



The 2025 Celtic Simultaneous Pairs

Tuesday 13th May

We are so pleased to welcome you once again to the Celtic Simultaneous Pairs, supporting the Celtic Nations. Funds raised will be used to support bridge within your own Bridge Union, whether that is the Scottish, Welsh, Northern Ireland or Irish Bridge Union.

We really hope you enjoyed the event and found the hands fun and challenging. Hopefully the commentators managed to get it right but by now you will be able to judge that for yourself!

Anna Newton,
Simultaneous Pairs Organiser
on behalf of the SBU, WBU, NIBU and IBU

Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

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

If East-West reach six spades, they will go down unless they play by East and South leads a club. If they reach six diamonds by East, they will make it whatever South leads, and they will also win the tournament with a score of 100%. Those Souths who led a club against four spades won't score terribly well for doing so, and 450 to East-West will be by far the most common result. Of course, there will be some Norths who open a weak two hearts. They won't win the tournament.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

North-South will usually reach a normal four spades, and lose a couple of club tricks in the fullness of time. But they have a chance to do better – if East opens one diamond and South overcalls one spade, North might very well jump to 3NT. Provided South lets him play there, the partnership will be well pleased with a score of plus 660. If you are a North whose partner removed 3NT to four spades, my sympathies are entirely with you.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

I have absolutely no idea what will happen on this deal, and no really strong views as to what should happen. West has three reasonable choices over South's 1♠ opening – 2♦, INT and double. North might react in various ways to each of those choices, and even East might get involved one way or another. All I can tell you is that the absolute par result is for North-South to sacrifice in 4♠ doubled against East-West's making 4♦. The details are left as an exercise for the reader.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

<p>♠ 7 5 4 ♥ 10 8 ♦ Q J 5 ♣ 10 9 6 3 2</p> <p>♠ J 10 ♥ A K Q 6 ♦ A 6 4 3 2 ♣ J 8</p> <p>♠ 8 6 3 ♥ 9 4 ♦ K 10 8 7 ♣ A Q 5 4</p>	<p>♠ A K Q 9 2 ♥ J 7 5 3 2 ♦ 9 ♣ K 7</p>
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If you reached six diamonds by East on Board 1, you no doubt reached six hearts by East on this deal (and you are still on a score of 100%). West has an awkward rebid after opening 1♦ and hearing a 1♠ response – if he chooses INT, then his side has a chance to reach the par contract because East will bid hearts first. If he makes a lightweight reverse into 2♥ he will regret it, but that will be bad luck. If he opens 1♥, as some authorities recommend, he will regret that too, and that will serve him right.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

<p>♠ K 9 7 4 3 ♥ K 5 ♦ A Q 8 4 ♣ Q 6</p> <p>♠ A 8 6 5 ♥ 8 3 2 ♦ 7 3 2 ♣ 10 9 2</p> <p>♠ — ♥ A Q 9 7 6 4 ♦ K 10 5 ♣ K J 5 4</p>	<p>♠ Q J 10 2 ♥ J 10 ♦ J 9 6 ♣ A 8 7 3</p>
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People will be muttering that there are a lot of slams about this evening, and casting all sorts of aspersions on the computer dealing program. But we really don't fix these hands in any way – to do so would be against the laws of bridge. Here North-South will do very well to get to six hearts, because it's tough to bid a slam when the key control is South's void in the suit North opens. Just playing in four hearts and making twelve tricks should score well enough; those Norths who think every hand ought to be played in 3NT by them will find this one an unfortunate exception.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ J 8 ♥ A J 6 ♦ A K Q 9 5 2 ♣ 10 9</p> <p>♠ K Q 10 9 ♥ 9 8 5 ♦ 8 7 4 ♣ K J 8</p> <p>♠ 7 6 3 2 ♥ K Q 10 7 2 ♦ J ♣ A 6 4</p>	<p>♠ A 5 4 ♥ 4 3 ♦ 10 6 3 ♣ Q 7 5 3 2</p>
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No one can make a slam on this deal, which is likely to be the flattest of the night since South will almost always play in four hearts and West will almost always lead a spade. Even the best defence of three rounds of spades cannot prevent South from coming to eleven tricks one way or another. Those Norths who still think every hand should be played in 3NT by them will either have their views reinforced (if East does not lead a spade) or find another unfortunate exception (if he does).

