to a poor result for NS. What happens in 3♣ may depend on the lead. If North starts with a low heart and West guesses to play low from dummy South wins and returns a diamond, declarer winning with the ace. Now taking the spade finesse gives declarer a shot at an overtrick by pitching a heart and then taking the ruffing heart finesse. Making an overtrick after a spade lead requires declarer to finesse, ruff a spade and run the nine of hearts - not exactly automatic. On a diamond lead declarer wins and gets close to an overtrick by finessing in spades, ruffing a spade and playing the ♥9, when if South wins, a diamond return is the only sure way to stop ten tricks.

Board 13. Dealer North. Vulnerability All

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

If North opens 1♦ South responds 1♥ and North raises to 2♥. The South hand (which rates 12.85 on the KR hand evaluator) improves as soon as the heart suit is supported (the fifth heart becomes the equivalent of an extra king) and if South makes a try with 3♣ North ought to accept and jump to 4♥.

There is nothing to the play.

Board 14. Dealer East. Vulnerability None

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

If East opens 1NT and South overcalls 2♥ will North jump to game? It might happen if South overcalls with a Multi Landy 2♦ as then North will know that partner's major is a six-card suit. The chances of this particular combination in hearts playing for no loser is only 13.56%, but those pairs who bid 4♥ will find it is their lucky day.

Board 15. Dealer South. Vulnerability N/S

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

If South opens 1♣ West will either overcall 1♠ or bid 2♣ to show both majors. In the latter case East is likely to jump to 4♠. After 1♣-(1♠) North doubles and East must decide how to show the spade support. I can

think of a number of possibilities, for example a jump to 4♠, a mini-splinter of 3♥, or a support showing 2NT.

On this layout it is hard to imagine anyone not taking ten tricks in spades, so stopping short of game might not score too well.

Board 16. Dealer West. Vulnerability E/W

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

If West opens 1♥ North will be snookered. But with East having nothing to say defending a heart contract is not a bad spot for NS. If West opens 1♣ North overcalls 1♥ and South raises to 2♥. If West now doubles (there must be a fit somewhere) East bids 3♣.

If North leads a club against a heart contract declarer wins and will exit with a heart, North winning and returning a second club. Declarer wins and plays a second heart and South wins, cashes a club and switches to spades. If declarer plays the queen at this point four tricks will be the limit, but winning with the ace and exiting with a heart should lead to five tricks. South can win and play another spade but declarer withholds the queen and will score two diamond tricks at the end to escape for two down. Three of either minor is comfortable for EW.

Board 17. Dealer North. Vulnerability None

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

If East opens 1NT West transfers to spades and then bids 2NT, leaving East to choose between passing or bidding 3♣. If East passes and South leads a heart (twenty years ago South would have led a club and the defenders would almost certainly have collected five tricks, but modern thinking is different) declarer has eight tricks, but might be tempted to try for a ninth by winning in hand with the queen, playing a spade to the king and a diamond. Now North will need to rise with the ace and switch to a club. With the ♦A inside there will always be nine tricks in spades.

Board 18. Dealer East. Vulnerability N/S

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

If South opens 1♣ and West makes a shape suitable double North can raise to 2♣. East has an awkward hand now, because the ♣K might be worthless, but nevertheless it feels right to bid 3♥. If South passes, cashes a top spade and switches to the ♦9 North must win and return a diamond for South to ruff. The main danger for the defence is that South must resist the temptation to underlead in clubs trying for a second ruff. As usual on these competitive part-score deals a plus score is likely to be a good result.

Board 19. Dealer South. Vulnerability E/W

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

If South opens 1♥ West overcalls 1♠ and North raises hearts according to system - an old fashioned limit raise to 3♥ is one possibility, a modernistic 2NT another, especially as it allows 3♥ to be used as a preemptive raise. In either case it's hard to see East not bidding 3♣. Unfortunately that will produce a poor score unless NS happen to go on to 4♥. Defending a spade contract North leads a heart and South takes two tricks in the suit and switches to a club, ensuring two down and the 'magic 200'.

