



Commentary for the CBAI Simultaneous Pairs

Wednesday 4th March 2026

Dear Bridge Player,

Thank you very much for playing in the CBAI Simultaneous Pairs 2026, and for your continued support for the Association.

The funds that you contribute via these Simultaneous Pairs will help the CBAI in its ongoing development work – training new teachers and new TDs, promoting the game and trying to attract new members, developing junior bridge, and so on. Many of the input costs, like costs generally these days, are increasing significantly, so your support for this event, and for the various live competitions run during the season by the CBAI, is greatly appreciated.

I hope that you enjoyed the chance to test yourself against your fellow players across Ireland (and for those still playing online, maybe overseas as well). As always, the hands (which are randomly generated by computer with no manual intervention whatsoever) provided plenty of difficult decisions. Many thanks to our expert commentators Jeannie Fitzgerald (Monday), Gay Keaveney (Tuesday), Brian Senior (Wednesday), Enda Glynn (Thursday), and our latest Grand Master Hilary D-L McDonagh (Friday) for their guidance through the fog. I hope that you have picked up some useful tips from their advice. Congratulations to anyone who ends up in the prizes; with over 1,000 pairs playing on most days, you've earned it!

Don't forget to check your standing in the national results at www.ecatsbridge.com/sims. You'll find the daily commentaries there too.

John Phelan

President, Contract Bridge Association of Ireland

Board 4 ♠ A Dealer W
 ♥ 108 Vul: Both
 ♦ KJ107653
 ♣ AQJ

♠ 8762	♠ 543
♥ AJ2	♥ Q964
♦ A94	♦ 2
♣ K75	♣ 98432

♠ KQJ109
 ♥ K753
 ♦ Q8
 ♣ 106

If West opens a weak NT, North may double and East run to 2♣. If so, South can jump to 3♠ or, if concerned about missing a heart fit, cuebid 3♣ as a Staymanic call. Either way, North is likely to end up in 3NT. Double dummy, this can be beaten by the lead of the queen of hearts, but in real life the lead is likely to be a club or, conceivably, a small heart, after which nine tricks can be made.

If West opens 1♣, N/S can have a more comfortable auction. North overcalls 1♦ and rebids 3♦ over South's 1♠ response. South bids 3♥ and North closes proceedings with 3NT.

Not everyone will get to 3NT, so +600 should score quite well for N/S, with 5♦ going down and, of course, +600 beating all the partscores.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	3	2	1	2
S	-	4	2	2	3
E	1	-	-	-	-
W	1	-	-	-	-

Board 5 ♠ KJ1054 Dealer N
 ♥ 4 Vul: N-S
 ♦ AJ86
 ♣ 864

♠ 7 ♥ A10 ♦ K743 ♣ AQJ973	♠ AQ986 ♥ KJ8532 ♦ 10 ♣ K
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♠ 32 ♥ Q976 ♦ Q952 ♣ 1052	
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East is six-five, but the wrong way round to be able to show relative lengths of the two suits without overstating the high-card strength of the hand, at least in traditional methods. Would you prefer to overbid but get the shape across accurately, or not overbid but confuse partner as to the relative lengths of the two suits?

We are talking about an auction beginning 1♠ - 2♣ - 2♥, or an auction beginning 1♥ - 2♣ - 2♠.

My preference is to get the shape right and hope to survive the fact that I have less strength than I have shown. My auction would therefore go 1♥ - 2♣ - 2♠ - 3♣ - 3♠, at which point East has shown six-five and West knows that the hand is a misfit so, despite the high-card strength, signs off in 4♥.

The alternative auction is 1♠ - 2♣ - 2♥ - 3♦ - 3♥, fourth-suit-forcing being necessary as rebidding 3♣ would not be forcing. This time West will continue with 3NT and East may bid 4♥, but West is in the dark about the fact that hearts is actually East's longer suit. West thinks that he now has to choose between a six-one spade fit and a five-two heart fit.

Those playing two-over-one game-forcing have it easier, because the 3♣ rebid is forcing in both auctions by definition but, more to the point, bidding hearts then spades and spades again can be played as promising less strength than in traditional methods, so is relatively safer.

