



The 2022 Charity Challenge Pairs Tuesday 15th March

Once again this year we are raising funds for two different, but closely related Charities – Cancer Research UK and Marie Curie. And again, it is running over five days

Last year, despite all the clubs playing online you managed to raise over £6,000 for each charity which was just amazing and incredibly generous of everyone.

The past year has seen charities receiving less and less as with all the difficulties and uncertainties arising as a result of the pandemic. Many people of course have less disposable income and the charities themselves have found that many of their traditional avenues, such as the Charity Shops, Street Collections etc, were unavailable to them although at least many of them are once again open now thank goodness. But they still need as much as possible to be raised, which is why we ask you to donate, through our website. If you haven't already done so, please [click here to go to the page](#) that gives you all the information.

The future year for Simultaneous Pairs has other Charity events to enjoy - there will be one in July to raise funds for Kidney Research and of course there will be the Children in Need Pairs in November – well we couldn't NOT run that could we !

... and who knows, we may be able to run a WorldWide event again, and maybe one or two events to raise funds for Youth Bridge. Our website will let you know what and when – I will put things onto the front page at <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/> and our calendar at <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/info/calendar.asp> will be kept up to date.

Do join us for some of these events if you can – whether virtually or actually joining in “round the table”. We love to have your company.

We do hope you have enjoyed yourselves, and you will know by know whether the commentator has got it right! This year the event will be “hybrid” with some clubs playing face to face and others online, and I suspect that may well continue into the foreseeable future as people find what suits them best and what they are most comfortable with.

Thank you so much for joining us and please do so again in future !

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Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

♠ A J 4 2 ♥ J 10 7 4 ♦ 10 6 ♣ 10 9 4 ♠ Q 10 7 6 5 ♥ K 8 6 ♦ Q 2 ♣ Q 8 2	♠ K 9 8 3 ♥ 9 5 2 ♦ K 7 5 4 3 ♣ 5 ♠ ♥ A Q 3 ♦ A J 9 8 ♣ A K J 7 6 3
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With the actual layout of the cards you can't quite make Game on the North-South hands. Nonetheless, I reckon most pairs will reach one, be it 5♣, 3NT or the exotic but entirely feasible 4♥. The play is likely to be interesting, too. How, for instance, do you play 3NT by North on a Diamond lead? You can get out for one down but if you try to make the hand you may end up going lots off. I suspect that most of the scores tonight will be 50, 100 and 150 to East-West.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

♠ A Q 6 ♥ K Q 9 5 3 ♦ J 2 ♣ 9 8 5	♠ K J 5 ♥ 8 4 2 ♦ A K 9 8 4 ♣ 10 6 ♠ 10 9 8 7 3 ♥ 7 ♦ 10 5 ♣ K J 7 4 3 ♠ 4 2 ♥ A J 10 6 ♦ Q 7 6 3 ♣ A Q 2
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3NT is an easy enough contract here, despite the nasty layout of the Heart suit. With both Spade honours onside and the Club finesse working it is hard to go down in Game. The only problem is in bidding it with a combined 24 points. South might start with a weak No-trump, leaving North with a choice between 2NT or 3NT. If North chooses the conservative 2NT most Souths should treat their hands as a non-minimum and bid the third.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

♠ A 9 4 3 ♥ 9 8 6 ♦ 6 4 ♣ K J 10 4	♠ K J 10 8 ♥ 5 3 2 ♦ A K Q J ♣ Q 3 ♠ 6 5 2 ♥ A J 10 4 ♦ 10 5 2 ♣ A 5 2 ♠ Q 7 ♥ K Q 7 ♦ 9 8 7 3 ♣ 9 8 7 6
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A part-score deal where North-South may well play in INT. If the defenders cash their tricks (four Clubs and two Aces) then declarer will be held to just 90. Meanwhile, Diamonds has nine easy tricks for 110. Still, it isn't that obvious to take all your tricks against INT – after all, if West were on lead he may burn a trick by leading the ♣J – and many North-Souths will be allowed to make eight or even nine tricks. 110 in Diamonds may be below average.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