Board 20. Dealer West. Vulnerability All

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

If West opens 1♥ East responds INT and passes West's 2♥ rebid.

The fate of 2♥ should turn on how declarer tackles the trump suit. The odds line is to cash the ace and then play low to the queen, which offers a 58.78% chance of only one loser. If declarer gets that wrong the only hope will be that the defenders make a mistake in the spade suit, which is unlikely.

Board 21. Dealer North. Vulnerability N/S

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

If West opens 1♠ East responds INT and South will be on lead after West's jump to game. Were West to start with 1♦ (or 2NT) then North will be on lead against 3NT. With both minor suits behaving there are ten tricks and South needs to avoid a heart lead which would present declarer with a least one overtrick - a heart honour would give declarer a shot at twelve tricks. North also needs to leave the heart suit alone - but if a heart is led and declarer puts in dummy's eight South has to duck in order to restrict declarer to eleven tricks.

Board 22. Dealer East. Vulnerability E/W

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

If East opens 1♥ West responds according to agreements - the most popular method at the moment being to bid 2NT. There are various ways in which the auction can continue after this. One popular method is for East's rebid to show a singleton (here that would be with 3♠). Another is for East to rebid 3♦ to show a non-minimum with a singleton or void, West bidding 3♥ to discover via East's response of 4♦ that it is a singleton spade. (<https://www.larryco.com/bridge-learning-center/detail/45>). Whilst I don't expect too many pairs to reach 6♥ the crux of the matter is that those who do will be successful.

Board 23. Dealer South. Vulnerability All

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

If South opens 1♥ North responds 1♠ and then raises South's 2NT rebid to game (perhaps going via 3♥). Imagine that West leads the ♠10. Declarer wins in hand and takes three rounds of spades ending in dummy, followed by a heart finesse.

If dummy's queen holds declarer's next move should be a low diamond to the king, hoping that East holds the ace.

When the king does hold declarer cashes the black suit tricks. The last of these finds East down to ♥K5 ♦A9 and on the enforced diamond discard declarer exits with dummy's ♦Q to force a return into the split heart tenace.

If West leads a diamond at trick one declarer can achieve the same result by winning in hand with the king.

Board 24. Dealer West. Vulnerability None

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

If West opens 1♣/1♦ North overcalls 1♥ and East bids 1♠. If South raises to 2♥ East is sure to go on to the spade game regardless of West's rebid.

On a heart lead declarer wins and is almost certain to play a spade to one of dummy's honours, the combination of the 4-0 split and the location of the ♠K meaning an inevitable one down.

It would be a misjudgement for NS to bid on to 5♥ - North has good defensive cards and knows the trump suit is breaking badly.

Board 25. Dealer North. Vulnerability E/W

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

If East opens 1♦ South will frequently overcall 2♥, West bidding 2♠ and following up with 3♥ over East's 3♣ re-bid, leading to the notrump game. If South overcalls 1♥ the auction might continue 1♠-2♣-2♥-2NT-3NT, but now declarer will not be sure South has a six-card suit.

After a heart lead declarer wins with dummy's jack and will have a number of options. To some extent the play will be easier if South is known to have a six-card suit.

In that scenario say declarer plays a club to the queen, followed by a diamond to the ace and a diamond, North winning and exiting with a club. Declarer wins and cashes three diamonds, squeezing North in the black suits for all the remaining tricks - a fate that can only be avoided if North unblocks the ♦K under the ace.

Board 26. Dealer East. Vulnerability All

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

If East opens 1♠ and West responds INT that will probably end the auction. If East starts with 1♣ and West responds 1♦ North will either bid 1♠ or double, the latter getting both majors into the picture. East can rebid INT over 1♠ or a double, but in the latter case South will bid 2♥.

Suppose East doubles that? If West assumes it is for penalties and passes the defenders will do well by leading trumps at every opportunity and leaving diamonds well alone. If West bids 3♣ there will be no reason for East to convert to 3♦, the latter being a making contract as long as declarer gets the trumps right.

