



# The 2025 Celtic Simultaneous Pairs

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May

We are so pleased to welcome you once again to the Celtic Simultaneous Pairs, supporting the Celtic Nations. Funds raised will be used to support bridge within your own Bridge Union, whether that is the Scottish, Welsh, Northern Ireland or Irish Bridge Union.

We really hope you enjoyed the event and found the hands fun and challenging. Hopefully the commentators managed to get it right but by now you will be able to judge that for yourself !

Anna Newton,  
Simultaneous Pairs Organiser  
on behalf of the SBU, WBU, NIBU and IBU

## Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

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

After North opens 1♥, East may overcall any number of spades from one to four depending on inclination and method. Any number less than four will not cause problems for the opponents – South will make a negative double and North-South will score 450 in four hearts. South will double an overcall of four spades also, and whether North sits for that and collects just 300 or risks the five level depends on the extent to which the double is played as “penalty” or “card-showing”.

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

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

Some Easts may open with a weak 2♠, and if West raises that to 3♠ as a pre-emptive measure he may find that he has bullied North into a 3NT contract that might not have been reached if he had merely left well alone. How strong does your partnership play a protective overcall of 2NT after a weak two bid? Even left to their own devices, not all North-Souths will reach 3NT – and indeed they are better off in the alternative game contract of four hearts, where there are eleven tricks available. But 630 to North-South will be the common result.

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

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

Playing a weak no trump against opponents with normal levels of courage, North-South will bid 1NT-2NT-3NT and make... well, it is anyone's guess how many tricks. After two rounds of spades, a club to West's ace and a third spade, will South risk a heart to the ten? Since he's going to play one to the queen anyway for the contract, he should start by leading the nine from dummy. Will East cover that? If East-West somehow get into the bidding, North-South should double them and collect considerably more than 430 points.

#### Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

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

With the fortunate lie of the club suit East-West have thirteen tricks in four denominations here – no trumps, hearts, diamonds and clubs. Of course North-South are entitled to a trick of their own, and whether or not they make it will be crucial in determining their match-point score. East-West will bid 2NT-♠lots of faffing about♥-6NT, and North must lead the ace of spades or lose it. What was that – you and your partner brilliantly diagnosed that the small slam was a poor contract and stayed out of it? If you want justice or even sympathy, don't play bridge.

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

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

This is actually a better slam than the last one for East-West, since six spades depends only on a 1-1 trump division (a 52% chance). Slams missing the ace and king of trumps are not easy to reach though, which on this occasion is just as well. In practice, if North opens the bidding and South offers vigorous support for clubs, North is quite likely to double spades below the six level to his chagrin. You and your partner stayed out of slam on the last hand but bid this one? Well, you can have my sympathy. But there still ain't no justice.

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

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

The reason fortune is said to favour the bold is that even when it shouldn't, it does. If East boldly opens one spade and over South's two heart overcall West boldly bids four spades, North-South ought to double and lead diamonds, collecting a 500 penalty instead of a non-vulnerable game. Will they do this? Of course they won't – North will bid five hearts and get a minus score and no match points. At tables where only the timid are involved, North-South will play in four hearts and collect a peaceful 420. Maybe Captain Kirk had something, apart from a deplorable lack of grammar.

#### Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

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

East-West will have the auction to themselves, and it will be a question of which game they attempt. They can be held to ten tricks in no trumps if South leads a club or North leads a diamond, both of which are quite likely. Better play in spades then, where eleven tricks are available on any defence – although the play is somewhat involved and any East who does emerge with 650 has deserved the good score this will bring.

### Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

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

This is a comfortable slam, and I would expect most North-South pairs to reach six hearts easily enough. But of course 6NT is also cold, and of course this is pairs scoring. If any North-South pair did reach 6NT and were confident before seeing the opening lead that it would make, all I can say is that their East-West opponents have my sympathy for getting a bottom that is not at all of their own making.

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

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

East-West have a chance to strike back at once – although six hearts is not nearly as good a contract on this deal as it was on the last one, it will make with careful play. You may find though that simply taking twelve tricks in four hearts brings a good matchpoint result – on a trump lead for example, it is somehow very difficult to see the need for cashing the ace of diamonds at the second trick. If you made slam whether you bid it or not, you did very well.

### Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

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

Although slams are fun, part scores are where the matchpoint battle is lost and won. Here everyone may get into the auction one way or another, and the object of the exercise is simply to get a plus score. That involves going no higher than the two level whether you are North-South or East-West, for this is an entirely Law-abiding deal on which both sides have exactly eight tricks in their longest trump suit. A good chance for North to get a top by punishing a venture to 3♣ to the tune of 200.

### Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

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

This isn't likely to generate too many different results across the field – South will almost always play in four hearts, and the number of tricks he makes will depend on West's opening lead. A spade to the ace and a club switch will hold declarer to ten winners and bring in a lot of matchpoints, while any passive lead will allow declarer to run both red suits for twelve tricks and a good score. A truly intrepid East-West pair might find their way to four spades and lose only 300. Good for them.

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

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

South is likely to bid a lot of hearts, the effect of which might be to push East-West into a lot of spades and to tell declarer how to play the trump suit. What with the favourable position of the diamond honours, that will mean no fewer than eleven tricks for East-West, in which case North-South had better hope that their opponents at least stopped short of game. Not that it's a bad idea to bid a lot of hearts on hands like South's, but sometimes at this game good ideas work badly.

### Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

East-West can make six clubs, but there is one trifling proviso – East has to be the declarer, otherwise North can defeat the contract by finding the obvious lead of a low spade. In the real world, East-West will play in three no trumps and make anywhere from ten to twelve tricks depending on the defence and how well declarer guesses the play. Just about all the scores on the traveller will begin with six and end in zero – it's the digit in between that will determine where the matchpoints go.

### Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

Some Souths will open the bidding, but that will have the effect of ensuring that East-West play a comfortable part score in hearts. Mind you, that may be better than what some other Souths will do, which is to pass and then compete with 2NT for the minors after West opens 1♥ and East raises to two, for three diamonds doubled is an unpleasant affair. A plus or a small minus will be pretty good for North-South, while East-West can be happy with 140 if they get it.

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

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

North-South can make a grand slam here, but anyone who bids one ought at once to go out and buy a lottery ticket. A few pairs might get to the six level, and although even the small slam isn't cast iron, it's just about worth bidding. Six hearts is a worse contract than six diamonds or 6NT, but it's the slam most likely to be reached after a weak no trump by South. I hope no one took a first-round heart finesse.

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

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

East-West will do very well here to compete to three clubs and no higher against North-South's spade contract. They will do better still to be playing a strong no trump and be passed out in it – the first five tricks will be for the defence, but the rest belong to declarer and 120 will be a fine score. Often, though, North-South will take a push to three spades and go down a trick, in which case the best East-West can do is remember to double them.

**Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.**

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

If North has a weak two diamonds in his repertoire he may decide to open it, and there are some Souths who will bid a confident 3NT over that and hope for the best. This isn't a good day for such tactics, because the hand belongs to his side in three diamonds. Where desperate measures are not in operation, East-West will find their club fit and may not do too badly even if they are pushed to a level they can't make.

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

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

If, for no good reason whatever, East upgrades his hand to a 2NT opening, he will arrive in 3NT and receive a heart lead. He ought to cash a second heart before playing on diamonds, and the 6-1 break may persuade him to play North for three diamonds to the queen. If he does all of that, he deserves some of his good fortune; if on the other hand he loses a diamond to North and misguesses on a spade return, it serves him right.

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

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

This is a typical matchpoint guess for the declarers in 3NT. A diamond lead will knock out a stopper, a club finesse will lose to the king, and a second diamond will leave you wondering whether to cash out for ten tricks or take the spade finesse for eleven at the risk of making fewer than ten. You should usually finesse anyway, because a diamond may not be led at every table and the defenders may not have kept enough winners to take all their tricks. But if you did finesse and you did get a poor score, I'm afraid I don't give refunds – just bad advice.

### Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

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

East-West will play in 3NT this time, and those who reach that contract via a weak no trump by West will regret it if North leads a club to hold them to nine tricks. A bad hand for the weak no trump? No, for the contract is likely to be played by West anyway after a red-suit opening and 1♠ response, and North certainly won't choose a spade in preference to a club then. Best is to raise INT to 3NT with the East cards without bothering with Stayman – then you just might get a spade lead and a top score.

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

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

If North opens the bidding – and 5-4 distribution with two aces and a king is an opening bid for all but the most reactionary – his side can put West under considerable pressure by getting to 4♥ before West has a chance. “Always bid four spades over four hearts”, say the experts nowadays, and this kind of hand is the reason why. One contract or the other usually makes, and although four spades can be beaten on a diamond lead, that's still not minus 620. Should North lead the wrong thing, of course, four spades will make also for a fine result.

