



The 2026 Welsh Bridge Union Simultaneous Pairs

Thursday 24th 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 11th, the monthly **Cake Club** on October 14th. 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 17th sees the **MWBA McKindley Teams**, and on the 18th 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 9 6 2	
	♥ A K 10 8	
	♦ 9 8	
	♣ K 9 6	
♠ K Q J 10 8 4		♠ 7 5 3
♥ 9		♥ 7 4 3
♦ A K 6		♦ Q J 5 4 2
♣ A 8 3		♣ 5 2
	♠	
	♥ Q J 6 5 2	
	♦ 10 7 3	
	♣ Q J 10 7 4	

North opens 1NT, South takes out to 2♥ (probably via a 2♦ transfer) and West has a choice. Double to show a strong hand is one option. A direct leap to 4♠ is another. East will not give much encouragement! Despite the 4-0 break, 4♠ is makeable. If North does not attack clubs, declarer simply knocks out the ♠A. If North does lead clubs early, declarer must give up a club while dummy still has plenty of trumps. A sacrifice in 5♥ doubled is cheap, down only 100.

Board 2. North/South Vul. Dealer East.

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

West presumably opens 1♦ in third seat. At this vulnerability, North will think twice about bidding 3♣ (weak). East would double for takeout, which West might leave in. Losing 500 in 3♣ doubled will be a bottom. Left to their own devices, East-West bid 1♦-1♥-1NT-2♣(enquiry)-2♥-2♠-2NT or similar. With the clubs blocked and the ♠K onside, game is there – indeed 10 tricks are possible in 3NT: two spades, three hearts and four diamonds.

Board 3. East/West Vul. Dealer South.

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

What should North open in third seat? Game looks unlikely facing a passed partner. Then again, the two defensive tricks and flattish shape are hardly ideal for pre-empting. Even 1♠ poses problems. If East overcalls 2♥, West might bid 3♣, when East can bid 3♦. Of course, West will fear that bidding 3♣ (or 3♦, a less flexible bid) will merely elicit 3♥. 3♦ plays better from the West seat, with 130 possible. North can make 2♠. 2♥ (East) is two down.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

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

The computer has produced a beautiful deal. Have you spotted the best contract? 6♦ is the spot. You can throw two spades on the top clubs (West ruffs but it is with a natural trump winner) and set up the heart suit with a ruff. Next best is to stay out of any slam and play in no-trumps. You can set up a long spade or, without a spade lead, a long heart for 660. Quite a likely sequence is 1♥-2♣-2♦-3NT. North has to trust South not to have too many extra values.

Board 5. North/South Vul. Dealer North.

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

Given the vulnerability, East-West may well have the auction to themselves, with a simple 1♣-3♣. As only a diamond lead and a spade switch stops 10 tricks, I expect 130 to be a common score. If West prefers a 1♦ response, North bids 1♥, making a heart lead even more likely. Declarer can then grab the ♠A at trick two and throw two spades from dummy on the ♥K-Q. North-South do not want to buy the contract as 3♠ is down two and 3♥ worse.

Board 6. East/West Vul. Dealer East.

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

After East opens 1♣, South surely doubles. The shape is great and the vulnerability favourable. If West redoubles, South retreats to 1♥ (the score for 1♣ redoubled with four overtricks is 1030 in case you did not know). West is not going to defend 1♥ doubled (down only two). All routes really lead to 3NT. Declarer has to give up a diamond to establish the suit, so 660 will be a common score – the ♥10 with East stops South from setting up the hearts.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

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

East opens 1♥ in fourth seat. West may raise to 2♥, whereupon East jumps to 4♥. If West decides the hand has no ruffing value – the Q-J doubleton may be just as useful (or as here useless) in no-trumps as in hearts – East should rebid 2♠ over 1NT. West then gives jump preference to 4♥. As it happens, the pairs who bid to 3NT will score a top, with 10 tricks available in hearts or no-trumps. Indeed 10 tricks are also there if you play in spades.

