



# The 2026 Welsh Bridge Union Simultaneous Pairs Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup>, the monthly **Cake Club** on October 14<sup>th</sup>. 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 17<sup>th</sup> sees the **MWBA McKindley Teams**, and on the 18<sup>th</sup> 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.**

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

Many Souths will bid 2♦ over 1♣ (whether weak or intermediate) to take away East/West's bidding space. Even if North ups the ante to 4♦, East/West should still reach 4♥ anyway. After the top diamond lead, East can see that a second diamond promotes a trump for North if he had four, so he might get the trumps right. East still needs to take a deep finesse in clubs to come home, though. +420 would be a great board here – 5♦ is only set -300 on an initial trump lead.

**Board 2. North/South Vul. Dealer East.**

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

After East opens INT South should overcall (most players these days have a way to show this sort of two-suiter). Now the issue is whether North will drive to game. If so will he blast 3NT (making only 600) or explore to find spades. In 4♠ on a trump lead declarer can ruff out the hearts, and lead up to the ♣K, or ruff out the ♦KQ. But I cannot see a way to combine all the necessary plays to come to 12 tricks. The 4-1 trump break looks too inconvenient.

**Board 3. East/West Vul. Dealer South.**

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

East/West can use a strong jump shift here easily enough to get to one of a making slam, but getting to the highest scoring slam at Pairs is a challenge. An auction 1♣-2♦-3♣-4♣-4NT-5♥-6♣ is simple enough. But if East can find diamond support and the ♠A, he might use Blackwood himself, and drive to 6NT. At Pairs it appears that reaching a minor-suit slam will score reasonably, but no better than that. You need to play no-trump to get all the marbles.

**Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.**

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

I'd guess most will choose to bid 1♦, because they can get both suits into play efficiently. Whether or not North overcalls 1♥, East/West will surely play 4♠. After two top hearts, one or other defender might shift to clubs. Declarer will win, play ♠A-Q, (unless North's false-card of the ♠9 misleads him) and then clear the diamonds; ten tricks made. BUT....a better shot for North/South is to give two ruff and discards. Declarer can survive, but may well misread the position.

**Board 5. North/South Vul. Dealer North.**

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

As a dedicated member of the 'raise with three trumps' fan-club, I wonder what else the dissenters would do as East if they do not open 1♦ then raise 1♠ to 2♠? Defending 2♠, North is likely to lead a club. West wins his ♣A and might now guess to lead a heart to dummy's ♥K (and North might make the guess easier). If so, the favourable lies in both red suits, with ♣Q onside for the ruffing finesse, mean West might bring home 170 for a huge result.

**Board 6. East/West Vul. Dealer East.**

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

Are you a purist or pragmatist? Sometimes one has to choose one approach or the other, and after 1♣-3♣ West can guess to rebid 3NT or explore scientifically with 3♦. I favour the latter approach, but today blasting 3NT would get North to lead a diamond, to concede 11 tricks. Going the slow route would get East to declare 3NT and South would find the heart lead. You pays your money, you takes your choice. 5♣ makes 600 of course, for an average score?

**Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.**

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

West will overcall 2♥ over 1NT at many tables, and North will join in with 2♠. East now has enough to bid 3♥ (♥A4 is pretty decent support here) and will South bid 3♠? I think he might, and now after a heart lead and diamond shift -- yes, a heart continuation might be better -- North will do well to manage to escape for down one. -200 will surely be a disaster for North/South but East/West can make 3♥ – and also, believe it or not, 3NT on their 17-count!

**Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.**

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

Facing a 2NT opening (if North upgrades because of his five-card suit) South should transfer into 4♥ and deny slam interest, or transfer and offer 3NT. Either way, North will declare 4♥, and on any lead but a spade can get clubs going at once. In fact by guessing trumps he might make +480. Compare how awkward 4♥ by South is on a diamond lead. If the defenders win ♦K and shift to spades, even ten tricks become something of a struggle. Some may go down in 4♥.

**Board 9. East/West Vul. Dealer North.**

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

North is unsuitable for a 12-14 no-trump; most will open 1♥ and rebid 2NT over 2♣. When South shows 3-card heart support North will raise to 4♥. East might understandably lead either a spade or diamond, but a club gives declarer the worst problems. At double-dummy he can win in hand, pitch a diamond on the spade, and then exit with ♥A and a heart. The chances of this line succeeding are slim – but it works in practice. There are, however, better, less successful lines at single-dummy.

**Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.**

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

South will open 1♠ and West must pass now. When North responds 1NT East might wander in with 2♣. If South can double that for penalties, West might run to 2♥. North would think he had a fair double now, but he would be wrong! On the lead of ♠10, the defenders can only prevail if South avoids splitting his spade honours. Any defender who finds that play would deserve his partner's applause. Students of the bizarre will note that 3NT is cold from South.

**Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.**

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

Do you believe you should open the West cards 1♦ or 1♠? The former works considerably better today. If you open the West cards 1♠, East will play 3NT – and North will be able to double for a spade lead, and +300. If West opens 1♦, then North will overcall 1♠, and the final contract is likely to be a partscore in diamonds, hearts, or no-trump, from West. The favourable heart-break means you can make game in either red-suit, not that you'd want to be there.

**Board 12. North/South Vul. Dealer West.**

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

A weak 2♦ opening by West would surely buy the contract here. But many will have to pass, letting South open 1NT. Now a Stayman auction will probably get North to 2♥ one way or another, and if West overcalls in diamonds, North may just simply bid 2♥ now. Against 2♥ the defenders have four top winners, so the key for North/South is to try to establish the 13<sup>th</sup> spade before the defenders get a ruff or a force going. Quite a few matchpoints will hinge on this.

**Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.**

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

South will open 1♠ and North can choose between raising spades or bidding no-trump. Either way, North/South will have to pick between 3NT and 4♠ with two balanced hands and an eight-card fit. 3NT by South on a top diamond lead can be made by guessing ♠Q, and then leading a heart towards the ♥Q9. 4♠ needs you to handle both majors correctly and also to endplay East in hearts; anyone bringing home +420 on a top diamond lead will have earned their top!

**Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.**

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

This looks like a good hand for strong no-trumps. South will open 1NT and be raised to 3NT, making, perhaps with overtricks, on a diamond lead. But most Souths will open 1♣ and after North's 1♦ response East can double. Now even if North/South get to 3NT from the South seat, game is in severe jeopardy on either major-suit lead. The spade blockage means declarer can still make nine tricks on that lead, but a heart lead should set the game by force.

**Board 15. North/South Vul. Dealer South.**

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

Most Souths will respect the vulnerability and pass, leaving North to open 1♦ in third chair. East will probably overcall 1NT (yes, the hand is maybe sub- minimum, but passing does not win Pairs contests)

Now East/West will probably bid to 4♥, down a trick. Since 3NT is down two on the likely club lead, East/West can only go plus by playing partscore or defending minor-suits contracts. +140 from 3♥ will score very well here.

**Board 16. East/West Vul. Dealer West.**

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

West will open 1♣ and hear a double on his left and 1♠ on his right. Even at unfavourable vulnerability, it seems reasonable to act, by either doubling or rebidding 2♣. But South will generally declare 2♠ on the lead of ♣K. Declarer may not feel able to duck this, and his best move next is to advance the ♠J, although a low spade to the eight also makes sense. While eight tricks are easy, collecting +140 should earn North/South the lion's share of the matchpoints.

**Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.**

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

It looks too aggressive for South to overcall a weak no-trump, but he might back in over a transfer to hearts. That delayed sequence would probably prevent North from driving to game; indeed, as the cards lie, North should pass 2♠, since that is technically the limit of the hand. Mind you South will make 140 if West leads anything but a heart. Some East/West pairs will compete to 3♥ and buy the contract, going down just one trick there, for a fine score.

**Board 18. North/South Vul. Dealer East.**

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

The North cards do not look worth an invitation facing a 1NT opening bid, so North will transfer and pass the 2♥ response. As it happens, game is excellent for North/South here, but they may get a second chance. East might stretch to re-open with a take-out double (probably unnecessarily aggressive at Pairs). If East re-opens, North/South might stop off to double their opponents and collect 300 against either spades or diamonds.

**Board 19. East/West Vul. Dealer South.**

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

In third seat any North worth his salt will exploit the vulnerability to open with a diamond pre-empt. It will probably not prevent East/West getting their act together, though; East will double, and West will bid on to 4♥, for 680. Perhaps some North/South pairs might find their sacrifice in 5♦. If you look at the North/South cards, you might hope to get out for 300. Alas, the defenders have THREE spade ruffs coming for 800 if they are accurate – but they will need to be very precise.

**Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.**

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

Both the North and South hands present difficult problems in valuation. Should North double 1♣ or plan to bid spades, then hearts? And if North bids 1♠ as I think he should, will South raise to 3♠ when East makes a pre-emptive jump to 3♥? The bottom line is that East/West can make eight tricks in hearts (nine if West was declarer!) while North/South can only take seven tricks in spades. So there will be virtually no contracts making here today.

**Board 21. North/South Vul. Dealer North.**

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

Another difficult hand for North/South, who are the ♠9 away from a decent slam. South will force to game and show hearts, North will make a constructive raise, South will start cue-bidding, and it will be very hard to apply the breaks in time. On a top club lead declarer cannot both strip off the clubs and lead spades from dummy. He could only make if the defenders donated him an extra entry to dummy, or (far more likely) if East forgets to cover the ♠10!

