



# The 2026 Celtic Simultaneous Pairs

Monday 11<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>♠ A Q 3 2 ♥ 7 3 ♦ 8 ♣ Q J 6 4 3 2</p> <p>♠ J 4 ♥ A Q 10 9 8 5 ♦ J 10 4 2 ♣ 7</p>	<p>♠ K 10 5 ♥ K 6 2 ♦ 9 7 3 ♣ K 9 8 5</p> <p>♠ 9 8 7 6 ♥ J 4 ♦ A K Q 6 5 ♣ A 10</p>
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A deal that belongs to North-South in 3♠, but they may over-reach if South opens 1♦ and West overcalls a weak 2♥. North will make a negative double, East will raise to 3♥, and South may be tempted to jump to 4♠ or North may raise 3♠ to four. The contract can be defeated only by a heart lead, but even if West starts with his singleton club, South must play very accurately to make ten tricks. 140 or 170 for North-South should be a good score.

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

<p>♠ A J 9 3 ♥ 7 6 5 4 ♦ 8 6 4 3 ♣ 5</p> <p>♠ K 8 ♥ K Q J 10 2 ♦ K Q J ♣ 8 7 4</p>	<p>♠ 10 7 2 ♥ 9 8 ♦ A 5 ♣ A K Q J 3 2</p> <p>♠ Q 6 5 4 ♥ A 3 ♦ 10 9 7 2 ♣ 10 9 6</p>
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In theory, the optimum result here is for East-West to reach 4♥, which cannot be defeated. But many pairs will bid 1♥-2♣-2NT-3NT, where only nine tricks are available – unless North falls into the fatal trap of leading fourth highest of his strongest suit. You know those books where it tells you to do that? Remember to burn them when you get home. If East starts with 3♣ over 1♥, West may rebid his hearts, and East had better not bid 3NT then, for a spade lead from South is lethal. Perhaps one or two of those books can be saved from the ashes...

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

<p>♠ A K 10 8 6 5 2 ♥ A 9 ♦ 8 ♣ A K 6</p> <p>♠ Q ♥ K Q 10 8 6 ♦ A K Q 7 ♣ Q 10 4</p> <p>♠ J 9 7 4 ♥ J 7 3 ♦ 10 6 ♣ 9 7 5 2</p>	<p>♠ 3 ♥ 5 4 2 ♦ J 9 5 4 3 2 ♣ J 8 3</p>
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North-South's monopoly of the spade suit continues, with another routine game that will make ten tricks on a red-suit lead, eleven on an unlikely black suit lead. If North bids his hand scientifically, showing his great playing strength, he will score 420 – but if he leaps to 4♠ over West's opening bid of 1♥, he may well be doubled by West in the pass-out seat. That won't please East – or South, though the latter will be cheered by the outcome. At this vulnerability only, a 5♦ sacrifice is just too expensive.

*Board 4. E/W Vul. Dealer West.*

<p>♠ J 6 5 ♥ J 6 5 4 ♦ J 10 5 4 2 ♣ 10</p> <p>♠ A K 8 4 ♥ 9 3 ♦ A Q ♣ Q 8 7 5 4</p> <p>♠ Q 10 2 ♥ Q 10 8 2 ♦ 9 6 3 ♣ J 6 2</p>	<p>♠ 9 7 3 ♥ A K 7 ♦ K 8 7 ♣ A K 9 3</p>
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A slam for East-West to test their bidding methods – 6NT has twelve top tricks. Playing natural methods, though, what should East respond to West's opening 1♣? 3NT is hardly attractive – no spade stop and too much high-card strength – so East will have to fall back on 1♦ and hope that nothing bad happens. The auction will meander along for a while, and it may not reach a successful conclusion. A forcing 2♣ in response to partner's 1♣ is played by many experts, and is a useful gadget on occasions.