♠ 9 8 5 4 ♥ A J ♦ 10 6 5 4 ♣ 9 4 2	♠ ♥ K 9 7 6 3 ♦ A K 7 2 ♣ Q J 8 6 ♠ A K 10 2 ♥ 10 8 5 4 2 ♦ Q ♣ K 10 5 ♠ Q J 7 6 3 ♥ Q ♦ J 9 8 3 ♣ A 7 3
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This deal belongs to North-South in a Diamond part-score, where nine tricks can be made. That might not be easy to reach as the bidding is likely to start 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♣ giving South an awkward call. Still, if he tries 2NT he may be left there and should make it. If North now tries 3♦ he might be left in that. The only way that the marmalade will get stirred on this hand is if East wanders in with a horrible 1♠ overcall. Now anything is possible – such as a large penalty.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

4♥ is the normal spot on the North-South cards and should make an overtrick. Bidding it may not be so easy, though. If East opens 1♠ South has an obvious take-out Double and North a 3♥ (or even 4♥) response. However, if East opens 1♣ (old fashioned but none the worse for that) South will surely Pass and it all gets murky. Still, whether West responds 1♦ or Passes North will surely bid something to show the majors and South's problems will be over.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

With a 4-4 fit and a hatful of points it looks easy enough for North-South to bid and make 4♠ on this hand. The Spades are kind so declarer's losses should be just one trump and one Club, when the finesse fails. The 3NT bashers will get a poor score regardless of whether the opening lead is a Diamond or a Heart – the best you can do is to make 630 and you might go off. There is a moral here somewhere. 6♣ is a horrible contract and deserves to go down.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

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

East-West have a combined 24 points without any great suit length and really should stay short of Game. 2NT is theoretically the limit of the hand but a Heart lead from North may well give away the ninth trick, provided West gets the Clubs right. The best lead is a Spade – easier for South to find than North. Still, if you lead the ♠J and North feels the need to put the ♠Q on it all becomes very messy. Nine tricks in No-trumps may well be made more often than not.

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

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

North-South may play this in 2♠ or a No-trump part-score. With the lie of the cards it is possible to make nine tricks in either strain but few will bid and make Game. At least, 3NT is a contract few would want to be in as it requires a miraculous lie of the cards. If North opens 1NT (reasonable, I reckon) then that will be that. If North opens 1♠ then South will respond 2♣ and either Pass North's 2♠ or try 2NT, a bid North should Pass quickly. Lots of 140s and 150s?

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

<p>♠ J 9 7 ♥ A 4 2 ♦ K 9 7 6 4 ♣ K 9</p> <p>♠ Q 8 6 4 3 ♥ 10 6 ♦ J ♣ A 6 5 3 2</p>	<p>♠ A K 5 2 ♥ K Q J 8 ♦ Q 10 5 2 ♣ 4</p> <p>♠ 10 ♥ 9 7 5 3 ♦ A 8 3 ♣ Q J 10 8 7</p>
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East-West can make 4♠ here but much will depend on North's action. Where North Passes, East will open 1♦ or 1♥ according to taste, West will bid 1♠ and East can raise that to 3♠. West should have no problem bidding Game. If North opens with a weak No-trump (streets better than 1♦ in my book) then it all gets very messy. If North opens 1♦ it is also not at all clear how the auction will progress. What do you do as East? Pass? INT? Double? Who knows?

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

<p>♠ A 10 7 ♥ 3 ♦ Q 10 8 ♣ A Q J 8 5 3</p> <p>♠ Q 8 5 2 ♥ A J 9 6 ♦ A 7 4 ♣ 10 4</p>	<p>♠ K J 9 3 ♥ Q 10 5 4 2 ♦ 6 2 ♣ K 7</p> <p>♠ 6 4 ♥ K 8 7 ♦ K J 9 5 3 ♣ 9 6 2</p>
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With only 20 points between them and no singleton, East-West can make both 4♠ and 4♥. Not that these contracts are desirable (they both rely on good breaks and two finesses) it's just that all pairs would want to compete to the three level in one of the suits. Some East-Wests may Pass throughout, though, allowing North to steal the hand in a Club part-score making nine tricks. If North-South bid (after three Passes) 1♣ – 1♦ – 2♣, West should reopen with a Double.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

