



The 2026 Welsh Bridge Union Simultaneous Pairs

Monday 21st September

Thank you for supporting the WBU Simultaneous Pairs 2026.

We are once more donating the proceeds to two very worthy causes – The Air Ambulance and our WBU Juniors.

Don't forget that the WBU and its districts run events throughout the year for you to enjoy – you will find the listed on the WBU Website of course - <https://welshbridgeunion.org>. The calendar of forthcoming events is on the right hand side but of particular note in the immediate future, are the **VWBA Vince Bevan** on October 11th, the monthly **Cake Club** on October 14th. That Cake Club is such a brilliant concept, played online using RealBridge, but with a break half way through the session for you to chat to fellow competitors and enjoy a cup of tea and (hopefully) some delicious cake that you have in your own kitchen !

October 17th sees the **MWBA McKindley Teams**, and on the 18th It is the **EWBA P. Jourdain Teams**. And November 13 – 15 is the **Porthcawl Congress**.

You will find details of other WBU events on the [WBU website](#) so do have a look and make sure you don't miss anything !

As you will be aware, I am leaving the post of CEO of the WBU at the end of September – I have really enjoyed my time with the WBU. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support whilst I have been in office – Support that I am sure will be transferred to whoever is appointed as my successor.

With best wishes

Ceri Pierce
WBU CEO

Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

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

Predicting what will happen after North opens 1NT is NOT going to be easy. But East will show a two-suiter, perhaps specifically the majors. South will now bid diamonds, and West may get a chance either to bid clubs or raise hearts. North/South can make 4♦, (and also 3NT if East leads anything but a club or heart to the JACK!). East/West will struggle to take more than eight tricks in any of their three plausible fits. And minus numbers figure to be the order of the day!

Board 2. North/South Vul. Dealer East.

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

Some Easts will pass, some open at any level between 1♥ and 4♥ (everything has some merit I suppose). If East passes, then East/West will find hearts, but not before North/South have found their spades. Now what? It is hard to see East selling out below 5♥, where the defenders had better cash their ♣A before it gets away. You'd expect to see heart contracts, some doubled, making at least 11 tricks here, mixed with North/South pairs conceding 500 or so in spades.

Board 3. East/West Vul. Dealer South.

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

An unopposed auction for North/South to 3NT at 98.7% of tables will see West lead a low spade to the ♠J and ♠A. Declarer has nothing better to do but go after hearts, and with the suit 3-3 and the ♠Q as an entry to dummy, he has nine winners without needing the diamond finesse. His best chance of manoeuvring a tenth trick comes from West winning his ♥K and underleading in spades. Now West might get thrown in with ♠K to lead diamonds at the death for -430.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

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

A point of bidding theory arises here. If East bids 1♥ and then competes to 3♥ opposite a silent partner, is West supposed to raise to 4♥? I'd say no if playing Acol Twos, but if not, it is quite close. It is hard to argue with East going on to 3♥, but best defence of early trump leads does hold him to eight tricks, which argues for him not doing so. Meanwhile, North/South can make 2♠ easily enough, and might be allowed to find a way to a ninth trick on sloppy defence.

Board 5. North/South Vul. Dealer North.

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

East will open 1♣ and hear his LHO overcall 1♠, and partner bid 2♥. Now he must ignore the three-card support and his six clubs, and instead rebid 2NT. When raised to 3NT, East should simply pass now, and not revert to hearts. That would be correct today, since 3NT handles very nicely on a spade lead. Declarer must play on hearts, not clubs, and that way will come to 11 tricks without too many problems. Note: communications are far more awkward on a diamond lead.

Board 6. East/West Vul. Dealer East.

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

Most will open 3♠ as East – though a 2♠ call would be fine at the vulnerability. Over 3♠ everyone will bid 4♥, won't they, and an alert West will double. The lead is critical; a low diamond allows the defenders three ruffs in all, for down three. The more likely ♣A lead lets declarer out for down one. Any North/South pair who stay out of things and defend to a spade partscore will do very well here.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

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

When West opens 1♦, North can overcall 2♣, letting East show a decent diamond raise by a 3♣ cue-bid. South should double 3♣ for the lead, letting West retreat to 3♦. Might South contemplate balancing now with 3♥? Only if he has great respect for the soundness of his partner's overcalls! 3♦ handles like a dream for +110, so the issue is whether South might buy the hand in 3♥, and if so whether he can escape for -100. The jury is still out!

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

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

West's INT opening will be raised by East to 3NT, an auction that will be repeated at most tables. On the lead of ♣Q declarer should win in dummy, run the diamonds, then take the ♥K, then ♥A, and cash two more hearts when the ♥J falls. In the three-card ending West now has to decide whether to cash ♣K before leading a spade towards the ♠K. I suppose some might wrongly pitch a spade from dummy, and then get the ending wrong, to hold themselves to 430.

Board 9. East/West Vul. Dealer North.

