

ECatsBridge Simultaneous Pairs for Children in Need



Thursday 12 November 2020

Together we can ...

... and by competing in this Virtual Simultaneous Pairs you have certainly shown that **together we can indeed do something to help make a difference** to children who really need our help.

Mark and I do hope you enjoyed it despite the very strange environment and world we find ourselves in!

Thank you so so much for coming along and joining in, playing and donating – please don't forget the donating bit though, will you – just go to :

<https://www.ecatsbridge.com/donate/>

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

We ask for £3 per player but if you can spare more please top it up a bit ! Then at the end of it all we can send a nice big cheque through to CiN.

You will notice this commentary is for 32 boards – we had set it up before the onset of COVID, and decided to leave it with all the boards and commentary so you could enjoy it even if you didn't play them all ! Our thanks to Julian Pottage for writing this set for us – I hope you found it interesting (and accurate!).

Take care won't you and stay safe

Anna & Mark

Board 1. Dealer North. Vulnerability None

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

With two defensive tricks outside, the North is hardly classic for a weak two – many will make the bid anyway. East then overcalls 3♣, South raises to 4♥ and the bidding goes back to East. 4NT shows the long club suit and an unspecified secondary suit, West then bidding 5♣. Assuming a double of 5♣ would be for penalties, North will do that. 5♣ doubled is a cheap sacrifice, cheaper even than conceding a partscore. Unless East leads a club, 5♥ should fail.

Board 2. Dealer East. Vulnerability N/S

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

Planning a no-trump rebid, South can open 1♥ rather than the standard 1♦. Playing the modern 18-19 range for a 2NT rebid, South does that over a 1♠ response. North will then either raise to 3NT directly or bid 3♥ en route to give South a choice of games. West will lead one of the minors and, because declarer will need to lose the lead to twice before making a heart trick, West will have two chances to switch to the ♠A. In practice, 3NT will quite often make.

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Board 3. Dealer South. Vulnerability E/W

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

As few will downgrade the South hand, 1♦ will be the common opening. North responds 1♥, East overcalls 1♠ and South rebids 1NT. With a decent 6-card spade suit, East competes to 2♠. Against 2♠ the defenders have just two spade tricks and one in each other suit – and will not manage even that if South leads a club. 1NT would make – the defenders make four spade tricks and the two minor-suit aces.

Board 4. Dealer West. Vulnerability All

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

After North opens 1♠ and East overcalls 2♣, South is bit weak for 2♥, not that this will stop some! If South doubles, it will be reasonable to reopen with 3♥ after West raises to 3♣. North would be the one to bid 3♥ if South bid 2♥ over 2♣. With trumps 4-0, making 3♥ is not easy – you may need to take a first-round trump finesse! It would be a lot easier if West has doubled 3♥, giving warning of the bad break. 4♣ is makeable by endplaying North in spades.

Board 5. Dealer North. Vulnerability N/S

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

Having passed in second seat, East may well overcall 2♦ after South opens 1♥ and North responds 1♠. If played as takeout (or as 3-card support), South doubles that. North then jumps to 3♠ and South raises to 4♠. The lead of either minor should stop the second overtrick in 4♠. After a club lead, declarer has time to ruff out the hearts but cannot get back to the long heart without running into a club ruff. 11 tricks are available in clubs too – but for a poorer score.

Board 6. Dealer East. Vulnerability E/W

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

The South hand is a bit flat and defensive for a pre-emptive opening, especially in second seat. After 1♠-2♥-2♠, North has a tricky rebid. A jump to 3NT with this club holding would be a bit risky. 3♦ seems a reasonable choice. South is bidding 4♠ next anyway. On any lead other than a club, you can make an overtrick in 4♠. You can use one heart entry for finessing the ♠Q, a second heart for ruffing out the suit and the ♦A to get back to the long cards.

Board 7. Dealer South. Vulnerability All

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| ♠ 9 | ♠ QJ84 |
| ♥ 10863 | ♥ Q974 |
| ♦ AQ10984 | ♦ J |
| ♣ 104 | ♣ AQJ3 |
| | ♠ A532 |
| | ♥ AJ2 |
| | ♦ 53 |
| | ♣ K852 |
| | ♠ K1076 |
| | ♥ K5 |
| | ♦ K762 |
| | ♣ 976 |

Unless East-West play weak twos in three suits, North gets to open 1♣ in third seat. If South responds 1♠ (some would bid 1♦), West overcalls 2♦ and North raises to 2♠. While the textbooks say not to lead a singleton trump, that is the lead to stop the overtrick in 2♠. If you guess well, you can make 3♦ – but you go down if you lose a trick to the singleton ♦J or if South captures the ♥J with the ♥K.

