



Commentary
for the
WBFSM Simultaneous Pairs Tournament
An initiative to support Youth Bridge
Wednesday 19th December 2012

Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

<p>♠ AK9 ♥ 1076 ♦ A97 ♣ AK98</p> <p>♠ QJ43 ♥ Q ♦ Q63 ♣ Q10754</p>	<p>♠ 86 ♥ K932 ♦ KJ8 ♣ J632</p> <p>♠ 10752 ♥ AJ854 ♦ 10542 ♣ —</p>
---	--

If South plays in 4♥, as will happen at most tables, there are headaches for the defenders and declarer alike. First, West must avoid a spade lead, which will simplify declarer's task considerably. Second, South must work out the best way to handle the heart suit to maximum effect – should he run the ten (and what next when it loses to the queen), or run the six, or lead low to the jack?*

Anything from nine tricks to eleven is possible here, with 450 being very good for North-South.

*The answer: run the ten, then lead to the jack – unlucky!

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ QJ842 ♥ Q10 ♦ J108 ♣ K75</p> <p>♠ K10 ♥ 5 ♦ AK952 ♣ Q10983</p>	<p>♠ A63 ♥ J98432 ♦ 74 ♣ J6</p> <p>♠ 975 ♥ AK76 ♦ Q63 ♣ A42</p>
---	---

A case of “last bidder gets the minus” here – if East opens an emaciated weak 2♥, it's reasonable for North to protect with 2♠, over which South will try 2NT or 3♠ and go down. If South opens a weak no trump. North will transfer into spades, then West will intervene with 2NT for the minors and go down in something. Anyone who bid and made anything scoring 110 or so will do well, but I expect more unhappy declarers than successful ones.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ KJ986 ♥ 643 ♦ 10873 ♣ 3</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ AKQ107 ♦ K96 ♣ Q954</p>	<p>♠ A1072 ♥ J8 ♦ 52 ♣ AJ1087</p> <p>♠ Q43 ♥ 952 ♦ AQJ4 ♣ K62</p>
---	---

East-West will do best to ignore their nine-card club fit and play in the seven-card heart fit, and if they get to game in the face of South's weak no trump and North's 2♠ in competition, they will deserve the 90% score this brings them. Reaching and making 5♣ should also be a useful result – and even 3NT will make with East as declarer, though it is not the most elegant of contracts. But bidding game is no easy matter, and the North-Souths who defend a part score will not do as well as all that.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

<p>♠ 1083 ♥ 1097 ♦ QJ1062 ♣ A8</p> <p>♠ J ♥ J ♦ AK9874 ♣ Q10976</p>	<p>♠ 542 ♥ K8543 ♦ — ♣ KJ532</p> <p>♠ AKQ976 ♥ AQ62 ♦ 53 ♣ 4</p>
---	--

There will be a lot of bidding on this board – North-South can make 4♠ if they play the hearts with care and attention, while East-West do best (in theory) to sacrifice in 5♣ for minus 200. If the auction starts slowly – 1♦ by West, pass, 1♥, 1♠, 2♣, 2♠, 3♣ – then South may blast 4♠ and West has a tough decision. He might rely on the lead of his singleton heart to beat 4♠ – but if East has ♥A, then surely 5♣ will have some play.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

North will open 1♠, East will double, and South may raise to 2♠. West's responsive double shows some values with (usually) both minors, and now it will be a question of putting on the brakes. 4♠ can go two down, though it probably won't since East will lead a club. 5♣ is not a ridiculous contract on the East-West cards until you see the North-South ones, and I expect there to be plenty of blood on the traveller by the end of the evening.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

North-South can make 4♠ here, and if they get there, they may very well be doubled. North has an awkward call after 1♥-1♠-2♥ – it would be nice if 3♣ showed clubs with spade support, and some modernists indeed play this way. If North does anything to indicate a spade fit, then – knowing of short hearts opposite – South may simply take a shot at game. East-West had better take care not to get too high in hearts, and since 2♥ is already over the top, there may be some penalties to go with the 590s in the North-South column.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

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

A quieter affair all round, with the issue being whether East-West choose to play in 4♥ or 3NT. With North-South unable to attack diamonds profitably, the no trump game will bring in a sackful of match points. But unless East is able to indicate that diamonds are not a worry, West is likely to opt for hearts after getting some support from his partner. The winning auction will be 1♦ (after three passes) – 1♥ – 1NT – 3NT. And why not?

