



**Commentary
for the
IBU Autumn Simultaneous Pairs
Wednesday 4th November 2020**

Dear Bridge player

"Thank you for your support of the online IBU Simultaneous Pairs 2020. We hope you enjoy the opportunity to pit your wits against bridge players across Ireland, and perhaps even some of our friends from abroad.

This is an interesting and challenging set of hands - as they all are - and the advice of our expert commentators will tell us plenty about what we should and shouldn't have done. I hope you did at least one clever thing tonight - and more than that, I hope the advice of Brian Senior will give us moral support in our never-ending discussions with our partners.

Hoping to see you all at a real table before long, but in the meantime stay safe, stay healthy, and enjoy your online bridge."

Jim O'Sullivan, President – Irish Bridge Union

Board 1. Dealer North. Vulnerability None

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

I would expect the popular contract to be 3♠ by North, reached either when South scrapes up an immediate raise and North invites game, or when South passes but West's balancing double leads to a competitive auction between spades and diamonds. If E/W can avoid leading diamonds at any point, N/S should be down one in 3♠, but East is likely to lead a diamond and that means nine tricks and an above average +140.

Board 2. Dealer East. Vulnerability N/S

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

E/W can make 3♥ easily enough, while North can make 4♦. The latter is rather double dummy, with declarer needing to play on spades rather than trying to ruff out the clubs, and taking advantage of the fall of the ♦10 to get to dummy. Playing to ruff clubs works when that suit is three-three or East is two-two in the minors without the ♦10, which offers much better odds – but doesn't work this time.

Board 3. Dealer South. Vulnerability E/W

<p>♠ AK73 ♥ Q765 ♦ KQ107 ♣ A</p> <p>♠ Q86 ♥ 1032 ♦ AJ9 ♣ Q1085</p> <p>♠ J4 ♥ AJ8 ♦ 852 ♣ KJ762</p>	<p>♠ 10952 ♥ K94 ♦ 643 ♣ 943</p>
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N/S will surely play in 3NT at almost every table, the only question being who will be declarer. As the cards lie, it is better to make South declarer to protect the spade position, but that is just a matter of random luck. While a spade lead from East can hold the contract to nine tricks, West has no good lead and 10 tricks can be made easily enough as the cards lie.

Board 4. Dealer West. Vulnerability All

<p>♠ AJ5 ♥ AQ1094 ♦ J105 ♣ AK</p> <p>♠ K107 ♥ KJ ♦ 942 ♣ 108764</p> <p>♠ 84 ♥ 7632 ♦ AKQ7 ♣ Q92</p>	<p>♠ Q9632 ♥ 85 ♦ 863 ♣ J53</p>
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There are 13 tricks to be had in any of hearts, NT or diamonds, yet a spade lead makes even a small slam against the odds. Playing simple methods, 1♥ – 3♥ – 4♥ is a possibility, while North could gamble with 3NT if that offers a choice of games and South should then pass. That of course beats all those playing the heart game. But an optimistic North will try for slam. If you do bid slam, should you safety play the trumps by cashing the ace first? Maybe, if you judge that few pairs will get to Six.

Board 5. Dealer North. Vulnerability N/S

<p>♠ K3 ♥ A542 ♦ AQ9 ♣ A1098</p> <p>♠ 864 ♥ 93 ♦ J85 ♣ K7642</p> <p>♠ J9752 ♥ KJ1076 ♦ 7 ♣ 53</p>	<p>♠ AQ10 ♥ Q8 ♦ K106432 ♣ QJ</p>
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This may be a good deal for the Acoll pairs as, if North opens 1♥, it would be quite normal for South to make a semi-pre-emptive raise to game after East's 2♦ overcall. While the ace of spades is sitting over the king, both majors divide evenly so 10 tricks should be fairly routine – there is no good reason to get the hearts wrong. A strong NT opening may see East intervene, but it is far from obvious to get to game, with or without the intervention, though no doubt many will get there.

