



**Commentary**  
**for the**  
**SBU Easter Simultaneous Pairs for the Bobby Allan Trophy**  
**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

*Dear Bridge player*

Thank you for your support of the Bobby Allan Easter Pairs 2022. Some of you will have played face to face at a club, others online, but whichever it was, we do hope you enjoyed the hands, found them interesting, challenging and fun whatever result you ended up with!

So now you can relax and enjoy the commentary - did you see the hands in the same way I wonder.

You will be able to enjoy many such future events as we work our way back to a more normal way of life. Do have a look on the SBU website at <https://www.sbu.org.uk/> for all the SBU news and also for information about forthcoming tournaments.

**Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.**

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

A INT opening from North will give E/W the chance to test their methods. Whilst East does have 15 points, the nature of the hand will persuade most to overcall rather than double. If E/W play a conventional defence to INT, they should easily find their Spade fit and wrap up nine tricks. A natural defence poses more problems: some may choose to bid 2♥ as the suit is better and, although nine tricks should be made, the contract is slightly more worrying. If North opens 1♦, E/W should find their Spade fit, whether or not they have 2-suited overcalls available.

**Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.**

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

After East's INT opening, E/W will normally have an uninterrupted auction to 2♥. If they are not playing transfers, it is possible that South will reopen with a take-out double but even then East will probably compete to 3♥. On the face of it, it just looks like a Heart contract has a loser in each suit, but if South makes the thoroughly bad play of underleading the ♦A to the first trick (or North makes the fairly normal lead of ♦J and South manages to duck), North can eventually get a Diamond ruff.

### Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

If South opens 1♥, a 1♠ overcall will be hard to resist for West given the quality of the suit, even with only eight points. Now East might even think of going beyond game, though his Heart doubleton should prevent him from doing so. If South doesn't open, West will start with 1♣ or 1♦; South's 1♥ overcall will give East a chance to bid 1♠ to show a 5-card Spade suit, as for most players a double of 1♥ shows four Spades. Now again 4♠ should be reached. 4♠ should go off but it will slip through on occasion if the defence neglects to take its two Club tricks.

### Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

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

Even if North opens on his distributional hand, the absence of two Aces should prevent South from going beyond 5♥. That is quite high enough as 5♥ requires good guesswork in the Diamond suit to succeed: after ruffing the second round and seeing the Jack come down, declarer has to opt for the ruffing finesse rather than the 3-3 break to succeed, though leading the ♦Q to the third round will force many Easts to mistakenly play the ♦K rather than ducking smoothly.

### Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

This is the sort of hand that makes people mistrust computer deals: with the singleton King offside, many players will end up losing two Spade tricks by playing to the Queen and then later cashing the Ace. The text books all say that you should open the East hand 1♣ but many will prefer the pre-emptive value of a 1♠ opening. West may only have 10 points but he does have only seven losers, which should propel many into game. Even if N/S do find their Heart fit they should get outbid.

### Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

After three passes North will open 1♣ but what will South respond? INT would be my choice which could be disastrous if North decides on an optimistic raise to 2NT. 3NT going one down would be the inevitable result if West were to lead a top Heart; even a small Heart lead would probably work as it takes an inspired duck in the dummy for declarer to have a chance of success. If North plays in No Trumps, the favourable lie of the ♠A and the 4-4 Heart break means that nine tricks can be made.

### Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

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

After South's Acol 2♠, or its equivalent, a positive response from North will probably be enough to ensure that South drives on to 6♠. The slam can always make, though I expect many declarers to fall short of twelve tricks: no matter what is led declarer can take the ruffing Heart finesse and then re-enter the dummy with a Diamond ruff after drawing one round of trumps; on an initial Heart lead, declarer can even take the losing Heart finesse and still make the contract.

### Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

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

West's INT opening should get passed round to South, who surely will bid 2♠ if he doesn't have the methods to show Spades and another suit available. Whether N/S reach 2♠ directly or via a conventional defence, East has the opportunity to compete in the minors by bidding 2NT which hardly can be natural after passing partner's INT on the first round. Even if E/W get to 3♣, their opponents will probably go on to 3♠ and then it is just a question as to whether they make it.

### Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

How do you and your partner play the auction INT-2♣-2♥-2♠? If Stayman is your only route to raising to 2NT, as it is for many pairs, it should show a raise to 2NT and a 4-card Spade suit – and there is no reason why it shouldn't even if you play a more normal style. Once West has shown an invitational hand with four Spades, it is up to East to decide whether he should go to game: Aces are good cards for suit play, as is the doubleton Diamond, so he should accept the invitation to the making 4♠. Those in 3NT will be grateful for those who played in a part-score.

### Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

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

If East opens INT that will often end the auction, unless of course South doubles when INT\* could be the contract. If E/W are playing a wriggle which involves a compulsory redouble goodness knows what the final contract will be! INT by East should succeed, and will even make an overtrick on occasion, but 2♠ is much more of a tricky proposition: getting the trump suit wrong will certainly spell failure as will the defence finding their Diamond ruff. If N/S end in 2♥ they should emerge with eight tricks.

### Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

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

Any South who opens 1♦ may well save his side from conceding thirteen tricks in 4♠ when the hand is played. Given a free auction E/W will start 1♠-2♥-2♠ but what will they do next? East can hardly just rebid a non-forcing 3♥ so, unless he chooses to jump to 4♠ (the best choice given the lie of the cards) or 4♥, he is saddled with trying 3♦ which at least benefits South the opportunity of making a lead-directing double. If South doesn't double and West bids 3NT, North will lead a Club and declarer will make all the tricks.

### Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

After West has shown a value raise to 3♥ over South's 1♠ overcall, East has to decide whether to go to game or not. I accept that East has only six losers but it is still quite a stretch to bid 4♥ on just eleven points; however it certainly works as the ♦K is inside. I expect many declarers to make eleven tricks: South is bound to lead a top Spade and then it takes a Club switch from King doubleton to prevent declarer from establishing a Spade trick on which to throw his losing Club.

### Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

N/S are bound to get too high on this hand, but how high will they get? After 1♠-2♦-2♥-3♦, it is tempting for North to try 3♥ but it would be a poor decision which may well prompt 4♦ from South. 3♦ should go one down as, after three rounds of Clubs, E/W are also bound to take a Spade and a trump trick. Declarer should go two down in 3♥ if only because the defence will eventually have to lead Diamonds (declarer may need to have the nerve to finesse) or give declarer Spade tricks.

### Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

If N/S are playing Ghestem then South is well-placed to show his 2-suiter via 2♣ or 3♣, depending on methods; the trouble then is that North has to guess just how weak his partner is, given the vulnerability. Over 3♣ an optimistic 3NT will reap the rewards but over 2♣ he may just try 2NT which may get passed. If South just overcalls 1♠, North will have to decide how strong a 1NT response to an overcall is: 10-13 is a sensible range as an overcall is on average about four points less than an opening but my experience is that many pairs have never even discussed it.

### Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

If South opens 1NT, then he will become a very nervous declarer in 3NT after West has led a Club. All he can do is eventually take his ♣A, cash his Diamonds and then lead the ♠J, overtaking it with the ♠Q and crossing his fingers. Some declarers may even make an extra Spade if the defence throws enough of them away on the Diamonds. If South opens 1♣, 1♦ response and a 1♠ rebid may prompt North to leap to 3NT, even though his Heart stop is not wonderful. Now a Diamond or Spade lead will mean that declarer has no worries about making his contract.

### Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

North's 1♥ opening certainly gives East a problem; if he doubles then West will bid 1♠ and North may well try 2♦, over which East will probably take the plunge and bid 3NT, a bid that many will have found on the first round anyway. Any declarers who don't take the Diamond finesse for their eleventh trick do not have my sympathy as North would have only nine points for his opening bid if he didn't hold the ♦A. 6♣ certainly makes but it will take some creative bidding to get there.

### Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

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

If North opens 1NT, East will have little choice but to pass (unless a natural 2♦ overcall is available – generally not a good idea on such a poor suit); now South can use whatever method he has to show a weakness take-out into 3♣. This will go two down for an above average score. If North opens 1♦, some Souths may venture a 1NT response, but it is more likely that it will get passed round to West for a 1♠ overcall. Once E/W are in the auction they should end up playing the hand and making their contract.

### Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

A 2♦ overcall by North over West's 1♠ should prompt a either a double (to show the other suits) or a raise to 2♠ from East. 2♠ will prompt 4♠ from West, whilst double should see West's 3♠ rebid raised to 4♠. After the inevitable Diamond lead, two rounds of trumps followed by Ace and another Heart removes any guesswork when the ♥J appears and declarer is now able to throw his losing Club away on the fourth Heart. Any declarer who starts with a small Heart to the Queen and King could even go down if they then run the ♥10 round to the Jack.

**Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.**

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

If West opens 1♣, some Norths will be unable to resist the temptation to show a major 2-suiter with a Michael's Cue Bid of 2♣ even though the hand is far too weak. South will now push on in Hearts and E/W should go up too high, perhaps even in 5♣ or 5♦. If North passes, it is still difficult for East to contemplate stopping short of game, though after 1♣-1♦-2♣-2♠-3♦ he should realise that West hasn't got much of an opening bid and stop in 3♦. If West passes as dealer, 3♦ should be reached via 1♦-2♣-2♦-3♦.

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

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

Given a free run N/S should reach 3NT via Stayman, though some pessimists may stop short in 2NT. It takes an inspired Spade lead from East to beat 3NT; in reality a small Diamond is likely and, as the Heart finesse is needed to make the contract, declarer is probably going to end up with eleven tricks. Should West open 1♠ (some will!), South will reopen with a double giving North a very difficult choice: 2♠ seems right but this only forces 3♥ from South, possibly resulting in 4♥ on a 4-3 fit.

**Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.**

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

South should play in either 2NT, via 1♦-1♥-2NT, or INT if N/S are playing a strong No Trump. In theory every declarer should make eight tricks, E/W taking the first four Spade tricks and the ♣A; however some Wests will make the mistake of starting with two top Spades rather than a small one, or even Ace and a small one, and the fourth Spade trick will be lost. If West finds an aggressive 4-card 1♠ overcall over 1♦, he may well drive N/S into a red suit part-score; Hearts will score well but Diamonds will be disastrous.

**Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.**

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

After South's 1♥ opening, West has to decide between doubling and overcalling 1♠; 1♠ certainly works best as the Spade fit will be lost if West doubles, with North bidding 1♠ and N/S probably playing in 2♥. Over a 1♠ overcall North can double to show the minors; East now just about has a 2♠ bid, but only if it is an out and out weak bid, maybe because E/W are playing unassuming cue bids (so that 2♥ would show a "real" 2♠). Spades should make nine tricks by ruffing the fourth Club after the ♠9 has appeared on the first round of trumps.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

North has to decide whether to overcall 2♠ or pass over West's INT opening. My guess is that there will be a fairly even divide, since the suit is not that good, and there are only five of them. INT by West can always make on the likely Spade lead, provided that declarer keeps plugging away at the Heart suit; in reality though, declarer will often go one down. 2♠ should always fail, provided that West splits his honours when a trump is led from the dummy; however it easy to let the eighth trick slip through.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

What should South respond to North's 1♣ opening? I would choose 1♠ but many just like to bid 4-card suits up the line and therefore will bid 1♦. Over 1♠ surely North should rebid INT rather than 2♦; now South will either make a try for game or go straight to 3NT. A 1♦ response will prompt 3♦ (*or possibly INT*) from North, and South may well let it rest there. 3NT would appear to have little hope of finding that elusive ninth trick, barring a very generous defence, whereas 3♦ should succeed despite the bad trump break.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