Four Hearts is the place to be, though 5♥ can also be made – but not everyone will manage the eleventh trick. A controlled auction should stop in 4♥, where +450 will score very well despite 11 tricks also being possible, with a little inspiration, if West is allowed to declare 3NT. There won't be many Easts who will do that.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	5	2	5	3	3
W	5	2	5	4	5

Board 6 ♠ 873 Dealer E
 ♥ AJ85 Vul: E-W
 ♦ K976
 ♣ 65

♠ K942 ♠ AQ10
 ♥ 74 ♥ KQ106
 ♦ 10543 ♦ AJ
 ♣ KJ3 ♣ Q1094

♠ J65
 ♥ 932
 ♦ Q82
 ♣ A872

Those playing five-card majors will open 1♣ as dealer and rebid 2NT over the 1♦/♠ response. Most Wests will then go on to game.

If playing Acol, some will prefer to open 1♥, and they too will jump to 2NT over the 1♠ response. Again, most Wests will raise to 3NT.

With a nice club fit, spades three-three, and both missing heart honours onside, it is easy enough to see where nine tricks will come from. Indeed, if North does not lead a diamond through on winning the ace of hearts, at least one overtrick is possible.

However, if South leads a heart and North wins and switches to a diamond, or South leads a club and declarer chooses to play on hearts before clubs, the defence can come to three diamond tricks to go with their two aces and down will go the contract.

It isn't good enough for South to lead a diamond as declarer's ten and jack combine to provide a second stopper.

I expect 3NT to make more often than not.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	2	3	4	2
W	4	2	2	3	2

Board 7 ♠ A1098 Dealer S
 ♥ KJ Vul: Both
 ♦ AK106
 ♣ K109

♠ KJ754 ♥ 5 ♦ Q92 ♣ QJ63	♠ ♥ A10963 ♦ J753 ♣ A852
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♠ Q632 ♥ Q8742 ♦ 84 ♣ 74	
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There will be two passes to North, who will open whatever the agreed system requires.

If that is 1♠, some Easts will scrape up a take-out double – surely more flexible and therefore safer than a 2♥ overcall on that suit.

That could see some Souths making a pre-emptive raise to 3♠ and going minus on a deal which actually belongs to their side.

A 1♣ or 1♦ opening is likely to see East overcall 1♥, a pass from South, and perhaps a 1♠ response from West. If North now passes, East will bid whichever is the unbid minor, and may play there. Two Clubs can be made, while 2♦ should be defeated.

But North will often try INT, and now East is too weak to bid again on a misfit and facing a passed partner. West, however, might compete with 2♣ if that suit is unbid.

North has 18 HCP but no dummy entry and no suit that can be effectively played from hand. It rates to go down one unless the defence slips up.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	1	2	-
S	-	-	1	2	-
E	2	1	-	-	-
W	2	1	-	-	1

Board 8 ♠ 7 Dealer W
 ♥ Q52 Vul: None
 ♦ AK2
 ♣ AJ10653

♠ J8654	♠ Q1092
♥ KJ98	♥ A107
♦ J84	♦ Q1063
♣ 8	♣ Q4

♠ AK3	
♥ 643	
♦ 975	
♣ K972	

North will open 1♣. Playing traditional methods, South can raise invitationally to 3♣ and North will have sufficient to go on. It is not yet clear which game, 3NT or 5♣, will be better, depending on where South's high-card strength lies.

North's best continuation is 3♦, a NT probe and showing diamond strength. South will bid 3♠, denying much heart strength but showing spades – but not four cards as the 3♣ raise pretty much denied a four-card major. North will conclude the auction with 3NT.

On a passive lead declarer has 10 top tricks. The only slight worry will come if East leads a heart, but even then nine tricks are assured, and ten unless declarer puts up the queen at trick two after West wins the king and continues the suit.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	4	-	1	-	4
S	4	-	1	-	3
E	-	-	-	2	-
W	-	-	-	2	-

Board 9 ♠ A10976 Dealer N
 ♥ AQ86 Vul: E-W
 ♦ 8
 ♣ A104

♠ 43 ♥ J ♦ Q653 ♣ K96532	♠ KQ85 ♥ 974 ♦ A10974 ♣ Q
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♠ J2 ♥ K10532 ♦ KJ2 ♣ J87	
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If playing Acol, South is just worth a 2♥ response to the 1♠ opening. North is well worth a raise to game, and can do so via a 4♦ splinter bid to show a sound raise to game with a shortage in diamonds.