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

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

West opens 2♣. North may overcall 2♦ (or 3♦ if feeling brave). East may double. West bids spades and East may bid 3NT. This is awkward as West does not want to bid 4♥ and hear East pass. 6♠ may be commoner than the easier 6♥. One way to make 6♠ is to ruff the ♦Q, draw trumps, cash the ♥A-K-Q and play a club to the nine: South has no safe return. A squeeze also works if again you play South for the ♣K. 6NT (East) is makeable on a strip squeeze.

Board 9. East/West Vul. Dealer North.

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

North opens 1♣ and South responds 1♥ (or if it is natural rather than a splinter, 3♥). West doubles 1♥ and North redoubles. Soon South arrives in 4♥. West has two aces to take: having seen the ♣2 at trick one, West cashes the ♠A at trick two to find out whether the ♣2 was a singleton (expecting East to play low if it was). If West tries to cash the ♣A-K at tricks one and two, declarer can set up the clubs for 12 tricks and 480. Only 430 is available in no-trumps.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

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

The sequence 1♠-3♠-6♠ has much to commend it. The slam surely has some play whatever West has for the double raise. The friendly heart position means that an overtrick is there. If South bids 3♦ (weak) over 1♠, West must take care. A simple 3♠ suggests a hand that would have bid 2♠ without the overcall: a jump to 4♠ is in order. East is always bidding a slam if West bids 4♠ on this sequence. Courtesy of the heart position, 7♥ and 7NT are also on.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

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

North-South might bounce straight back with a slam of their own. Can they bid it? Suppose the bidding starts 1♠-2♠-4♦(splinter). With an ace, a singleton, a fifth trump and very little wasted in diamonds, North has an enormous hand. If you do not play 4♦ as a splinter, it is a little harder to reach 6♠. Twelve tricks are there: five spades, a heart, two clubs, a long club and three ruffs. Only if West leads a club can you make all 13 tricks.

Board 12. North/South Vul. Dealer West.

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

The players may struggle to stop in a safe contract on this deal. 1♠-2♥-2♠-3♠ sounds just plausible. Now West has to take a dim view of the singleton in East's suit to avoid reaching 4♠. With the ♦K protected, the defenders cannot make three diamonds and two trumps, so 3♠ makes. The play may start with the ♣Q to the ace and four rounds of hearts – the losers are three trumps and a diamond. Playing fewer hearts means two trump and two diamond losers instead.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

With terrible spades (and an awkward strength), North opens 1♣. What does South do after East overcalls 1♦? Expecting West to have the spades, a jump to 3♣ seems best. This is not a strong action – 2♦ would show a sound raise. West scrapes up a double of 3♣. Rather than guess which major to bid, East is likely to take this out to 3♦. North competes to 4♣ to end proceedings. 4♣ is on. For East-West, both 3♦ and 3♥ are on but obviously not 3♠.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

West opens 1♥ in third seat and North doubles. East, with five spades, bids 1♠. South probably tries 2♣. West rebids 2♦ to end the auction. To stop 10 tricks North needs to lead a trump early in the play – at trick two most likely having cashed a club at trick one. Dummy cannot then make the ♠K, the ♣Q and ruff a heart. With (in theory) only 110 available in diamonds, no-trumps scores more, with 8 tricks and 120 possible. No contracts make for North-South.

Board 15. North/South Vul. Dealer South.

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

A 3♣ opening from South may well begin and end the auction. West is too flat to come in with a double while North has too few aces to contemplate a pot at 3NT. To beat 3♣, having led a top diamond at trick one, West must switch immediately to a heart. This way the defenders get two tricks in each red suit as well as a spade. Bashers who bid 3NT as North may be in luck as the lead to let it make – a spade – is the natural one for East to make. 3♠ would be two off.

Board 16. East/West Vul. Dealer West.

