



The 2023 Charity Challenge Pairs Friday 17th March

We are raising funds for two support Charities this year -[Mind](#), that wonderful charity supporting people with mental health problems, and [Macmillan Cancer Support](#) ... the work they do is just amazing. Please help us raise lots of lovely funds for them.

Last year you managed to raise over £5,000 for the two charities we supported in 2022 which was just amazing and incredibly generous of everyone. If you haven't already done so, please [click here to go to the page](#) that gives you all the information.

You may already have heard that in addition to the normal Charity events we run, we have decided to "slot in" one for the **Turkiye – Syria Earthquake Appeal**, which will run for the week beginning 17 April – [click here for more information](#) about this one. Another new one is a charity event run by u3a, so if you know of people who would be interested in that please send them along [to this website](#) for more information.

July sees our [Summer Charity pairs](#) for Kidney Research UK and the British Heart Foundation and then of course there will be the [Children in Need Pairs](#) in November – well we couldn't NOT run that could we !

Do join us for some of these events if you can – whether virtually or actually joining in "round the table". We love to have your company.

We do hope you have enjoyed yourselves, and you will know by know whether the commentator has got it right! We are very grateful to Mark Horton for writing the Monday and Thursday commentaries, to Mark Mortimer who penned the ones for Tuesday and Friday and to Brian Senior for doing the mid-week Wednesday commentary. This year the event will again be "hybrid" with some clubs playing face to face and others online, and I suspect that may well continue into the foreseeable future as people find what suits them best and what they are most comfortable with.

Thank you so much for joining us and please do so again in future !

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Board 1. None. Dealer North

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

North will open 1♥- South will respond 1♠. North could contemplate a splinter in diamonds to show slam interest and support for partner's spades- but they're not quite strong enough. Best to play safe and bid direct to 4♠ without much fuss. Declarer is making an easy 10 tricks- losing the 2 red suit Aces and a top trump.

Board 2. N/S. Dealer East

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

East opens 1♣. If you're playing inverted minors- this is a good time to use it and bid 2♣ showing a good raise in clubs and an opening hand or better. An old fashioned raise to 3♣ would show the same thing but is less practical, using up vital bidding space to investigate the chances of a game in NT. But here- the horrid singleton H in each hand precludes that anyway- so whatever partner responds in clubs- East should just keep it simple and bid 5♣ direct. Its close to slam- but the spade finesse is not working today and declarer settles for an easy 11 tricks

Board 3. E/W. Dealer South

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

With 4441 shape in the South hand- there are as many opinions as what to bid as there are cards in a pack. There are those who even advocate not even opening with these type of hands at all- understandably aware of the headaches and subsequent Bridge nightmares which they provoke! But here- the hand is too strong in HCP to contemplate the latter. Many would open 1♣ and some would reasonably open 1♦- the suit below the singleton. North will respond an easy 1♠ and again South could contemplate a Splinter bid of 4♥- agreeing spades as the trump suit. If not- a simple Blackwood 4NT enquiry will reveal that 2 vital cards are missing. The vast majority will be happy here in 4♠ making plus one.

Board 4. All. Dealer West

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

A rather bog standard deal. The bidding is very likely to pass out to South in 4th position. Most Acolites will open a standard Weak NT here which almost certainly will be passed out. Most declarers should romp home with 7 tricks.

Board 5. N/S. Dealer North

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

This is a very exciting deal and brings up some interesting ideas on bidding. Some Norths may open a Strong NT and most Acolites would settle for a 1♣ here. What do you now bid with the East hand? Some might settle for a 3♠ jump overcall here which is fair enough. But in these circumstances its best to be as preemptive as possible, for the simple reason of being a real pain to your opponents and denying them vital bidding space. This makes a strong argument for the case of a direct raise to 4♠ to me. Say East punts for the latter- South has quite a few options, either of which could be right or wrong. They could just bid 5♣ if partner has opened 1♣ and settle for an easy life and probably a bad score into the bargain. They could just bid 5H- which is in real danger of being passed by partner, But lets look again. The spade void is immensely powerful and we're 2 suited. Lets be creative here and bid 5♠! North now knows they have a certain slam in clubs and a probable one in hearts by South's eloquent cue bid. Now its for North to decide whether to just bid 6♣ or take a slight but not considerable gamble on 6♥. Owing to the spade void in dummy- declarer always make 13 tricks in either clubs or hearts but few will bid the Grand. Much more interesting will be how many North/Souths bid to slam here and which frustrated ones miss out owing to East's leaping spades.