South will hate the diamond wastage facing the shortage, and should quickly sign off in 4♥, where 11 tricks can be made if declarer gets the diamond right as the club loser can be pitched on the spades. Having said which, some will, quite reasonably, take two spade finesses, so losing two tricks in the suit and three in all.

Playing other methods, South has to respond 1NT and now North will rebid 2♥ – a 2♣ overcall from West would not affect this. Some Souths will love their fifth heart and raise to game, while others will content themselves with a simple raise to 3♥. Now North will have a big decision to make.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	5	3	2
S	-	-	5	3	2
E	1	2	-	-	-
W	1	2	-	-	-

Board 10 ♠ 762 Dealer E
 ♥ AK873 Vul: Both
 ♦ J
 ♣ K642

♠ 10954 ♥ 1065 ♦ 5 ♣ J10873	♠ Q3 ♥ Q942 ♦ AK632 ♣ A5
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♠ AKJ8 ♥ J ♦ Q109874 ♣ Q9	
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Weak No-trumpers will open the East hand with 1♦ and that will go round to North. Double would be the big winner here, as E/W have nowhere to wriggle to that doesn't cost at least -800, but the normal action is to overcall 1♥.

South should respond 1♠ to that and North should probably pass – matchpoints is not the game at which to strain to reach thin games, and North should bear in mind that partner did not bid over 1♦.

It looks to be between eight and nine tricks in 2♠.

N/S are also close to making 3NT, though they really shouldn't get so high. Diamonds can be played for four tricks by overtaking the jack with the queen, and only a heart lead, from West, looks to threaten the contract.

If playing strong NT, that is what I would recommend East to open. The alternative is to open 1♦ and plan to rebid 2♦, which doesn't look right, or open 1♦ then reverse into 2♥ if partner responds 1♠. I'd rather have an extra point or two to get into the sometimes slightly murky world of reverses.

What happens over a strong NT opening will depend on the N/S methods. Can South show a four-card major and longer minor, or will he jump to 3♦ because 2♦ is artificial? If South passes North will presumably be able to come in – at worst with a simple natural 2♥ bid.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	4	2	3	3
S	2	3	2	2	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 11 ♠ AJ2 Dealer S
 ♥ A104 Vul: None
 ♦ A1086
 ♣ K106

♠ Q10953	♠ K87
♥ Q965	♥ 832
♦ J3	♦ Q542
♣ 42	♣ A85

♠ 64	
♥ KJ7	
♦ K97	
♣ QJ973	

North has a classical strong NT and, if that is what is opened, South can raise directly to game. If East leads from queen to four diamonds, that picks up three diamond tricks for declarer without losing one, while a passive heart lead picks up the queen for declarer. Playing on clubs, either may see 11 tricks made.

Acopl players will open 1♦ and rebid 2NT over the 2♣ response, raised to game by South. That may convince East to lead a heart, as diamonds are no longer a sensible option.

Those for whom 1♣ is the systemic opening will also get to 3NT easily enough. South will respond whichever of 2♣ and 3♣ is the stronger in their methods, and North show a strong NT type.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	5	4	3	1	5
S	4	4	3	1	4
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 16 ♠ 653 Dealer W
 ♥ 3 Vul: E-W
 ♦ A43
 ♣ AQJ1064

♠ 74	♠ AQ2
♥ AK85	♥ Q97642
♦ KQJ86	♦ 52
♣ 83	♣ 72

♠ KJ1098
 ♥ J10
 ♦ 1097
 ♣ K95

West opens 1♦ and North overcalls 2♣.

Now East is awkwardly placed, wanting to show the hearts but not being strong enough to bid a forcing 2♥. The solution is to start with a negative double, intending to over-rule whatever partner's response. For example, if West rebids 2♦, 2♥ from East now shows long hearts but less than the strength for an immediate 2♥ bid.

In practice, South might get involved, either via simple raise to 3♣, or by introducing the spades. It isn't clear how the auction will progress from here. What we can say is that N/S can make nine tricks in either black suit, while E/W can make 3♥.