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

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

Which suit to open with 4=4=4=1 distribution is a matter about which many learned people have written many careful and well-excogitated words. So of course no one has any idea what the right answer is. It doesn't matter here – North-South will fine their heart fit readily enough whatever South opens, and at most tables will make eleven or twelve tricks in the heart game. Some pairs will bid a slam, in which case their opponents had better lead a spade to beat the contract or receive almost no match points.

### Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

If South opens one diamond, what should West do? And if West doubles one diamond and North passes, what should East do? It wouldn't surprise me to see that the final contract was one diamond doubled at a few tables, but usually West will just bid some number of clubs (and then some higher number of clubs if pushed). Poor North will innocently lead his partner's suit, giving West an entry to the table which he had better use to finesse in hearts rather than trumps. Any plus score will be good for the side that gets it here.

### Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

East-West don't really have the values for game here, but the fact that North has no entry to the long diamonds combined with the power of the black-suit intermediates means that there isn't any defence to 3NT. I guess that game might be bid at some tables via pass-1♥-1♠-2♥ (ugh)-2NT-3NT, or if East sensibly opens a weak no trump and West invites game East may bid in on the strength of his five-card suit and top cards. But any North-South who do concede 400 can feel themselves hard done by.

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

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

After North opens 1♦ and South responds 1♠, what should North rebid? Despite the 16 points I think the best choice is a simple 2♠, although it may go against the grain never to bid that club suit. South won't make a forward move over that and the partnership will miss a very playable game – but they will do well in any case because if North does rebid 2♣ South is entirely likely to pass it for want of anything better to do, and 130 will not score well.

### Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

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

Whether West responds 2♣ or 1NT to East's opening bid of 1♠, North should get into the auction with a takeout double, and South will drive to 4♥ on the basis of his fitting red cards, singleton club and well-placed king of spades. East-West ought to be saving in four spades – “always bid four spades over four hearts”, remember? But it's not really practical for them to do that, and since not all North-Souths will reach game by any means, even minus 200 in four spades doubled won't score all that well.

### Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

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

This is a bidding test for East-West, and if they reached seven hearts with confidence then they passed with flying colours. It will help if West, after supporting hearts, can show not only that he has two side kings but which two, for if the ♣K were the ♦K the grand slam would be on a finesse at best. North-South can't do much except sit back and admire the opponents' sequence, but they have the consolation that at least the play won't take very long.



**Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.**

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

East-West have a lot of points, but they can't make game in anything. Indeed, they can only just make a four-level part score in clubs, provided that they play from the East seat and declarer squeezes South in spades and diamonds. North-South don't have anything, but they can make three of either major. Par might just about be reached if North overcalls in hearts and East-West discover they don't have a stopper, but any East-West plus will be a fine result.

**Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.**

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

North may well open and close the auction with a weak no trump at most tables – South doesn't have enough to try for game. Just as well, because on a heart lead North will find it a struggle to make even seven tricks unless he guesses well in diamonds or spades. If East is able to overcall in hearts and West competes to the two level, North-South have a chance to score very well by doubling – but even if they don't they may find that plus 100 compares favourably with a row of plus 90s and the occasional minus.

**Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.**

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

Four hearts is a perfectly respectable contract on the East-West cards – until you take into account the North-South cards. Indeed, if South begins the defence with a clairvoyant diamond lead, East-West will be wishing they'd stayed in one heart because that is all they can make. Not that this will happen very often, but one way or another East-West are likely to go minus despite all the points they hold, and those who avoid this fate will score remarkably well.

**Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.**

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

This time North-South have a lot of points and a 4-4 heart fit, and this time the cards are much kinder to them than they were for East-West on the previous deal. True, the ace of spades is in the wrong place, but the fortunate lie of the diamonds means that game is easily makeable. What should East-West do about it? By now you will know the answer to this – “always bid four spades over four hearts”. The price here is just 300, and that is a bargain.



Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

North will open one spade, East will overcall two hearts, and that will come back to North. If he doubles to cater for South having a penalty pass, South will have to decide whether he has one or not, and the answer to that will depend on what he chooses to lead. A spade or a diamond will result in minus 670 and a bottom, a heart or a club in plus 200 and a top. But at most tables North will buy the hand in two spades, where he will make eight tricks for a quiet end to an exciting evening's bridge.