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

<p>♠ A 4 2 ♥ Q 5 ♦ A K 9 6 ♣ A K 10 6</p> <p>♠ Q 10 ♥ A 4 3 ♦ Q 10 8 7 3 2 ♣ 8 7</p> <p>♠ 6 5 ♥ K J 10 9 8 6 2 ♦ J ♣ 5 4 3</p>	<p>♠ K J 9 8 7 3 ♥ 7 ♦ 5 4 ♣ Q J 9 2</p>
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North is likely to open 2NT, and the final contract will be 4♥, perhaps played by North after a transfer. East's natural lead of ♣Q holds this contract to eleven tricks – but if South is declarer, West may choose a red suit lead, and that allows a second overtrick by means of a trump squeeze on East in the black suits. 680 will be very good indeed.

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

<p>♠ Q 6 4 ♥ 2 ♦ A 10 9 8 ♣ A K J 7 4</p> <p>♠ K 10 3 2 ♥ Q J 6 5 ♦ J 7 2 ♣ Q 3</p> <p>♠ A 7 ♥ K 10 9 8 4 ♦ K Q 6 5 4 ♣ 2</p>	<p>♠ J 9 8 5 ♥ A 7 3 ♦ 3 ♣ 10 9 8 6 5</p>
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A second potential slam in the set. 6♦ is not a cast iron contract, but with ♥A onside, the hearts 4-3, ♣Q falling doubleton and West unable to lead a spade with profit, there is no way to defeat it. A possible auction might be: 1♥-2♣-2♦-2♠-3♦-4♦ (forcing) – 4♠ – 4NT (keycard Blackwood) – 5♠ (two key cards and ♦Q) – 6♦. West ought to attack with a spade lead against this bidding, and South will have a nervous moment until dummy's ♠Q holds the trick, but it will be plain sailing after that.

*Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.*

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

And here comes another possible slam of the set – but this one is truly awful. There may be several East-West pairs who have a rush of blood, however, and reached 6♥. More or less any line of play will lead to twelve tricks – it isn't even necessary to ruff the clubs out. Just take a spade ruff in the East hand and run the trumps, squeezing North in the minors. Having said that, 680 will be well above average for East-West.

*Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.*

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

Something of a trap for North-South here. Playing a weak no trump, North's 1♥ opening will silence East (or his 1♣ opening will attract a 1♥ overcall, but the opponents will stay out of it after that). Since North-South cannot make anything higher than the one level, South will have to pass after (say) 1♣ (1♥) 1♠ (Pass) 1NT, and that's not easy to do. If North opens a strong no trump, South will at least invite game, and North will go down in something. Any plus for North-South will do very well indeed, and minus 50 won't be too bad.

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

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

Another slam – North-South can make both 6♠ (an excellent contract) and 6NT (a terrible contract, but one that scores more at pairs). A simple auction will see North open 1♦ and respond 4♣ (a splinter bid) to South's response of 1♠. You may think that North's high cards don't really justify this, but his massive playing strength is more than enough. Keycard Blackwood will take care of the rest. Even if North rebids only 3♠, South has plenty in reserve. A flat 980 all round the country? Don't you believe it!

*Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.*

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

North-South had better not get carried away on this deal – there is no slam available here. Moreover, you need to play in hearts, where eleven tricks can always be made; in no trumps, the lead of either black suit from East or a club from West will enable the defenders to take three tricks. Reaching 4♥ and not 3NT won't necessarily be easy, for both North and South will view their hands favourably from the point of view of a no trump contract. 650 will score well for North-South, since there will be more 630s than 660s.

*Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.*

<p>♠ K 4 ♥ J ♦ 10 9 6 3 2 ♣ J 8 5 3 2</p> <p>♠ A J 7 ♥ K Q 9 8 6 4 2 ♦ A ♣ Q 4</p>	<p>♠ 10 6 2 ♥ 7 5 3 ♦ Q 8 7 5 4 ♣ A 7</p> <p>♠ Q 9 8 5 3 ♥ A 10 ♦ K J ♣ K 10 9 6</p>
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West is likely to play in 4♥ one way or another – East should raise a 1♥ opening to 2♥ rather than respond INT, which might discourage his partner. Whether or not he makes a vital overtrick will depend on the lead – a heart or a club holds 4♥ to ten tricks, a spade or a diamond allows eleven on skilful play. If North-South are enterprising enough to find a way into the auction, and guess the lie of the cards well enough, they can escape for 300 in 5♣ doubled for a well-earned top.