Board 6. Dealer East. Vulnerability E/W

<p>♠ 97 ♥ 3 ♦ K9863 ♣ AJ975</p> <p>♠ AQ64 ♥ KQJ64 ♦ J42 ♣ K</p> <p>♠ KJ8 ♥ 10987 ♦ 1075 ♣ 864</p>	<p>♠ 10532 ♥ A52 ♦ AQ ♣ Q1032</p>
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This one looks about as exciting as watching paint dry. Once East opens the bidding, West will always drive to game and it is normal to find the spade fit and play in 4♠. With spades three-two with the king onside and the ♦K also onside, it is hard to see why anyone would not come to 11 tricks for +650. Any other result will be a near top or bottom.

Board 7. Dealer South. Vulnerability All

<p>♠ — ♥ A 9 5 4 ♦ A K 9 4 2 ♣ Q J 9 4</p> <p>♠ A J 10 7 6 3 ♥ K 6 ♦ 7 6 ♣ K 10 3</p>	<p>♠ Q 5 ♥ J 8 7 3 2 ♦ J 10 3 ♣ 7 6 2</p> <p>♠ K 9 8 4 2 ♥ Q 10 ♦ Q 8 5 ♣ A 8 5</p>
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I would not open 1♠ with the South cards, especially when vulnerable, but no doubt many will and that will come as a big surprise to West, who will be silenced. A 1♠ opening ensures that N/S will get to game, normally 3NT, while that may also be the final contract after an opening pass – 1♠ from West, double from North, 2NT from South, and 3NT after North shows the diamonds. Nine tricks cannot be prevented, while 10 may be possible on a non-spade lead.

Board 8. Dealer West. Vulnerability None

<p>♠ J 5 3 ♥ Q J 10 6 4 2 ♦ 8 7 2 ♣ 6</p> <p>♠ 9 8 ♥ A K 9 ♦ J 10 5 3 ♣ A J 8 7</p>	<p>♠ A 10 4 2 ♥ 8 7 3 ♦ Q 9 4 ♣ 10 9 5</p> <p>♠ K Q 7 6 ♥ 5 ♦ A K 6 ♣ K Q 4 3 2</p>
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If West opens 1NT it will go two passes, double from South. North removes to 2♥ and makes eight or nine tricks according to whether the defence can find its spade ruff. If West opens 1♣/♦, North may overcall 2♥ – I certainly would. South will now need to show good discipline and pass or the partnership risks going minus.

Board 9. Dealer North. Vulnerability E/W

<p>♠ K ♥ 6 3 2 ♦ Q J 8 ♣ A Q 9 8 5 2</p> <p>♠ A Q 8 2 ♥ K Q 10 8 5 ♦ A 9 6 ♣ 10</p>	<p>♠ J 10 7 4 3 ♥ 7 ♦ K 3 ♣ K 7 6 4 3</p> <p>♠ 9 6 5 ♥ A J 9 4 ♦ 10 7 5 4 2 ♣ J</p>
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Once upon a time many players would have passed with the North cards because they downgraded the bare king. Nowadays, I'd expect pretty well everyone to open 1♣, and most Easts to overcall 1♠, weak suit or not. With or without the overcall, E/W should get to 4♠ and, if declarer finds out where the ace of hearts is, there is every prospect of dropping the bare king of spades so coming to an overtrick.

Board 10. Dealer East. Vulnerability All

<p>♠ 9 8 6 ♥ J 8 ♦ K J 5 4 2 ♣ A J 6</p> <p>♠ A 2 ♥ A K Q 4 ♦ A Q 7 ♣ Q 5 3 2</p>	<p>♠ 7 5 4 3 ♥ 7 6 3 ♦ 10 8 ♣ 10 9 7 4</p> <p>♠ K Q J 10 ♥ 10 9 5 2 ♦ 9 6 3 ♣ K 8</p>
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West will open 2NT and play there. Say that North leads a diamond; declarer puts up dummy's ten and plays a club, and South should rise with the king to play a diamond through. The defence is ahead of the game and the contract should be down two. Even better is if North, loath to lead away from the diamonds round to a strong balanced hand, chooses a spade opening lead. From here accurate defence leads to down three.

