

## The 2022 Celtic <br> Símaltaneous airs

## Monday $5^{\text {th }}$ December

We are so pleased to welcome you once again to the Celtic Simultaneous Pairs, supporting the Celtic Nations. And this year for the first time we are delighted to welcome clubs from the CBAI

We really hope you enjoyed the event and found the hands fun and challenging. Hopefully the commentators managed to get it right - we would like to thank Adam Adamson for his analysis of the Monday hands, lan Sime who did the Tuesday commentary, Harry Smith who puzzled over the Wednesday set and Liz McGowan whose wise words can be found in the Thursday+Friday set.
We hope you will all take care, stay safe and well and - since we are now in December - we wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year

Anna Gudge,<br>Simultaneous Pairs Organiser on behalf of the SBU, WBU, NIBU and CBAI



A lot may hinge on whether North opens or not. Many will pass and this could create a risk that N/S miss game. For instance, if South opens IV, West overcalls 3 and North bid $3 \vee$ then South might pass knowing he is facing a maximum of II points. However, I expect most $N / S$ pairs to get to $4 \curlyvee$. If West overcalls $4 \sqrt{4}$ then that will push North into $4 \checkmark$ and may enable East to enter the auction. We are now approaching the key decisions on the hand. Should E/W push on to 4s then that should be too expensive - if declarer tries to draw trumps in order to enjoy the diamonds he will lose a pile of clubs and go for at least 500. 5 in the ten card fit is better and should cost 300, losing three spades and a heart. Over 5\%, N/S will do well to judge to bid on to 5P, which will make for the loss of a trump and a diamond.

Board 2. N/S. Dealer East

> A 9872 K 9874 862

¢ K 103

- 106
-KQ
2 AQ 10953
N/S have the balance of the points here but the finesses and breaks favour E/W. If East opens is then that will help N/S to avoid playing in that strain. If East passes then it is possible that N/S will have the auction to themselves, probably playing in a club partscore. If E/W do get into the auction they are most likely to play in a heart partscore. East could find herself with a choice of good options if the auction begins:

| West | North | East <br> Pass | South <br> Is |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Is |  |  |  |

Tempting as it would be to defend, when you have found a nine card fit it is rarely right to let them play the hand at the one, two or even three level.

The more adventurous will get to $4 \longdiv { y }$ and find that their 19 points are enough to make an overtrick.

Board 3. E/W. Dealer South

- K76
- J 102
- K 4

298653

```
&Q853 A 1042
\vee65 \vee Q
* - 108763
&KQ 102 & A 7 4
    4 J }
    * AK 8743
    * AQJ2
    & J
```

Other than Strong Club pairs, South will open IV. If they play five-card majors then North has an easy to raise to $2 \downarrow$. South has to realise that his hand is worth considerably more than 16 high card points, even with 2 useless Jacks. Opposite as little as four low hearts and the king of diamonds he is a strong favourite to take at least ten tricks. I would not mind seeing South jump to $4 \uparrow$, but if he takes the investigative approach and bids 3 this should lead to the same result. North will see that her king of diamonds is just what partner is looking for to bid the game.

If $N / S$ are playing four-card majors then North may well respond INT. That puts South in a more awkward situation. He is not good enough to force to game. Some may rebid $2 \checkmark$ and some may rebid 34 . In either case, I could see game being missed.

Board 4. All. Dealer West

- KJ 106
- 10962
- Q 73
- 102

```
&84 & AQ 5 2
    \vee3 \vee AKQJ54
    *J9 - 86
    & KJ954
    & 8
    & 73
    ४ 8
    * KlO542
    & AQ763
```

For the fourth hand in a row, $4 \checkmark$ is making. In the auction, East will show a strong hand with hearts and spades. West will be unexcited by
either suit and I could well see a lot of pairs playing in 3NT rather than $4{ }^{\circ}$ - for one thing, East may like the idea of laying down a running suit for her partner.

3NT has six heart tricks, two spades and a diamond for nine. Best defence will prevent declarer from getting any more but it is very likely that he will make either a club or a second diamond. A diamond lead from North to 3 NT will cut declarer off from his hand, and he had better take the spade finesse while he is there. $4 \longdiv { 4 }$ can be made on any lead but it requires the right moves on a diamond lead. Declarer needs to put in the nine, drawing the king. Declarer now has the hand under control. Going up with the ace at trick one should lead to defeat.

