



COMMENTARY FOR THE SBU EASTER PAIRS 2026

Wednesday 25th March 2026

Thank you for supporting the SBU Easter Pairs 2026. We do hope you enjoyed the hands, found them interesting, challenging and fun whatever result you ended up with! There are generous overall masterpoint awards and red points for those who do well as the local points awarded by your own club for doing well there.

So now you can relax and enjoy the commentary and see how well you did on the website of course !

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Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

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

It is a strange layout, in that all four players could open the bidding at some tables and all could pass. North could open 2♥ but, with poor hearts and four spades, should pass. East could open 1♠ or INT, Love All being the best time to try to steal the partscore with a borderline hand, but could equally well pass. South could open 1♣, 1♥ or INT, but could also pass. And finally, West has an obvious opening bid yet could pass fearing that he will be outbid due to his shortage in the majors and minimal point-count. Shame if so, as E/W are cold for 5♦.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

Going plus may be the key on this messy little partscore deal. E/W can make 2♥ and N/S only 2♣, yet there will be tables where 2♥ goes down and others where 3♣ makes. North has an ugly choice over the 1♥ opening. If he passes he will be shut out of the auction and defend 2♥. A 2♣ overcall is hardly classical, vulnerable and facing a passed partner, but it is necessary this time to give N/S a chance of winning the auction.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ 10 5 ♥ A Q J 8 5 3 ♦ K 6 ♣ K 3 2</p> <p>♠ A J 4 3 ♥ ♦ Q 10 7 ♣ A Q J 9 7 6</p> <p>♠ Q 8 6 2 ♥ 10 9 4 2 ♦ 9 5 4 3 ♣ 5</p>	<p>♠ K 9 7 ♥ K 7 6 ♦ A J 8 2 ♣ 10 8 4</p>
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6♣ is roughly on two finesse out of three – you don't care if you are in it or not (until you see how many finesses work). West opens 1♣ and North bids 1♥, over which East will double if that does not promise four spades. South has a classic pre-emptive raise to 3♥ and West will bid 3♠. Now East may try 3NT and it will be up to West. If he passes, as will many, the failing club finesse will mean a very poor result of two down. If he goes back to 4♣, East will probably just raise to game, not liking his ♥K for slam purposes.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

<p>♠ 9 7 3 ♥ 9 4 2 ♦ J 5 3 ♣ A 10 8 4</p> <p>♠ Q 6 ♥ A J 10 5 ♦ Q 9 6 ♣ K 7 5 3</p> <p>♠ J 8 2 ♥ 8 7 3 ♦ K 10 7 4 ♣ Q J 2</p>	<p>♠ A K 10 5 4 ♥ K Q 6 ♦ A 8 2 ♣ 9 6</p>
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Though four of a major is a perfectly reasonable alternative, this will be everyone's 3NT by West. West will open 1NT and be raised to game via a transfer, when he will pass the 3NT rebid, or he will open 1♣/♥ and rebid 1NT. East will probably use checkback then settle for 3NT. West's

opening bid may be crucial. If he has bid clubs North will find a passive red-suit lead and there will be only ten tricks, while if he has shown only hearts he may get a club lead and an eleventh winner.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

<p>♠ K J 4 ♥ A 10 8 5 ♦ Q 7 6 5 ♣ 7 4</p> <p>♠ 10 ♥ Q J 6 3 2 ♦ A J 9 2 ♣ K J 8</p> <p>♠ Q 9 8 6 3 ♥ K 7 4 ♦ 10 8 4 3 ♣ 3</p>	<p>♠ A 7 5 2 ♥ 9 ♦ K ♣ A Q 10 9 6 5 2</p>
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E/W have twelve easy tricks in 6♣, but it will be tough to bid. East opens 1♣ and rebids 1♠ over the 1♥ response. Now what? Many Easts will jump to 3NT, liking the club fit and strong diamond holding. East will be tempted but will usually pass because of the lure of no trump at matchpoints. If West decides to go more slowly to keep slam in the picture, he will bid 2♦ over 1♠ and will hear 3♣ from East. A delayed 3NT, expressing doubt, or a more committal club raise? I like 3NT at this point and East may well bid on if he trusts the inference.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ Q J 9 8 6 3 ♥ 10 6 2 ♦ A 3 ♣ Q J</p> <p>♠ A 10 5 ♥ J 5 ♦ K 9 7 4 2 ♣ A 10 8</p> <p>♠ 4 2 ♥ Q 8 4 ♦ J 10 6 5 ♣ 9 6 5 3</p>	<p>♠ K 7 ♥ A K 9 7 3 ♦ Q 8 ♣ K 7 4 2</p>
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After 1♥ – 2♦, East may rebid 3♣ or prefer 2NT as the clubs are not that great. Either