Board 6. E/W. Dealer East

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

Back to earth with a bump. Most Souths will open a Strong NT here and Acolites will try 1♦. Most West's should manage a reasonably sound 2♣ overcall. North isn't strong but is shapely and could try a negative double with both majors. If West has not bid- they could just show their hand naturally or via a Stayman Enquiry or transfer to hearts. The likely final contract is a part score heart contract by North/South- which makes comfortably.

Board 7. All. Dealer South

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

Back into the dizzy heights of the stratosphere! Some Souths might open a Strong NT here- most Acolites will open a very reasonable 1♣. If they open the latter- West has a perfect hand for a Michaels Cue bid overcall of 2♣- showing both majors. Michaels can be a real pain for one's opponents, using up their vital bidding space. But not here- because North has an easy and confident bid of 2♦. Most Easts will bid 2♥ in support of their partner's Michaels and others might jump all over the place to be a nuisance. South now knows

to have an almost certain game in 5♦ and possibly 5♣- but 3NT looks dicey from their perspective, with only kx♥. Most will probably settle for a safe minor game here but slam in either is cold, although dependent on the singleton heart with North. Some clever partnerships, who have the bidding mechanics to show the heart singleton, will reap the rewards.

Board 8. None. Dealer West

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

My word- North/Souths must be glad they showed up today- the thrilling ride they're having! Again with the 4441 shape- North has many options- but most would opt for 1♣ here. A weak jump overcall of 2♦ by West here would be verging on the ludicrous but most of us are tempted into such indiscretions these days! South will show the heart suit or ♣ one via a negative double or naturally. Most Norths will now raise direct to 4♥ without much thought. Always making 10 tricks and a magic 11 if you play the clubs for that much talked about singleton k in one hand!

Board 9. E/W. Dealer North

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

Lucas 2's are gaining in popularity these days- mainly because they're such a pain for the opposition to bid against. Some Norths might open 2♥ here showing an intermediate level hand with hearts and an unspecified minor. Those a bit more old school in their approach will pass. Again East has the dreaded 4441 shape (a lot of these today- maybe the ECats computer is teasing us?!) but it seems sensible to open 1♦ here after nothing from North. What for South to do? As in a previous hand today- the obvious option is a weak jump of 3♠. A jump to 4♠ would certainly be preemptive but rather foolhardy with such a mediocre suit lacking 2 honours and is going to end in tears after East will undoubtedly show no mercy and double for penalty if passed around to them. Dependent on either- West could bid 4 or 5♦ here- which makes. An interesting hand of which I predict many different results- a lot of which will end up with a drowning of sorrows in the bar afterwards!

Board 10. All. Dealer East

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

Time to take a breathe and calm down after so much excitement, with a rather prosaic deal! Most North/Souths will probably find their nice fit in hearts - but with no game on they'll have to compete a bit to stop East/West languishing in a low level NT contract.

Board 11. None. Dealer South

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

Its all going East/West's way here for a change. West will open a standard 1♠ and East an equally so 2♣. When they discover they haven't got a fit in much- 3NT will be a popular final contract. Dependent on the lead from South- declarer should make 11 tricks with the spade suit behaving nicely.

