



The 2026 Celtic Simultaneous Pairs

Tuesday 12th 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 6 ♥ A 4 3 2 ♦ 2 ♣ K Q 9 7 4</p> <p>♠ K J 10 8 ♥ Q ♦ 8 4 3 ♣ A 6 5 3 2</p> <p>♠ 7 5 ♥ 10 9 7 6 5 ♦ A Q 7 6 5 ♣ 8</p> | <p>♠ 9 4 3 2 ♥ K J 8 ♦ K J 10 9 ♣ J 10</p> |
|--|--|

I hope I get the analysis of these deals right as I am working on them in Normandy while drinking some very agreeable cider. The first deal of the session will reward aggressive bidding as North/South can make ten tricks in hearts, so those bidding game should score well. A plausible sequence is 1♣ – 1♥ – 3♥ – 4♥. Although South has only six high card points, once North shows four card support in hearts the value of his hand increase enough to try for game.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

This deal should not present much of a problem in the bidding as North/South will not find it difficult to reach 3NT almost certainly played by North. The onus will be on East West to score at least three tricks in defence. On a spade lead West will win and must switch to a heart. Otherwise declarer will be able to knock out the ace of clubs and take two spades, one heart, four diamonds and five clubs for eleven tricks.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

After North opens 1♠ – and assuming East goes quietly – South has to choose between responding INT or 2♠. I would raise but it is a matter of style and here it will make no difference as North will bid 2♦ and South will give preference to spades.

A red suit lead will defeat the contract but East is likely to try a top club first and now declarer should arrive at eight tricks. If East/West do get involved they can make nine tricks with a winning trump view.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

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

West will open 1♣ or INT and I expect the final contract to be either INT or 2NT. It is hard to predict the result – for example if North leads a low spade – and that would be my choice – the winning line for eight tricks is to play low from dummy. I suspect that +120 will prove to be a good result and anything more than that a virtual top.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

East/West are destined to play in Four Spades and as long as East is the declarer it will be possible to make eleven tricks. Declarer can win the opening lead, take a spade finesse, cash the ace of spades and then play on hearts, discarding diamonds from hand. All the defenders can make is one trump and one diamond.

If you only make ten tricks it may be time for a cheering drink.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

Light opening bids are the current fashion so some East's will open 1♠ and if West raises to 2♠ North may make an off centre double, taking his side to a level where they may be defeated. A similar situation will arise when East passes and the auction goes 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♥ – 2♠.

Its one of those situations where a plus score is probably going to score well, especially if it is +110 for either side.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

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

Another part score battle where each side has a major. Eight tricks are the limit in spades and nine in hearts. After two passes – okay I apologise to the people who play the mini notrump at red – North has a classic third in hand 1♥. East overcalls 1♠ and after that it all depends on when the music stops. If the auction continues 2♥ (or dble – pass 2♦) – pass – 2♠ then South will have to decide about bidding on – slightly easier after hearing partner bid diamonds.

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

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

After East opens 1♠ South will either bid INT or double. Playing in no trumps, nine tricks can only be prevented in double dummy fashion if West leads a heart and East switches to a low spade a t trick two. Otherwise declarer can arrange an endplay on East, forcing him to let declarer get to dummy to cash a couple of winning diamonds. As getting to game is not so easy, and making it quite difficult a plus score for North/South should be good.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

All roads should lead to a game contract in spades by North/South. There is nothing much to the play, everything depending on how declarer tackles the trump suit. A winning view will lead to twelve tricks and a top score.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

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

North's hand looks like the famous one where John Collings once passed as South will a solid ten card suit. Unluckily for him his partner, holding 'just three aces' also decided to pass! Nothing quit so dramatic will happen here and if North opens INT he may well be allowed to play there. Although declarer can be held to seven tricks, I suspect that eight will be a frequent result and about an average plus.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

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

Yet another battle between the major suits. I will risk predicting that the auction will start 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♥ – 2♠ all around the room. If West bids 3♥ – I would be inclined to – then North may like the look of his heart honours and go on. 3♠ is easily defeated by a diamond lead, ace, low diamond for a ruff, club to the ace, diamond ruff and king of clubs, but –50 may not be so bad.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

4♠ is easy for North/South, but East/West can sacrifice – for example 5♣ will usually be no more than two down. The auction may develop in several different ways, for example 2♠ – dble – 4♠ – 5♣ would be one possibility. East might pass on the first round and then come in with a delayed double on the next round. What is certain is that +620 will be well above average.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

Most of the field will open the East hand INT and even though South is facing a passed partner South he may be tempted to join in with some defensive bid – a Landy 2♣ for example. It will not inconvenience West this time as a direct raise to 3NT is obvious, but make the hand slightly stronger and West would want to investigate for a slam. If South leads a spade, declarer will make 12 tricks in 3NT while a heart holds him to 11. A non club lead and a winning view is spades will see 6♦ make.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

This hand will surely see North/South playing in a no trump game, so it will be all about the number of tricks that are made. The location of the defenders high cards should ensure that nine tricks are always made, but to make more declarer needs to avoid a heart lead from either side and get the diamonds right. That makes it clear that +430 will be excellent.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

West has a marginal opening bid – much easier if you are playing a limited system like Precision – but whatever action is taken it should be a simple matter to reach the heart game. The number of tricks is going to depend on the opening lead and how declarer tackles the trump suit. Say South leads a diamond, North wins and switches to his club. Declarer must win and play a heart to the king – otherwise he will be one down. So +420 will score well.