way, 3NT is the likely outcome. If East is declarer after a 2NT rebid, he will probably get a club lead. With the favourable layout, he can make as many as 11 tricks if he goes for it, but many will make fewer than that. West will get the ♠Q opening lead and will have to play a diamond next if he is to make an overtrick – clear hearts first and the spades are cleared in turn while North still has the diamond entry.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

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

West will open 1♠ and North overcall 2♦, over which East will show a constructive raise to 3♠, perhaps via a 3♦ cuebid. West is minimum so is likely to pass, though if South competes to 4♦ some Wests may bid one more – a common error. If he does so, he will turn a plus into a minus as 4♦ is nowhere near to making and 3♠ is the limit for E/W. Excellent to see justice done. After all, why should South bidding make West think his hand has improved?

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

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

Whatever your thoughts on opening 1NT when holding a five-card major, when the suit is as good as West's spades here it is better to open 1♠ and rebid the suit. East will respond 2♣ then bid 3NT over 2♠, giving full weight to that ♦10, which suggests that east should be declarer. After a diamond lead to the queen and ace, declarer will pass the ♠10. North will make life very easy of the wins this trick. A smooth duck could defeat the contract if declarer does not pick the play well.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

South opens 1♣, or perhaps a strong no trump, and West overcalls 1♥. North may upgrade his hand because of the heart shortage and make a negative double, and east raises to 2♥. Now South may stretch a point and try 2NT. If he plays there, a heart lead gives the eighth trick – but, of course, West should lead the queen of spades on this auction and now declarer is a trick short. If North does not get involved, West may get to play 2♥, which can be made but often won't be.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

♠ 9 6 5 4 3 ♥ 9 ♦ 9 7 4 ♣ A 8 6 5 ♠ A 10 7 2 ♥ K Q 6 4 ♦ 8 5 ♣ 10 4 2 ♠ K J ♥ J 3 2 ♦ A K J 10 ♣ Q J 9 7	♠ Q 8 ♥ A 10 8 7 5 ♦ Q 6 3 2 ♣ K 3
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If East opens 1♥ South has a horrible call. Most club players will double while many experts would pass, being unwilling to double with a doubleton spade. Either way, West should show a limit raise to 3♥ and, if South has passed, that will be that for a solid +140. If South doubled, North may try 3♠ and now N/S are in trouble. West can double 3♠ and, with the limit of the N/S cards being 3♣, they are likely to be doubled for -200 or -500 wherever they run to.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

♠ Q J 8 3 ♥ 6 4 ♦ K Q J 6 5 ♣ J 9 ♠ 6 2 ♥ J 10 2 ♦ A 8 ♣ A Q 10 6 5 4 ♠ K 9 4 ♥ 7 3 ♦ 10 9 4 3 2 ♣ K 8 7	♠ A 10 7 5 ♥ A K Q 9 8 5 ♦ 7 ♣ 3 2
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As the cards lie, E/W can make 7♥. It would be a surprise if anyone got beyond 4♥, however, so expect a lot of +510s on the scoresheet. Declarer should start on the clubs before drawing trumps, as he will need the ♥J10 as entries to the long clubs – he doesn't know that both hearts and clubs are breaking evenly so must not take too committal a line, such as drawing trumps

then taking the club finesse. That could work out very badly on a different layout.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

♠ K 10 2 ♥ K Q 9 6 ♦ A K 10 6 ♣ 9 4 ♠ J 6 4 ♥ 7 5 4 3 ♦ 9 8 7 ♣ 10 7 2 ♠ 7 3 ♥ A J 8 2 ♦ Q 5 4 2 ♣ K 6 5	♠ A Q 9 8 5 ♥ 10 ♦ J 3 ♣ A Q J 8 3
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If North opens 1♥ East may make a Michaels Cuebid to show spades and a minor. South will show a constructive raise to 3♥, perhaps via a 2♠ cuebid if East did bid 2♥, Michaels, and North will go on to game. If North opens 1NT, East will again overcall, showing a two-suiter if his methods permit. South may make a take-out/value-showing double or use Lebensohl. Again, the 4-4 heart fit should be found and game reached. Unless East leads a spade, for no obvious reason, there are ten tricks – no more and no fewer – so flattish board.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