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

<p>♠ A K Q 6 2 ♥ A K 8 6 4 2 ♦ 8 ♣ A</p> <p>♠ 10 8 ♥ 9 7 5 ♦ J 9 7 6 5 ♣ K 7 6</p>	<p>♠ J 9 7 5 ♥ J 3 ♦ A 3 ♣ Q J 5 4 3</p> <p>♠ 4 3 ♥ Q 10 ♦ K Q 10 4 2 ♣ 10 9 8 2</p>
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There is a slam here for North-South, though it might not prove easy to reach. If the auction begins 2♣-2♦-2♥-3♦-3♠, should South bid more than 4♥? His trump holding is very good, but the diamond honours may be wasted, so this is a close decision. If South does bid only 4♥, North has no reason to proceed – South could have a far less suitable hand. Not that 6♥ is a wonderful contract, of course – it is not, but as the great Bob Hamman once said, "A good slam is one that makes."

*Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.*

<p>♠ J 10 9 ♥ K Q J 10 9 ♦ 5 ♣ K 10 9 7</p> <p>♠ Q 3 ♥ 8 6 4 ♦ A 10 8 4 ♣ Q J 8 6</p>	<p>♠ A K 7 6 ♥ 7 3 2 ♦ K Q 7 6 ♣ A 5</p> <p>♠ 8 5 4 2 ♥ A 5 ♦ J 9 3 2 ♣ 4 3 2</p>
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North can strike a blow for his side with a light opening bid of 1♥, for that will make it very difficult for East-West to arrive in their optimum spot, which is a diamond part-score. Indeed, if East doubles 1♥ and West guesses to respond 2♣, an unlovely contract will have been reached. Where North passes and East opens a strong no trump, West will raise to (or invite) game, and South will concede nine tricks by not leading a heart for a near-bottom. Should you open the bidding with those North cards? You should today.

*Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.*

<p>♠ A 10 ♥ 8 5 3 ♦ J 6 3 ♣ A 10 9 7 5</p> <p>♠ Q 3 ♥ Q 9 ♦ K 9 7 5 4 2 ♣ Q J 2</p>	<p>♠ J 6 ♥ A J 10 7 4 2 ♦ A Q 10 ♣ 6 4</p> <p>♠ K 9 8 7 5 4 2 ♥ K 6 ♦ 8 ♣ K 8 3</p>
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North-South don't have the majority of the high cards here, but that won't stop them from making game if they reach it. Suppose that the auction begins 1♥ from East, 1♠ from South and 2♦ from West. Many experts play that a double by North shows the unbid suit (clubs) and tolerance for partner's spades, a useful device in a number of situations. If South takes some more violent action over 1♥, such as 3♠, North will have to judge well to raise. Not every North-South will get to game, but I hope that West didn't double if they did ("I had ten points and you'd opened, partner!")

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

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

A range of possible outcomes here – East's strong no trump will end the auction, and South's diamond lead will hold that to seven tricks. If East opens 1♥ in fourth seat, West will raise to 2♥, and East should resist the temptation to bid on. If an intrepid North decides to enter with a double after (1♥) – Pass – (2♥), his side will find a nine-card diamond fit, but East should double them in it for 200 and a top. One of those deals where any plus score will be good.

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

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

Another slam, and this time it is best to play in 6NT, which is a superior contract to 6♠. That might not be so easy to achieve, though – if West opens 1♠ playing a weak no trump and four-card majors, how is East to know that spades is not his side's best spot? Even if West opens a strong no trump (or rebids INT after 1♣-1♦), the spade fit will come to light in time, though in this scenario East may be able to judge that no trumps is superior. Reaching 6♠ won't be a terrible score – indeed, it will be some way above average – but if you reached 6NT, you deserve your top.

*Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.*

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

North-South cannot quite make 4♠, because the defenders can organise a heart ruff. "Can" and "will" are often not the same thing at bridge, and – especially if East opens the normal 1♣ – West is not likely to lead a heart (or a diamond) against a spade contract. That being the case, if North-South do bid to 4♠, East-West had better sacrifice over it in 5♣, which will lose only 100 on careful play and compare well with spade part scores the other way.