Board 27. Dealer South. Vulnerability None

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

If South opens 1♠ North bids 2♥ and then raises South's 2NT rebid to game. It is not hard to predict that and all roads will lead to the nine-trick game. However, making 3NT may not always be easy. A low club lead from West allows declarer to put in dummy's ten and a low diamond lead allows declarer to score the jack. Starting with a spade is testing (as it happens the singleton heart gives nothing away) declarer winning and playing on hearts.

If East ducks the first heart, wins the next one and plays a spade it looks as if declarer will need to score four club tricks (given the likely distribution finessing the ♣10 is a fair shot) but that's not the case, as West will pitch a diamond on the second heart. If declarer now plays four rounds of clubs West will be endplayed, declarer ducking if West tries to exit with a diamond honour.

Board 28. Dealer West. Vulnerability N/S

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

If North opens 1♦ East might be tempted to overcall 1♠. If South doubles and West bids 2♦ EW will play in spades, maybe getting as high as 3♠ if NS compete in diamonds or West feels obliged to raise 2♠ to 3♠. If North opens 1NT and West protects with something to show the majors it will be difficult for East to bid less than 4♠. If South leads a diamond against a spade contract North wins and will probably return a trump. If declarer plays to ruff two diamonds in dummy nine tricks can be made by playing South for the ♥K.

One way to make ten tricks is to play a heart at trick three, South taking the king and returning the ♣J. Declarer ducks this, subsequently ruffing one diamond and squeezing South in the rounded suits.

Board 29. Dealer North. Vulnerability All

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

If North opens 1♦ and East overcalls 2♣ South can double and then pass North's 2♦ rebid. It's possible that East might come again with 3♣, but if not and West raises to 3♣ (not obvious) South competes with 3♦. If North does not open and East starts with 1♣ West might just scrape up a 1♥ response. What happens then will depend on whether or not North overcalls 2♦ and/or how East chooses to continue. It's clear there are nine tricks in clubs, the 2-2 trump break meaning that declarer does not need spades to break. 3♦ is not clear. For example if East cashes the minor suit aces and exits with a club declarer wins in dummy, draws trumps and plays a low heart, but even then will need to divine the spade position.

Board 30. Dealer East. Vulnerability None

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

If East opens 1♣ South overcalls 1♥ and North responds according to agreements - 2♣ may be a popular choice. Thanks to the layout of the red suits this is a deal where it pays to get to game - does North's hand justify jumping to game over South's 2♥ rebid? Perhaps the answer is for North to bid 3♦ over 2♥ as a game try - one which South would be delighted to accept.

Board 31. Dealer South. Vulnerability NIS

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

South opens 2♣ and rebids 2♠ over North's 2♦. Now some pairs play a second negative, North bidding 3♣, allowing North to pass if South rebids 3♠. Here South would bid 3♥ which North must raise to game. If you don't play this then you should still reach game after the sequence 2♣-2♦-2♠-3♣-3♥-4♥. With both major suits behaving ten tricks are easy, declarer ruffing a spade in dummy.

Board 32. Dealer West. Vulnerability E/W

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

North opens 1♥ and rebids 2♦ over South's 2♣. If South continues with 2♠ North rebids 3♦ and South will probably call it a day with 3NT. On a spade lead declarer should record ten tricks.

Suppose South were to reach 6♣? On a heart lead (best) declarer wins with dummy's ace and runs the ♥ Q pitching a spade. Then declarer plays three rounds of diamonds pitching a spade and a fourth diamond. If East ruffs declarer ruffs with the ♣K, ruffs a spade and plays a diamond. East ruffs and declarer ruffs with the ♣A, ruffs a spade and loses only one trump trick. Wouldn't that be a way to end the session!

Please read me !!

Hopefully you have read this far because we have yet another favour to ask you !

Mark and I use eBay to sell items to raise funds for RNLI - mostly stamps or old bank notes ... things with some small value that are easy to post. If you have anything like that and could send it to us - well that would be marvellous! Every little helps and living as we do on a fairly small island off the top of Scotland we are very aware of the value of the RNLI and the courage of all its volunteers and want to do our bit to support them.