Board 11. Dealer South. Vulnerability None

<p>♠ A K 9 5 ♥ 7 ♦ A Q 7 3 ♣ A 10 4 2</p> <p>♠ Q 8 7 4 2 ♥ 4 2 ♦ 10 6 ♣ K 6 5 3</p>	<p>♠ 3 ♥ K Q 8 6 3 ♦ K J 8 5 2 ♣ 9 8</p> <p>♠ J 10 6 ♥ A J 10 9 5 ♦ 9 4 ♣ Q J 7</p>
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North opens 1♣/♦ after two passes. Say that East overcalls 1♥; South may bid INT and North raise to 3NT. As the cards lie, nine tricks are easy and it is all about overtricks, with 10 the most likely outcome. But if North opens 1♣ East may overcall 2NT, showing a red two-suiter. If South doubles that E/W have nowhere to run to – double dummy it is N/S who can make 4♥ or 3♦ – so a huge penalty is in the offing.

Board 12. Dealer West. Vulnerability N/S

<p>♠ 5 3 ♥ A Q 10 6 3 ♦ 6 4 ♣ Q 7 4 3</p> <p>♠ A Q J 9 ♥ 2 ♦ A K J 10 9 8 2 ♣ 10</p>	<p>♠ 10 6 2 ♥ K 9 7 4 ♦ Q 5 3 ♣ A J 6</p> <p>♠ K 8 7 4 ♥ J 8 5 ♦ 7 ♣ K 9 8 5 2</p>
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West opens 1♦, North overcalls 1♥, East bids a slightly heavy INT and South competes with 2♥, West may bid 2♠ to help in the decision as to which game to play in. Most Easts will bid 3NT and often be left to play there. However, if East instead bids 3♦ West may get interested in slam. 3NT is cold, and the successful spade finesse means that 12 tricks are possible. That winning finesse also means that 6♦ is making (I don't expect anyone to play the equally cold 6NT).

Board 13. Dealer North. Vulnerability All

<p>♠ 7 5 2 ♥ 7 ♦ A K J 9 3 2 ♣ 8 6 5</p> <p>♠ J 3 ♥ A Q J 10 9 8 4 ♦ 5 ♣ 9 7 2</p>	<p>♠ A Q 9 8 6 ♥ K 5 ♦ Q 7 6 ♣ K 10 3</p> <p>♠ K 10 4 ♥ 6 3 2 ♦ 10 8 4 ♣ A Q J 4</p>
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Even low-level pre-empts can prove to be very effective. Say that North passes as dealer; E/W should have little difficulty in stopping in 3♥ (though N/S could compete to 4♦, I guess). Now try it if North opens a weak 2♦. East will overcall 2♠ and West's 3♥ response is forcing. 4♥ is down on a top diamond and club switch, while 3NT is defeated by a diamond to the king and club switch, and the same start beats 4♠.

Board 14. Dealer East. Vulnerability None

<p>♠ 5 2 ♥ A Q J 5 4 ♦ 10 ♣ Q J 10 7 3</p> <p>♠ Q 7 ♥ K 10 6 3 ♦ A K 7 4 2 ♣ K 9</p>	<p>♠ K J 9 6 ♥ 8 7 2 ♦ 9 8 5 3 ♣ A 4</p> <p>♠ A 10 8 4 3 ♥ 9 ♦ Q J 6 ♣ 8 6 5 2</p>
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If West opens 1♦, North may overcall 2NT, clubs and hearts. 3♣ would be making, but E/W will compete to 3♦, which also makes. If E/W reach 3NT a club lead leads to about three down. If playing a strong NT, that is what I would open as West. It would be good for N/S to be playing two-suited overcalls now as that should see them find the club fit. A simple natural 2♥ overcall would be doubled for take-out by East and sometimes left in by West for +300.