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

East will open 1♥ and most South's will have some way of showing their two suiter – 2♥ being the popular way. Then North has to decide how many spades to bid. As 4♠ can be defeated in a number of ways the winning view will be to bid no more than 2♠. However, that looks like a slight underbid so when North tries 3♠ South will have to resist the temptation to go on.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

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

If North opens 1♠ the final contract is almost certain to be 2♠. That will fail on a heart or club lead, both reasonable choices from the East hand. Where North passes and East opens 1NT North may back in with 2♠. If he does not South must avoid leading a diamond – not exactly easy. If East opens 1♣ South overcalls which could result in 2♠ once again. If East opens 1♦ West responds 1NT and should go down. Once again a plus score will be a winner.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

The auction is likely to go 1♥ – 2♦ – 2♥ – 3NT. That will make it very difficult for North to lead a diamond – but that is the only way the contract can be defeated. A spade lead presents declarer with the ninth trick at once, but it will take a serious misdefence to allow more than that.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

If South opens 1NT should North attempt to find a safer haven? Using Stayman will see South playing in 2♠ where six tricks should be the limit. I would pass – and that may well be the best thing to do here as declarer may well arrive at six tricks with a little help from the defence and a modest minus will be a great result.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

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

I would be able to open the West hand with a weak 2♦ – and I suspect many of you will be able to do so as well – but that will not stop North/South from playing in spades. Some pairs will get to game and to make ten tricks declarer must play East for the queen of hearts. +170 or better will collect a bushell of matchpoints.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

All roads should lead once more to the nine trick game – perhaps 1♦ – 1♠ – 2♦ – 3NT will be your route? Even though both club honours are offside the contract should always be made – and ten tricks are possible. My guess is that many West's will lead a heart, and declarer may be disappointed that it is East who has the queen. Say he wins in hand a plays a diamond to the queen. Now he plays on clubs and is sure of +630.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

Another deal, another 3NT. Unless North is the declarer and East is kind enough to lead a club ten tricks will be the limit. I'm often tempted to predict a flat Board – but in real life that is about as likely as a unanimous panel in a bidding competition. Still, this might just be the one.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

It would be no surprise to see the auction go 1♦ – 1♠ – 2♦ – 2♠ – 3♦ round to South who will be left with an interesting decision. If he bids 3♠ then North will have to play well on a diamond lead. Win the ace, ruff a diamond and play a club, intending to finesse on the next round. East is never going to lead a heart, the only sure way to defeat 3♠. If South passes North will have to lead a club to defeat 3♦.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

When West opens 1♥ East's reply will depend on the methods being employed but for most people a limit raise of 3♥ will be the order of the day. West will go on to game and a winning guess in spade will lead to 12 tricks. With North quite likely to lead a spade +480 is going to be a frequent entry on the traveller. Any pairs that arrive in a slam and make it will scoop the pool.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

Not easy to predict this one. North opens 1♦ and then East may bid some number of spades. South will either bid his clubs or double and depending on West's action North may bid clubs. Unless the defenders make a mistake they should collect four tricks against a club contract. However, the majority of the matchpoints will go to the East/West pairs who play in spades and record nine tricks.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

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

If you subscribe to the theory that you need a six card suit to overcall 1♦ with 2♣ then you will have to pass on the South hand. Now the auction continues 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♦ back to you. Not easy to bid now is it? But you can make 3♣ and letting the opponents make 2♦ is not going to give you more than an average. So the points will go to those who manage to get their clubs into the game either here or earlier.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

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

We have only had to wait 27 Boards for the first real slam opportunity. The early part of the auction is likely to go 1♥ – 2♦ – 2♥ – 3♣ – 4♣. I would bid 4♦ now but I suspect that some form of Blackwood will be the popular choice. North may have hopes of a grand slam but once he discovers an ace is missing he will abandon them and settle for six clubs. Bidding the slam will certainly earn North/South an over average score.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

Whatever North opens East is going to overcall or double and almost certainly end up in spades. However there are four losers and no obvious way for the defenders to make a mistake, so going past 3♠ may prove to be expensive. If the auction starts 3♥ – 3♠ (or double) South can bid either pass, bid 4♥ or 4♣. As in spades there are four losers in hearts, so its another scenario where a plus is all important.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

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

This is a bidding problem for North/South – can you reach 7♠? Here is one plausible sequence: 1♠ – 2♣ – 2♠ – 3♦ – 3♠ – 4NT – 5♠ – 7♠. I'm assuming that you are playing Roman Key Card Blackwood so when North bids 5♠ you know he has two aces and the queen of spades. However these things are much easier on paper, so 6♠ will probably be the popular resting place. Anyone who attempts 7NT and gets a club lead will be pleased to see dummy's jack of hearts!

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

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

In Acolland the auction will generally go like this:

1♥ – 2♦ – 2NT – 3♥ leaving West with a decision. On this layout 4♥ has no chance but 3NT will make some of the time, especially when North leads a spade. There is a lot to be said for trying the nine trick game – and some East's may solve partner's problem by preferring that bid to 3♥.

Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

Although its possible that this deal might see everyone pass the reality is that either West, North or East will open. Suppose West starts with 1♣ or 1♦. East responds 1♠ and West will already be in trouble, especially if he opened 1♣. If he selected 1♦ he will have to rebid 2♦ and East will go on to 3♦. That is the top spot and should produce a good score for East/West.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

East/West can make eight tricks in hearts, North/South nine in clubs, so our final deal may be yet another bidding battle. Of course the auction might go 1♣ – 3♣ All Pass, as it is not automatic for East to overcall facing a passed partner – although I would. I hope you enjoyed playing these deals – I certainly enjoyed writing about them.