Board 12. N/S. Dealer West

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

Just when you thought you could relax - the rollercoaster continues. Who said Bridge is a boring game! Most Wests will open a standard 1♠ here without much thought. If there was ever a case for a Michaels Cue Bid of 2♠- its a perfect one with the North hand- containing 6/6 shape in the other major and an unspecified minor. Most Wests will support their partner's spade but to what extent? 3♠ will be common but 4♠ isn't a bad punt and makes. Now South knows they have a heart fit with partner and a probable club one also. South could either bid 5♣ or 5♥ but both will undoubtedly be passed out and a golden slam opportunity missed in either. A difficult hand to bid to slam

without sophisticated methods by the North/south partnership- but those who do will probably score very well indeed.

Board 13. All. Dealer North

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

More excitement! I, for one, would have to lie down in a darkened room with soft music on, after this session. Some 'experts' advise against pre-empting in first position. In a minor perhaps- but generally a sound idea in a major. A lot of Norths will therefore not hesitate to open 3♥ here. East should certainly try a takeout double and West has a nice hand- but what to respond to partner's enquiry? 4♠ would be an easy option and also an uninspired one! Granted that North opens 3♥- West should ideally make a cue bid of 4♥- telling partner 'I know 4♠ is a certainty but I'm short in the enemies suit and slam could be a possibility'. East can now make 4Nt Blackwood Key Card enquiry with a response of 5♠ (showing 2 key cards plus the trump Q)- enough for a confident bid of 6♠. Another hand where many will no doubt settle for the easy option and will be interesting to see how many reach the slam after North's annoying pre-emptive opening. Bravo to those who show the imagination!

Board 14. None. Dealer East

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

South will kick things off with a gentle 1♥. With the West hand there's something to be said for an overcall of 1NT showing 15/17 HCP and a double stop in the enemies suit. But, alternatively, the 4 card spade suit is an attraction towards a take out double. East will now bid 4♠ without much hesitation. Whether East bids 1NT or elects for a double- most pairs will either be in a NT game or 4♠, both making an easy 11 tricks and the former scoring better in the process.

Board 15. N/S. Dealer South

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

Most Souths will open a weak 2♥ here. There are quite a few Wests (yes- you know who you are!) who would overcall 3♦ at non vulnerability here- but it really amounts to a 'psychic' bid but happens to land on its feet here as partner has an excellent fit with you. Assuming most Wests refrain from 'Gung Ho' tactics- North will certainly bid 2♠. Most partnerships agree that a change of suit over their weak 2 bid is non- forcing and shows equal length or better. I imagine

most North/South pairs will end up in a part score spade contract here- with a few lucky East/Wests stealing the show in diamonds

Board 16. E/W. Dealer West

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

Those who are fond of Lucas 2 opening will probably open 2♥ with the West hand. But the sensible majority, who are not determined to open the bidding on just about anything- will get a big green thing out here! North opens 1♦ and East makes a take out double (OK with such meagre ♦). Both sides will battle it out in the red suits but East/West are likely to steal the show in a part score heart contract.

Board 17. None. Dealer North

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

A common all garden type of hand. Most Norths will be 1♠ here and South will try a jump raise of 3♠. North, being minimum, declines the invitation. 9 tricks are off the top but would be difficult to envisage many more unless the defence slips up.

Board 18. N/S. Dealer East

<p>♠ 7 6 ♥ A K 7 5 4 ♦ 8 5 4 3 ♣ A 6</p> <p>♠ Q J 5 2 ♥ 10 9 8 6 3 ♦ J ♣ K 9 4</p>	<p>♠ 9 4 3 ♥ J 2 ♦ Q 10 7 2 ♣ 8 7 5 3</p> <p>♠ A K 10 8 ♥ Q ♦ A K 9 6 ♣ Q J 10 2</p>
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A 4441 hand again! But this time- a very strong one. Which minor to open is a matter of style but I imagine most would open 1♦. North responds 1♥. South now has several options but I suspect most will take the easy one and bid a direct 3NT to play. North/South actually have a slam in diamonds but would be very difficult to find unless South opens one. Double dummy suggests 11 tricks in NT is the maximum.