<p>♠ Q 9 4 3 ♥ J 5 2 ♦ 10 9 7 6 ♣ 7 2</p> <p>♠ A J 7 ♥ K 7 6 ♦ A Q J 3 ♣ J 8 3</p>	<p>♠ K 10 8 6 2 ♥ 10 9 3 ♦ 5 2 ♣ K Q 6</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ A Q 8 4 ♦ K 8 4 ♣ A 10 9 5 4</p>
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East-West can make Game here with 4♠ and 3NT being decent contracts – after all, after South's 1♣ opening bid it's normal to expect the ♦K to be right. After an unlikely Heart lead you need to pick the Spade suit up without loss – the whole point of the play is whether you can divine that North has Spade length and therefore has the ♠Q. Bidding? After 1♣ – Dbl – Pass – 2♠, West will make another try and 3♣ seems to fit the bill, forcing 3NT from East.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

<p>♠ 10 9 7 4 2 ♥ J 10 ♦ J ♣ K 10 7 3 2</p> <p>♠ Q J 3 ♥ A 9 8 4 ♦ 9 3 2 ♣ Q 9 8</p>	<p>♠ A 5 ♥ K Q 6 3 2 ♦ K Q 8 7 5 ♣ 4</p> <p>♠ K 8 6 ♥ 7 5 ♦ A 10 6 4 ♣ A J 6 5</p>
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East-West have a thin 4♥ on this hand. Although in theory it has no chance (South can give North two Diamond ruffs or can lead a Club to North for a Spade return) in practice it's very hard for the defenders. If South leads a trump, for example, or Ace and another Club 4♥ can make, simply by setting up the Diamonds for two Spade discards in the dummy. Declarer will lose just two Diamonds and a Club. Most will make ten tricks in 3♥ or 4♥.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

<p>♠ K 10 9 ♥ A Q 9 8 2 ♦ A 10 5 ♣ 7 6</p> <p>♠ Q 6 ♥ J 6 4 ♦ J 7 ♣ K J 10 9 8 3</p>	<p>♠ 8 7 5 ♥ 10 7 5 ♦ K Q 9 8 4 2 ♣ 5</p> <p>♠ A J 4 3 2 ♥ K 3 ♦ 6 3 ♣ A Q 4 2</p>
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It is normal to play this hand in 4♠ by South. Those gifted with second sight can actually make all the tricks in Spades by getting trumps right and then running the Hearts. After the ♦J lead, though, it's actually more awkward as South is unaware of the trump position and doesn't know the Hearts will run. Some will run dummy's ♠10, some may try three rounds of Hearts to throw a Diamond away, some may find the ill-starred play of the Club finesse.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

<p>♠ 6 ♥ K J 9 7 6 5 4 3 2 ♦ K 10 3 ♣</p>	<p>♠ K 10 3 ♥ 10 ♦ A J 7 5 ♣ A J 7 6 5</p> <p>♠ J 9 4 ♥ A 8 ♦ 9 8 6 ♣ Q 10 8 4 3</p> <p>♠ A Q 8 7 5 2 ♥ Q ♦ Q 4 2 ♣ K 9 2</p>
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A nasty looking affair! Here South will open 1♠ and West will bid 4♥. Some Norths will Double but I suspect most will try 4♠. Whether or not West tries 5♥ or not is anybody's guess now – as the cards lie it's the right thing to do as ten tricks can always make in Hearts (note that East has two entries to play the Diamonds in the right way). If West does try 5♥ North-South do best to bid on to 5♠, which can always make. Not an easy hand to judge at all.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ 10 9 2 ♥ 10 7 3 ♦ A K Q 8 ♣ K Q 4</p>	<p>♠ A J 7 5 3 ♥ Q 9 ♦ 10 7 4 2 ♣ 5 2</p> <p>♠ Q 8 6 4 ♥ K J ♦ J 3 ♣ A J 8 7 6</p> <p>♠ K ♥ A 8 6 5 4 2 ♦ 9 6 5 ♣ 10 9 3</p>
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Given a free run East-West should reach a routine 3NT. With the lucky Heart position and the Spade blockage East-West can always make eleven tricks in No-trumps. However, if South were to open 2♥ (or a multi 2♦) then East-West need to know what they are doing in the bidding. After 2♥ should West bid at all? If he Doubles Would East not be tempted to bid Spades? Perhaps all roads should lead to 3NT but accidents do happen at this game. We shall see.