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

<p>♠ 6 ♥ A K 9 4 3 ♦ K J 7 4 ♣ K 4 3</p> <p>♠ Q J 9 8 7 3 ♥ Q J ♦ 10 3 2 ♣ J 10</p> <p>♠ A 10 5 4 ♥ 10 7 6 ♦ A 9 6 ♣ Q 9 8</p>	<p>♠ K 2 ♥ 8 5 2 ♦ Q 8 5 ♣ A 7 6 5 2</p>
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Some Wests will open a weak two in spades, and North-South will be confronted with an array of choices. Should they defend two spades doubled? No, since West can come to six tricks for only 500 to North-South. Should they play in 3NT, as certain obstinate Norths may yet continue to believe? No, for a spade lead will hold that contract to ten tricks despite the favourable lie of cards. Should they play in the perfectly normal contract of four hearts? Indeed they should, and they will find that 650 is worth a lot of matchpoints.

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

♠ 8 4 ♥ J 9 5 3 ♦ J 5 4 ♣ K J 10 7 ♠ K 10 6 ♥ A Q 10 8 6 ♦ K 2 ♣ 6 3 2 ♠ A J 7 5 3 ♥ 7 ♦ Q 8 6 ♣ A Q 9 8	♠ Q 9 2 ♥ K 4 2 ♦ A 10 9 7 3 ♣ 5 4
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West will start with 1♥ and whether East raises to 2♥ or bids a rather sick INT, South will join in with two spades. The best East-West can do here is double him and collect 300 on best defence – and contrary to what you might expect, best defence does not involve starting with the king of diamonds. But collecting 300 is very hard to do, so East-West had best push on to three hearts and scramble 140, which should be at least a 60% score.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

♠ 10 6 4 3 ♥ 4 2 ♦ A J 10 9 ♣ A Q 9 ♠ A Q J ♥ A Q 10 6 3 ♦ K ♣ 10 8 5 2 ♠ K 8 5 2 ♥ J 8 7 ♦ 7 3 2 ♣ K J 3	♠ 9 7 ♥ K 9 5 ♦ Q 8 6 5 4 ♣ 7 6 4
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North may take a look at his intermediate cards and risk a non-vulnerable weak no trump, but one way or another West is likely to end up as declarer in a heart part-score. The likely spade lead from North will make nine tricks relatively straightforward, but even without it West can still arrive at plus 140 if he times the play carefully enough. That will be worth a fair number of match points; any plus or smaller minus for North-South will score well.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

♠ A K 5 2 ♥ J 5 ♦ K J ♣ 10 9 6 4 3 ♠ Q 10 7 4 ♥ 2 ♦ 10 9 8 7 4 3 ♣ A 5	♠ 9 6 3 ♥ K 10 6 4 ♦ Q 6 2 ♣ Q 7 2 ♠ J 8 ♥ A Q 9 8 7 3 ♦ A 5 ♣ K J 8
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At double dummy South can come to eleven tricks in hearts – or if North continues to believe in the power of 3NT he can take eleven tricks there also. But the play is a complicated business, and those who do score 660 or 650 will be well rewarded in terms of match points. On a diamond lead, for example, North has to start by leading a low club for a finesse of the jack – scarcely an obvious line of play. 630 will be around average, anything less will not score so well.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

♠ 8 6 4 ♥ A Q 8 2 ♦ Q 10 9 ♣ 10 8 7 ♠ J 10 2 ♥ J 10 5 ♦ J 7 5 3 ♣ 9 5 3 ♠ 9 5 ♥ K 9 7 6 ♦ A K 4 ♣ A Q J 2	♠ A K Q 7 3 ♥ 4 3 ♦ 8 6 2 ♣ K 6 4
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If you're going to play these hands in 3NT you had better make sure that South is the declarer and that West is a firm believer in leading from his longest suit rather than from ♠J102. If you're going to play in hearts, it doesn't matter who is declarer or what the defence does; there are eleven obvious tricks and two obvious losers. This ought to be the flattest Board of the evening.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