♠ Q 6 4 ♥ Q J 9 7 4 ♦ 7 4 ♣ Q 8 6 ♠ 9 7 ♥ A 6 3 ♦ K 2 ♣ J 10 9 5 4 3 ♠ K J 3 2 ♥ 8 ♦ A Q J 9 8 6 5 ♣ A	♠ A 10 8 5 ♥ K 10 5 2 ♦ 10 3 ♣ K 7 2
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E/W can make 3♣ but may never come into the auction. Meanwhile, N/S have nine tricks in diamonds. South will open 1♦ and rebid 1♠ over the 1♥ response. North may consider passing that, lacking any ace or king and

having spade preference but not genuine support. If so, 1♠ will be an uphill struggle and should be defeated. Most Norths will, however, try INT, and now South can jump to 3♦ to show an invitational range 6-4 or similar. North should pass that and +110 will score OK for his side.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

If East opens INT, most Wests will transfer to diamonds if their system gives them that option. 3♦ plays very nicely for +130 by East, +110 by West, but will West gamble out 3NT if East shows a diamond fit? Even after a club lead, the defence can beat 3NT if North wins the first spade and switches to a heart. If East opens 1♠, West should raise to 2♠ then bid 3♦ over east's 2NT game try. That shows 6-3 and too weak for an initial 2♦ bid. This time East may be tempted by the prospect of six running tricks.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

South cannot open with that 5-6 distribution so North will get first go. He will probably open INT if within range, otherwise open 1♣ then rebid INT, not being concerned by East's 1♦ overcall. Even a 2♦ overcall may not matter as South will surely bid 2♥. One can well imagine South driving to game as he will never be able to describe his hand accurately. If he transfers, East may lead a to diamond and now it may be possible to establish a diamond winner as the tenth trick. Otherwise, on accurate defence there are only nine.

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

N/S can make 4♥ or 4NT and both games will be reached a fair proportion of the time. There is scope for an embarrassing accident if East has not bid his diamonds. When the ♦K is led, some declarers may duck and get their ace ruffed out at trick two. After which they will be considerably sadder, if not necessarily wiser. Otherwise, declarer can make a tenth trick either by passing the ♣J or, if a trump was not led, by playing to ruff a spade in dummy.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

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

The North hand is worth a 2♣ opening but I would open 1♣ because 2♣ pre-empts your own auction. Consider an auction that begins 2♣ – 2NT – 3♣ – 3♥ – 4♦; are you sure you can get to the excellent 7♣ from here? Now try 1♣ – 1♥ – 2♦ – 3♣ (played as forcing with Lebensohl on weak hands); you have found club support at the three level. Even if you don't play 3♣ as forcing, South's second bid becomes 2♠, 3♦ from North and now 4♣ agrees clubs. How do you feel this time? I rest my case.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

If East opens 1NT, South may scrape up a double, which should end the auction, A spade lead would be best but is not a realistic option. After the more normal low club, the contract may be just one down. If East opens 1♥ South may pass then bid 2NT over North's balancing double, or may overcall 1NT. That gets a transfer followed by 2NT

from North. By playing on spades, declarer can make eight tricks in 2NT. If East opens 1♦, South may double and hear 2♠ from partner, which he will have to pass – just making for +110.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

E/W can make ten tricks in a spade contract, but that is very lucky and it would be abnormal to bid to game. North opens 1♣ and East overcalls 1♠, over which South makes a negative double. West will show a mixed raise to 3♠ or a constructive raise to 2♠, according to system, but when North competes to 3♣ West will take the push to 3♠ anyway, which should end the auction.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

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

At Teams, it would be just fine to get to 5♣ on the E/W cards but at Pairs it is important to bid to the no trump game. Important, but not necessarily so easy. West has to find a rebid after 1♠ – 2♣, and a raise to 4♣ could hardly be described as ridiculous, just

unsuccessful. If a raise to 3♣ is forcing, will West feel able to pass East's 3NT when holding all those extra high cards? West could invent a rebid, 2NT being the obvious choice if forcing, and now East raise to game or may bid 3♥, over which West can bid 3NT to end the auction.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