630 looks like a good score for E/W, just edging out those with +620 .

Board 5. N/S. Dealer North
卫 6

- QJ 107
- AJ 62
\& Q 1053

| ¢ A Q 108 |  | - 53 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $\checkmark 532$ |  | - AK984 |
| - 4 |  | - 98753 |
| 2KJ976 |  | \% 8 |
|  | KJ 9742 |  |
|  | 6 |  |
| - | K Q 10 |  |
|  | A 42 |  |

How many of you made a contract on this hand? The double dummy analysis says that $2 \varphi$ by E/W is the last making spot but will anyone be able to stop that low? Or even make it if they do? It looks sensible for declarer to try to crossruff the hand, trumping diamonds in the West hand and clubs in East, something the defence may try to counteract by playing trumps. But South is not likely to let them play there. If East has a method that allows a 29 opening then South will bid 24. If East does not open then South will open is and rebid 2s over INT or 2s by North. West will happily sit back and wait for his four trump tricks, a hearts and a club.

Board 6. E/W. Dealer East

- K 9
- AQ 10986
- 8
\& AK97

```
& AQJ7 & 63
\ K73 ` J2
KJ1065 & Q93
* J 1085432
- 108542
- 54
- A 742
2 Q 6
```

This time the hand lies well for N/S, and West's I opening will help North to place the cards. North is too strong to overcall IV so should double then bid hearts on the next round. The double dummy analysis finds ten tricks in hearts, but which ones are they? East will likely lead a diamond to South's ace.

Declarer is going to want to lead up to the king of spades and to take the heart finesse and one of her two dummy entries has just been dislodged. After winning the ace of diamonds she should lead a spade towards hand. When this wins, or the ace goes up, declarer knows she can afford a heart and a club loser. If the king of spades loses to the ace in East then declarer still has chances - the best line is to try to ruff a club in dummy and finesse the queen of hearts.. If declarer squanders the queen of clubs by playing it at trick two and leading towards hand then West should discard. North will be in a real pickle with no entry back to the dummy to lead to the king of spades or finesse the heart.

Board 7. All. Dealer South

$$
\begin{aligned}
& 104 \\
& Q 105 \\
& 543 \\
& 109654
\end{aligned}
$$



It is usually harder to bid a slam after the opponents have opened and that could well be the case here, at least if South opens I and

West passes. All is not lost, however. After North passes, East will double and West can jump to 24 to show his hand quite well. Knowing that her partner could not overcall $1 \downarrow$, East might struggle to envision him having a hand good enough to make slam. Where West overcalls ls it will be hard to stop East below the six level.

A slightly off-beat weak NT opening from South could really put the cat among the pigeons. N/S can get out for a very satisfactory -500 in 29x, though E/W will no doubt get to 44, make 12 tricks and wonder how they could have bid the slam.

Board 8. None. Dealer West

> K7643
> 75
> 107
> 9762


7NT is a great contract here with at least 13 top tricks. $7 \boldsymbol{7}$ is almost as good - it could go down on an unlucky ruff. 7 is good, but could go down on an unlucky ruff or trumps 5-0. Well done if you bid any of them. Many auctions will start along the lines of $1 \vee-2 \downarrow$ 3 . This is likely to lock E/W into playing in hearts.

Despite all of these top tricks is will not necessarily be easy to bid a grand slam with confidence. These red jacks and the 10-9 of hearts do a lot of work to make the suits run and it will not be easy to identify all of the necessary information with confidence. suspect that 69 and $6 N T$ will be the most popular contracts.

Board 9. E/W. Dealer North

- A 973
- A86
- A62

A A 83

```
QJ2 & 854
Q Q 5 V J4
KJ74 Q Q953
&KQJ6 9754
& K 106
* K 109732
- 108
&102
```

Doesn't this hand lie well for N/S? Playing in hearts, there is no trump loser with the 2-2 break, and spades come down to set up a third trick in the suit, which has the added benefit of allowing declarer to discard a loser in whichever minor the defence did not lead. The result should be that declarer will make eleven tricks. But what level will they be in?

