

HIWCBA

IBM Cup

DUPLICATE PAIRS COMPETITION

February 2026

in aid of

Hampshire Air Ambulance



Commentary by Fred Hotchen

<p>Hand 1</p> <p>♠ 73 ♥ J875 ♦ J3 ♣ AKQ109</p>	<p>♠ AKJ ♥ AKQ3 ♦ AK6 ♣ 753</p> <p>N/-</p> <p>♠ Q10864 ♥ 92 ♦ 10752 ♣ J8</p>	<p>If North opens 2♣C and rebids 2NT, South can transfer to spades and reach the best contract of 4♠. If East doesn't find a club lead North is able to discard a club or even two if West discards a heart. A club lead and best defence will hold 4♠ to ten tricks. If North-South play in 3NT, this goes off on a club lead but without a club lead, North has ten tricks or even more if West discards a heart.</p>
<p>Hand 2</p> <p>♠ - ♥ 10832 ♦ 10764 ♣ KQJ93</p>	<p>♠ QJ65 ♥ A7 ♦ KJ9532 ♣ A</p> <p>E/NS</p> <p>♠ 1083 ♥ QJ654 ♦ Q8 ♣ 762</p>	<p>Although 11 tricks are makeable in clubs on a cross-ruff, East is more likely to languish in spades or North in diamonds, both going off. The most likely contract is 2S by East. Anything higher than this could start getting expensive unless East-West somehow find their club fit.</p>
<p>Hand 3</p> <p>♠ 876 ♥ 62 ♦ A108 ♣ KQJ106</p>	<p>♠ 10543 ♥ J1043 ♦ Q76 ♣ A9</p> <p>S/EW</p> <p>♠ KQ92 ♥ AK7 ♦ 54 ♣ 8532</p>	<p>Many who open 1NT on the South hand will be left to play there. On the King of clubs lead, Declarer is best to take it and switch to a spade. East goes up with the Ace and returns a club. Now for the defence... West should win with the 10 then play the Jack, indicating something in diamonds. This makes East's discarding easy: he can discard hearts then after the clubs, there are five more diamond tricks. 4 down. In practice this will often not happen and sometimes Declarer will even make 1NT if West switches to a heart. If Declarer ducks at trick one, West continues with a small club. Now it is East who can switch to Diamonds to put West in to cash clubs then diamonds. Signals and discards are really important in defence!</p>
<p>Hand 4</p> <p>♠ 954 ♥ J53 ♦ 643 ♣ Q1098</p>	<p>♠ A1087 ♥ A10762 ♦ 9 ♣ K62</p> <p>W/All</p> <p>♠ KQJ ♥ K9 ♦ J52 ♣ AJ743</p>	<p>After North's 1♥ opening, East will bid 2♦ or 3♦, depending on style. South has game points but with 3NT out of the question, where will North-South end up? They have a club fit but unfortunately the bad break will scupper 5♣. However, 4♥ or 4♠ should both succeed because in each case trumps break 3-3. Any North-Souths defending against diamonds might not do too badly. A very awkward hand which will no doubt result in mixed fortunes.</p>