It is normal to reach game on the N/S cards, the only question being which one. And it is normal for whatever game is reached to fail, so that one down for -100 may be a perfectly reasonable result. North opens 1♠ and rebids 2♥. South could rebid a non-forcing 3♣ and North pass that, but this is very pessimistic and will miss a cold game more often than, as here, it wins the board. More likely South bids 3NT or 3♦. Over the latter, North bids 3♥ and South still has no idea what to do.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

E/W are cold for 7♦ but that is only because the hearts can be ruffed out to produce a second trick. 6♦ would be the place to be. However, the auction may become very competitive, making it very difficult to explore sufficiently to bid slam with confidence. East opens 1♥ and South overcalls 1♠. After 2♦ from West, North jumps to 4♠ and East bids 5♦. West may be able to 'see' East's spade shortage and go on to slam, but he needs to be brave. Meanwhile, 6♠ is a good save at 'only' -1100.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

3NT should be the contract at every table, though who will be declarer is less automatic. If South opens 1NT he will be raised directly to game. The spade play is the key to overtricks. After a club lead, dropping the queen allows 11 tricks, via a squeeze/endplay against East, while a losing finesse holds declarer to nine. If a heart is led at the start, it is ten if declarer loses to the ♠Q and 11 if he drops it. Ten tricks for +630 will be the most common outcome.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

♠ 9 8 7 3 ♥ K 10 6 5 ♦ Q 4 2 ♣ A 3 ♠ 6 5 4 2 ♥ 9 7 ♦ 8 3 ♣ Q J 10 9 4 ♠ A K Q J ♥ A 8 4 ♦ A K 6 5 ♣ K 5	♠ 10 ♥ Q J 3 2 ♦ J 10 9 7 ♣ 8 7 6 2
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South opens 2♣ then rebids 2NT to show 23-24 or so and it is normal for North to check for a major-suit fit. When that fit materialises he is worth a serious attempt to get to slam, though he may be a little concerned with the quality of his spades. No matter, if North cuebids 4♣ or 4♥, as required by his methods (4♣ might be natural for some), South will drive to slam. 6♠ is better because it allows a ruff whenever trumps are 3-2. On the actual layout, there is no ruff, but a same red-suit squeeze makes either 6♠ or 6NT.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

♠ 10 ♥ J 6 5 4 ♦ K 6 5 4 ♣ 8 7 3 2 ♠ A 8 3 ♥ Q 9 3 2 ♦ J 10 9 ♣ A J 4 ♠ K Q J 9 7 ♥ A ♦ A 8 7 3 ♣ 10 9 5	♠ 6 5 4 2 ♥ K 10 8 7 ♦ Q 2 ♣ K Q 6
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South opens 1♠ and will sometimes be left to play there as nobody has a clearcut bid. After the normal diamond lead declarer can play on trumps then set up the long diamond to make eight tricks. An unlikely heart lead allows the defence to force declarer and he should not now have the time to establish

and cash a third diamond trick so makes only seven. If East makes a balancing double, a 2♥ response offers a contract which makes on a winning heart play, while INT would fail by a trick.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

♠ 7 5 ♥ 8 7 6 3 2 ♦ A J 9 2 ♣ A 10 ♠ K Q 4 ♥ A Q J ♦ K 10 5 4 3 ♣ Q 8 ♠ A 8 3 ♥ K 9 5 4 ♦ Q ♣ J 7 4 3 2	♠ J 10 9 6 2 ♥ 10 ♦ 8 7 6 ♣ K 9 6 5
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If West opens INT East will transfer and West play 2♠. Where West opens 1♦, North's suit is too weak for an overcall. East may scrape up a 1♠ response then go back to 2♠ over West's INT rebid, or he may pass 1♦. In the latter case, South can double, being limited by his initial pass, and North will bid 2♥, whether or not West redoubles or bids INT. East competes with 2♠ and that may end the auction. Eight tricks is the norm in 2♠, but there will be an occasional overtrick.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