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

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

Who would be a bridge player? If, after East opens 1♥ and West responds INT, North makes the normal overcall of 2♣, South might well jump straight to 3NT. Should West lead his partner's suit, as all the books tell us? No, that allows the contract to make. What about fourth highest of longest and strongest – a diamond? No good either, I'm afraid. There are only two cards West can lead to beat 3NT by South – the jack of spades, and the five of spades. If you led either of those, all I can say is, you must be reading this commentary for the second time!

*Board 19. N/S Vul. Dealer West.*

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

North's pre-emptive 3♦ over West's 1♣ opening should not cause problems on this occasion even if South, as he should, raises to 4♦. West will double, and East can bid 4♠ comfortably enough. The bidding may well give East the necessary clue to pick up the club suit and make an overtrick. At the vulnerability, North-South are unlikely to venture to the five level, but if they do, East-West must defend carefully to extract 500 for a great score rather than 200 for a poor one.

*Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.*

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

North-South had better stop at the five-level here (East-West can push them there in any case, for 5♣ costs only 500, and is a good sacrifice against 4♠). The spade suit on this deal is not among the most difficult of suit combinations to play for one loser – leading the ten from South and running it unless West either covers or shows out is completely safe. But there are players who start with the queen, turning a bright shade of red when West discards. They will survive this deal, though they do not deserve to.

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

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

North-South can make game on anything this evening, but when East-West finally get some high cards, they can just about make a one-level contract. If East opens (or rebids) a 15-17 no trump, West ought almost certainly to pass it – queens and jacks are over-valued by the point count, and on most hands some of them turn out to be wasted. Of course, if South ventures to the two level in spades, no one should think of doubling him – that contract is unbreakable. Again, any plus will be good for the side that gets it.

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

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

A straightforward deal on which the auction is likely to proceed 1♥-1♠-2♥-3♥-4♥. I would have some sympathy for a South who led (or even underled) ♦A on this bidding – from his point of view, the hearts and spades are breaking well for declarer, and it may be a question of cashing some fast tricks. Not on this occasion, though – the more natural lead of a club is required in order to secure two winners for the defence.

*Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.*

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

A part-score deal (for a change) on which the best spot is 2♥ by South. This isn't at all easy to find, though – South will open 1♦ and North will respond INT, whereafter it is not really possible for South to bid 2♥ and North to pass it. The more likely contract of INT can be defeated if East leads either black suit, as he almost certainly will (some experts might choose the more passive ♥J, but that won't work this time). East-West can't make anything, but they will be used to that by now.

*Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.*

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

Do you feel lucky? If so, you should arrive in 7NT as East-West, for with the diamonds coming in for four tricks, all you then have to do is guess the hearts. Of course, in the process of playing off the minor suits and the top spades, you will form the (correct) view that South has more hearts than North, so you will play accordingly and go down. Don't look at me – I didn't deal these boards. Blame that on some malevolent computer.

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

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

Once again, North-South don't have anything much –except a cold game, for there is no defence to 4♠. Should South respond to North's opening 1♦? Most certainly, in my view – but North may selfishly rebid 2♦ rather than raising spades, ending in a decidedly inferior spot. If South does pass 1♦ round to West, he will of course reopen, probably with INT. South should protect with 2♠ when that comes round, scoring well for +170 and leaving West wondering why he bothered to get out of bed this morning.

*Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.*

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

A bidding battle is likely to develop here between East-West's spades and North's minors. In theory, the par contract is four diamonds by North, but after South opens the bidding, North may be reluctant to stop at the four level (or may be pushed to five if East-West compete aggressively enough in spades). Even if the defence forces the North hand by leading spades, he can fall back on a cross-ruff to secure ten tricks. Any plus score will do well, and there are chances for either side to score a top for plus 200.

*Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.*

<p>♠ 10 6 5 4 2 ♥ K J ♦ 6 4 ♣ J 4 3 2</p> <p>♠ A K Q ♥ Q 4 3 ♦ Q J 7 5 3 2 ♣ 10</p>	<p>♠ 9 8 ♥ A 8 7 6 5 ♦ 8 ♣ K Q 8 6 5</p> <p>♠ J 7 3 ♥ 10 9 2 ♦ A K 10 9 ♣ A 9 7</p>
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East-West will do well to reach 3♥ here, and to stop in it if they do reach it, for nine tricks are all they can make. A weak no trump opening by South may find West unable to overcall naturally in diamonds, but when North's transfer to spades is completed by South, West may join in. But if that happens, East has to remove to 3♥ and West has to pass it, neither of these being obvious decisions. Another deal on which any plus is good, and 140 best of all for East-West.

