



# COMMENTARY FOR THE SBU EASTER PAIRS 2026

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> 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 !

Do have a look on the [SBU web site](#) and [Facebook page](#) for all the SBU news and also for information about forthcoming tournaments.

## Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

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

There are the same ten tricks available in no trump as in spades, though it is hard to construct a sensible auction that ends up in no trump. When North opens 1♣, East will overcall and West has a constructive raise to the three level. For many club pairs that can be shown by raising to 3♠, while tournament pairs may have to go via 2♣, 3♣, or even 2NT. All roads lead to ten tricks except one, a club lead, ducked to the king, and a greedy low heart switch from North. Putting in the jack makes an overtrick.

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

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

E/W can make 2♥ or, considerably less attractive though it may be, 2♠, and they will frequently get to play one of these contracts if South opens 1♣ and West doubles. They will also buy it if West doubles a 1♦ opening, but it is unclear whether he should do so as he has the wrong shortage and little to spare in high-card terms. But the best E/W scores will come against a strong no trump opening from South, which will usually end the auction and fail by a couple of tricks after a heart lead followed by accurate defence.

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

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

After a pass from South, the most popular auction will see West open 1♠, North overcall 2♥ and South raise to game. Accurate defence should see 4♥ defeated by one trick. East leads the ♠J, which is ducked to North's king, and declarer cannot establish a discard for his spade losers without letting East in to lead a second spade through, netting two tricks in the suit for the defence. Those Souths who only invite game will score well with +140 well above average.

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

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

If North opens 1♠, by no means automatic with such empty suits and a mere 10-count, East will double, intending to bid hearts at his next turn – only to find North bidding them in front of him. That should silence East and South may give preference to 2S, which rates to be about two down. If North does not open, East opens 1♥ and maybe North balances with 1♠ – INT from East, 2♣ from

South, 2♦ from West. That makes an overtrick. There are many different auctions possible and may different results.

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

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

Despite the combined 27 HCP, N/S cannot make 3NT without the aid of some pretty ordinary defence. Indeed, an endplay may be required to get up to eight tricks. Say that East gives a trick by leading the ♦J round to declarer's queen. Declarer lacks the communications to do all that he would like to do so will perhaps try running the ♣J to the queen. The diamonds will be cleared, he leads the ♣9 to dummy's king, finesses the ♥J, and will need to read the position to get out for one down. Two off will not be an uncommon outcome.

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

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

Some will reach 3NT after South has shown a weak no trump type and North invited game. Despite the 4-1 diamond split, declarer would be close to making 3NT, if only he

could find an easy way back to hand for the second diamond finesse. Alas, he has no good play and may just play three rounds of diamonds, which will not be a success. 1NT+1 and 3♦ just making will win the matchpoints for N/S.

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

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

E/W make 7♠ but very few will get to six, as the deal is a perfect fit and most will just settle for game. If playing weak no trump, South's best opening bid is 1NT, with the strong doubletons and a hand that really should be led up to. West will overcall 2♠ and be raised to game. If South opens 1♣, West overcalls 1♠ and East makes an invitational raise to the three level. West goes on to game, but is hardly likely to consider slam.

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

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

E/W have another slam and, this time, they rate to get there as they have 35 HCP between them. The trick will be to reach

6NT, which is an excellent contract, succeeding when either spade honour is onside or the ♣J falls, rather than 6♦, which is a very unlucky contract. Even 7♦ will be tried once or twice. After all, it requires little more than a finesse. After 1♠ – 2♣ – 2♦ – 2♥ – 3NT, it is inconceivable that East will not drive to at least six, and he should see that there are sufficient high cards that 6NT will be worth bidding.

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

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

3NT will be the popular spot, with ten tricks the most likely outcome. If South passes in third seat, West may open a strong no trump and be raised to game via Stayman, or may open 1♦. It may then continue: 1♥ – 1♠ – 2NT – 3NT, or perhaps: 2♣ – 2♠ – 3NT. Some Souths will open 1♥, trading in the vulnerability. West will double, East perhaps jump to 2NT, and West raise to game. If East bids only 1NT, game will be missed as West is likely to pass.

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

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

4♠ may not always be reached but it is an excellent contract for N/S. However, its success or failure may depend on how much bidding East does. When East turns up with a singleton trump, declarer will need to pick up the clubs without loss to succeed. But he will think that it is normal to play for the drop, unless East has shown a very two-suited hand, If East opens 1♦ then bids 3♥ or even 4♥ on his own, according to the level at which he is forced to bid, he will have shown 6-5, and now declarer will be OK.

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

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

E/W can make 3♥ – three rounds of trumps seems to be a practical defence and now there will be only one ruff in either hand – but N/S can make 3♠. If East opens 1NT and North passes, East will use Stayman then invite game, which West will decline. But North will usually come in with a two-suited overcall and South compete to at least 3♠. And if West opens 1♣, North will double and again South will compete in spades. Only a 1♥ opening may keep North quiet, as he can hardly overcall 2♦ on that suit and has the wrong shortage to double.