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

<p>♠ A ♥ A J 7 4 ♦ K 9 4 2 ♣ A J 6 4</p>	<p>♠ K Q 8 ♥ Q 2 ♦ A 7 3 ♣ K 10 9 8 5</p> <p>♠ J 5 3 ♥ K 10 9 8 6 ♦ Q 10 8 5 ♣ 3</p> <p>♠ 10 9 7 6 4 2 ♥ 5 3 ♦ J 6 ♣ Q 7 2</p>
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4♥ the normal contract on this deal and most pairs will reach it. I suppose if West were to open 1♦ and North were to overcall 2♣ it might be difficult to find the Heart fit. Anyway, if you do reach 4♥ you still have to find the ♥Q and the ♦J to make the maximum, which is twelve tricks. Quite how you divine these "guess" positions I have no idea but some players seem adept at sniffing them out. Lots of 450s, I suspect, with a handful of 420s and 480s.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

<p>♠ K Q 10 7 ♥ 10 3 ♦ J 5 ♣ K J 10 6 4</p>	<p>♠ A 5 2 ♥ Q 6 2 ♦ K 9 7 3 2 ♣ Q 2</p> <p>♠ 6 4 3 ♥ J 7 5 4 ♦ Q 10 8 6 ♣ 9 8</p> <p>♠ J 9 8 ♥ A K 9 8 ♦ A 4 ♣ A 7 5 3</p>
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The normal contract here is 3NT by North-South. This should make by playing patiently on Diamonds but needs good timing. In fact you can actually make an overtrick if you get everything right. Suppose that South gets a Club lead to dummy's ♣Q. Now three rounds of Diamonds to East. Win the Club return, cash the ♥A, cross to the ♥Q and give up the fourth Diamond. Win the Spade switch in dummy, cash the last Diamond and finesse the ♥9 – for a top.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ A Q 2 ♥ A J 7 ♦ Q 9 8 6 5 ♣ A 4</p>	<p>♠ 5 ♥ K 8 2 ♦ 4 2 ♣ K 9 8 6 5 3 2</p> <p>♠ K 10 7 6 4 3 ♥ 10 5 ♦ A K J 10 ♣ 7</p> <p>♠ J 9 8 ♥ Q 9 6 4 3 ♦ 7 3 ♣ Q J 10</p>
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An interesting test of bidding this deal. East-West can make a grand slam in three strains – 7♠, 7♦ and 7NT. Given the vulnerability it is unlikely that North-South will put up too much of a fight so East-West are going to have a free run at it. I suspect that, in practice, most pairs will subside in 6♠ so there will be lots of match-points available for anyone who can reach even 6NT, let alone a grand slam. Maybe I am being unduly cynical. We shall see...

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ Q 10 8 7 4 ♥ 7 6 ♦ K Q 8 6 ♣ 9 2</p>	<p>♠ 5 3 ♥ Q 9 5 3 ♦ 3 ♣ A Q 10 8 6 5</p> <p>♠ J 9 2 ♥ A 4 2 ♦ A J 5 ♣ K 7 4 3</p> <p>♠ A K 6 ♥ K J 10 8 ♦ 10 9 7 4 2 ♣ J</p>
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This seems to be a part-score hand with the points split 20-20. Despite that, North-South can (I did not say should) make a Game (4♥) on any defence. Many will bid, sensibly enough, 1♦ – 1♥ – 2♥ – Pass with East-West having little cause to rise from their slumbers. If East-West do compete they can be held to just seven tricks in Spades so it pays them to lie low and say nuffin'. Also, getting active may cause North-South to push on to Game in Hearts.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

<p>♠ Q 7 5 ♥ K Q 10 2 ♦ 9 8 7 ♣ K J 9</p>	<p>♠ J 8 6 4 3 ♥ J 9 ♦ 10 5 4 2 ♣ Q 5</p> <p>♠ 9 ♥ A 8 7 6 5 4 ♦ A K Q J ♣ A 3</p> <p>♠ A K 10 2 ♥ 3 ♦ 6 3 ♣ 10 8 7 6 4 2</p>
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Another bidding test for East-West, an easier one than Hand 18. Here 6♥ should be bid confidently.. After East opens 1♥ West has a textbook raise to 3♥. Now East can roll out that jack-of-all-trades Roman Key Card Bashwood and West can own up to one key card. Knowing of four-card Heart support opposite East doesn't need to confirm possession of the ♥Q, he can just try 6♥. It's hard to construct a hand where slam has no play and here it is laydown.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