♠ Q 9 6 4 ♥ J 8 5 3 ♦ 8 3 ♣ Q 6 5 ♠ A K 8 3 2 ♥ K 7 4 ♦ 10 6 4 ♣ A 8 ♠ 7 5 ♥ Q 6 2 ♦ A 9 7 5 2 ♣ K J 9	♠ J 10 ♥ A 10 9 ♦ K Q J ♣ 10 7 4 3 2
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E/W have nine tricks in no trump and, with a combined 25-count, have no particular reason not to bid to game. The West hand is a bit too good for a weak no trump, even if

you are happy to open 1NT with a decent five-card major. The combination of good suit, two aces and two kings, makes 1♠ a better choice. West rebids 2♠ then raises 2NT to 3NT. After the obvious diamond lead, declarer runs the ♠J and comes to four spades, two diamonds, two hearts and a club; +400.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

♠ J 5 ♥ Q 9 ♦ J 8 6 2 ♣ K 9 7 5 3 ♠ A K Q 8 6 3 ♥ K ♦ K 7 5 3 ♣ 6 4	♠ 9 ♥ A J 10 8 7 5 3 ♦ 10 9 ♣ Q J 8 ♠ 10 7 4 2 ♥ 6 4 2 ♦ A Q 4 ♣ A 10 2
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When West opens 1♠, East has only 8 HCP but, with such a promising heart suit, can hardly not respond 2♥. West may rebid 3♠ and now East follows through with his original plan to repeat the hearts. 4♥ is not a good contract but it has one important thing going for it – it is cold as the cards lie.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

♠ A K 7 5 2 ♥ J 7 ♦ Q 4 ♣ A 10 4 2 ♠ Q 3 ♥ A 8 6 5 4 3 2 ♦ 9 5 ♣ Q 9	♠ 6 4 ♥ K Q ♦ K J 7 3 2 ♣ K J 6 5 ♠ J 10 9 8 ♥ 10 9 ♦ A 10 8 6 ♣ 8 7 3
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When North opens 1♠, East will usually overcall 2♦. Though the suit is poor the alternative is to pass and few will wish to do that. South raises to 2♠ and West has to bite the bullet and bid 3♥ – he cannot afford to

be shut out when holding a seven-card suit. North will often compete with 3♠ and, whether he does so or not, East has a tough decision. He has a minimum overcall with a doubleton spades, the worst possible number, but the heart honours look very good. Unless the agreement is that 3♥ is forcing, I would pass, but it is close.

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

♠ A Q 7 3 ♥ A Q 6 4 2 ♦ 9 8 5 ♣ 2 ♠ J 5 4 2 ♥ K 8 ♦ 10 3 2 ♣ J 8 5 4	♠ 8 6 ♥ 9 5 3 ♦ K Q 7 ♣ K Q 10 7 6 ♠ K 10 9 ♥ J 10 7 ♦ A J 6 4 ♣ A 9 3
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If South opens a weak no trump North may transfer then show the spades. Minor-suit aces suggest playing in hearts rather than no trump and South will usually choose 4♥. The legitimate play in diamonds is to lead towards the jack, and that is richly rewarded. Some will try running the nine, however, and hold themselves to 11. This is playing for a misdefence, as when the ten is onside East can cover and declarer is missing the seven.

Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

North will open 2NT and play there. Eight tricks are always possible. If East leads a spade declarer goes up with dummy's queen and takes a club finesse. Though that loses, the even break means eight tricks. On a diamond lead he has to be a little more careful. If he tries leading to the ♠Q to take a club finesse, he risks establishing spades to go with the defensive diamond winners. Here, the club finesse loses and the defence can take three diamonds and three spades for down two. So declarer needs to just play ace and another club from hand to make his contract.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

<p>♠ A Q J 9 7 5 ♥ A 2 ♦ A 6 ♣ 9 7 4</p> <p>♠ K 3 ♥ 10 9 ♦ J 8 4 3 2 ♣ Q J 10 5</p>	<p>♠ 6 ♥ K Q J 8 7 5 4 3 ♦ Q 10 5 ♣ 6</p> <p>♠ 10 8 4 2 ♥ 6 ♦ K 9 7 ♣ A K 8 3 2</p>
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6♠ is on the spade finesse and, as the king is onside, the slam is successful. If East overcalls 4♥, South will only be able to bid 4♠. That will be difficult for North, who will not know if his partner is full value for his bid or stretched a little. With no security at the five level, North should pass. If East only overcalls 3♥, South can cuebid 4♥ to show a good raise to game. Now North will like his good trumps and controls and will surely at least try for slam and possibly bid it after checking on key cards.