At most tables, North will either open or rebid INT to show a strong balanced hand. I suspect that at many tables the bidding will get no higher than $2 \boldsymbol{2}$. If North finds a way to get to 34 then I hope that South will reward her courage by bidding game. It is a good contract to be in, needing only one of the majors to break to get you to ten tricks.

Board IO. All. Dealer East
-AJ9843

- J2
- 1094
* Q 6
- Q 10
- K 5
- AKQ97

甲 53

- K 876
- A Q J 2
- 105
\& AK 832
¢ 762
- 10864
- 53

2 1974
I would want to be in 6 here, but it is no certainty. If trumps are 3-2 then declarer is a big favourite as you have a great chance of scoring four heart tricks, and can fall back on clubs 3-3 if need be. If trumps are 4-I, however, declarer will be walking something of a tightrope.

Will it even be bid? After the start $1 \%$ - $\mid \mathcal{P}$, North is likely to come in with I or 2 s and it
is likely that $\mathrm{E} / \mathrm{W}$ will now focus on possession of a spade stop for 3NT. On a spade lead, declarer will not be able to do anything more than take their ten top tricks.

Board II. None. Dealer South

- 108654
- K
- K Q 976
- 109


This hand seems likely to be played in a partscore. If South opens a weak 2 or a Multi then that partscore could be 2 x . Declarer will manage to secure one spade, three hearts and a diamond. If he can get to six tricks, he will score a few match points.
If $\mathrm{E} / \mathrm{W}$ play the hand, it is likely to be in clubs or notrump. Both play well. There is no good suit for the defence to attack and I could easily see a notrump contract making nine or ten tricks. North's diamonds may well get set up, but by that point they may well be entryless. All of the ten and nines are working well for declarer here so those who find that an excuse to try 3NT will feel very satisfied with the outcome.

Board I2. N/S. Dealer West

- A83
- AQ 10762
- 8

9 1094

```
& 762
\vee \3 v 54
* Q1053 AK92
&|87 K65
                                    & KQ|5
& 1094
` J 9 8
- J764
&Q 32
```

E/W have balanced hands, no big fit in a suit, and 26 points between them. Even with a heart opening by North, it seems likely that most tables will see West finish the auction as declarer in 3 NT . A heart lead will take out
declarer's stop and place him in a precarious situation. As the cards lie, he will need to cash the top diamonds in the East hand first. With North's opening showing heart length it is more likely that she is short rather than long in diamonds. If that hurdle is overcome then declarer can take four diamond tricks, on which North will have to make three discards. These might help declarer to read the hand better. It won't be an entirely comfortable experience, but the best odds for declarer are to play to the king of clubs and then finesse the jack. On the friendly lie of the suit, he will get four club tricks to take him to the nine he needs.

It is possible that there will be pairs in 44, 5 and $5 \%$ round the country, or even round the club. In all cases, it will be worth a trick to declarer to have West playing the hand, though 4s by East can survive for the loss of two hearts and a spade.

Board I3. All. Dealer North

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { \& } 62 \\
& \text { A6 } \\
& \text { J } 98743 \\
& \text { J } 64
\end{aligned}
$$

| ¢ Q J 7 |  | ¢ A 10983 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - J 1087 |  | - K Q 9 |
| - A 6 |  | - 5 |
| 2 A 875 |  | \& KQ 32 |
|  | 4. K 54 |  |
|  | - 5432 |  |
|  | - KQ 102 |  |
|  | - 109 |  |

Only the most red blooded Norths, or perhaps some juniors, will open $2 \downarrow$. Whether she opens or passes, it should make little difference. I'm going to take a risk and suggest that this will be one of the flattest boards in the set. East will surely declarer 44. There are no bad breaks. There is no way of avoiding losing the ace of hearts and the king of spades. All in all, this is the ideal hand for $\mathrm{E} / \mathrm{W}$ to come up against the pair in the club that seem to have a jinx over them. They can score their +650 along with everyone else and breathe a small sigh of relief.