Board 8. Dealer West. Vulnerability None

| | |
|---------|-----------|
| | ♠ 86 |
| | ♥ AJ |
| | ♦ KJ10754 |
| | ♣ A85 |
| ♠ J | ♠ AKQ974 |
| ♥ Q1074 | ♥ 8532 |
| ♦ A863 | ♦ 2 |
| ♣ Q632 | ♣ 97 |
| | ♠ 10532 |
| | ♥ K96 |
| | ♦ Q9 |
| | ♣ KJ104 |

Facing a passed hand, East should have no scruples about making a 2♠ weak jump overcall. It is often best to cram opposing bidding space. South has no good action over that and, if South hesitates, North cannot really reopen with 3♦. With the spades blocked, North-South do best if North does bid 3♦ and South then calls 3NT. Knocking out the ♦A then lands an easy 9 tricks. An overtrick is on in 3♦ via a winning finesse in one of the rounded suits or a squeeze.

Board 9. Dealer North. Vulnerability E/W

| | |
|--------|---------|
| ♠ 987 | ♠ KJ102 |
| ♥ AQ43 | ♥ 85 |
| ♦ 1083 | ♦ J7 |
| ♣ A105 | ♣ QJ764 |
| | ♠ A65 |
| | ♥ 762 |
| | ♦ K642 |
| | ♣ K93 |
| | ♠ Q43 |
| | ♥ KJ109 |
| | ♦ AQ95 |
| | ♣ 82 |

The bidding could be rather dull: a weak no-trump opening from South passed out. The defenders can easily make two tricks in each rounded suit and the ♠A. To stop the overtrick they need to play on spades – not so hard with West looking at the 9-8-7 for a possible opening lead; this removes North's entries to the club suit. 8 tricks are unbeatable as the cards lie if North-South play in spades. A trump promotion on the fourth round of hearts defeats 2♣.

Board 10. Dealer East. Vulnerability All

| | |
|---------|-----------|
| | ♠ AJ |
| | ♥ Q1084 |
| | ♦ 6 |
| | ♣ AKJ1054 |
| ♠ 10964 | ♠ KQ875 |
| ♥ A952 | ♥ KJ6 |
| ♦ KJ73 | ♦ 852 |
| ♣ 7 | ♣ Q8 |
| | ♠ 32 |
| | ♥ 73 |
| | ♦ AQ1094 |
| | ♣ 9632 |

Lacking aces and with the devalued doubleton queen, most will pass the East hand as dealer but overcall 1♠ after North has opened 1♣. South then raises to 2♣. West does best to jump to 3♠ and North should compete to 4♣ if necessary (expecting a 10-card club fit). The defenders take a spade and two hearts against 4♣. If North-South overbid to 5♣, declarer will risk the diamond finesse and go two down. 3♠ would make for East-West.

Board 11. Dealer South. Vulnerability None

| | |
|--------------|----------|
| ♠ 7 | |
| ♥ 7 3 2 | |
| ♦ AKQ3 | |
| ♣ K 9 6 3 2 | |
| ♠ J 10 6 4 2 | ♠ A 8 5 |
| ♥ 8 | ♥ AKJ5 4 |
| ♦ 9 6 5 4 | ♦ 10 7 2 |
| ♣ 10 8 7 | ♣ A 4 |
| ♠ K Q 9 3 | |
| ♥ Q 10 9 6 | |
| ♦ J 8 | |
| ♣ Q J 5 | |

In third seat North might choose to open 1♦ as lead-directing gesture rather than the normal 1♣. As it happens South doubles 1♥ to show four spades and later rebids 2NT whichever minor North opens. With both the ♠A and the ♥J onside for declarer, the defenders cannot stop the overtrick in 2NT. 3♣ does not make because West can score a heart ruff. East-West would be one down in 2♠ (doubled).

Board 12. Dealer West. Vulnerability N/S

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

After West opens 1♠ East has the perfect hand for a raise to two and a half but will struggle to bid the right card for that in the bidding box! Those using the losing trick count will not make game a try on the West hand if East raises to 2♠ while those counting points might do so. With the ♠K offside but the ♦A onside, making 4♠ may well depend on a guess in the club suit. Unless declarer starts the suit low from hand and North ducks smoothly, 4♠ ought to make.

Board 13. Dealer North. Vulnerability All

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

After a 1♦-1♥-2♣ start North-South, South might decide to pass to ensure the bidding stays low rather than give false preference back to 2♦. A lead of the unbid spade suit or a low trump should beat 2♣. With the sight of all the hands you can make 2♦ via a backward finesse – lead the ♣J and later run the ♣9 – in real life, 2♦ probably also fails by a trick. East-West can make 1NT, though I do not see how they get to it unless North miscounts and forgets to open.