<p>♠ K 9 6 4 2 ♥ J 7 2 ♦ K 10 4 ♣ 3 2</p> <p>♠ A 3 ♥ K 8 5 ♦ Q 9 5 ♣ Q J 10 9 7</p> <p>♠ Q 8 5 ♥ A 3 ♦ J 8 7 2 ♣ A K 8 5</p>	<p>♠ J 10 7 ♥ Q 10 9 6 4 ♦ A 6 3 ♣ 6 4</p>
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When West opens a weak no trump and East transfers to (or bids) 2♥ it will be important for North-South to compete to 2♠. They can achieve this easily enough if South is able to double 2♥ for takeout at some stage. If North guesses the play well he can come to nine tricks, and if he does that he will be well rewarded. Any smaller minus or even a plus for East-West will bring them a fine matchpoint score.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

<p>♠ 4 3 ♥ A K 10 ♦ K J 9 8 ♣ A K 9 8</p> <p>♠ 9 8 6 2 ♥ Q J 8 6 2 ♦ Q 7 ♣ 6 4</p> <p>♠ K Q 10 ♥ 5 4 3 ♦ A 6 5 4 ♣ Q J 10</p>	<p>♠ A J 7 5 ♥ 9 7 ♦ 10 3 2 ♣ 7 5 3 2</p>
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North-South can make a slam on these cards, and it is not necessary to take any abnormal views in the play in order to achieve this. It is necessary to take some abnormal views in the bidding in order to reach 6♦ or 6NT with eighteen points facing twelve, and I imagine that most pairs will play in game. If you were East-West and your opponents bid a slam, I'm afraid it wasn't your evening.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

<p>♠ K 9 2 ♥ 9 4 3 ♦ A K 7 5 ♣ Q 9 2</p> <p>♠ 10 6 3 ♥ A 8 7 6 2 ♦ 4 3 ♣ A K 7</p> <p>♠ Q 8 7 4 ♥ 10 5 ♦ Q J 9 2 ♣ J 4 3</p>	<p>♠ A J 5 ♥ K Q J ♦ 10 8 6 ♣ 10 8 6 5</p>
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There was a time not so long ago when this deal would have been passed out, but not any more. West is likely to open 1♥ in third seat, and East has a pretty awkward response to that unless playing a method such as Drury or SNAP (strong no trump after passing). If he feels that he has to bid 2NT or 2♣ he is likely to end up in the wrong contract; if East-West can stop in something they can make, they will score very well indeed.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ Q 8 ♥ J 8 7 6 3 ♦ Q J 3 ♣ K 9 2</p> <p>♠ J 6 5 ♥ A K Q ♦ K 6 2 ♣ Q 8 7 3</p> <p>♠ 10 7 3 ♥ 9 5 2 ♦ A 10 9 8 5 ♣ 5 4</p>	<p>♠ A K 9 4 2 ♥ 10 4 ♦ 7 4 ♣ A J 10 6</p>
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East-West can make a slam on these cards with the remarkably favourable lie of the black suits and the position of the ace of diamonds. Not that I expect any East-West pairs to bid a slam, unless they were annoyed at having one bid against them on Board 13. The spade suit is interesting; the best play for four tricks is ace and low to the jack, but the best play for five tricks is to cash ace and king. This is pairs, so that is what you should do whether you are in a slam or not.

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

♠ K 9 8 ♥ K Q J 6 5 ♦ 6 4 ♣ Q 4 2 ♠ 10 7 4 ♥ 10 9 7 4 ♦ A 8 3 ♣ K 9 7 ♠ 5 ♥ A 8 2 ♦ K Q 10 7 5 2 ♣ A 10 6	♠ A Q J 6 3 2 ♥ 3 ♦ J 9 ♣ J 8 5 3
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No one can make a slam on this deal, and the chances are that North-South will play in 4♥ at most tables since the vulnerability and the fact that they haven't got very much will deter East-West from competing too heavily in spades. But if East does open a weak 2♠ and South chooses to overcall 3♦ rather than double, a raise to 3♠ will mean that North has to take a good view to bid 4♥. Ten tricks are the limit on most normal defences, while any intrepid East who does bid 4♠ will find that he can escape for down one and minus only 200, which will not score badly.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