<p>Hand 5</p> <p>♠ KJ1098 ♥ 32 ♦ J8 ♣ Q1053</p>	<p>♠ AQ532 ♥ QJ65 ♦ AK10 ♣ A</p> <p>N/NS</p> <p>♠ - ♥ A98 ♦ 7643 ♣ KJ8762</p> <p>♠ 764 ♥ K1074 ♦ Q952 ♣ 94</p>	<p>Acot players will open 1♠ on the North hand. East may interfere with 2♣ or 3♣ but if he doesn't, will South respond and, if so, what? Might depend on whether North's 1♠ shows a five card suit. For those playing four card majors, South might respond 1NT then North would jump to 3♥ which South would raise to game. East-West can make nine tricks in clubs but, with the bad spade break, North will not manage to make more than nine tricks in spades. I doubt many North-Souths will manage to reach the best contract of 4♥ which plays very nicely and makes 11 tricks.</p>
<p>Hand 6</p> <p>♠ K97 ♥ 872 ♦ 2 ♣ AJ10963</p>	<p>♠ QJ54 ♥ 1063 ♦ 10854 ♣ 87</p> <p>E/EW</p> <p>♠ A10863 ♥ AQ5 ♦ AKQ6 ♣ 2</p> <p>♠ 2 ♥ KJ94 ♦ J973 ♣ KQ54</p>	<p>East-West should reach the excellent contract of 4♠. The lead that gives the least away is a diamond from South. Declarer doesn't have enough entries to dummy to set up the clubs so his best line is to discard dummy's hearts on his diamonds then embark on a cross ruff. Despite the bad trump break he may come to 12 tricks for a very good score.</p>
<p>Hand 7</p> <p>♠ AQJ1086 ♥ 65 ♦ Q ♣ KQ64</p>	<p>♠ 52 ♥ KQJ7 ♦ AK52 ♣ 1097</p> <p>S/All</p> <p>♠ 97 ♥ 10832 ♦ J10763 ♣ 85</p> <p>♠ K43 ♥ A94 ♦ 984 ♣ AJ32</p>	<p>North-South have game points but no game. If South opens 1NT, West is likely to come in with spades. This may or may not deter North-South from bidding 3NT which will go one down on a spade lead. If West plays in spades, that will also not succeed. Any plus score by either side is likely to be good and that will mostly be achieved by defending.</p>
<p>Hand 8</p> <p>♠ K653 ♥ 2 ♦ AJ543 ♣ KQJ</p>	<p>♠ 2 ♥ 854 ♦ KQ962 ♣ 8765</p> <p>W/-</p> <p>♠ AQJ109 ♥ QJ ♦ 87 ♣ 9432</p> <p>♠ 874 ♥ AK109763 ♦ 10 ♣ A10</p>	<p>This competitive hand is all about fit. After East responds 1♠ to West's 1♦, South competes in hearts but at what level depends on view and style. West competes in spades and North should join in by supporting partner's hearts. Where this all ends up will vary but despite East-West having near game points, they are the sacrificers as South can make 4♥ whilst East goes one off in 4♠. Always difficult to know how far to push and when to stop. South can only make 10 tricks in hearts but will make 11 if East-West don't lead a club or find an immediate switch to one.</p>