Board 14. Dealer East. Vulnerability None

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

After South opens 1♥, West overcalls 1NT and North doubles, East has nowhere to go. If North leads a black card, the defenders can make four spades, three clubs and a diamond to collect 300. On a red-suit lead, declarer is a tempo ahead and has time to make a sixth trick. With 140 easily available for North-South in a spade partial, there could be a huge difference in the matchpoints between 100 and 300.

Board 15. Dealer South. Vulnerability N/S

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

North opens 1♥ in third seat and East should, if possible, make a weak jump overcall of 3♦. South then stretches to make a negative double and North, aware that South could not open, settles for 3♥. With the ♦A under the ♦K and the ♣A short, only a spade lead from East holds a heart contract to 9 tricks. After the normal lead of the ♣J, declarer can win, draw trumps and duck a club, thereafter ruffing a club and discarding a spade on the ♣Q for 10 tricks.

Board 16. Dealer West. Vulnerability E/W

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

After East opens a weak INT, West may well use Stayman with the intention of passing any reply. This will almost certainly improve the contract if East has a four-card major and is only a disaster if East is 3-3-2-5. On the actual layout, 2♦ is unbeatable while INT should fail if South leads a spade and later holds up the ♥A until the third round. East-West do better if West bids 2♥ over 2♦, with 8 tricks makeable even on a trump lead (which prevents any spade ruffs).

Board 17. Dealer North. Vulnerability None

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

For simplicity East might open 2NT. If the partnership uses a form of 5-card Stayman, they will finish in 4♥; if not, they will play in 3NT. Even if South leads a diamond against 3NT, the spot cards in diamonds are such that declarer can restrict the defenders to two diamonds and a spade. In the heart game the likely losers are a diamond and two trumps – East can discard the ♠J on the third round of clubs.

Board 18. Dealer East. Vulnerability N/S

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

East is likely to play in 3NT after opening a weak INT and showing four hearts in reply to a Stayman enquiry. Expecting both declarer and dummy to hold a 4-card major, South might well lead the ♦J in an attempt to find North's suit. Declarer will often make the par number of tricks, which is 10; the defenders might score a spade, a heart and a diamond for example. After a spade lead the defence is trickier; South might need to switch to the ♥J to stop 11 tricks.

Board 19. Dealer South. Vulnerability E/W

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

After East scrapes up a raise of 1♥ to 2♥, West is likely to count 19 points and jump to 3NT. Those who adjust for the poor shape and terrible intermediate cards will prefer a 2NT rebid. Holding four hearts and what looks like a ruffing value, East might pull 3NT to 4♥ (or 2NT to 3♥). You can make 3NT if you play on hearts and guess how to do so, taking the ♥K with ♥A and then finessing the ♥8. In 4♥ the losers are two spades, at least one heart and a club.

Board 20. Dealer West. Vulnerability All

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

After North opens a weak INT, system may prevent East from making a natural 2♦ overcall – you might not want to anyway vulnerable facing a passed partner. 2♦ doubled could go a huge penalty; a rescue to 2♠ doubled could be almost as costly if the defenders draw East's trumps whilst not losing the ♠Q in the process. A no-trump contract will usually yield 11 tricks, though a strip squeeze for 12 tricks is possible if East starts off with a middle diamond honour.

Board 21. Dealer North. Vulnerability N/S

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

The poor suit and adverse vulnerability will surely dissuade North from opening a weak 2♥. East thus opens a weak INT and West transfers into spades. By leading up to West's trump honours and setting up the clubs you should make an overtrick in 2♠. You might make the same number of tricks in no-trumps, though you will need not to play the ♥Q if North switches to a heart early in the play.

Board 22. Dealer East. Vulnerability E/W

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

At unfavourable vulnerability, even a third seat opening by West would be unwise. North thus opens 2NT and South is likely to try, without success, to locate a major-suit fit. East has an easy lead of the ♣Q against 3NT. After West shows out on the second round of diamonds, declarer has a marked finesse on the third. Since dummy has only the one entry, declarer will take the simple spade finesse and emerge with 9 tricks when it succeeds.

Board 23. Dealer South. Vulnerability All

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

If you do not play inverted raises, East has a very difficult response to West's 1♣ opening. I guess you respond 1♥. When West rebids 1NT to indicate 15-17 balanced, East must then decide whether to invite a slam or simply to bid it. The running 6-card suit makes it worth adding at least a couple of extra points. With no ruffing values in the short trump hand, the same 12 tricks are available in 6NT as in 6♣.