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

When two passes follow West's 1♣ opening, South is too good for reopening 1♠ and doubles. West might rebid 1♦ or, in an effort to shut out the majors, 2♣ or 1NT. North does not need much shutting out but clearly South bids again, introducing the spades. Most likely South gets to play in 3♠ after East-West have competed to three of a minor. 3♠ yields 140 with four tricks to lose. Normal play in the diamond suit should allow West to make 3♣ or 3♦.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

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

What does South bid after North opens 1♥ and East overcalls 1♠? I like 3♦, a fit-showing jump: heart support, the values to raise to at least 3♥ and a source of tricks in diamonds. All routes in fact seem to lead to 4♥ by North. East cashes a top spade but has no good continuation. A second top spade sets up the queen while switching is worse, letting declarer throw dummy's spades on the clubs and perhaps make 11 tricks. 4♠ doubled would be costly.

Board 18. North/South Vul. Dealer East.

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

If East opens 4♠, South will feel tempted to come in with 4NT (any two suits). If North bids a restrained 5♣, the move works. West cannot effect a trump promotion on the third round of clubs and 5♣ makes. There is a way to get a better score. If South doubles 4♠, the defenders might cash their six top winners to leave North with the lead. Then a second round of diamonds promotes South's ♠J for 800. 5♥ fails as West can ruff the third round of spades.

Board 19. East/West Vul. Dealer South.

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

North opens 1♥ in third seat. If East bravely bids 2♣, South doubles for takeout. West then raises to 3♣, probably ending the auction. 3♣ makes, with two hearts and two aces to lose. If East passes over 1♥, South bids 1♠ and North may well pass this. East reopens with a double but it will be less clear to compete up to 3♣. South makes 2♠ in comfort, losing two tricks in each minor and the ♥A. 2♥ can go two down if East gets two spade ruffs.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

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

1♠-INT-2♥-3♥-4♥ sounds like a good auction. With the singleton ♣Q not pulling full weight, a jump rebid of 3♥ would be a big overbid. For South, it would be pusillanimous to pass 2♥ when holding five-card support. With trumps 2-2, declarer should manage an overtrick in 4♥ without raising a sweat. If North raises INT to 2NT, this goes down if East wins the diamond lead and switches to a low club. If South passes 1♠ (a poor move), it makes 8 tricks.

Board 21. North/South Vul. Dealer North.

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

In weak no-trump land, many will bid INT-3NT. Can the defenders unscramble their winners? Obviously, if East leads a diamond, the answer is 'no' – declarer rattles off 10 tricks. The potentially killing lead is a top heart. West plays the six (encouraging), then the four (suit preference) and finally the three under the jack. East should now work this out and switch to a spade. Well done if you did that – and bad luck if it happens against you! 4♣ clearly makes.

Board 22. East/West Vul. Dealer East.

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

1♠-INT-2NT is the normal Acoll sequence. With no tens and a singleton in South's suit, North should not go on to 3NT. Of course, some South players will bid 3NT over INT. Double dummy the only lead to beat 3NT is a diamond from East. On a heart lead, an inspired declarer might make it. You have two tricks in each suit. The ninth trick comes by endplaying West with a diamond, forcing a spade lead to set up the nine in dummy. 4♦ and 3♠ are makeable.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

South opens 1♥ and North responds 2♣. With the spades so good, and the desire to stop South from bidding 2♥, East may bid 2♠ rather than double. Now South might bid a good/bad 2NT (like Lebensohl – the 2NT precedes a competitive bid). As it happens, only a diamond lead stops the tenth trick in a heart contract – maybe East should have doubled 2♣ after all! 3♠ doubled goes down at least one. 3NT by North also fails by a trick.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

1♠-INT-2♠ seems the sensible auction. I hope that nobody decides to rebid 2♣! Dummy in 2♠ is useless, not making a single trick if the defenders are on their toes, so declarer goes two down. In theory, East-West do better if they buy the contract. With the aid of a few good guesses, you can make 3♥, losing a spade, a diamond and two trumps. Nine tricks are also available playing in clubs. East can make INT but is unlikely to get to play there.