Board 15. Dealer South. Vulnerability N/S

<p>♠ Q 7 5 3 ♥ Q 10 ♦ K Q J 10 9 5 ♣ A</p> <p>♠ A 4 2 ♥ J 5 4 3 ♦ 8 7 2 ♣ 10 3 2</p>	<p>♠ K J 10 6 ♥ K 6 ♦ A ♣ K J 8 6 5 4</p>
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<p>♠ 9 8 ♥ A 9 8 7 2 ♦ 6 4 3 ♣ Q 9 7</p>	
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North opens 1♦ and East overcalls 2♣. There will probably be two passes to North, who doubles. If East passes, South bids 2♥ and North converts to 2♠, South then giving preference back to 3♦, which is unbeatable. If E/W compete to 3♣, which they can make, it is still likely that N/S will get to 3♦, North being willing to bid to that contract on his own if necessary thanks to the strong main suit.

Board 16. Dealer West. Vulnerability E/W

<p>♠ Q 10 ♥ A 9 ♦ Q 6 4 3 ♣ A Q 7 6 3</p> <p>♠ A 6 ♥ K J 7 5 4 3 ♦ J 9 8 7 ♣ 4</p>	<p>♠ 8 4 ♥ Q 10 2 ♦ A K 5 2 ♣ K 9 5 2</p>
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<p>♠ K J 9 7 5 3 2 ♥ 8 6 ♦ 10 ♣ J 10 8</p>	
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Another good hand for a pre-empt. If West passes, N/S should buy the hand in 3♠ at most tables. A singleton club lead beats that by a trick, but with E/W making a red-suit partscore -100 will not be a bad score. But when West opens 2♥, N/S either get shut out completely or get to 4♠, because once again South cannot bid spades without showing more than he has got. East has a 3♥ raise, whether or not North bids over 2♥, and South is caught.

Board 17. Dealer North. Vulnerability None

<p>♠ 10 6 2 ♥ Q 10 ♦ K Q 10 4 ♣ K Q J 6</p> <p>♠ K J 7 ♥ A K 3 2 ♦ J 8 6 3 ♣ 8 7</p>	<p>♠ Q 8 4 3 ♥ J 7 ♦ A 5 2 ♣ A 10 9 4</p>
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<p>♠ A 9 5 ♥ 9 8 6 5 4 ♦ 9 7 ♣ 5 3 2</p>	
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If North opens a weak NT, South will transfer to hearts, where six tricks is the limit. That means down two, which is also the likely outcome if North declares INT. But E/W can make either 2♠ or 2NT, so -100 may not be too bad for N/S. It's hard to say, because the eighth trick in 1/2NT is not automatic, and +90 may not score well for E/W. A 1♣/♦ opening from North will usually see E/W declare a NT partscore.

Board 18. Dealer East. Vulnerability N/S

<p>♠ 10 5 ♥ 9 3 ♦ 9 8 7 5 4 3 ♣ A 10 5</p> <p>♠ A K ♥ A 10 6 2 ♦ Q 10 ♣ K J 6 4 3</p>	<p>♠ Q J 9 6 4 2 ♥ J 4 ♦ K 6 ♣ 9 8 2</p>
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<p>♠ 8 7 3 ♥ K Q 8 7 5 ♦ A J 2 ♣ Q 7</p>	
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After a weak 2♠ opening from East, many E/W pairs will reach the borderline contract of 4♠. If South leads a heart honour declarer can win, cash the top spades, then lead a heart to the jack. South wins but declarer can succeed with a winning club guess. A trump lead gives the defence a chance, though it is not easy – spade, spade, heart to the jack and queen, ♣Q to king and duck, and declarer has no entry to hand to take the heart finesse for the tenth trick.

Board 19. Dealer South. Vulnerability E/W

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

It is normal to play in 4♠ from the South seat but any sort of competent defence should beat the contract. Say that West leads the singleton diamond; if declarer tries to cash a second diamond it is ruffed, while if he instead ducks a heart, planning for a ruff, East can win and give his partner a diamond ruff. If West instead leads a heart, a diamond switch when he gets in with the ♠Q is still good enough for the defence as declarer is cut off from the diamond winners.