Anyone who is allowed to play 3♥ and makes +140 should score very well. Likewise, +140 in 3♠ should score very well. The problem for both pairs may be that once they find the major-suit fit they will need to avoid getting too high.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	3	-	-	3	-
S	3	-	-	3	-
E	-	2	3	-	-
W	-	2	3	-	-

Board 17 ♠ AQ1097 Dealer N
 ♡ 85 Vul: None
 ♦ KJ1042
 ♣ 2

♠ J32 ♡ 4 ♦ Q765 ♣ J8763	♠ 865 ♡ AKJ762 ♦ A3 ♣ K5
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♠ K4
 ♡ Q1093
 ♦ 98
 ♣ AQ1094

North has only 10 HCP, but the five-five shape, coupled to the fact that all of the high cards are concentrated in the long suits, including the two tens, makes the hand well worth a 1♠ opening.

East has an easy 2♥ overcall and South should pass, hoping for a reopening double which can be left in to collect a healthy penalty. West will pass, of course, and now North has a big decision to take.

It is easy to see that E/W are in trouble, with nowhere to run to if North doubles, but will North double, having only opened because of the shape of the hand? Or, put it another way, if we were playing penalty doubles and partner doubled 2♥, would we be happy to leave in that double, or would we take it out into our second suit?

If the answer to that question is that we would not leave in a penalty double, then we clearly should not make a reopening double, because partner is heavy favourite to be looking for a penalty to explain how little bidding is being done around the table.

If North does double, that will end the auction, and N/S should collect +500. If North bids 3♦, South will bid 3NT and the favourable lie of the cards means +400. And if North just passes out 2♥? Well, that will be that and N/S will score only +150 and South will be frustrated.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	3	2	3	3
S	1	3	2	3	3
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 18 ♠ Q1064 Dealer E
 ♥ 9875 Vul: N-S
 ♦ 9
 ♣ J743

♠ AKJ832	♠ 95
♥ J	♥ A43
♦ Q1065	♦ AK843
♣ 85	♣ Q106

♠ 7	
♥ KQ1062	
♦ J72	
♣ AK92	

If playing a weak NT, that should be East's choice of opening bid. West should transfer and bid game in spades. For those who play four-level transfers that is better than starting with 2♥ then raising the response to game as it cuts the opposition out of the auction.

Four Spades is an excellent contract which just happens to fail because there are two trump losers and the club losers should be going nowhere.

If system requires that East open 1♦, South overcalls 1♥ and West bids 1♠. North will raise hearts, perhaps with a pre-emptive jump to 3♥. Even a raise to 2♥ will silence East, but West will bid gain.

If West jumps to 3♠, East may raise to game, but if West bids 3♠ without a jump East may not. The latter sees E/W score an excellent +140. But West should be aware that 3♠ over an opposing 3♥ will appear just to be competitive when the hand is worth more than that. West may therefore bid 4♠ instead of 3♠, and that will see E/W going minus. This is also the likely outcome if North's raise to 3♥ tempted South to go on to 4♥. Now West will surely bid 4♠ as a two-way shot, the right thing to do if either major-suit game is making.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	2	-	3	-	-
S	2	-	3	-	-
E	-	4	-	3	2
W	-	4	-	3	2

Board 19 ♠ A7 Dealer S
 ♥ Q74 Vul: E-W
 ♦ KQ762
 ♣ AK10

♠ KQJ10	♠ 85432
♥ 1052	♥ A96
♦ A109	♦ J853
♣ Q72	♣ 5

♠ 96	
♥ KJ83	
♦ 4	
♣ J98643	

If playing weak NT, that is what West will open, and North has an easy double. East won't fancy that and may run directly to 2♠, over which South, with no interest in defence, may compete with 3♣. That should end the auction, though some Norths will take a shot at 3NT.

Even if declarer picks up the clubs without loss, 3NT is hopeless on a spade lead.

Or perhaps East's methods permit him to show two places to play, 2♦ showing diamonds and a higher-ranking suit? West responds 2♥, pass or correct, and that finds the spade fit.

If playing a strong NT, West will usually open 1♣, and North is just a touch too strong for a 1NT overcall so should double. Most Easts will bid 1♠ and South will perhaps bid 2♥. When West raises to 2♠, North should double as the most flexible way forward. South will respond 3♣ to the double, not only showing long clubs, but also denying a fifth heart, which is important information for North.

