



# The 2023 Celtic Simultaneous Pairs

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December

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!

We hope you will all take care, stay safe and well and – since we are now in December – we wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year

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

## Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

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

After two passes, South might choose to open with a tactical weak two bid in hearts, if playing that method. The chances are that this will shut out East-West; North will hate the whole business, but the values he has fit partner's hand well, and to his surprise the contract will make. The same final contract will be reached if South opens 1♥, and +110 will be a common result, a little over average for North-South.

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

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

Six spades is an excellent contract, but might not be so easy to reach if South opens with a weak no trump. If North transfers with 2♥ and South can show four-card support, though, North may be sufficiently enthused to give his partnership at least a chance. Those Souths who reach 6NT and guess the play well are – well, there won't be many of them, which is just as well, because they're too good for this place.

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

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

If North-South can get their spades into the act, they can make it difficult for East-West to reach 6♥ or 6♦, both of which are good contracts that can be made easily enough. East has an awkward bid after West overcalls 1♣ with 1♦ and North passes – if 1♥ can be four cards and is forcing, that's fine. If not, East must resist the urge to jump to 3NT, which will produce a deservedly undignified result.

*Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.*

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

The remarkably fortunate position in hearts means that East-West can make any of 5NT, 5♠ and 5♥. Indeed, on any lead but a club, there are 13 tricks available in no trumps or in hearts; a diamond lead will hold a spade contract to twelve tricks. Not that anyone should bid a slam, of course – the matchpoints will go on this occasion to those who find the no-trump game. They won't deserve them, but then, they never do.

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

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

In first seat at adverse vulnerability, it would take an intrepid North to open the bidding, but the world is full of intrepid Norths these days. Just as well, for the cards lie in friendly fashion, and 4♠ can't be beaten as long as declarer goes right in diamonds. Most of the time, though, South will open a weak no trump and North will be content with 2♠, perhaps competing to 3♠ if East-West find a way in to the auction. 140 will be OK, 170 will be fine, and if you scored 620, you don't need me to comment.

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

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

Whether South upgrades his 19-count to a 2NT opening or not (he has no reason to, but that never stopped anyone from overbidding) his partnership is likely to come to rest in 4♠. That will lose the obvious three tricks, and North-South will score the obvious 420 for the obvious average. Even if West introduces his hearts, the vulnerability ought to deter his side from enterprise – despite the Law, even the three level is too high this time.

*Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.*

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

A fearless weak 2♠ by South, raised to 3♠ by North, could give East-West a real headache. But in the fearful world, East-West are likely to come to rest in 3NT, and a spade lead will leave declarer in some doubt as to the best line. He wins the ace, cashes ♣A, knocks out, ♥A, wins the second or third spade and... well, if he takes the club finesse, he will be a most unhappy man. Misery loves company, though, and he will have plenty of it.

*Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.*

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

If West opens the bidding with 1♣, his side is going to find it impossible to stop in anything they can make – unless East exercises superhuman restraint. Not that the position will be much easier if East opens an eminently sound 1♣ in third position, though if West can depict a singleton diamond in a club raise, East might find the brake pedal just in time. Any East-West who go plus here will have earned the large number of match points they will receive.

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

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

With the diamonds coming in, North-South have fourteen top tricks in no trumps – sixteen with the heart and club finesses. Suppose you discover that you have a nine-card fit missing only the queen – should you bid a grand slam? Theoretically, the answer is “yes”, but partners tend to take a dim view of grand slams going down, however sound they may have been in principle. Those who reach only six can feel infuriated at the “luck” of those who reach seven, but pairs is a game at which you make your own luck.

*Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.*

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

North-South need to choose the right part score here – but which is it? Eight tricks are the likely maximum in no trumps, and only nine tricks can be made in diamonds at double dummy, so perhaps the no-trump merchants win the debate yet again. If South plays in diamonds, though, West will need to find the lead of precisely ♠6 to prevent a tenth trick. Not so easy, and 130 will be worth quite a lot of matchpoints.

*Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.*

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

North-West can make an awful lot, but each is saddled with a partner who can't contribute much. Still. South has a few cards in support of partner's suit, and if he shows these at some stage, North will probably take his chances in 4♠. If he plays West for ♥A on the bidding, those chances will have improve to 100% when the rest of the distribution proves friendly. East-West this evening seem to need a whole lot more than North-South when it comes to making games.