<p>Hand 9</p> <p>♠ KQ1042 ♥ 1063 ♦ 75 ♣ Q105</p>	<p>♠ 976 ♥ - ♦ KQ1093 ♣ J8732</p> <p>N/EW</p> <p>♠ 8 ♥ AKQ8542 ♦ J864 ♣ 6</p> <p>♠ AJ53 ♥ J97 ♦ A2 ♣ AK94</p>	<p>If East-West manage to play in 4♠, there are only three heart losers providing reasonable care is taken with the clubs in order to discard a diamond. However, if East opens 1♣ or 1NT, South is likely to bid 4♥ which makes and will probably get doubled to boot and East-West will not find their spade fit. If East opens 1♠, no problem for East-West in reaching 4♠. Nobody can make 11 tricks in anything so the par spot is 5♥ doubled going one down but I doubt anyone will be in that.</p>
<p>Hand 10</p> <p>♠ AQ3 ♥ 52 ♦ J4 ♣ AQ7543</p>	<p>♠ K1074 ♥ KJ9874 ♦ - ♣ 986</p> <p>E/All</p> <p>♠ 985 ♥ AQ103 ♦ AQ863 ♣ K</p> <p>♠ J62 ♥ 6 ♦ K109752 ♣ J102</p>	<p>A competitive deal which will lead to a variety of games and part-scores. If North-South reach 4♥ this will make on careful play, losing two spades and a club. However, 5♣ doubled, despite going two off, is not likely to be a good sacrifice as quite a few will either not make 4♥ or not bid to it.</p>
<p>Hand 11</p> <p>♠ 932 ♥ - ♦ KJ43 ♣ AKQ1062</p>	<p>♠ K10654 ♥ A5 ♦ Q875 ♣ 75</p> <p>S/-</p> <p>♠ Q8 ♥ KQJ98643 ♦ 6 ♣ 94</p> <p>♠ AJ7 ♥ 1072 ♦ A1092 ♣ J83</p>	<p>If South doesn't open 4♥, West has a relatively easy entry into the auction. If he does, then it's more of a dilemma whether or not to bid 5♣. Fortune favours the brave as 5♣ makes if Declarer guesses the diamonds right (which he definitely should), losing just two spades. 4♥ has four quick losers unless West starts with three rounds of clubs. Surely not! Anyone continuing to 5♥ will go two off doubled which, whilst a good sacrifice against 5♣, will probably not be a particularly good score.</p>
<p>Hand 12</p> <p>♠ 98 ♥ QJ ♦ 654 ♣ QJ8754</p>	<p>♠ KJ3 ♥ 109832 ♦ KQ9 ♣ 63</p> <p>W/NS</p> <p>♠ Q652 ♥ AK4 ♦ A832 ♣ A9</p> <p>♠ A1074 ♥ 765 ♦ J107 ♣ K102</p>	<p>The 5-3 fit in hearts plays very well (potentially 12 tricks) but 3NT shouldn't make more than 10 tricks on a club lead. That is all providing Declarer fells Queen Jack doubleton heart. Those playing a strong no trump may reach 4♥ after a transfer sequence but those who open 1♠ on the South hand should also reach 4♥ if North responds 2♥. Those who open 1♦ on the South hand will almost certainly play in 3NT rather than game in hearts. I wonder if anyone will end up in spades...</p>

<p>Hand 13</p> <p>♠ AK5 ♥ 106 ♦ A10 ♣ K109432</p> <p>♠ 872 ♥ KQ953 ♦ J5 ♣ A85</p> <p>N/All</p> <p>♠ QJ10943 ♥ 2 ♦ 762 ♣ QJ7</p>	<p>If North opens 1♣ and East bids 2NT (Unusual No Trump), East-West may easily end up in 4♥ which makes with an overtrick. If East overcalls in diamonds, South will get the chance to show his spades and it is possible that East-West will not bid hearts at all. North-South can make 4♠ as the defence will get the Ace of Clubs and Ace of hearts and either a diamond trick or a club ruff but not both. However, on a diamond lead or switch, Declarer will need to ensure he doesn't expose himself to a diamond loser when West gets in with the Ace of clubs. The par spot is 5♠ doubled going one down.</p>
<p>Hand 14</p> <p>♠ J108654 ♥ A5 ♦ KQ98 ♣ 9</p> <p>♠ KQ ♥ J7632 ♦ J10 ♣ 8643</p> <p>E/-</p> <p>♠ A32 ♥ 1094 ♦ 542 ♣ AK105</p>	<p>Many Easts will open 1NT. If so West is likely to transfer to hearts which will then be passed round to North. If North passes, East should go one down in 2♥. However, when the East-West bidding fizzles out, South is marked with some values and North should protect by bidding 2♠. There is no reason for North-South to bid game but they do make 11 tricks as the cards lie. Similarly if East-West are not playing transfers and West makes a weak take-out into hearts, South will be in the protective position and should compete with a takeout double. This hand belongs to North-South, not East-West.</p>
<p>Hand 15</p> <p>♠ Q8 ♥ QJ8743 ♦ A3 ♣ J62</p> <p>♠ J9765432 ♥ 9 ♦ 742 ♣ 5</p> <p>S/NS</p> <p>♠ K ♥ A1065 ♦ 10985 ♣ A1097</p>	<p>Whether North-South play in hearts or East-West in spades, Declarer has a loser in each suit. Having said that virtually no one will stop below game level and the auction is likely to be different at just about every table. There is even the potential for any of the four players to be the opening bidder – If it was me, I would not open either the South or West hands but I would open 1♥ on the North hand. I would then double on the East hand, probably bid 4♥ on the South hand and definitely bid 4♠ on the West hand.</p>
<p>Hand 16</p> <p>♠ 3 ♥ J9865 ♦ 10973 ♣ 973</p> <p>♠ AK96 ♥ A72 ♦ J ♣ KJ842</p> <p>W/EW</p> <p>♠ 1074 ♥ K1043 ♦ AK865 ♣ 6</p>	<p>East-West have an excellent slam in spades if they can reach it and I suspect many won't. Dave Huggett and I had this hand recently and bid as follows – 1♣ – 1♠ – 3♦ (mini Splinter, singleton or void in diamonds, agreeing spades and forcing as far as 3♠) – 4♣ – 4♥ (both cue bids), 4NT (Roman Key Card Blackwood), 5♣ (0 or 3 key cards, obviously 3) - 6♠.</p>