*Board 28. E/W Vul. Dealer South.*

<p>♠ ♥ J 6 5 4 ♦ J 10 6 ♣ A J 7 6 4 2</p> <p>♠ A 10 9 4 2 ♥ 10 9 ♦ 8 3 ♣ K Q 10 9</p>	<p>♠ Q 8 7 5 ♥ 8 3 2 ♦ Q 9 5 4 ♣ 8 5</p> <p>♠ K J 6 3 ♥ A K Q 7 ♦ A K 7 2 ♣ 3</p>
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Another slam for North-South – at least, in theory. Those intrepid bidders who reach 6♥ will have to do the following: win West's ♣K lead with the ace, run ♦J, lead ♦10 covered by East and won by South, lead ♥A and a heart to the jack, then play a low club and discard a spade. West, endplayed, must concede a black-suit trick on his return, whereupon South ruffs his remaining spade losers in dummy and finesses ♦7. Did you do that? Very well played!

*Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.*

<p>♠ 6 4 3 2 ♥ K 6 3 ♦ A J 5 ♣ K Q J</p> <p>♠ J 8 ♥ Q 2 ♦ K Q 9 6 4 2 ♣ 7 5 3</p>	<p>♠ A K Q 7 ♥ J 9 5 4 ♦ 8 ♣ A 10 8 2</p>	<p>♠ 10 9 5 ♥ A 10 8 7 ♦ 10 7 3 ♣ 9 6 4</p>
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After a brief interruption, North-South return to their monopoly of the high cards and the spade suit. A simple auction will consist of a weak no trump by North, a Stayman enquiry by South, a 2♠ response by North, and a raise to game by South, making an easy overtrick. There are some cunning matchpoint players who would deny a major as North, with a bad suit and a 4-3-3-3 shape. They may get away with it on this deal, for the lead of a heart by East – good old fourth best – is the only one to permit eleven tricks to be made in no trumps.

*Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.*

<p>♠ A 8 5 4 3 2 ♥ 4 ♦ 10 7 5 3 ♣ Q 8</p> <p>♠ Q J 9 ♥ Q J 7 2 ♦ J 9 4 ♣ 10 7 3</p>	<p>♠ K 10 7 6 ♥ 10 8 ♦ A Q 8 6 ♣ A 9 5</p>	<p>♠ ♥ A K 9 6 5 3 ♦ K 2 ♣ K J 6 4 2</p>
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Again, North-South have the spades – but East-West can do something about it this time. 5♠ cannot be made – but 5♥ can, provided that East is declarer, and provided that he guesses the club suit correctly, starting with a low one from dummy and not the ten. After South doubles East's 1♥ opening, West will raise hearts, North will jump to 4♠, and East will continue to 5♥. What happens then is anyone's guess – well done to the North-Souths who pressed on to the successful five-level sacrifice.

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

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

An awkward opening bid for South – too weak in high cards for 1♠, but vastly unsuitable for any kind of pre-empt with two first-round controls. If South does open 3♠, North will do well to raise him, and game may be missed at a few tables. But the vast majority will reach 4♠, and on West's natural lead of ♥K, ten tricks will be the normal result. If West leads a diamond or a club (perhaps when East has bid 2♣ after 1♠ – Dble – Rdbble), an overtrick can be achieved for a near-top score.

*Board 32. Game All. Dealer West.*

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

If North opens the bidding with a shaded 1♠, he may regret it, for South with an opening bid of his own might drive to game, which is too high. If North passes, East might score a goal with a tactical opening of 3♣ in third position – North-South cannot defeat this contract, and will find it well-nigh impossible to reach their own optimum spot in 3♦. Only a trump lead will hold North-South to nine tricks in diamonds, though, so pairs who do overbid may emerge unscathed. Any plus score will be good for the side that gets it.