Board 19. E/W. Dealer South

<p>♠ K 8 5 ♥ A J 8 7 4 ♦ 6 5 3 2 ♣ K</p> <p>♠ Q 10 9 ♥ Q 5 2 ♦ K 9 4 ♣ J 10 7 2</p>	<p>♠ A 4 3 2 ♥ 10 ♦ A Q J 7 ♣ A 9 8 5</p> <p>♠ J 7 6 ♥ K 9 6 3 ♦ 10 8 ♣ Q 6 4 3</p>
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North will probably kick things off with a 1♥ in 3rd position. East has a perfect hand for a take out double. South will give partner a gentle raise with 2♥ and West bid their club naturally at the 3 level. Both sides will compete and its difficult to predict which one will win the day in either club or ♥.

Board 20. All. Dealer West

<p>♠ A K 8 7 3 2 ♥ K 5 2 ♦ K J 10 ♣ J</p> <p>♠ J 9 4 ♥ A J 7 ♦ 9 3 ♣ A K 9 8 2</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 6 ♥ Q 9 8 4 3 ♦ A 8 4 ♣ 7 4</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ 10 6 ♦ Q 7 6 5 2 ♣ Q 10 6 5 3</p>
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Acolites will probably open 1NT with the West hand- others 1♣. North is definitely worth an overcall of 2♠. East will compete in hearts either naturally or via a negative double. There will be a battle for supremacy in the majors here and is tricky to call which side will win the day in a part score contract.

Board 21. N/S. Dealer North

<p>♠ — ♥ K Q 10 9 4 ♦ A Q J 10 9 ♣ K Q 9</p> <p>♠ Q 8 7 6 5 ♥ A J 2 ♦ 5 4 ♣ J 7 3</p>	<p>♠ K 4 2 ♥ 8 7 6 ♦ 8 7 6 ♣ A 8 6 2</p> <p>♠ A J 10 9 3 ♥ 5 3 ♦ K 3 2 ♣ 10 5 4</p>
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North has a lovely hand and opens 1♥. South responds 1♠. To my mind- North should jump bid with 3♦ to show a powerful 2 suited hand. South could bid 5♦ but is better to fill in the gaps and bid 3NT. A sound declarer with good intermediaries in hearts should engineer at least 3♥ 5♦ and one in each of the black suits for 10 tricks.

Board 22. E/W. Dealer East

<p>♠ A Q 3 ♥ 9 5 ♦ Q J 9 6 4 ♣ 5 4 2</p> <p>♠ J 6 2 ♥ K 6 4 2 ♦ A 3 ♣ K J 9 7</p>	<p>♠ K 10 4 ♥ A J 10 3 ♦ 8 5 ♣ A Q 8 6</p>
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<p>♠ 9 8 7 5 ♥ Q 8 7 ♦ K 10 7 2 ♣ 10 3</p>	
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A hand for East/West at last! Most Acolites will opt for a INT opening with the East hand and most Wests will therefore try a 2♣ Stayman enquiry. The heart fit identified- most pairs will end up in 4♥ uncontested. An interesting note on the play of the spade suit, which features in most of the classic texts on the subject by Kelsey, Reese et al. Most declarers of sound technique will advance the J♠ first- awaiting North's response and a subsequent 2 tricks in that suit as the cards lie, leading to a magic 11 all in.

Board 23. All. Dealer South

<p>♠ K J ♥ K Q 9 3 ♦ A 5 4 ♣ Q J 7 3</p> <p>♠ Q 3 ♥ 4 2 ♦ J 9 7 ♣ A K 9 6 5 4</p>	<p>♠ A 10 7 6 5 ♥ A 10 6 5 ♦ 8 2 ♣ 8 2</p>
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<p>♠ 9 8 4 2 ♥ J 8 7 ♦ K Q 10 6 3 ♣ 10</p>	
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A deal which may lead to many different results. West opens 1♣ and North has a very reasonable INT overcall to my mind. East may be tempted into a negative double with both majors. South might leave the double in or elect to show their diamond suit. Very difficult to call and I predict that the traveller will be diverse by the end.