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

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

West will open 1♥, North will pass, East will (depending on system and inclination) bid 2♥ or 2♣ or INT, and South will bid some number of spades. If that number is three, the limit of the hand will have been reached, and everyone will rest more or less content with 140 to North-South. If anyone contributes beyond this, he will get a minus score which won't do well in matchpoint terms.

*Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.*

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

Good news and bad news for West if he ends up on lead to 6♥. The good news is that he has a singleton spade; the bad news is that he also has a singleton trump, and East has the wrong major-suit ace. Not that North-South should bid to 6♥; they should not, for the contract is worse than a finesse. But if, after the last few deals, West is beginning to feel that he would rather be at the dentist than at the bridge club, I would have a lot of sympathy with his view.

*Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.*

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

After 1♥-1♠-3♥, is North worth a move towards slam? The way things have been going this evening, North may with justification feel optimistic, and there are some South hands that might yield a play for slam. But North isn't worth more than one try, and South – having bid 3♥ – has a minimum, so 450 ought to be flat around the world. If your partnership did something else... well, I hope it worked, though I fear it did not.

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

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

A case for “breaking the transfer” – if West opens a weak no trump and East bids 2♦, West has a chance to show some life. The defence against 4♥ can take two diamonds and a diamond ruff, then wait for a spade – but it won’t. Left to his own devices, declarer must avoid losing three diamonds. If declarer is West, he should (after eliminating the black suits) lead a low diamond from East, winning when South has ♦AK or a doubleton honour (North won’t have ♦AK). If declarer is East, good luck to him.

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

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

West 1♣; North double; East – well, there’s a case for 1♦, or 1♠, or INT, or redouble, or pass. If East does other than pass, South will be a happy man, for he was not looking forward to having to bid. Nobody can make much of anything, but nobody will bid much of anything either – the important thing on this kind of hand is simply to go plus. If I could tell you how to do this, I would.

*Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.*

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

A cold game in no trumps for North-South. Yes, but how would you bid it? If North opens 1♣, East overcalls 1♠ and this is passed back to North, what should he do? I’d vote for 2NT, but that’s because they already let me look at the hands. Maybe South should venture 2♣ after East’s overcall, but maybe he should not. If you have the impression that I don’t know what I’m talking about, I would not contradict you.

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

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

A model auction for East-West would be pass-1♦-1♥-INT-3♦-pass, but just about every West I know bids 3NT in that sequence as if 3♦ were a transfer. If West opens a strong no trump, East is uncomfortably placed – fear of missing a major-suit game might lead to a Stayman enquiry and a reluctant 2NT, which West will also regard as a transfer to game. Will 3NT make? If North leads a low spade rather than a high one, it should not – at several tables it will, which is a pity because East-West will carry on bidding like that.

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

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

North's turn to have a borderline response to South's weak no trump opening – on this occasion, that may very well uncover the spade fit, and North should be happy to allow South to play 2♠. If INT is passed round to East, or if North does use Stayman and South doesn't bid 2♠ over 2♥, the fate of the deal may depend on whether North can double 2♥ for takeout. 110 in 2♠ will be a good score for North-South; 110 in 2♥ will be an excellent score for East-West.

*Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.*

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

Another weak no trump, this time for West. If North overcalls in hearts, East-West will need some methods (or some guesswork) to reach 3NT with confidence. Not that 3NT is a particularly good contract – it isn't, but it's where the field will play, so collecting only 500 from 2♥ doubled might not be good enough. Of course, North can beat 3NT by leading any of his seven non-hearts, and even if this does not happen, West will need to play with care.

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

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

Much has been written about the correct opening bid with a hand like East's, despite which nobody knows what the correct opening bid with a hand like East's actually is. Whatever he chooses, though, his partnership is likely to end up in a comfortable 4♥, and the destination of a lot of matchpoints will depend on declarer's guess in the trump suit. If you're a good guesser, perhaps you should bid a slam – but you'll collect an above-average result for making twelve tricks in game.