Despite wonderful fits in both Hearts and Clubs, slam in either suit depends on the Spade finesse. Whether slam will be reached is another matter. The auction will probably start INT-2♦-2♥-3♣ which, for most pairs, shows Hearts and Clubs and slam interest; the question is then what should East bid next? 3♥ or 4♣ (if they are forcing bids) may get West to cue bid his ♦A but East may now try to sign off, given his Spade holding. It takes a very brave West to go further as there are a lot of gaps to plug.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

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

If West opens 1♦ (I prefer INT), South has to choose between 2♣ and pass; over 2♣ North may be able to bid 3♥ as a jump fit showing Hearts with Club support and now it is possible that game will be reached. If South passes, whether West raises to 2♦ or not, North is going to bid Hearts and a Heart part-score is the probable outcome. It is hard to see how declarer can make anything other than ten tricks in Hearts as East is bound to lead a top Diamond and now declarer can't avoid losing a Spade, a Club and a Diamond.



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

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

Despite only having ten points, North is worth a take-out double of West's 1♥ opening. Now it should be question of how many Hearts should East bid, unless perhaps a jump to 2♠ shows Spades with a Heart fit. Personally with the East cards I would just go straight to 4♥, if only because I like to give partner a challenge! A splinter bid of 4♣ is an alternative but it might inspire partner to greater things than can be achieved. The 4-0 trump break makes play tricky but at least ten tricks should be made.

**Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.**

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

If North overcalls 1♠ over West's 1♥, East has to choose between pass, double and a very tenuous INT. Come what may, South is likely to make a game try in Spades and as a result may get too high. If North passes initially, the Spade fit will never be found as East will bid 1♠ and now the final contract depends on whether West rebids 2♥ or 2♦. If North leads his singleton ♦6, any Heart contract should be held to eight tricks, or even fewer if declarer tries the finesse. In Diamonds declarer may get in a mess if he draws too many trumps.

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

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

1♣ could easily be the final contract; indeed passing partner's opening bid might be West's only chance of obtaining a plus score. Clubs should make nine tricks, provided that declarer sets about the major suits rather than drawing trumps. No doubt some Norths will rake up a reopening double rather than passing out 1♣; this may even result in South playing, and going down, in a Heart contract. If West responds INT to partner's 1♣, he could end up playing in 2NT, also going down.

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

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

East should end up in 3NT via Stayman and you would think that, with 26 points, nine tricks would be easy; however it is anything but. On a Heart lead declarer can see seven tricks and all he has to do is attack the Spade suit for two extra tricks; the trouble is though that the ♦J is such a tempting card, and taking the finesse could well see the contract defeated. A Club lead presents more problems, but setting about the Spade suit immediately (and forsaking an early Diamond finesse) gives declarer every chance of success.



Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

After 1♦-1♠, East will surely raise Diamonds. If he bids 2♦, N/S might get away with playing in 3♠ but, if E/W play 3♦ as weak, and East has the nerve to bid it, the auction could easily reach the 4-level. 3♠ can always make despite the bad trump break, provided that declarer plays on the Club suit early on whilst dummy still has trumps remaining; then, even if the ♥A has already been played and West has ducked the first round of Spades, when West eventually does take the ♠A he has to return a trump or give a ruff and discard.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

Over East's INT South will often bid 2♣, be it natural or an Astro type bid to show Hearts and another suit. Ironically the best that N/S can do, unless they bid to 4♥, is to let East play in INT which will go two down unless the defence slips up badly. If N/S do find their Heart fit they should make ten tricks; the only way that they can make an eleventh is if the defence fails to set up their Diamond trick before declarer has drawn trumps and eliminated the ♣A.