<p>Hand 17</p> <p>♠ QJ9532 ♥ A ♦ 1075 ♣ 542</p>	<p>♠ A ♥ J53 ♦ QJ2 ♣ AKJ863</p> <p>N/-</p> <p>♠ 874 ♥ KQ862 ♦ A86 ♣ 109</p>	<p>♠ K106 ♥ 10974 ♦ K943 ♣ Q7</p> <p>Looking at all four hands, 4♥ is definitely the best contract but in practice will often go off due to the heart break and the offside doubleton Queen of clubs. 3NT on the other hand is dreadful on a spade lead but unless West bids one, East might not lead one in which case North might get away with it. Against 4♥ a spade lead is best for the defence as a club or diamond lead are both likely to steer Declarer in the right direction. This hand could turn out to be rather frustrating for some!</p>
<p>Hand 18</p> <p>♠ Q10 ♥ J1032 ♦ J97 ♣ AJ74</p>	<p>♠ AK972 ♥ 974 ♦ 853 ♣ Q5</p> <p>E/NS</p> <p>♠ 653 ♥ AQ5 ♦ AKQ106 ♣ K9</p>	<p>♠ J84 ♥ K86 ♦ 42 ♣ 108632</p> <p>Another hand that plays well in a 5-3 major fit rather than no trumps. The bidding might start 1♦ – 1♠ – 2NT. If North now bids 3♠, that is forcing and promises a five card suit. South should now raise to 4♠. In spades Declarer should manage to make 11 tricks but in 3NT ten tricks will be the maximum on a club lead.</p>
<p>Hand 19</p> <p>♠ 85 ♥ AKQJ95 ♦ 82 ♣ K105</p>	<p>♠ QJ ♥ 864 ♦ 63 ♣ Q98743</p> <p>S/EW</p> <p>♠ 1074 ♥ 10 ♦ AKJ974 ♣ AJ2</p>	<p>♠ AK9632 ♥ 732 ♦ Q85 ♣ 6</p> <p>After South opens 1♦, West will overcall 1♥ or 2♥ depending on methods. North will not get involved but East has a good supporting hand and some pairs will reach 4♥. If East bids spades, East-West might not end up in their heart fit. Defending a heart contract, North will lead his doubleton diamond and on the third round Declarer must ruff high then cross to dummy with a spade to play a club towards his king. He can then get a club ruff in dummy before drawing trumps. Ten tricks. In spades there is a trump loser plus a diamond overruff so only eight tricks.</p>
<p>Hand 20</p> <p>♠ K2 ♥ KQJ43 ♦ K1043 ♣ 84</p>	<p>♠ Q106 ♥ 1098 ♦ 9876 ♣ J109</p> <p>W/All</p> <p>♠ J4 ♥ 65 ♦ AQJ ♣ AQ7653</p>	<p>♠ A98753 ♥ A72 ♦ 52 ♣ K2</p> <p>East-West should end up in a heart part-score but some pairs will overreach themselves and bid to game. Whether or not South gets the chance to overcall in clubs, North is likely to lead the Jack of clubs anyway. The defence may well take the first three tricks and switch to a trump. Declarer must pin his hopes on a 3-2 break in both majors so needs to win in hand, play King, Ace and ruff a third spade, play another top heart from hand, draw the last trump with dummy's Ace then run the spades. A score of +620 will be very good for East-West but +170 should also be good.</p>