Board I4. None. Dealer East

- AQJIO43
- A7
- 10
* AJ7 3

| K95 | Q 82 |
| :--- | :--- |
| Q 43 | K 1052 |
| 85 | Q974 |
| K 1062 | Q94 |

¢ 76

- 986
- AKJ632
\& 85
$\mathrm{E} / \mathrm{W}$ are unlikely to get into the auction on this board. Where will N/S get to? Seeing all the hands, 44 looks like the spot, but I expect some pairs to play 3NT and some to play in a partscore. Yes, 44 can make II tricks double dummy, but this is not a comfortable spot to be trying for ten. You lack the entries to take the spade finesse twice and if you risk a diamond finesse you risk taking no tricks in the suit. Declarer may manage to ruff a club in dummy. Along with five spades, one heart and the ace of club, that takes her to eight tricks. It will be very tempting to take the top two diamonds for ten. My expectation is that if you got to 4s and made it you have done well. Those who make eleven will do exceptionally well and some may even go down.

Board I5. N/S. Dealer South

- 753
- AJ6532
- Q 9
- 104

| - K Q 10 |  | - A 42 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - 74 |  | - 98 |
| - A 10652 |  | - K873 |
| - J 97 |  | -K862 |
|  | - J986 |  |
|  | K Q 10 |  |
|  | - 4 |  |
|  | - A Q 53 |  |

Where N/S are playing Weak NT this is likely to be a dull board with North removing her side to her six card heart suit. There are five top losers in hearts and the fate of $2 \varphi$ depends on the club finesse. This time all is well and there will be a lot of $+110 \mathrm{~s} / \mathrm{S}$.

The bidding will be more interesting where South opens Is. If West overcalls I\$ then we will get a competitive auction. East is unlikely
to stop below $3 \uparrow$. If $\mathrm{N} / \mathrm{S}$ go on to $3 \downarrow$ they will regret it. How will 3 do? At first sight it looks quite good. Declarer has two heart and two club losers. See what happens if North leads a club. South wins the queen, takes the ace of clubs and plays back the three of clubs. Hopefully North is wide awake and notices that the three was the lowest remaining club. South is trying to say that his entry is in hearts not spades. The defence now takes their two heart tricks with South winning the second of them. They have taken the first five tricks and South applies the coup de grace by playing his last club. This puts West in an impossible position. If he ruffs low then North overruffs. If instead he ruffs with the ace and plays a trump to the king then North's queen falls, but suddenly South's doubleton jack has become the master trump. Either way it is two down. That's a nice defence, and worthy of a good score, but they will lose out to the pairs playing $2 \varphi$.

Board I6. E/W. Dealer West

$$
\therefore 143
$$

- KJ5
- 10542 - A 76


This is a tricky hand to bid. The eight card heart fit looks like the best strain to play in, though in fact spades take more tricks double dummy. I can see both 4s and 4 being popular contracts, and they both play like a dream. In spades, with both missing heart honour correctly placed for declarer and trump splitting nicely, twelve tricks come rolling in. Declarer might even make thirteen if the defence don't take their club trick.

It looks similar in hearts. Have you spotted the way that the defence can take a second trick? The defence needs to continue with a second club at trick 2. Declarer trumps this in the West hand but can now only take one heart finesse so North will come to a trump trick. This may feel like an illogical defence but
looking at the West hand dummy, South can see that there is little chance of taking a spade trick and if there is a diamond trick to be had it is not going to disappear. It is therefore it makes sense to try to reduce dummy's trumps to cut down on finesses.

Board I7. None. Dealer North

- A 107
- K43
- Q 7
* KJ1096


On the face of it, this looks like an obvious 44 for $\mathrm{E} / \mathrm{W}$. They have 26 points between them and an eight card fit. This contract is by no means guaranteed but North's opening bid strongly suggests that the club finesse will work. Declarer could still lose a heart, a diamond and two trumps, but fortunately the queen of diamonds falls. The auction may prove more interesting if North opens a Weak NT. After this has been doubled for penalties, the best contract that N/S can get to is 2e doubled. Here, E/W can take two clubs, two diamonds, two hearts and a spade against a club contract. That would come to an unsatisfactory 300 against rather than 420 for bidding and making their game.