♠ 10 6 4 ♥ 10 4 2 ♦ K 10 4 3 ♣ Q 9 4 ♠ K 7 5 ♥ A J 8 6 ♦ Q 9 5 2 ♣ 10 6 ♠ Q 2 ♥ K Q 9 ♦ A J 8 7 ♣ A 7 3 2	♠ A J 9 8 3 ♥ 7 5 3 ♦ 6 ♣ K J 8 5
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East-West can make an awful lot of tricks in spades if they take some good views in the play, and even after passing originally they should be able to compete on most auctions. If South has given away too much about his strength and then kicks off the defence by leading the king of hearts, he may find himself on the wrong end of minus 170 or even minus 200, which will not score all that well. If South opens a strong no trump and East goes quietly, the defence won't take enough tricks to compensate for the missed part score.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

♠ — ♥ A K 10 9 ♦ A Q 8 5 4 ♣ 10 9 5 2 ♠ A Q 9 6 4 2 ♥ Q 8 7 ♦ 2 ♣ K J 6 ♠ J 10 ♥ J 6 5 3 ♦ 10 9 7 ♣ Q 8 7 3	♠ K 8 7 5 3 ♥ 4 2 ♦ K J 6 3 ♣ A 4
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Most Easts will choose to open 1♠ these days – after all, the hand is a full point stronger than the dreaded Rule of 19. That will surprise West a little, and he may well employ some mechanical devices to discover that he can't make slam. A direct blast to 4♠ will work better on this occasion, though, for it might tempt into the auction even at the vulnerability. The result if that happens will be significantly better than the mundane 450 East-West were going to collect otherwise.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

♠ 6 4 2 ♥ 10 7 2 ♦ 8 4 3 2 ♣ 9 8 6 ♠ K 10 8 3 ♥ K Q 9 5 ♦ K 10 ♣ A 7 3 ♠ Q J 7 5 ♥ J 6 4 ♦ 6 5 ♣ K 10 5 2	♠ A 9 ♥ A 8 3 ♦ A Q J 9 7 ♣ Q J 4
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Back to the slams, and this one is the grandest of them all – East-West can make 7NT with the fortunate lie of the hearts and the favourable position of ♣K. Only desperate men would bid to the seven level on these cards, though, and most pairs are likely to have an auction consisting of the equivalent of a strong no trump by West and a raise to six by East. Minus 1020 will be around average for North-South, since the number of East-West mice will be roughly equal to the number of desperadoes.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

♠ A 5 ♥ K 10 4 ♦ A J 7 4 2 ♣ Q J 6 ♠ Q 10 9 7 3 ♥ — ♦ K 9 5 ♣ 10 9 7 5 2 ♠ K J 8 6 ♥ Q 7 5 3 2 ♦ 8 ♣ K 8 3	♠ 4 2 ♥ A J 9 8 6 ♦ Q 10 6 3 ♣ A 4
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If North is able to open a strong no trump and East feels inclined to step into the auction, his side is likely to regret it, for the West hand is not what East is hoping for. Better to go quietly, and find that it is North-South who introduce and perhaps even play in the heart suit. That won't happen after a 1♦ opening and a normal 1♥ overcall by East, and there will be very many different results on this deal, most of them failing contracts. Any plus score will be good for whoever gets it.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

♠ Q 2 ♥ A K 5 2 ♦ A 10 6 ♣ 9 4 3 2 ♠ 10 5 ♥ Q J 8 7 ♦ J 7 5 4 3 ♣ Q 6 ♠ K J 9 8 6 3 ♥ 10 6 ♦ K Q ♣ J 10 5	♠ A 7 4 ♥ 9 4 3 ♦ 9 8 2 ♣ A K 8 7
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North has a weak no trump this time, and South may well decide to drive to game. If he does so, he had better offer North the choice between 4♠ and 3NT, and North had better choose the latter even if he has had his faith in that contract weakened by previous Boards in this set. Of course this never happens to true believers, and North-South will score very well for plus 600 here.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