♠ A 10 2 ♥ A 10 4 ♦ 5 3 ♣ J 7 5 4 3	♠ 4 3 ♥ K 5 3 2 ♦ K Q 9 8 ♣ 9 8 2 ♠ K J 9 7 6 5 ♥ Q J ♦ A J 10 2 ♣ Q ♠ Q 8 ♥ 9 8 7 6 ♦ 7 6 4 ♣ A K 10 6
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4♠ is the normal spot on these cards, although some pessimists may play in a Spade part-score. South is likely to cash a top Club and switch to a Heart, won by North's ♥K. North will now probably lead a top Diamond. At this stage it just boils down to guessing the trump position. Those who play the odds and bash out the top trumps will make the contract, those who sniff "computer deals" and try the finesse through North will hold themselves to nine tricks.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

♠ Q 8 ♥ A K Q 9 7 2 ♦ J 8 ♣ Q J 3	♠ K 9 7 ♥ 5 ♦ A Q 5 4 3 ♣ A K 9 8 ♠ A 6 5 3 ♥ 8 3 ♦ K 7 2 ♣ 10 5 4 2 ♠ J 10 4 2 ♥ J 10 6 4 ♦ 10 9 6 ♣ 7 6
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East-West can make 2♥ here and North-South are able to scrape 3♦. West will open 1♥, North will Double and East will bid 1♠. West now has a choice between the overbid of 3♥ and the underbid of 2♥. If the latter then North might Double again, forcing South to bid 2♠ – a bid that might well end the auction. If West plays 3♥ he can't make it after three rounds of Clubs, ruffed. Either a Spade switch or a Diamond to the ♦A and another Club ruff is fatal.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

♠ 10 8 ♥ K 5 ♦ 4 3 2 ♣ A Q 10 9 7 4	♠ K Q 5 4 ♥ A J 10 9 ♦ A J 9 8 7 ♣ ♠ J 6 3 2 ♥ 8 6 3 ♦ Q 10 5 ♣ K J 2 ♠ A 9 7 ♥ Q 7 4 2 ♦ K 6 ♣ 8 6 5 3
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I reckon that the majority of North-South pairs will play this hand in 4♥ making about twelve tricks. Double dummy you can actually make the lot but 7♥ is a farcical contract. How good is 6♥? Well, it isn't that bad a spot and I wouldn't mind being in it. Quite how you reach it though is not easy to say. If North opens 1♦ and makes a splinter bid of 4♣ after a 1♥ response then South may well upgrade three very good cards. Still, 6♥ will be a rare contract, I predict

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

♠ Q J 4 2 ♥ 10 8 5 3 ♦ A 6 ♣ A 6 2	♠ K 3 ♥ K Q 9 7 ♦ Q J 10 2 ♣ Q J 10 ♠ A 8 7 6 5 ♥ 2 ♦ K 8 ♣ K 9 7 5 3 ♠ 10 9 ♥ A J 6 4 ♦ 9 7 5 4 3 ♣ 8 4
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This hand belongs to East-West in Spades where the friendly layout allows them to make eleven tricks. However, bidding 4♠ isn't that easy as North may be able to open a weak No-trump. In fact, some Norths may be able to open a strong No-trump! Provided East-West have methods to counter this they should be all right but some East-Wests may find themselves hamstrung. Indeed, some Norths may be allowed to steal the hand in INT (down two?) for a near top.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

With a lot of points and no real fit most North-Souths pairs will bid this on to 3NT making an unknowable number of tricks. If West leads a Spade then the defenders may well make two Hearts and two Spades; after a Diamond lead things are much less clear. If North plays 3NT a Club lead starts to mess the entries about but the contract should still make, largely because of the crucial ♠8. Perhaps 3NT making on the nose will be the most common score.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

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

4♠ makes for East-West but bidding it may well prove difficult. East could open 1♦ and see that Passed around to North. That player would do well to keep shtum but that's too hard in practice and most will protect with 1♥. Whether this will result in East-West now reaching 4♠ is hard to say. Certainly East should Double 1♥ but that doesn't guarantee that West will value his hand with great enthusiasm or that East will realise that West has five Spades.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