Board I8. N/S. Dealer East
$\pm 4$

- A8632
-KQ 1097
م 98
K 7652 AQJ83
ヤ 4 Q 10975
-432 5
K 1052 ~ 73
- 109
- KJ
- AJ86

A A QJ 64
Do you open one of a suit holding a ninecount? If ever there was a time, this is it. Holding two good five-card majors there is a
lot to be said for IS on this hand. If you hit a fit in either suit your hand comes alive. South has no obvious bid over is other than $2 \boldsymbol{2}$. West will surely put his partner onto 44. Things are now looking very awkward for N/S. Those pairs that manage to get to $5 \$$ will have done very well. Those that double 4s should manage to take that one down, but if the defence is not alert I it could even make. In particular, if North happens to discard any hearts the declarer may be able to ruff the suit good. Some N/S pairs will play at the five level in clubs or hearts, failing badly.
If East has an opening to show both majors then South might be able to double to show the minors, helping his side get to $5 \downarrow$. If East chooses to pass as dealer then N/S may get a relatively free ride on the hand. Once they find they have a diamond fit and don't have a spade stop then they should play in $5 \star$.

Board I9. E/W. Dealer South

```
- A6
\bullet J
* K Q IO 9
& AK 10543
```



After 18 comes another diamond fit for $\mathrm{N} / \mathrm{S}$ to try to find. With clubs coming in, there are eleven tricks in the match-point favourite contract of 3 NT. If N/S play in diamonds, they had better get to slam if they want a good score. Against that, after a pass from South and a IV opening by West, North does not have a straightforward bid. It is possible that a heavy 2 overcall could get passed out. Double by North would be more mainstream, though it would be done with some trepidation that South will bid an uncomfortable number of spades. Now move to the South seat. If North has doubled IV, what should he do? INT looks right to me, and the chances of finding the diamond fit have all but disappeared. North will surely drive to 3NT.

Board 20. All. Dealer West

- $A Q 7$
- K
- Q 104
- 1097432


Most Wests will pass as dealer on this hand. If North opens ik she could well end up playing in an unfortunate going down. If she passes, then many Easts will open is and could also end up playing in 2s. This may well turn out to be one of these hands where making contracts are rare on the score sheet. These hands can be as hard to defend as they are to play. Deep Finesse says that East cannot make INT, but with the king of hearts falling it is easy to see two tricks in each of clubs, diamonds and hearts and it will be hard not to give a seventh. Certainly a good hand to stay as low as you can.

Board 21. N/S. Dealer North

- K 87
- 873
- K 104

2 QJ 104

| ¢ J 643 |  | $\wedge Q^{10}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - A |  | - KJIO4 |
| - J983 |  | - Q 72 |
| \% AK 83 |  | \% 9765 |
|  | 4 A 952 |  |
|  | - Q 9652 |  |
|  | - A65 |  |
|  | -2 |  |

On 20 the last making contract was INT. On 21 it is 14 ! I can't see many pairs managing to stop that low. A sensible looking auction for E/W would be 19-19-1s-2e. This perfectly reasonable contract goes down because the trumps break $4-I$, adding two trump losers to the two spades and the two diamonds.

If South ventures into the auction in third seat, he may play in 2\%. It is easy to see how declarer could end up losing the dreaded 200 here. Still, 2 might push $\mathrm{E} / \mathrm{W}$ even higher, to

3\%. I wonder if any North players will decide to double that?

Board 22. E/W. Dealer East

\[

\]



What a hand! The logic of bridge scoring tells us that it is very dangerous to sacrifice vulnerable against not. The points lie N/S. They have first round control in every suit and second round control in three of them. Surely this is their hand? Right enough, they can make $4^{4}$ easily enough, losing a club and two spades. Double dummy, they can make $5{ }^{\circ}$. But this hand belongs to E/W. If they judge to take the unfavourable sacrifice in $5 \downarrow$, they will be delighted to find that it makes. In the unlikely event that East is playing the hand, South will be unable to lead a trump so all of West's hearts can be ruffed and declarer will make twelve tricks. If North is on lead, she will have to lead from her Qx of diamonds something that won't come naturally to everyone. I'm predicting some big scores both ways on this hand. They could easily range from at least 950 to $E / W$ to 450 to N/S.