♠ 10 8 6 4 ♥ 7 5 4 3 ♦ 10 8 ♣ J 9 5 ♠ 9 7 3 2 ♥ K ♦ A Q J 5 3 ♣ K 7 4 ♠ A K J 5 ♥ A 9 ♦ K 9 4 ♣ 10 6 3 2	♠ Q ♥ Q J 10 8 6 2 ♦ 7 6 2 ♣ A Q 8
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East's 1♥ opening will be doubled by South and redoubled by West, whereat North will be relieved that at least he has the spade suit to offer. East is likely to bid 2♥ at this stage to indicate that he isn't interested in trying for a penalty, and West will at some point settle four 4♥. There won't be any problems in the play, and East will come to eleven tricks for 650 and an average plus.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

♠ K ♥ K 8 7 2 ♦ Q 10 9 8 3 2 ♣ 9 5 ♠ A Q 9 6 ♥ A 4 ♦ A K 5 ♣ 8 4 3 2 ♠ J 10 8 4 3 ♥ Q J 10 6 3 ♦ — ♣ K J 10	♠ 7 5 2 ♥ 9 5 ♦ J 7 6 4 ♣ A Q 7 6
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If West opens 1♠ in Acoll style he may well silence his opponents, and his side will be faced with the rather difficult task of obtaining a plus score on the unfriendly lie of the cards. But that same lie means that North-South won't do badly at all if they can find a way into the auction and locate their heart fit. Indeed, if North-South compete to three hearts and West makes a matchpoint double, hoping for "the magic 200", he may well find himself with a decidedly unwizardly minus 730.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

♠ J 5 3 ♥ A J 7 4 ♦ K 10 8 2 ♣ 10 7 ♠ A Q ♥ Q 6 5 2 ♦ A Q 9 3 ♣ A 5 2 ♠ 10 9 6 ♥ K 10 8 3 ♦ J 5 4 ♣ K J 6	♠ K 8 7 4 2 ♥ 9 ♦ 7 6 ♣ Q 9 8 4 3
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West will open in a red suit, East will respond 1♠, West will rebid 2NT and East will wonder why he bothered to get out of bed. He can't stop in 3♣, his sides best contract, any more – and he may not even have a mechanism for stopping in 3♠. He may consider that the best practical shot is to bid some game or other and hope that the black suits provide enough tricks – the spades will oblige but the clubs won't, and the traveller will be littered with plus 100s and 150s to North-South.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

♠ 10 7 ♥ 3 2 ♦ 9 5 4 3 ♣ K Q 10 6 3 ♠ Q J 6 4 ♥ J 10 7 4 ♦ K 10 7 ♣ 7 4 ♠ A K 8 5 ♥ A K 8 6 ♦ 8 6 ♣ J 9 8	♠ 9 3 2 ♥ Q 9 5 ♦ A Q J 2 ♣ A 5 2
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If East opens a weak no trump South will double him, and the hand will become a game of chicken. West does best to pass and North does best to run, for even if South leads or shifts to clubs in the early going, his side can't take more than six tricks. The North-South pairs who reach a club part score will do well, and it won't be necessary to get plus 180 on the East-West cards for a good result – just about any plus score will do,

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

♠ 7 6 5 3 ♥ A K J ♦ 5 2 ♣ A K J 7 ♠ A Q J 9 ♥ 9 7 3 ♦ A Q 9 6 ♣ 9 5 ♠ K 8 4 ♥ Q 5 4 2 ♦ J 10 4 ♣ Q 4 2	♠ 10 2 ♥ 10 8 6 ♦ K 8 7 3 ♣ 10 8 6 3
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This time West will open a weak no trump and North will double. East had better run from this one, and had better have one of those wriggly things that allow his side to find their diamond fit. North-South may end up doubling this just because of the values they hold, but those values won't produce more than five defensive tricks, while if they choose to bid on they may find it difficult to stop in their best contract of 2♥. Any North-South able to enter a score in the left-hand column will be able to enter a lot of matchpoints next to it when they review the results.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