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

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

East will open 1♦ and spend the rest of the auction watching his partner agonise. 1♦-2♣-2♦-2♥-2NT (or 2♠ if natural)-3♦ – so far, so good. Then, East should probably bid 3♥ to be going on with, and West's next bid will take forever. An optimistic six diamonds will succeed if East guesses the play very well; the overtrick in 5♦ will be worth a lot of matchpoints, for on this occasion there are only nine tricks available in 3NT.

*Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.*

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

East-West will end up in 3NT one way or another, having investigated a major-suit fit on the way. North, poor fellow, will lead a diamond, and that will be declarer's tenth trick. The play as he struggles for an eleventh will become highly convoluted – he can always succeed if he reads the cards well, and 660 will be an excellent result. In truth, eleven tricks can always be made on any lead but a club, though this will be of little comfort to North.

*Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.*

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

Not quite good enough for a reverse into 2♥ after 1♣-1♠, South has a good alternative in 1NT. North may let him play there, or may retreat to 2♠ (which will be the contract if South opens an off-shape strong no trump also). How should you play that trump suit in 2♠? Cash the ace and lead to the queen will be the knowledgeable answer, gaining if East has the doubleton jack. But the real answer is that you should run the queen. If you knew that already, you're probably winning this tournament; if you didn't, it's worth trying to work it out.

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

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

Another guess for a queen, this time for the twelfth trick in a spade contract. It will be the more crucial if West has lead a heart, for then the question will be ten tricks or twelve. But very few Wests will find this threatening start – unless the North-South scientific methods have pinpointed a singleton club in the South hand. Still, if you bid like that, it is your moral duty to get the diamonds right.

*Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.*

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

Just about everyone will have something to contribute to this auction, which usually means that the final contract will go down. After 1♦ from East and 1♠ from South, many Wests will look at their spade holding and bid 1NT. North will compete in hearts, East might bid diamonds again, South might... well, you get the idea. I suspect that the traveller will contain a number of scores of 200 and above in both directions – if you bid and made a part score, you'll get roughly an average for your pairs.

*Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.*

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

North-South will bid a lot of clubs and East-West will bid a lot of spades. It won't be easy for East-West to judge that their best result is a sacrifice at the five level, and it may not be so easy for North-South to settle for this rather than trying a hopeless slam. If you were allowed to play five clubs and make it, you'll score pretty well – if you pushed on to five spades as East-West, you deserve the fine result this will bring.

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

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

South may be surprised if East opens a jocose 1♥ in third seat, but he should pass with what equanimity he can muster. That opening may well create havoc – after West's response of 1♠, North could venture a passed-hand takeout double, but life will not be at all easy for his side. Left to their own devices, North-South may well end up in 4♥ – the play will be awkward, but declarer can prevail. If East does open and North-South end up in a diamond game, they will have reason to curse their opponent. Sotto voce, of course.

*Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.*

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

South's 1♦ or INT opening may be greeted by a conventional bid to show the majors from West, and a muttered “thank you, partner” from East. It's another of those deals on which no one can make anything, and the pairs who stop bidding early will do better than the pairs who carry on regardless. Once again, the traveller will have more than a few 200s on it in both columns.

*Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.*

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

East's weak no trump opening may instil thoughts of a club or no-trump slam in West's mind. East-West have not been having the best of the luck this evening, so they will doubtless be astonished when the heart suit proves impossible to misguess and the slam proves to be a make. If by now they have become so dejected that they do not risk the six level, perhaps this will serve to remind them that cards have no memory.



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

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

West has a mountain, and the little East has fits reasonably well. Flushed with success on the previous Board, East-West may propel themselves to the dizzy heights of six or even seven diamonds. Again, the cards will cooperate and thirteen tricks will not present a problem. Chances are, though, that South will make things very awkward with a heart preempt as dealer – if West bids an exasperated but practical 6♠ over that, he will do all right.

*Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.*

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

Should East, facing a passed partner, overcall North's 1♠ opening with 2♥? If so, his side will reach 4♥ and will make it, if declarer plays with care. If not, North-South may well buy the hand in a part score, and it won't matter all that much how many tricks they make. Alternatively, West may open a horrible weak 2♦ if that is in his arsenal, and East's raise to 3♦ will be passed out. How many tricks will that make? Who cares?