Board 23. All. Dealer South

- Q 32
- 63
- Q 854
- AQ 107
- AJ5
- K 10764
- J 1094
- AQ5
- 2
\& 85432
- KJ 107

2 9

- 98
- K 872
- A963

R KJ 6
N/S have the edge on points here but E/W have the shape, and the spades. This partscore contest should end with E/W playing a spade
partscore. Indeed, it may not be much of a contest as N/S, with their flat ten and eleven counts, may well not enter the auction at all. The South hand is no fun to lead from and those who are inclined towards trump leads may well choose that. Their partners are probably used to seeing their queen of trumps getting picked up. Most lines of play will lead to nine tricks, though some may emerge with eight and a poor matchpoints score.

```
Board 24. None. Dealer West
            4 K 9
            - 10643
            - KJ
            \& QJIO 94
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline - Q J 43 & & 72 \\
\hline - J 98 & & - K Q \\
\hline - A 865 & & Q 1072 \\
\hline \% 62 & & AK 873 \\
\hline & 4 A 10865 & \\
\hline & - A 752 & \\
\hline & -943 & \\
\hline & - 5 & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
```

For the fourth hand in a row, the contract belongs to the partnership with fewer points and more distribution. N/S have eighteen points between them and a 4-4 heart fit that plays well, if they can find it.

After two passes, East is most likely to open l\&, though some might try the pre-emptive value of INT. I would hope that South would come in with Is over l\%. INT by West might end the auction and declarer is likely to make his contract, especially on the K lead. There is every chance that E/W will miss their diamond fit and N/S will miss their hearts. I'm anticipating lot of small scores in either direction, and anyone getting +100 or more is likely to happy with their matchpoints on the board.

Board 25. E/W. Dealer North

- Q 85
- 52
- A5
\& AKQ65
上KJIO974 乌2
- KJ64 - A87
- 74 KQJ63

29 10872

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { A } 63 \\
& \text { Q } 1093 \\
& 10982 \\
& \mathrm{~J} 4
\end{aligned}
$$

This is a tough hand to predict. The auction could well begin 18-14-1P-14. Or perhaps 19-pass - 19-24. Where it will end, I don't know. N/S will enjoy playing in No Trump. They have eight top tricks and a spade lead will allow them to score North's queen for nine. The defence will need to set their diamond tricks up early to hold declarer to eight.
2. plays well for E/W. Declarer should make eight tricks, probably losing one trick in each side suit and two trump tricks. $3 \mathbf{0}$ by North is another likely spot, but this one will go down if East leads her singleton. Going up with dummy's ace avoids the ruff, means that declarer will not be able to lead up to the Q later, after trumps have been drawn. On a top diamond lead, declarer can draw trumps then play spade to the ace and another one towards the queen. She will just lose a diamond, two hearts and a spade. Even so, +110 may score annoyingly poorly against those in a No Trump part-score.

```
Board 26. All. Dealer East
    & J985
    * AK
    * J1086
    * A64
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline -1043 & . K 62 \\
\hline - J 1097 & - 642 \\
\hline - A Q 2 & - 9543 \\
\hline -K87 & - 1093 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
        - AQ7
        - Q853
        * K7
        * QJ52
```

After a long run of competitive hands, we have a one-sided board that would be of little
interest to anyone in a teams match, but requires more careful thought at match points.

N/S have balanced hands, 27 points between them and no eight card fit. Almost everyone will play the hand in 3NT, most likely by South. Declarer ought to be able to get to nine tricks easily enough - for instance, three spades, three hearts, a diamond and two clubs. This hand will reward the declarer who can build a tenth trick while avoiding losing four - such as two diamonds, a spade and a club.

Board 27. None. Dealer South

- 9
- 8753
- 9752
* A Q 62

| - J73 |  |
| :---: | :---: |
| - AKJ2 |  |
| - AKQ |  |
| \& K 97 |  |
|  | - AK54 |
|  | - Q64 |
|  | - J 86 |
|  | - J 108 |

Maybe some strong club pairs will be able to stop low on this hand. The rest of the field are likely to get too high with the E/W cards. After West opens 2NT, what should East do? Sadly, passing and transferring to spades are both likely to lead to contracts that are one down.

Let's look at 2NT. North could blow a trick by leading a club or, more likely, a heart. A diamond lead happens to be best. Declarer knows that the chances of running the spades a very slim. It will need a bad misdefence or for the ace and king of spades to be doubleton. He wins the lead in hand, leads a low spade towards dummy and notes North's nine. He overtakes with the ten and if South ducks, declarer can take the heart finesse for eight tricks. South needs to win the first spade and divine that he needs to play J . It is not necessarily obvious that declarer's weak suit is clubs and not hearts, but the J - 10 holding has the advantage over the Qxx that if declarer ducks, South will stay on lead and be able to repeat the attack.