Board 20. Dealer West. Vulnerability All

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

3NT by West will be the popular spot with North leading the ♣K. Knocking out the ace of hearts establishes nine tricks and the even club split means that the contract is just made.

It is possible to go down if declarer, fearing five-three club split, plays for diamonds to be three-three and to guess the spades for four tricks and loses to the ♠Q, but that is much less likely than a four-four club break so simply playing on hearts is better.

Board 21. Dealer North. Vulnerability N/S

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

E/W may bid: Pass – 1♣ – 1♥ – 1♠ – 3♣ – Pass. Ten tricks are possible in a club contract. If West opens 1♦, the club fit may be lost: 1♦ – 1♥ – 1♠ – 2NT – Pass. There are eight tricks on a club lead but a diamond lead and heart switch means only seven. Limited by being a passed hand, North may double a 1♣ opening and East redouble. South bids 1♥ and West 1♠, and East may bid only INT and play there.

Board 22. Dealer East. Vulnerability E/W

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

N/S can make game in either black suit or in NT, the latter being the top-scoring spot but hard to reach as South has such a distributional hand. Best for N/S will be to defend any E/W contract, doubled, but that too may be hard to achieve. If South opens 1♣ or 2♣ and West intervenes, North will pass and wait for a reopening double – but will probably still be waiting after the session is over. A weak 2♦ opening from East creates another interesting problem for N/S.

Board 23. Dealer South. Vulnerability All

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

6♣, or even 6♥, can be made on this super-friendly layout, but 3NT is the normal contract. West opens 1♣, North overcalls 1♦, and East jumps to 2NT, natural and invitational. A trusting West should raise to 3NT. With six clubs and four hearts, the contract is assured. If the defence ducks a diamond, there will be 11 tricks. On the other hand, on a diamond lead and low spade switch, declarer may not have the nerve to put up the king and will then be held to nine.

Board 24. Dealer West. Vulnerability None

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

West is likely to either open or rebid 1NT, and East has a simple raise to game. On the likely diamond lead, declarer will probably play on hearts, making either 10 or 11 tricks with no strong clue to aid him in getting it right. 11 tricks can also be made by playing on clubs but, unless the vagaries of system make East declarer on a club lead, that will be a minority choice I would think.

Board 25. Dealer North. Vulnerability E/W

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

If East opens 1NT that should end the auction. South leads a top spade, sees dummy and switches. Best is a diamond and that should ensure the defeat of the contract. A heart should also be good enough, but if North wins the ace and continues the suit declarer has a chance by playing for South to hold the queen. If East opens 1♥, South may double and North respond 1NT. Seven tricks are likely after a heart lead.

Board 26. Dealer East. Vulnerability All

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

4♠ is easy on the E/W cards while N/S can make 10 tricks in either red suit. If West opens 1♠ and North doubles, East raises to 2♠ – the hand is too balanced to do more – and West raises to 4♠. North will presumably double again. If South passes, praying that partner has enough defence and not expecting to be able to make 5♥, that will be -790. If he bids 5♥, West may even go on to 5♠ and N/S go plus.

Board 27. Dealer South. Vulnerability None

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

If South opens 1♣/♦ West will overcall – 1♠, 2♠, even 3♠ is not ridiculous – and East will probably raise any of those bids to game. As the cards lie, there are 11 routine tricks for a solid +450. If South opens 1NT, West will again overcall. A pre-emptive 3♠ would definitely be my choice now, but many will settle for a simple 2♠. Once again, East can raise to game, making this a candidate for flattest board of the night.

Board 28. Dealer West. Vulnerability N/S

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

If West passes, North will often open 3♦. South will have to take a pessimistic view and pass, seeing potential communication issues in NT. 3♦ should be made exactly. If West doesn't worry about the four-card spade holding and opens 2♥, North must pass and South will overcall, probably 3♣, though 2NT is a possibility. Neither will be a success on this misfit. Another triumph for a pre-empt, as North's 3♦ over 3♣ would be forcing so not an option.