<p>Hand 21</p> <p>♠ AKQ108 ♥ K8 ♦ Q2 ♣ KJ32</p> <p>♠ 74 ♥ QJ ♦ A10973 ♣ 8754</p> <p>N/NS</p> <p>♠ 3 ♥ A97543 ♦ KJ ♣ AQ96</p>	<p>This slam hand will no doubt be bid in all sorts of different ways with some unfortunate outcomes. North should have reasonable clubs for his 3 club bid, a reverse after South's 2 heart response. 6♣ looks sound whilst 6♥ is hopeless on a diamond lead. However 6♣ also has a sting in its tail. Assuming a diamond lead and trump switch, the play of the 10 of clubs rings alarm bells that things are not behaving. Declarer might hope to ruff a heart but will worry that suit is also breaking badly and be lured into a plan B, attempting to drop the Jack of spades which doesn't work. Another sleepless night!</p>
<p>Hand 22</p> <p>♠ A875 ♥ 42 ♦ 109654 ♣ 65</p> <p>♠ J63 ♥ AJ986 ♦ 72 ♣ J43</p> <p>E/EW</p> <p>♠ KQ1094 ♥ Q105 ♦ KJ ♣ 1072</p>	<p>Although East-West can easily make 4♥ with an overtrick, if East opens 1♣ and South overcalls in spades, East-West may not find their way there. Some East-Wests will end up in a club part-score making 11 tricks and if North-South play in spades, they will make 8 tricks. Any East-West who manage to bid to game in hearts or clubs should get a good result.</p>
<p>Hand 23</p> <p>♠ 62 ♥ K863 ♦ 987542 ♣ 7</p> <p>♠ A1083 ♥ 1094 ♦ A ♣ AKQ106</p> <p>S/All</p> <p>♠ K5 ♥ QJ75 ♦ QJ10 ♣ J542</p>	<p>This is a good one for those who use splinter bids. The East-West bidding might proceed 1♣ – 1♠ – 4♦ – 4♥ – 4NT – 5♦ – 6♠. 4♦ shows a singleton or void diamond and agrees spades. 4♥ is a cue bid. If you play 4NT as Roman Key Card then after 5♦ (showing one key card), 5♥ would ask about the Queen of trumps. The slam zone is a difficult area and this is on the optimistic side but today fortune favours the brave! With the King of trumps onside 6♠ can make with an overtrick though on a diamond lead Declarer should play safe with Ace and another trump.</p>
<p>Hand 24</p> <p>♠ KQJ108 ♥ Q6 ♦ Q1083 ♣ A3</p> <p>♠ 7643 ♥ KJ8752 ♦ - ♣ K65</p> <p>W/-</p> <p>♠ A ♥ 94 ♦ AKJ9642 ♣ 942</p>	<p>For those who opened a weak two in hearts, how did North-South fare? North may overcall in spades and East may bid 3♥. Will South bid 4♦ or support partner's spades on a singleton? The correct spot for North-South is 5♦ and unless the defence take their hearts immediately, Declarer will end up with thirteen tricks. Where West didn't open, North-South should have an easier time of it but may possibly end up in 3NT and if they don't get a heart lead, they will also make thirteen tricks.</p>