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

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

After North opens 1NT and South transfers to hearts, West may very well double 2♥ in the protective position. This will leave East with an unenviable problem – his best bet is 2♠, where he may scramble seven or even eight tricks in the 3-4 fit. If North-South go on to 3♥, they can achieve 140 with careful timing, and this will be an excellent result. Any plus for East-West will also be well rewarded on the traveller.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

If North opens a weak no trump, he will probably buy the contract – though the odds in fact favour South using Stayman. In former days, East would look no further than ♠4 as his opening lead, but experience has shown that a more passive start such as ♦J will work better in the long run, especially at pairs. So well do the cards lie for North that the battle will be for the overtrick, despite the division of the high-card points. A diamond lead is a good opening salvo – a spade lead would be classed as “friendly fire”.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

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

Most East-West pairs will reach 4♠ here, and should come to ten tricks one way or another. Of course, East must take care to ruff his losing heart in dummy before trumps are drawn, but to allow him scope for an oversight in this respect, the defenders had better not start with a club to the ace and a ruff. This, however, gives scope for eleven tricks if the defenders later do something foolish (or East something very clever) in the club suit.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

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

Despite possession of a combined 25 count, East-West cannot make much of anything at all, and their best chance for a plus score will be that South propels himself to 4♥ and goes down. That might happen at once if South is an aggressive pre-emptor; a 4♥ opening will be passed out (or doubled). But if South goes more quietly, he may well buy the contract in 3♥ for a useful 140, or defend at the four level for a small plus.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

Another straightforward 4♠ for East-West, but North-South can actually save profitably vulnerable against not in 5♦. At most tables, I expect the auction to be simply 1♠-2♥-4♠, over which it would really be too much to expect South to act even if he had a competitive double available. This should be one of the flatter boards tonight, but no doubt the field will prove me wrong as usual.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

East-West are having the cards at the moment, and once again they have a choice between 4♥ and 3NT. The former contract should produce eleven tricks with careful play – the latter can be held to ten on a spade lead, and even that will require a double-dummy effort. However, if East bids spades and West becomes declarer in 3NT, North won't find the killing lead, and 660 will be a very fine score for East-West.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

North-South's turn to have the tickets – here, they can make six hearts, though on a spade lead this requires a little good fortune. If the auction begins 1♥-2♣-2♦-2♠ (fourth suit), East may take the opportunity to double in order to get the defence off to the best start. But it will be hard for North-South to bid slam with assurance in any case, and 480 won't be much below average.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

♠ Q
♥ A Q 8 7 6 4
♦ A Q 2
♣ K Q 2

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

♠ K 7 6 2
♥ K 9 5 3 2
♦ K 8 6
♣ 4

Anna Gudge tells me that I have room for nine lines on each of these hands, but this one is going to tax my ingenuity to the limit. I suppose I could write out nine times: "North-South will play in four or five hearts and make eleven tricks for a score of 650", but I haven't done that sort of thing since I was a schoolboy (the rude man who remarked that there is no evidence from this commentary that I have ever attended an educational establishment can stay behind after the session and wash up the coffee cups).

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

♠ Q 8 2
♥ J 6
♦ Q 9 7 4 3
♣ 6 5 3

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

♠ K J 7 4
♥ Q 8 3
♦ K 5
♣ A K J 8

A bidding test for North-South here, which they may well resolve best with the auction 1♣ (after three passes) 1♦-1♠-Pass. Or, South could open a strong no trump and play there. The difficulty will come if South opens 1♠ and is raised to 2♠ by North. Should he try for game? It's a borderline case, but on this occasion any South who does push on with 2NT will find himself struggling to avoid a minus score. An aggressive East-West might buy the hand in 2♥, where one down will not fare badly on the traveller.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

♠ A 2
♥ A K 7 4 2
♦ K 4 3
♣ A Q 7

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

♠ Q J 9 8 7 5
♥ 9 8 5
♦ J 10
♣ 8 2

North has the values for an opening 2NT, and this will lead to his becoming declarer in 4♠ after a transfer sequence. The game is not easy to defeat with East on lead – the winning defence of a diamond lead to the ace and a club return is far from obvious. On the more natural lead of ♥J, the defenders still have time to attack the minors in the right order – but any pair who defeats 4♠ can feel that they have earned the excellent score this will bring.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

♠ A K Q J 7
♥ K Q 6 4
♦ Q 7 5
♣ Q

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

♠ 8 5 3
♥ 7 5
♦ 8 3
♣ J 8 7 5 3 2

With ace-king ace, the East hand is certainly worth an opening bid, and after 1♥-1NT, should bid a simple 2♠ with his minor-suit queens and heart honours devalued. This can be defeated on careful defence, limiting declarer to five trumps, a heart, and a ruff in dummy with the well-placed eight of spades – but East-West will have to tread carefully in preventing North from making a trick with ♦Q. Of course, they have another way to go plus – West may compete with 3♦, and 110 in that contract will score well.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

♠ 9 5
♥ A Q J 10 7
♦ Q 2
♣ Q J 6 5

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

♠ K Q J 7 2
♥ 9 8 5 4 2
♦ 8
♣ 10 9

This deal belongs to East-West in 4♦, but North-South may compete strongly in hearts. If West does not open the bidding, and later shows up with ♦AK and ♠A, declarer may well take the right view in the trump suit and emerge with nine tricks in a heart contract. But that may not be enough for a plus score, since when North bids hearts, South could be forgiven for raising to the four level. Anyone who bids and makes a part score contract will score highly, since 50 and 100 one way or the other will be the most common results.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