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

East-West should play this hand in a Spade part-score, making just eight tricks. Game is a poor proposition, requiring that South has the ♣J and North the ♦K. It looks straightforward enough – after three Passes (South is a long way from an opening bid. Yuk.) East should open 1♠ and West has a simple raise to 2♠ after South has made a take-out Double. East has no reason to move and there we are. Sometimes bridge is very straightforward.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

The normal thing to happen here is for West to Pass and for North to open 3♠. Now, it boils down to East and whether he is a man or a mouse. Do you bid on that hand or not? Certainly it is wrong to Double but 3NT may be the winning call, even though partner is a Passed hand. Curiously, 3NT works well. Even though it should be defeated it will make eight tricks and that scores better than the -140 that was about to be achieved defending 3♠. A triumph for machismo.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

<p>♠ J 7 2 ♥ K 8 7 6 2 ♦ Q 7 5 2 ♣ 6</p> <p>♠ K 6 4 ♥ 4 ♦ J 10 9 4 ♣ Q J 9 8 4</p>	<p>♠ Q 9 8 ♥ 10 5 ♦ K 8 6 3 ♣ A K 5 2</p> <p>♠ A 10 5 3 ♥ A Q J 9 3 ♦ A ♣ 10 7 3</p>
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4♥ seems to be the normal spot here but might be missed. If East opens 1♣ or 1♦ it is hard to see Game being avoided but if East opens a weak No-trump anything might happen. Still, if South Doubles, West will bid 2♣, North will try 2♥ and South can hardly do less than bid Game. There is a certain Club loser, of course, and two Spade losers unless East-West take their eyes off the ball. So there should be a whole raft of 620s to North-South tonight.

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

<p>♠ Q 8 6 3 ♥ A 10 8 5 ♦ Q 8 ♣ K 8 3</p> <p>♠ A K J 9 5 4 ♥ 9 3 ♦ A J ♣ A Q 6</p>	<p>♠ 7 2 ♥ K Q J 7 6 2 ♦ 10 5 4 ♣ J 5</p> <p>♠ 10 ♥ 4 ♦ K 9 7 6 3 2 ♣ 10 9 7 4 2</p>
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In theory, the only Games that East-West can make are 4♥ and 3NT. 4♠ can always be beaten although might slip through. There are all sorts of possible auctions, starting with 2♥ or 2♦ by East and ending up in some Game or other. In practice, though, a weak two bid should result in East playing the hand in Hearts (it's usually best to play with the trump suit in the weaker hand) so maybe 4♥ making will be a common result. North-South won't bid much.

Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ K 8 6 4 3 ♥ A 7 ♦ Q 2 ♣ A 8 7 5</p>	<p>♠ A 10 5 ♥ Q 3 ♦ A J 7 5 3 ♣ Q J 4</p> <p>♠ Q 7 ♥ K J 10 8 6 2 ♦ 4 ♣ K 9 6 2</p> <p>♠ J 9 2 ♥ 9 5 4 ♦ K 10 9 8 6 ♣ 10 3</p>
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The outcome of this hand isn't clear. East-West can make 4♥ but it isn't obvious to reach it and, anyway, it depends on a favourable lie of the cards. After West opens 1♠ that's a poor vulnerable overcall of 2♦ for North and prudence dictates a Pass. Those players who are constrained to respond INT as East may actually play there, presumably scoring +90 for a near bottom. Those who bid 2♥ are likely to hear West rebid 2♠ and will probably Pass that. Not easy.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

<p>♠ K Q J 9 2 ♥ 7 3 ♦ 10 5 ♣ K Q J 7</p>	<p>♠ A 10 4 ♥ K Q J 9 5 ♦ K 4 ♣ 9 8 2</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ A 10 ♦ A 8 7 6 2 ♣ 10 6 5 4 3</p> <p>♠ 8 7 6 3 ♥ 8 6 4 2 ♦ Q J 9 3 ♣ A</p>
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A competitive deal with East-West able to make 3♣ and North-South, after the automatic Spade lead, a remarkable 5♥! Not that 4♥ is the sort of contract you want to be in but with East holding both red Aces there is no entry to West's Spades. West will open 1♠, North will overcall 2♥ and East will Double. Now it's simply a question of how far each side is prepared to compete. Any North-South who bids and makes 4♥ can't complain of bad luck for a month!