Board 24. None. Dealer West

<p>♠ 10 9 5 ♥ Q 9 7 ♦ 8 5 3 ♣ A 8 7 2</p> <p>♠ J 7 ♥ 4 ♦ K Q J 10 9 7 4 2 ♣ Q 6</p>	<p>♠ 8 6 2 ♥ A 10 8 6 5 ♦ A ♣ J 10 9 3</p>
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<p>♠ A K Q 4 3 ♥ K J 3 2 ♦ 6 ♣ K 5 4</p>	
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An interesting hand and amusing at the same time. What would you open with the West hand? 3♦ would be OK- but a totally pre-emptive 4♦ even better, scuppering any chances of the opposition finding a fit at a low level. West would be unwise to raise to 5♦ with so many losers. What next for poor old South- sitting there with a nice hand but no really attractive options? Could bid 4♠ and hope for the best or double 4♦ for penalty with equal sentiments. The amusing twist is that North/South have 3NT, only because the blockage of the A♦ precludes East/West from taking the first 8 tricks! Funny old game.

Board 25. E/W. Dealer North

<p>♠ Q 8 ♥ A 9 8 4 3 ♦ 6 4 ♣ J 6 5 4</p> <p>♠ A K 10 ♥ K Q 5 ♦ K 10 7 3 ♣ Q 8 2</p>	<p>♠ J 6 4 3 ♥ 10 ♦ A Q J 9 ♣ A K 10 3</p>
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<p>♠ 9 7 5 2 ♥ J 7 6 2 ♦ 8 5 2 ♣ 9 7</p>	
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East/West now have their moment in the sun. It would be unfair on them not to, with North/South having so much of the fun today. Granted that few Norths will open some form of ludicrous Lucas 2 here- East, with their 4441 shape will start with either 1♣ or 1♦ based on style. West could either opt for a simple 1♦ or inverted 2♦ raise

dependent on partner's opening bid. East now rebids NT to show a minimum of 15 HCP and West just goes for it with 6NT. Despite the combined HCP of 32 the slam is not 100% and rests on playing either opponent for Qx♠ after inevitably losing the A♥. I imagine that those who boldly bid to slam here will score well.

Board 26. All. Dealer East

<p>♠ K 8 4 3 ♥ A 7 3 ♦ 8 ♣ J 9 6 4 2</p> <p>♠ Q J 10 7 5 ♥ 2 ♦ Q 10 9 5 3 ♣ Q 10</p> <p>♠ A 9 2</p> <p>♥ 8 6 5 ♦ A 4 ♣ K 8 7 5 3</p>	<p>♠ 6 ♥ K Q J 10 9 4 ♦ K J 7 6 2 ♣ A</p>
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The points are pretty evenly divided but East/West have the superiority in terms of shape. The vast majority of Easts will open 1♥. South may overcall 2♣ and West could make a negative double. North may just raise their partner with 3♣ and East can now bid either 3♦ or repeat their solid and rebiddable ♥. Very likely that most East/Wests will win the day in the red suits here.

Board 27. None. Dealer South

<p>♠ K Q J 8 6 5 3 ♥ A 6 ♦ 10 7 4 ♣ 5</p> <p>♠ 7 ♥ 10 9 7 4 ♦ Q J 5 ♣ A K J 10 7</p> <p>♠ 10 4 2 ♥ K J 8 5 3 ♦ 6 3 2 ♣ 8 3</p>	<p>♠ A 9 ♥ Q 2 ♦ A K 9 8 ♣ Q 9 6 4 2</p>
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West will open 1♣ and North will overcall in ♠. The degree to which has cropped up on numerous hands today. My vote would be for an obstructive immediate raise to 4♠. East now bids 5♣ (which makes)

without a moment's hesitation. The irony is that North's 4♠ bid has given West a clear cut decision which otherwise they might not have had- an interesting game.