Will N/S manage to stop in time – a spade lead beats 5♣ as well as 3NT? Perhaps if North bids 3♠ over 3♣ and South simply repeats the clubs, having no help in spades? I can see a lot of N/Ss getting to one of the doomed games.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	4	2	3	-	2
S	4	2	3	-	2
E	-	-	-		-
W	-	-	-		-

Board 20 ♠ J9 Dealer W
 ♥ A4 Vul: Both
 ♦ J1093
 ♣ 109652

♠ 743 ♠ AKQ6
 ♥ 10872 ♥ 53
 ♦ K72 ♦ Q854
 ♣ KJ3 ♣ A87

♠ 10852
 ♥ KQJ96
 ♦ A6
 ♣ Q4

South opens 1♥, North responds 1NT, and East doubles, take-out of hearts.

South may rebid the hearts and play there, or East may make a second double and West leave it in for a sweaty one down which is rewarded with the magic +200 on a partscore deal. It won't be that West is confident of beating 2♥ doubled, but what other option is there?

If South passes over the double of 1NT, West has an equally unpleasant set of options. He really can't leave in the double when holding no sure heart stopper, but has no four-card suit to bid.

Maybe West will pass the double, praying that partner is strong. As long as the defence establishes a diamond winner they will have seven tricks for down one, though choosing an opening lead is another problem for West.

And if West is not prepared to pass out 1NT doubled? Will they bid 2♣, arguing that this is the cheapest bid so leaving room for East to correct to their own preferred suit, or will they opt for 2♠ on the basis that, being the unbid major, it is the suit East is most likely to have four of, which is a lot less certain in the case of either minor?

Somehow scrambling into 2♦, and don't ask me how E/W manage to do that, is the only way to go plus by declaring the hand, so the gambling pass out of the double is the big winner for E/W.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	1	-	-
S	-	-	1	-	-
E	1	2	-	1	1
W	1	2	-	1	1

Board 21 ♠ KJ107 Dealer N
 ♡ QJ1032 Vul: N-S
 ♦ 1087
 ♣ 6

♠ 84	♠ A632
♡ A9	♡ 65
♦ KJ3	♦ 965
♣ AK9752	♣ Q1083

♠ Q95	
♡ K874	
♦ AQ42	
♣ J4	

South may open a weak NT and West will double. North has 7 HCP but it would be a gamble to stand for the double, and most will either just bid 2♥, transfer to 2♥, or bid 2♥ showing both majors, according to the agreed methods. All of these possibilities end up with N/S finding the nine-card heart fit and West most likely bidding 3♣.

With the diamonds as they are, there are ten easy tricks in a club contract, but a heart lead beats 3NT, should E/W get to that contract. It looks as though a spade ruff would beat 2♥, but West can be endplayed to ensure the eighth trick and, if there is no ruff, a similar ending could see declarer emerge with nine tricks.

If South opens 1♦, West overcalls 2♣ and North doubles. East can raise to 3♣ and, with a poor minimum opener, South should pass. Will West try for game? If so they had better stop in 4♣, as we have already seen that no game is making. Or will 3♣ be passed round to North and North double for a second time, judging the club shortage to be more important than his minimum in high-card terms?

That last auction gets South to 3♥. West may take the push to 4♣, or perhaps a sharp matchpoint double will net +200?

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♡	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	2	-	-
S	-	1	2	1	-
E	4	-	-	-	2
W	4	-	-	-	2

Board 22 ♠ K42 Dealer E
 ♥ KQ1095432 Vul: E-W
 ♦
 ♣ Q4

♠ A76	♠ Q
♥ 86	♥ A7
♦ K842	♦ AQJ1095
♣ KJ86	♣ A1053

♠ J109853	
♥ J	
♦ 763	
♣ 972	

East opens 1♦ and an aggressive South might take advantage of the favourable vulnerability and make a 2♠ weak jump overcall – as long as we have the necessary suit, I don't believe it is possible to be too weak for a weak jump overcall at this vulnerability.