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

East might do best to open 3♣ – very unsound at the vulnerability – but a winner today, since ten tricks are easy and 11 entirely possible (on pardonable misdefence) in a club contract. Assuming East passes, then North/South will probably find their way to spades, but at what level? There is nothing really wrong with 4♠ here except that the 4-1 diamond break might defeat you (but again, the defenders could be forgiven for not finding the winning line).

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

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

The world is divided into those who pass the East hand, those who open 1♦ to rebid clubs, and those who open clubs and lose the diamonds. All these approaches make sense, but today is a day to pass. Otherwise, whatever East opens, West will find it hard to stop in a makeable contract. In fact, the highest sensible contract East/West can make is 2♥, since North is likely to find a diamond lead and hold West to eight tricks. Plus scores will be very good for East/West.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

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

South will open 1♦, West will overcall 1♠, and North can either bid hearts, make a negative double, or bid no-trump. East may well raise spades, after which it will be hard for North/South to go plus. The point is that when South introduces his clubs, North might take a shot at 3NT and be disappointed by the bare dummy. In fact 4♥ is a far better spot for North/South, and if South were to declare it on the lead of ♠A he might even make! (A trump or club lead sets the game.)

Board 12. North/South Vul. Dealer West.

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

After North opens 1♣ North/South want to up the ante to 4♣ as quickly as possible, which should not be so hard to do. Meanwhile, after West passes he will want to find a way to come in to show one or both of his suits as efficiently as possible. He may be forced to bid the suits in turn, and hope for a suitable dummy (and he will get one). Since East/West can make nine tricks in either of their fits, and North/South can make 4♣, +100 is par for North/South by doubling East/West at the four-level.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

I'm reluctant to suggest what North/South SHOULD do here – there are so many possible actions. North could sensibly open either red-suit, South could insist on spades, or play one of his partner's suits, and if he does play spades there are many options in the play and defence. As to par: South should insist on playing spades, and the defenders do best to lead to the ♥A for a trump shift. If declarer guesses to duck, he can bring home nine tricks, otherwise eight.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

When East opens 1♦ West will respond 1♥, thereby effectively stealing that suit from his opponents for the duration. North/South cannot compete sensibly in spades, so may sell out to 2♦, a contract that can be set two tricks on repeated spade ruffs. If North/South could find a way back into the auction they might declare a heart partscore; nine tricks look easy enough against any defence. My guess is that making contracts will be few and far between here.

Board 15. North/South Vul. Dealer South.

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

When North opens 1♥ in third seat some Easts will double, some overcall 1NT, but passing looks correct to me. As it happens, when South raises to 2♥, North has enough for a game-try, or even an unsubtle leap to game – a view that would be well rewarded today. With the club and heart finesses succeeding, declarer can take 11 tricks, although it is easy to see some Norths misguessing spades. A few East/West's will steal the board in spades....and not enjoy themselves.

Board 16. East/West Vul. Dealer West.

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

If West passes, then North will open 3♣ and perhaps be raised to 5♣ by South as a sort of two-way shot. With the club finesse succeeding there is no defence to 11 tricks in clubs. Hearts is more challenging, and many pairs will go down in heart games, though 11 tricks might also be made. If West gets in first with a weak 2♦ (not recommended with such good spades on the side) East/West might steal the board in diamonds or spades, where they can make nine or ten tricks.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

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

South will open 1♦ in third seat and jump to 3♣ over the 1♠ response. Now all roads lead to 3NT by South. On a spade lead what is South to do? One line is to win the ♠A and pass the ♦10, then ♦9, aiming to play clubs from hand and guess hearts. That line produces between seven and ten tricks! A heart lead and continuation gives South an equally difficult problem. Relying on the diamond finesse would suggest playing clubs from hand at trick three, also.

Board 18. North/South Vul. Dealer East.

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

South has too much to open 4♠ (maybe a 2♣ opening and a jump to 4♠ shows these values). After 2♣-3♣-4♠ North should assume he is facing about 8 ½ playing tricks, and that he does not have enough to advance to the five-level. But in fact slam is not at all bad from the South seat; on a spade or diamond lead it is excellent, on a club or heart lead South needs the club finesse, and gets it.

Board 19. East/West Vul. Dealer South.

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

North/South will have an easy fourth-suit auction to 3NT by South (1♥-1♠-2♦-3♣-3NT) but making game is quite another matter. West appears to have a natural lead of ♦Q, and declarer's communications are shot. If he wins in hand and leads a spade to dummy it is hard to see how he might emerge with nine tricks. A better line is to win ♦K and play spades from the board. Eventually South will have to try to cross to hand in clubs – and the roof will fall in!

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

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

What would you do with the South cards facing a vulnerable 4♠ opening bid? You might pass, fearing heart losers, or you might advance. But in practice you might face a different problem today, since many Easts will double 4♠, to show cards, optional. Now will South bid on in spades or try to double a heart contract instead, for which the reward will be a paltry 500 (and a bottom at this vulnerability)? Of course 6♠ is no better than a finesse, but it works today.

Board 21. North/South Vul. Dealer North.