Board 28. N/S. Dealer West

<p>♠ 6 3 ♥ A J 7 4 ♦ A 9 6 4 ♣ K 5 3</p> <p>♠ A J 9 7 ♥ K Q 9 5 ♦ J 8 5 2 ♣ J</p> <p>♠ Q 10 8 2 ♥ 8 6 ♦ 10 3 ♣ Q 10 9 8 6</p>	<p>♠ K 5 4 ♥ 10 3 2 ♦ K Q 7 ♣ A 7 4 2</p>
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This hand belongs to East/West but surely not yet another 4441 hand to open with- this is getting almost too much of a coincidence! There are certainly those (including some extremely distinguished practitioners of the game) who would pull out a big green thing with the West hand in anticipation of the horrors ahead but I, for one, am not amongst them and would open 1♥. Luckily for me- partner East has a good hand and will probably respond 2♣, forcing for one round. West can now just about bid 2♦ and East obliges with a invitational 2NT- which will be passed out. Double Dummy suggests that East/West should make 8 tricks off the top in NT but difficult to wheedle out any more on the lie of the cards.

Board 29. All. Dealer North

<p>♠ Q 10 4 ♥ 8 2 ♦ A 6 4 2 ♣ K 6 5 2</p> <p>♠ K 8 3 ♥ 9 ♦ K Q 10 9 8 3 ♣ A 9 7</p> <p>♠ J 5 2 ♥ Q 7 5 4 ♦ J 5 ♣ Q J 10 4</p>	<p>♠ A 9 7 6 ♥ A K J 10 6 3 ♦ 7 ♣ 8 3</p>
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East opens 1♥ and West raises with 2♦. East rebids a simple 2♥- a jump to 3♥

would be too pushy with so many losers. West may elect to bid 2NT with their solid diamonds and stoppers in the unbid suits and is now up to East to either raise to 3NT or punt 4♥. Both are making on best defence.

Board 30. None. Dealer East

♠ 10 8 7 5 ♥ A 7 4 ♦ J 4 3 ♣ Q 8 5 ♠ K J 9 4 3 2 ♥ 5 2 ♦ K ♣ K J 10 2 ♠ Q ♥ Q 10 6 3 ♦ A Q 10 7 6 ♣ 9 6 3	♠ A 6 ♥ K J 9 8 ♦ 9 8 5 2 ♣ A 7 4
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Acolites will open a weak NT with the East hand and West will transfer to spade with a bid of 2♥. At the end of the day- West's decision is either to take a punt and bid 4♠ or pass out the completed transfer. Many will be understandably cautious but those taking a gamble will be lucky today with 10 easy tricks on top if declarer makes the text book play of finessing the j♥ after drawing trumps.

Board 31. N/S. Dealer South

♠ A K 8 6 2 ♥ 4 3 ♦ 5 4 ♣ K Q 9 2 ♠ 4 ♥ A K J 6 ♦ K 8 6 ♣ A 8 7 6 5 ♠ Q J 9 5 ♥ Q 10 7 2 ♦ J 10 7 ♣ J 10	♠ 10 7 3 ♥ 9 8 5 ♦ A Q 9 3 2 ♣ 4 3
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Most Wests will open 1♣ and most Norths overcall 1♠. East cannot really overcall their moderate diamond suit but could just about manage a INT dust bin bid here. South will no doubt show their support for partner's ♠- which may end the auction in a part score contract unless East/West find their ♦ fit.

Board 32. E/W. Dealer West

♠ A 8 5 ♥ K Q 7 ♦ K Q J 4 ♣ A Q 9 ♠ 9 7 6 4 ♥ J 9 6 4 ♦ 8 5 3 ♣ 4 2 ♠ J 10 ♥ 10 3 2 ♦ 10 9 7 ♣ K J 8 6 3	♠ K Q 3 2 ♥ A 8 5 ♦ A 6 2 ♣ 10 7 5
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The final board today of which has been a stupendously exciting session for North/South . Here on the last- they're back in the driving seat yet again. Most Norths, with their perfectly balanced 21 count, will open 2NT and South will surely just raise to 3NT and hope for the best. The thrills of the day are likely to end with an anti climax when East leads K♠ and declarer lacks the tempo to get 9 tricks off the top, most settling for one off.