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

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

This one appears to be everybody's 4♥. The most likely result is ten tricks – the defence can always hold the contract to ten – but no doubt a few will manage an overtrick on inaccurate defence, and gain a lot of matchpoints in the process. One or two may even reach the five level – West opens 1♥, East splinters in diamonds, and West thinks he has nothing wasted so tries for slam. That is a bit aggressive with a weak no trump hand.

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

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

N/S can make four of either minor, while the E/W limit is 2♠. Most Norths will pass and East open 1♠. That catches South with three aces and a bit of distribution but a weak main suit. I suspect most will overcall, West will bid 2♠, and North 3♣. It is not clear that either East or West should bid again at this vulnerability, but unless 3♠ gets doubled it will pay to do so, and only a very aggressive

pairs player will be able to find a double for the magic +200.

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

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

N/S make 4♥ but may not be allowed to play there very often. Say that East opens INT, South passes and West bids 2♥, transfer. North can double to show hearts, East jump to 3♠ to show the good fit, and South bid 4♥ because he has both heart support and ruffing values. With a limited two-suiter, West should think it likely that one or other major-suit game may make and that makes 4♠ the winning action. It is unclear that anyone can find a double and there will be the odd South who goes on to 5♥, one down.

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

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

After 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♦ – 3♣ – 3NT, North will clearly bid on, but with what? Many will drive to slam, though the lack of a fit makes this a very dubious decision. 4NT gets a swift pass from partner and scoops the pool on this lay-

out, 11 tricks being possible. But South showed a club stopper and a natural 4♣ slam try is also an option. Holding only a doubleton club, South should sign-off over that, either in 4NT or 4♠, and now North will need to show discipline to stay out of a doomed slam.

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

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

At favourable vulnerability, North may open a weak no trump with only 11 HCP but a five-card suit, and East overcall 2♠. If North passes, East can open 2♠ – the side-suit is of no consequence facing a passed partner and with such good spades. South may overcall 3♦, loath to go past 3NT, and now North will bid 3NT, ending the auction. If South overcalls 4/5♦, he will play 5♦ down one. What about 3NT? On a spade lead, declarer has 12 tricks and a lot of matchpoints. A heart lead, however, nets eight tricks for the defence.

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

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

6♠ is a very good contract for E/W but few will bid it. Aggressive opponents will actually help for once: 1♦ from North, 1♥ overcall, 3♦ pre-emptive, 3♠ – Pass – 4♦ (East is too good to bid a simple 4♠), and now West drives to slam. North should really pass as dealer. If East opens 1♥ and rebids 2♥ over the 1♠ response, it will be tough to reach 6♠. If he prefers to rebid 2♠, which will be very much a minority choice, West will certainly be interested and if he gets any help at all should get there.

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

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

You would think that this might be the flattest deal of the day with everyone playing 4♠ and making exactly. Of course, we all know there is no such thing as a flat board at our club. West may open 2♦ (if playing this as a weak two) or 3♦, in third seat. This should not affect things too much. North will overcall then raise the spade response. If West does not open, the auction 1♠ – 2♠ – 4♠ looks obvious enough. I wonder what variety the more imaginative will produce?

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

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

E/W are cold for 3NT, courtesy of the club situation. However, they will rarely bid to game. If West opens INT, North may compete with whatever method is available to him to show a two-suiter. East will in turn compete to 3♣ and South with three of whichever major his partner has promised. I suppose West might take a shot at 3NT now, hoping for six club tricks. If he instead competes with 4♣, that contract is just making. Meanwhile, N/S can make eight tricks in spades but only seven in hearts.

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

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

N/S make 2♥ while E/W make 2♠. Allowing your opponents to play 2♥ will therefore cost you a lot of matchpoints. And if E/W do compete to 2♠ over 2♥, it will save a fair number of points for N/S to go on to 3♥, down one, as it is very unlikely that they will get doubled. Minus 200 would be very close to a zero. The vulnerability means that most

Souths will get to open the bidding. If he starts with 1NT and North transfers, West can balance with a take-out double and it will be natural for South to take the push to 3♥.

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

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

N/S have a combined 25-count and can make 3NT if declarer judges correctly which major suit to play on, while they also make 4♥ despite the 4-1 trump split. The natural start to the N/S auction is 1♠ – 1NT – 2NT, and now comes the key decision. If North simply raises to 3NT, that will be that, while 3♥, checking for a 5-3 fit, will catch a raise to game and a lot of matchpoints. It would not be absurd to pass 2NT, and those who do so may not score disastrously, as there will be some going down in either game

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

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

Another game for N/S and one which should be reached at most tables. When East opens 1♥ and South overcalls, it will be normal for North to raise to 2♠ and for South to make

a game try. Holding an ace, a king, and a potential ruffing value, North should accept the game try and careful play leads to ten tricks. Should South start with a double, he will then follow up with 2♠ and North should again raise, perhaps all the way to game.

### Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

Played by South, N/S can make a diamond slam. West cannot lead clubs to good effect so declarer can draw trumps then play spades for three tricks, getting rid of a club from dummy on the fourth spades. Now a club ruff brings down the king and that is twelve tricks. However, when South opens 1♦ many Wests will overcall 2/3♥ and, despite the excellent diamond support, most Norths will bid a practical man's (or woman's) 3NT, ending the auction. That makes comfortably enough and the defence have to be careful not to allow an overtrick.

### Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

There are the same ten tricks available in 3NT as in 4♠ so the key to a good score will be to play in no trump. If West opens 1NT, East will check for a 4-4 heart fit but then settle for 3NT when none is forthcoming. However, where West opens 1♠, it may be more difficult. Say it goes 1♠ – 2♠ – 2NT, it will be normal for East to bid 3♠ to check back for a 5-3 fit as he has a weak doubleton in a side suit. Most Wests will admit to the fifth spade and 4♠ will be the final contract.

### Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

North holds a weak no trump. If that is what he opens, South will use Stayman and, if West stays silent, 3NT will be the inevitable outcome. And if West intervenes with 2♠? North will pass, South bid a forcing 3♦, and North will bid 3NT because he has a spade stopper in an unexciting balanced hand. There are nine tricks in 3NT, with a possibility of an overtrick on a non-spade lead – and East has no reason to lead a spade if his partner has not bid the suit.

### Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

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

North can make either 4NT or 4♠, while a diamond honour can be led if South is declarer, holding either contract to at most nine tricks. South opens 1♠ and rebids 2♥ over the 2♣ response. If North now bids 3NT he will play there, while if he doesn't like his diamond holding for no trump he may try 3♦ instead and hear 3♠ from South. North can bid 3NT now, having followed a route which expresses doubt about playing no trump, or he may judge to raise to 4♠. As we have seen, 3NT will be a much more successful choice.

### Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

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

South has a classic example of a weak two bid, holding a very solid suit with 6 HCP and no second four-card or longer suit. After two passes, East will double and, even his partnership plays Lebensohl, which allows West to show a weak hand by bidding 2NT followed by 3♦, while an immediate 3♦ would

show around 8+ HCP, a final contract of 3NT looks inevitable as east will just bid 3NT at his second turn, having shown some interest in alternative contracts as he did not simply overcall 3NT at his first turn. 3NT should be down three.

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

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

If East opens 1NT, some Wests may look at the weak hearts and simply raise to 3NT. When the 5-0 heart split shows up, declarer will smile with relief that the heart fit was not found – yet 4♥ is actually cold. North makes only the ♣A, a heart honour and one long heart, either via a ruff or not matters now. Will +420 be sufficient? Well, that depends on South's opening lead against 3NT. If he leads a spade, there are 11 tricks and a lot of matchpoints for E/W. On a diamond lead, declarer is held to nine tricks.

### Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

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

Did I suggest that an earlier board would be the flattest of the night? Well, perhaps not, as

this looks a likely contender for that award. If playing the weak no trump, North should open 1NT rather than the weak heart suit, but South will transfer and North break the transfer, so that 4♥ is easily reached. Strong no trumppers will open 1♥ and now it will be even more automatic to reach the heart game. 11 tricks are completely routine, even on three rounds of clubs.

### Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

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

E/W make 4♥ but I suspect that many pairs will stop short of game. West will open 1♥ and North double. Now, unless East upgrades the hand for no obvious reason, he will either make a simple raise to 2♥ or, more likely, a pre-emptive raise to 3♥. In neither case has West any reason to go on to game. In fact, the hands fit together very well. Reverse East's minors and 4♥ would be a very poor contract after North's take-out double.

Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

6♣ makes but will rarely be bid. It is only OK as a contract anyway – nothing special – as it needs the ♦A onside or both hearts and clubs breaking evenly, and could fail even with the diamond onside if hearts broke very badly. West has a potentially very good hand but, unless playing Acol strong two bids, should open 1♥ rather than 2♣. He can rebid 3♣, game-forcing, over the 1♠ response, but will then probably choose 3Nt if East bids 3♦, fourth-suit-forcing. Only if West elects to bid 4♣ at his third turn might slam be reached.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

The miracle positions in the black suits, such that both black tens can be tricks, means that N/S can make 4♥, at least double dummy. In practice, game is hardly likely to be reached with only a 5-3 fit and a combined 21-count. Usually, North will show a weak no trump, either with his opening bid or rebid, and South will decide that it must be better to play in a suit partscore. +170 in hearts should score reasonably well many will not find the line for ten tricks.