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

Every weak no-trump pair will start 1♥-1♠-1NT ...but what next? If the 1NT rebid showed 15-16 East might just pass, although correcting to 2♥ to show constructive values and three trump also makes sense. Today no game is that good for East/West, and in fact four rounds of clubs might promote the ♥J to hold West to 110. That overtrick in a heart partscore is vital, since no-trumps can make a comfortable 120 (though finessing the ♠J would not work well!).

Board 22. East/West Vul. Dealer East.

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

Even at unfavourable vulnerability most Easts will open 3♣, South will overcall 3♦, and what happens after that is anybody's guess. North might well drive the hand to slam, but if he does he might, fatally, select no-trump not diamonds. Alas, South's unexpected club void makes 6♦ easy today, while 6NT is a catastrophic failure. If West tries to get in the way by raising clubs, North might work out that 6♦ might be safer.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

The West hand may be too good and too suit-oriented for a 1NT opening bid. Regardless, even if West does opt to treat it as 12-14, East/West will still surely find their spade fit and get to game; any North/South pair whose opponents miss 4♠ will be gifted almost a clear top. As to the play; with the ♥A and ♣Q onside there is only one top loser – but also only 11 top tricks. Since spades are 3-1, and the hand long in spades has only three diamonds, 11 tricks are the limit today.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

When East opens 1♠ South will have to overcall 2♥ with his feeble suit – what else can he do? Some Souths will be left there, and they can make 110 unless West leads a diamond (in which case there would be a steward's enquiry!). A rather easier route to 110 would be for North to declare 3♣. Indeed, that contract might make 130 on a good day. If East plays spades the defenders must cash ♣A and shift to diamonds to get their trump promotion for down one.

Board 25. East/West Vul. Dealer North.

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

North's A-K-A is not an opening bid (unless your no-trump openings include hands this weak). Most Souths will open 1♠ and pass the heavy response of 1NT. This is technically the best partscore for North/South. The defenders have four hearts and a spade trick but declarer has +120 once diamonds behave. A spade partscore might do even better, though, unless the defenders can cash their hearts; declarer can shake a heart on the 13th diamond and bring home 140.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

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

North/South should have a simple auction such as: 1♠-1NT-2♥-3♥-4♥. Now the question of whether to lead a singleton trump on this sort of auction is a vexed one. When dummy has one spade you may be better off leading diamonds. Here, though, the trump lead saves a trick and holds East to 650. Without it, a complete cross-ruff gives East 12 tricks via the diamond finesse. That overtrick will represent a big matchpoint difference.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

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

Each side will discover their big major-suit fit, the question is where the music will stop. You would expect West to bid on to 5♥ over 4♠, and for South to compete again to 5♠. At that point West may well feel he has done enough, I suspect, and East can hardly overrule him. 5♠ will make easily, with 6♥ rarely being defeated 800 on the diamond ruff, far more often down only 500 for an excellent result.

Board 28. North/South Vul. Dealer West.

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

When the auction starts 1♣-3♠ to South that player now could settle for bidding 3NT – or risk a negative double, knowing that any response but 4♥ will sink him. I'm guessing most will opt for 3NT. A possible winning line is to take the spade lead and play a heart to the ♥Q and ♥K. Subsequently declarer can pass the ♣J, covered all round, followed by a diamond to East's ♦K. Now declarer can arrange to unblock hearts, cash all his winners, and endplay West with the ♦J, to collect a club winner at the end.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

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

East is likely to open a red-suit and raise his partner's response of 2♠ in competition to 4♠. With diamonds 4-2, there are few chances to steal an overtrick unless North misdiscards. A more interesting contract is 3NT, which may take the same ten tricks, for a near-top at Pairs. The defenders can prevent the overtrick if they can unblock their heart winners. But they have to lead and continue that suit rather than attack clubs – and that may not be so easy to do.

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

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

East will open 1♦ and hear West make a negative double of 1♠, and in all probability a pre-emptive raise to 3♠ by North. Now it looks normal to jump to 5♦, only to discover a near Yarborough in dummy (one that would have made 3NT easy!). Still, against 5♦ all South can do is cash ♠A and follow with ♥A, East unblocking the ♥K. Now whatever the defenders do, declarer can finesse in clubs and play diamonds for no loser, to make the game.

Board 31. North/South Vul. Dealer South.

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

Facing a 12-14 no-trump North has the classical hand for a Crawling Stayman auction. When he hears South respond 2♠ he can pass happily, and neither East nor West can sensibly join in. In fact 2♠ plays like a dream (as would 2♥). The defenders have to struggle to get their fourth winner – repeated clubs leads tap the dummy and promote the ♠7. Curiously, the 5-2 heart fit plays better than the 4-4 spade fit; the defence cannot stop 170.

Board 32. East/West Vul. Dealer West.

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

North/South will bid unopposed here, probably with a sequence along the lines of 1♣-1♠-2♣-2♠-Pass. South should not risk 2♥ at his second turn with less than invitational values. The defenders can do very well against 2♠ by leading ♥K and continuing the suit at every turn, while dislodging dummy's trump if declarer does not do so himself. They can collect one heart and two ruffs, to go with their three top winners, for down one.