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

When West opens 1♦, North has the values for an overcall of 1NT, a move that he will regret if the doubling starts. An escape to 2♣ will not be much better for North-South, and by the end of the evening there will be an impressive row of penalties in the East-West column. Should they not be given the chance to collect one of those, they may still do well if they bid aggressively to 3NT – but any North-South pair who emerge with less than minus 500 are going to pick up a lot of match points.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

The auction will begin with 1♠ from North and 1NT from South. Now North will rebid 2♥, and South give preference to spades. It's the sort of hand on which a pushy game try of 3♥ can work well, but North had better pull in his horns at the two level, for even that will be a struggle on the actual lie of the cards. Should North make his try for game, South with two aces has plenty to accept it, but that will lead inevitably to a minus,

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

South's 1♠ opening will attract an overcall of 2♣ from West and a raise to 2♠ by North – a minimum, to be sure, but the right call nonetheless. East in turn will support his partner's clubs, and with the fortunate lie in hearts, West can collect nine tricks easily enough. If South competes to 3♠, as well he might, the contract is at least one down and perhaps more on careful defence – but –50 or –100 should not score too badly for North-South.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

East-West can actually make six clubs (or 6NT by East) with some fine views in the play, but they are not likely to get that high. At most tables West will open a weak no trump and be raised to 3NT via a Stayman sequence – but West's 2♥ response will put North off the best lead for his side, which is a heart. It may also put him off the worst, which is a spade, and the battle will be for the twelfth trick. Any West who wins that battle will be well rewarded on the traveller.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

After 1♦ by West and 1♠ by East (surely not pass!) South can enter the auction with a natural 1NT. A red-blooded East will contest with 2♥, and a return to 2♠ by West will not prove all that easy to defeat by more than one trick. But at most tables I expect South to buy the contract in 1NT, in which he will score either 120 (for quite a lot of match points) or 90 (for not all that many).

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

East's weak no trump will be overcalled by South with whatever his choice of weapon happens to be – if he can do something which gets his side to spades, then he may very well come up with plus 140, which ought to be an excellent result. East-West can take eight tricks in hearts, and even if they go –100 at the three level, they will not score badly. The bottom score will go to any North-Souths who sell out to 2♥ by West – and quite right too.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

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

A messy business. There are Souths who would open that hand 3♣, and the fact that they will emerge with plus 1100 or so from 3♠ doubled by West is a striking proof of God's mercy to them that hate Him. But if South passes, West will open 1♠, to North's surprise. He will pass smoothly in the hope that just for once, his partner can come up with a reopening double, but he will as usual be disappointed. After South's protective 2♣, North-South will do well to play in anything they can make.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

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

Would you overcall South's 1♥ with 1♠ on those West cards? I'm no great fan of four-card suit overcalls, but if ever there was a moment, this might be it. East will have to give you some rope by raising only to 3♠, via an unassuming cue bid if you play them. If 1♥ is passed round to East, his protective double should also lead to a spade part score, and 140 will be a common result. Apart from those given a chance to defeat a spade game, the best North-South score will come from the auction 1NT (strong) – all pass. And so it should.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

With the miraculous lie of the club suit, North-South have to lead a trump to beat six diamonds by West. But reaching even game is not all that easy – after West opens 1♦ and East responds 1♠, West will rebid 2♦ and be raised to three by East. Now the minimum point count and spade void may not unreasonably deter West from further enterprise, and although it is a little undignified to make twelve tricks in a part score, doing so will not prove a terrible result.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

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

North's 1♥ opening will be raised to 2♥ by the five-card major players and attract a 1NT response otherwise. East-West will earn style points (though no additional match points) by competing to 2♠ and no further, pushing the enemy up a level to 3♥. What East-West must be wary of doing is getting to the three level themselves, for -200 or even -300 will prove a terrible result. But 1♥-pass-2♥-2♠-3♥-3♠ is an auction that will occur more than once, forgiveably so.

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

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

South has a good hand, but North doesn't, and the final contract is likely to be either 1♦ (after that opening is passed out) or 4♠ (if North dredges up a response). The latter may even make; the former isn't very likely to unless West kicks off with a spade. There are some Wests who will enter with an intrepid double of 1♦ – they may end up with a poor result if North-South can tiptoe into a spade part score. Any plus will be good for the side that gets it – the essence of the pairs game.

Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

A dangerous deal for North-South, who will do well with the auction 1♠-2♥-2♠-pass. But, holding a decent spade fit and a not unpromising 11-point hand, North may feel that he has too much to pass 2♠ even if his system allows him to do so. If he chooses 2NT, passed by South, he should emerge with a splendid 120 for close to a top – but any other way of advancing the auction is likely to result in a minus.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

Whether West opens the bidding or not, North-South are likely to come to rest in 4♠. With every king offside and the hearts 4-2, the contract can be beaten on a club lead – easy for East if West has opened the bidding in the suit, and not unlikely otherwise. Even without that lead, North has to play the hand by establishing diamonds and rejecting any finesses at all – I can't see a good reason why he should do that, and any North who does register 420 should hasten to the bar where his partner ought to buy him a well-earned drink.