Board 24. Dealer West. Vulnerability None

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

Having opened 1♠ and seen a 2♣ response, West might reasonably ignore the terrible heart suit and rebid 2♠. East then raises to 4♠ or perhaps makes a 4♥ splinter bid to show a spade raise with short hearts. The latter might encourage West to check on key cards, finding out that there are two (the ♠K and the ♥A) missing. On any lead other than a trump, the defenders make a heart as well as a spade.

Board 25. Dealer North. Vulnerability E/W

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

After East doubles North's weak 1NT opening, South has no suit to run to but West does! 2♦ is not exactly what East wanted to see. Best is to continue with 2♥, keeping the bidding low. It does not make sense to bid 2NT when partner has shown a dislike for defending 1NT doubled. A (low) trump lead should stop any overtricks in 2♥. As the cards lie, 9 tricks in a spade partial are available. 1NT doubled would be down one.

Board 26. Dealer East. Vulnerability All

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

Over South's second seat 1♣ opening, a brave West might make a 2♠ weak jump overcall. North would probably bid 3NT over that. With clubs 2-2, there are 11 top tricks in 3NT. The opening lead is likely to give declarer an extra trick. Even if East found a safe club lead, it would be possible to develop a trick in spades. If you are not bidding a slam, next best is to collect a big penalty from defending 2♠ doubled.

Board 27. Dealer South. Vulnerability None

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

South opens a weak 2♠, West doubles for takeout and North jumps to 4♠. As it is matchpoints East might simply bid 5♥, though 4NT to show two places to play would be the textbook action. Anyone who decides to 'take the money' by doubling 4♠ will be in for severe disappointment: 10 tricks are cold. With a singleton club in dummy and a singleton heart in the closed hand and with the ♦K under the ♦A, the defenders have just three aces to take.

Board 28. Dealer West. Vulnerability N/S

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

| |
|--|
| <p>♠ A Q J 9 6 ♥ A Q J ♦ 5 ♣ 6 5 4 3</p> |
|--|

If North decides to open 1♦, the partnership is likely to get too high because with 14 HCP South will surely insist on reaching game. In essence, 5♦ needs trumps 3-3 and one major-suit finesse right or trumps 4-2 and both finesses right – not a bad shot vulnerable if you were play with IMP scoring. As the cards lie, the limit is 10 tricks. The limit in a spade contract is 8 tricks if West leads a diamond, which cuts the communications between declarer and dummy.

Board 29. Dealer North. Vulnerability All

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

| |
|---|
| <p>♠ J 7 5 ♥ A K 10 8 7 ♦ K Q J 9 ♣ Q</p> |
|---|

South opens 1♥ in third seat and West has a textbook takeout double. East is a bit good for a jump to 2♠ but nothing else appeals. It is unclear whether West should raise to 3♠. East would certainly go on to 4♠ if West did raise. You can make 11 tricks by ducking the first diamond, drawing trumps, cashing three clubs and exiting with a heart. South is then endplayed. If South starts with a heart, again you need to cash the clubs and this time have a ruffing finesse.

Board 30. Dealer East. Vulnerability None

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

| |
|--|
| <p>♠ 10 2 ♥ K J 8 ♦ K 10 8 ♣ J 9 5 4 3</p> |
|--|

If East opens 1♥, West has a variety of ways to raise – 3♥, 4♥ or a 4♣ splinter. Despite having 16 HCP including three aces, East has only four hearts and a balanced hand so should not get too excited even by news of a club shortage. While superficially there are no losers in the side suits (the ♠K is onside and two diamonds can go on the ♣A-Q), it is not possible to take all the ruffs needed and the limit is 11 tricks.

Board 31. Dealer South. Vulnerability N/S

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

If North passes in third seat, East can open a weak 1NT in fourth seat. North might reopen with 2♣ Landy, showing both majors – life is so much tougher when you are vulnerable since down 100 is worse than losing 90 and down 200 is a disaster. In fact 2♠ plays well, especially on a trump lead because you can pick up the trumps and set up a long heart for a club discard. 1NT fails by a trick with four spades, a heart and two clubs to lose.

Board 32. Dealer West. Vulnerability E/W

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

After West opens 1♦ and North overcalls 1♥, East doubles to show four spades. South bids 2NT if that shows a 4-card value raise. The adverse vulnerability might put West off bidding 3♦ over 2NT, though A-x-x is great facing a singleton. North is worth a game try and so doubles 3♦ (or bids 3♣ if West passes). South is minimum and declines. 4♥ is a good spot, only beaten on a club ruff: West might overtake the ♦K with the ♦A and switch to a club.