**Board 22. East/West Vul. Dealer East.**

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

In third seat vulnerable will West open 1♣ or an insouciant INT? If he opens 1♣ then North/South bid smoothly to 3NT, and should make on a heart lead. However, a club lead sets up the clubs for the defence before declarer can knock out both the spade and diamond honours. If West opens INT then the red cards will start to fly, with East/West likely to end up in 2♥ doubled. East should manage to emerge with six tricks – but a very poor matchpoint result.

**Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.**

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

Would you overcall 4♥ as West over 1♠? To my mind, it acts as a transfer to 4♠ for the opponents, and I'm not sure you want that to happen. If you just bid 2♥, then 3♥, North/South will probably buy the hand in a spade partscore and make nine or ten tricks. If you bid 4♥ you may play it there, and even if undoubled will go down 200. Or you might push North/South into 4♠, and now South might make his game by guessing spades or by a trump reduction if he does not.

**Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.**

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

If East does not open 2NT (not a particularly attractive hand for this action) he can choose to bid 1♣ or 1♠ -- I prefer the latter. If South rashly pre-empt to 3♥ he will get to play there doubled at many tables – and be lucky to escape for only three down. Of course 3NT makes ten tricks fairly comfortably for East/West, so this would not be a tragedy at teams; but at Pairs +500 will surely collect the bulk of the matchpoints.

**Board 25. East/West Vul. Dealer North.**

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

As West if you heard 2♠ on your left, raised to 3♠ on your right, you'd bid 3NT – wouldn't you? Who needs red-suit stoppers? East might raise to 4NT but no harm will be done. Thanks to the lie of the red-suits, it may not do North any good to avoid leading a spade. He can be endplayed with a heart to broach spades at the death. In practice, West is likely only to make 630 unless the defence lead spades. Note that 2♠-4♠ might actually buy the pot undoubled!

**Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.**

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

East/West will have an unopposed auction 1♣-1♥-1♠-3♠-4♠ at most tables (although at Pairs it would not be unreasonable for East to raise only to 2♠ and for East/West to miss game now). On a normal diamond lead from North, declarer will draw two rounds of trumps then cross-ruff till the cows come home. After wrapping up 12 tricks East will ask innocently if he should have done more – but +480 is a lot less embarrassing than +230!

**Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.**

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

After South opens 1♥ North almost has to raise to 2♥, since 2♦ requires a far better hand than this. East will compete with 2♠, South will re-raise to 3♥, and that will end proceedings. On the lead of ♠J declarer will surely bring home ten tricks without raising too much of a sweat. +170 may score North/South below average, since the odd East/West pair will go overboard, and some North/South pairs may reach 4♥ – but there again, some may play no-trump and not enjoy it.

**Board 28. North/South Vul. Dealer West.**

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

After West opens 1♣ and North overcalls 1♥ East will have a negative double available, planning to correct clubs to diamonds. Now it gets murky: South will redouble if he plays that to show a good hand, and then he should compete to 2♥ over 2♦. Can anyone do any more? The answer is that they should not. South can double 3♦ and set it 300 after three rounds of hearts, ruffed, by shifting to trumps.

**Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.**

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

The standard auction 1♠-2♦-2NT-3NT will put East on lead with an obvious fourth-highest club. The defenders can clear clubs and sit back to wait to get on play in diamonds. But declarer will cash ten winners first, and East will forlornly have to discard all his clubs to retain his diamond guard. +630 will be very common here – but probably represent a 60% board or so, because of all the other quirky results that invariably occupy a travelling score-slip!

**Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.**

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

East has a classical super-maximum weak no-trump, but no other action really appeals. In fact, when South doubles, the board will become a delicate partscore battle. West will introduce his clubs, North his diamonds, and maybe West will compete again in hearts. Where should the music stop? The answer is that the last making contract is for East-West. They can take eight tricks in either major or in no-trump; meanwhile 3♦ by North collects at least eight tricks.

**Board 31. North/South Vul. Dealer South.**

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

After South opens 1♦ West has a sensible 4♠ overcall; but will either North or South find another bid now? They should not do so, since par on the board is 420 for East/West, and any five-level contract by North/South will cost 800 on accurate defence. Still, it is not so clear that anyone will double 5♦. Thus the odd South might register -300 or 400, and score surprisingly well!

**Board 32. East/West Vul. Dealer West.**

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

When West opens 2♥ plenty of undisciplined Norths hazard a 2♥ overcall. Few experts come in with moderate suits on poor hands, but people do it until they get punished once too often. This time nothing bad will happen to North, since East will jump to 4♠ and play there. Even if North stays silent, any partnership using key-card Blackwood won't get beyond 5♠ here. With the ♠K singleton onside 12 tricks are easy. Any strong-club pair who reach spades by East, on a heart lead will get a zero.