♠ Q 9 ♥ A K 7 ♦ J 10 7 5 4 ♣ J 9 8 ♠ 3 2 ♥ Q 10 6 ♦ A Q 8 6 3 ♣ K 6 5 ♠ A 8 6 5 ♥ J 5 4 ♦ K ♣ A Q 10 7 3	♠ K J 10 7 4 ♥ 9 8 3 2 ♦ 9 2 ♣ 4 2
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South will open 1♣, West will overcall 1♦ and North may opt to try for a penalty. If he doesn't, he should not bid a feeble 1NT – the truth is that he is much closer to 3NT than one, for “slow tricks” in the opponents' diamond suit are very valuable in this kind of position. To see this, consider that even with the king of clubs and the king of spades badly placed, it takes a very precise defence to defeat 3NT, and anyone making this contract will score well.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

♠ A Q 5 4 ♥ K J 9 8 ♦ 9 4 ♣ Q 6 4 ♠ K 10 8 7 3 ♥ Q 10 7 ♦ K Q 8 6 ♣ K ♠ J 9 2 ♥ A 6 5 4 ♦ A J 3 ♣ A J 8	♠ 6 ♥ 3 2 ♦ 10 7 5 2 ♣ 10 9 7 5 3 2
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East doesn't have a whole lot, and may choose not to respond to West's opening bid of 1♠. If he doesn't, his side will let the opponents bid and make a game, perhaps even picking off West's singleton ♣K in the process. But if East does elect to bluff with a INT response, he may find that it keeps the enemy out of game – indeed, his side might even buy the pot in two diamonds. What does this prove? Only that Zia, a passionate believer in responding with really awful hands, may know what he is talking about.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

♠ J 7 6 5 ♥ 7 ♦ J 9 7 4 ♣ A 9 8 7 ♠ A Q 9 3 ♥ 10 8 2 ♦ A 8 ♣ Q 10 5 3 ♠ 10 8 4 2 ♥ J 9 6 3 ♦ 3 2 ♣ 6 4 2	♠ K ♥ A K Q 5 4 ♦ K Q 10 6 5 ♣ K J
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It's been a while since we had a slam, and by contrast to earlier deals on which slam was awful but made, here is one on which slam is good but fails on most normal lines of play. But if East-West can get to 6NT rather than 6♥, and if the break in hearts inspires East to take a second-round finesse of ♦10, he will have got his standing ovation the old-fashioned way. He earned it.

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

♠ 10 4 ♥ J 7 4 ♦ 9 8 6 2 ♣ K J 6 5 ♠ A K 6 3 ♥ 10 6 ♦ J 7 5 ♣ Q 10 4 2 ♠ Q 7 2 ♥ K 8 5 3 2 ♦ A Q 4 ♣ 9 3	♠ J 9 8 5 ♥ A Q 9 ♦ K 10 3 ♣ A 8 7
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We've all been in worse games than 4♠ on the East-West cards, but we haven't often had to deal with worse lies of the cards. "Everything wrong, partner" declarer is likely to plead after losing what will feel like about fifteen finesses and failing to drop ♠Q into the bargain. In the meantime, those Easts who opened a weak no trump and played there, making seven or eight tricks, will wonder what all the fuss is about as they chalk up their 70% score.

Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

♠ 10 4 ♥ 8 7 3 ♦ K J 10 ♣ Q 9 8 7 5 ♠ 8 7 ♥ K J 2 ♦ A 9 8 2 ♣ A 4 3 2 ♠ K Q J 5 ♥ 10 9 6 4 ♦ 6 5 ♣ J 10 6	♠ A 9 6 3 2 ♥ A Q 5 ♦ Q 7 4 3 ♣ K
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This is a quiet deal on which East-West will reach 3NT at just about every table, and make nine tricks at just about every table whatever the defence. Mind you, despite the combined 27 high-card points, declarer will feel a little uncomfortable about the whole business until the friendly lie of the diamond suit comes to light. Any score of more than 400 will be a top for East-West, anything less will be a bottom.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

This is a noisy deal on which North-South will compete in clubs and East-West in the red suits. When East bids hearts, 5♣ isn't all that bad a contract for North-South, but the breaks are unkind and it has to fail. Mind you, the breaks aren't all that friendly for East-West either, who had better not do too much bidding or they will find that South has an agreeable alternative to trying for a thin game. Once more, anyone who gets a plus will score well for it.