Board 28. N/S. Dealer West


I would expect a IV opening by North to be the norm. East is not worth INT and has the wrong shape for double, so will probably pass. South has a normal ls response and North will rebid $2 \varphi$. There is a good chance that E/W will be frozen out of the auction. They should get three clubs and three trump tricks to take this one down, but they will look in envy at the pairs that managed to get into No Trump. Here, declarer will find she has four club tricks and three hearts. On the 10s lead an astute duck will reveal the situation in that suit, giving declarer two more tricks. Even if the defence play on diamonds they will be doing declarer's work for her, setting up the jack. Eight tricks will be routine in No Trump and some will get to nine.

Board 29. All. Dealer North

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { A } 765 \\
& 653 \\
& K 1096 \\
& \text { J9 }
\end{aligned}
$$

| ¢ KJ 8 |  | - 109 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - 1042 |  | - J 87 |
| - AJ 7 |  | - Q 854 |
| \& A 1072 |  | Q Q 653 |
|  | Q Q 432 |  |
|  | - AKQ9 |  |
|  | - 32 |  |
|  | - K 84 |  |

The Weak NT pairs sitting N/S may not fare so well on this hand as it is very likely that they will miss their spade fit. There is scope for the defence to open up clubs or diamonds to declarer's advantage in INT, but I would still rather be in a spades.

West should pay attention to his flat shape and avoid coming into the auction, despite his
opening points. If they do manage to find their club fit they will probably regret it.

Board 30. None. Dealer East

- Q 2

Q Q 854

- J5

AK962

- 43
- AJ 1097
- 873 ( K 1098765

Q Q J 3

-     - 
- 964
\& 854
- AJ
- K 632
- AKQ 102
\& 107
How high did East open at your table, or did they not open at all? For me 3s would be middle of the road on this hand, though some will open 2 and some will go all the way to 4.
Over 34, South really has to bid 3NT and that is probably where he will play. A spade lead, taking the finesse for declarer, gives him nine sure tricks. . Declarer can play a heart to the queen for a tenth trick. Now, playing out the top clubs will get you to eleven tricks, assuming West takes his $\vee \mathrm{A}$. The truly bold declarer will attack clubs by taking the double finesse and twelve tricks. I suspect that anyone who only makes ten tricks will wish they were playing teams as they will not score many match points. They will, however, beat those playing in 4.

Over 24, South will probably bid 2NT and the extra space will allow North to look for a heart fit. The good news is that she finds one, the bad news is the $5-0$ break.

Board 3I. N/S. Dealer South

- J86
- QJ 962
- A 10
\& 32

```
49543
- K 10
- 87
- 53
\& A 10954
- A 43
- QJ8742
- AQ72
- K 105
- K 96
ce K 87
```

South is likely to find himself playing $4 \stackrel{\Gamma}{ }$, either after a transfer sequence for those playing a strong NT, or after a Checkback sequence for those playing a weak NT. This loses 2 clubs and a spade for an easy 10 tricks.

However, some Souths might prefer to play in 3NT in view of their flat shape. The lead is likely to be a club won by the king, and East will play a second club when in with $\vee$ A. Now declarer with only 8 top tricks will be forced at some point to take the spade finesse into the danger hand. All is well, however, and he will emerge with 10 tricks to win the match points battle.

Board 32. E/W. Dealer West

- A 932
- 83
- A872
* A 87

```
& 108654 KJ7
\bulletAK4 v J72
| Q Q63
& KJ 104
& Q
    \veeQ 10965
    - K IO954
    & 95
```

If $E / W$ are left to their own devices, it is likely that West will play the hand in 24. North has an unappetising choice of leads, probably opting for a heart. If West makes the unlikely play at trick 2 of a low spade to the king, he will lose 2 spades, and one in each of the other suits for his contract. If he makes the normal play of $\stackrel{\text { J }}{ }$ then he will go down.

Indeed, it will look very bad for him if South, when in with $\Phi \mathrm{Q}$, finds the diamond switch. However, he can still manage to scramble 7 tricks.

It's hard to see how N/S will get into this auction, but they can make 9 or 10 tricks in diamonds. Any N/S pair who manage to play in the diamond part score can expect a lot of match points.


## 2022 Celtic Winter Pairs - Monday