Board 25. East/West Vul. Dealer North.

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

After South opens 1♠, West faces a dilemma – show a two-suiter with a Michaels cue bid of 2♠ or keep open the option of stopping lower with 2♥. If West bids 2♠, East bids 3♥ and South doubles. Pass is the winning option for North but 4♦ may be the more common choice. 4♦ makes exactly. 3♠ also makes exactly – East should come to a long trump to stop the overtrick. Likewise, 3♥ doubled should go two down – North's trumps are too hot to handle.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

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

Playing a natural defence (apart from 2♣, Landy), South bids 2♦ over East's INT. West bids 2♥ and North joins in with 2♠. Holding four spades, East may pass this. South may do too but is more likely to call 3♣. North probably gives preference to 3♦. East might then compete to 3♥. 4♦ and 2♠ are on for North-South. Whether it is better to go down one in 3♥ all depends on whether someone doubles. 3♣ fails if the defenders keep on playing hearts.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

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

The club values and 7222 shape make the West hand less than ideal for opening 3♠ – will anyone care? North probably doubles 3♠, intending to convert clubs to diamonds. An inspired East might bid 3NT – normal play (restricted choice) brings in the spade suit, ensuring nine tricks (at least). Of course, South might bid 4♣, which West doubles. North tries 4♦, which East doubles. South must then run to 4♥ (two down doubled). 3♠ would make if North is chicken.

Board 28. North/South Vul. Dealer West.

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

After North opens 1NT and East bids 2♥, South can double if it is for take-out but not if it is general value showing (Lebensohl) or penalties. West is likely to raise to 3♥ whatever, after which East probably bids 4♥. If South finds the diabolical lead of a trump, East must play well to make even eight tricks. On any other lead, declarer can ruff a couple of diamonds in dummy, take the ruffing club finesse and make 10 easy tricks. Who said never lead a singleton trump?

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

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

North opens INT and South invites game either with a natural 2NT or with 2♠ (range enquiry). North clearly accepts. After a spade lead to the queen and one back to the ace, best play is to take the heart finesse at once. When this wins, declarer turns to clubs. Since the ace of clubs is three times as likely to be part of an A-10-x-x combination than it is to be a singleton, even those who lead a high club from hand should get the suit right and thus make nine tricks.

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

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

East-West can make game (3NT, with an overtrick if declarer guesses well). Can they get there? INT all pass is no good. Nor is 1♦-1♠-2♦. Maybe West likes the good spot cards (spottage as Ian McCance calls it or impletion as Marc Smith does) and the aces, rebidding 2NT over 2♦, which East would raise. Maybe East will be the one to take the bullish view, rebidding INT rather than 2♦ over 1♠, which West would raise. 130 is the limit in diamonds.

Board 31. North/South Vul. Dealer South.

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

On a heart lead, 6♠ is slightly against the odds – you need East to hold the king and no more than one other spade – three clubs go on the ♦A-K-Q. It is better on a diamond lead as then you lose no hearts and can afford to lose one trick in the black suits. The auction may start 1♣-1♠-3♥-4♣-4♦-5♦ (3♥ being a mini splinter). South guesses 5♦ is a void (or North would bid 4NT) and may pot the slam, hoping trumps are solid. 6♠ makes easily as the cards lie.

Board 32. East/West Vul. Dealer West.

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

If West opens 3♦ (not advised at this vulnerability), South reopens with 3♠ and North raises to 4♠. This makes with two trumps and a diamond to lose. After a pass from West, North might open. Then if it goes 1♣-1♠-2♣, South probes with 2♥ and North raises to 3♥, which complicates matters. If South gets to open in fourth seat, 1♠-(2♦)-Double is the likely start. There are certainly a number of ways to reach the doomed 3NT (down three).