If West bids a natural 2NT or cuebids 3♠ to show a good club raise, North will bid 4♥, just as he would if South had not bid. Now it will just be a matter of how brave East is feeling. The East hand has a lot of playing strength with its six-four shape, and is full of controls. A forcing pass, available if West has effectively forced to game, might allow East to let West into the decision-making process, otherwise East has to close his eyes and bid either 5♦ or 6♦.

Say that South leads the jack of hearts against 6♦ and declarer wins the ace. Whilst drawing trumps he should eliminate spades by ruffing the suit twice. Now, what to do about the clubs?

In isolation, cashing the ace then running the ten is correct, as ♣Q9xx can be picked up this way around but not if North has that holding. But is four-one clubs possible? North has three spades and no diamonds. Is he 3-8-0-2 or 3-7-0-3, and which way should we take the finesse?

Obviously, the hand which is longer in clubs is more likely to hold the queen, by a 60-40% margin, but we still cannot be sure of the distribution.

Playing ace and another heart for an endplay might be attractive at first sight, but North can win and give a ruff and discard and we still need to find the missing queen.

I like cashing ace and king of clubs and conceding the third round if the queen has not appeared. This line wins when North is 3-7-0-3 but South has the ♣Q and also when North is 3-8-0-2, irrespective of who has the queen, because the third round endplays South, if he has it, to give a ruff and discard and there is no heart loser.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	2	-	-
S	-	-	2	-	-
E	6	6	-	-	6
W	7	6	-	-	6

Board 26 ♠ 9 Dealer E
 ♥ Q85432 Vul: Both
 ♦ K6
 ♣ KJ102

♠ 8543	♠ AJ72
♥ A106	♥ K
♦ 8542	♦ Q73
♣ 53	♣ AQ764

♠ KQ106	
♥ J97	
♦ AJ109	
♣ 98	

East will open 1♣ and South is just about worth a take-out double, the assorted tens and nines tipping the balance. West has no reason to get involved, so the board will be decided by North.

I can imagine some players jumping to 4♥, while others content themselves with just 2♥. For me, the former is an overbid, particularly given the form of scoring and that clubs have been bid by left-hand opponent, while the latter is an underbid, given that it could be bid with the same high cards but two fewer hearts.

I like 3♥, a bid that many players forget about. It is highly invitational and shows long hearts, not just four, begging partner to find an excuse to go on to game. With this hand South will decline the invitation so 3♥ will end the auction.

Even 3♥ is hard work for declarer. Only the fact that there is no quick entry to the West hand prevents the defence from winning their five top tricks. As it is, East is endplayed.

Whatever East leads, declarer can either avoid a spade loser, or avoid a second club loser, according to how East defends. Try it and see.

For all that, not everyone will find the way home, so I expect +140 to score pretty well for N/S.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	1	2	3	-	2
S	1	-	1	-	2
E	-	-	-	1	-
W	-	-	-	1	-

Board 28 ♠ AJ95 Dealer W
 ♥ 764 Vul: N-S
 ♦ 543
 ♣ 1096

♠ 1082 ♠ KQ
 ♥ KQ105 ♥ AJ98
 ♦ 9 ♦ AK2
 ♣ A7532 ♣ QJ84

♠ 7643
 ♥ 32
 ♦ QJ10876
 ♣ K

Most Easts will open 2NT in third seat and West will use some version of Stayman, quickly finding the heart fit.

West, with strong hearts and some potentially valuable distribution, is worth a slam try, precisely what being dependent on the partnership methods, but West has a poor hand in context of a 2NT opening, so should not co-operate.

Nonetheless, some will bid to slam, only to find that it is a poor contract.

There are two ways declarer could try to play clubs for no losers. The first is to lay down the ace, making when the king is singleton, and the other is to lead the queen, planning to run it, which works when South has king-doubleton.

The good news is that one of those plays works; the bad news is that the winning play is well against the odds. Cashing the ace works when either defender has the bare king, two of the four three-one breaks, while the finesse works for three of the six two-two breaks. You won't be surprised to hear that one of three lay-outs is more likely than one of two lay-outs, and declarer should be aware of that so take the losing option and go down.

Anyone who scores +980 will have a huge board, and +480 should also score very well.

Makeable Contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	=	=	=	=	==
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	6	1	6	1	6
W	6	1	6	1	6