



**Commentary  
for the  
IBU Autumn Simultaneous Pairs  
Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

Dear Bridge Player,

Thank you very much for playing in the IBU Simultaneous Pairs 2022, and for supporting the Irish Bridge Union.

The funds raised this year will be used to defray the costs of sending what we hope will be two IBU teams to the World Championships in Marrakech in 2023 – our Open Team will definitely be competing for the Bermuda Bowl, and our Women’s Team will very likely be competing for the Venice Cup (for the first time). So your entry fees will be going to a very good cause. Players from each of these teams have contributed a commentary this week, which means that those of you who play in Wednesday or Thursday’s sessions will have the opportunity to observe their analytical skills, and gauge your own bidding and play against Ireland’s best.

We hope that you enjoyed the chance to pit your bridge wits against your fellow players across Ireland (and for those still playing online, maybe overseas as well). As ever, the hands (which are randomly dealt by computer with no manual intervention) provided plenty of challenges. Many thanks to our expert commentator(s) **Monday** – Brian Senior; **Tuesday** – Enda Murphy; **Wednesday** the Irish Women’s Team, Rebecca Brown-O’Keeffe, Jeannie Fitzgerald, Diane Greenwood, Joan Kenny, Gilda Pender and Teresa Rigney; **Thursday** – members of the Irish Open Team, Hugh McGann, Adam Mesbur, and Tommy Garvey and **Friday** – Paul Delaney for their guidance through the maze. I hope that you have picked up some useful tips from their advice.

Don’t forget to check your standing in the national results at [www.ecatsbridge.com/sims](http://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims).

**Harold Curran – President, Irish Bridge Union**

**Board 1. None. Dealer North**

	♠ A 5 2		
	♥ Q 9 8 7 5		
	♦ 8 7 6 5		
	♣ 9		
♠ 9 8		♠ K 6 4 3	
♥ J 10 3		♥ A K	
♦ K J 9 4		♦ 10 3 2	
♣ A 10 5 3		♣ 7 6 4 2	
	♠ Q J 10 7		
	♥ 6 4 2		
	♦ A Q		
	♣ K Q J 8		
<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	INT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

hands as if I were playing with myself (I may need to reword that) against myself and myself.

If you’ve had the great misfortune to encounter me in Sims before now, you’ll know that on religious, moral and ethical grounds I am obliged to nose a decent Chardonnay whilst I offer my pearls. Tonight I’m trialling Nugan – I’ll let you know how it goes.

To business. On this bidding, a Diamond lead is most likely, since South could have Clubs. 7 tricks most days of the week.

If South opens a strong NT then N will transfer to 2♥. This looks likely to fail, so INT making could be a sneaky good score.

Hello, good evening and welcome. Nice to see you, to see you – nice. Let’s keep it simple – Weak NT and 5-card Majors. 1♣ shows at least two. Weak twos in three suits. Our signals are smiles, snarls and baleful looks. Marquis of Queensbury rules. I’m analysing the

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

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

North	East	South	West
	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

2NT shows 18-19, and West has 7 points plus two tens so has a normal raise to game.

3NT is likely to make on the bidding, because a Diamond is the only one of South's suits not bid by EW. The Jack wins in dummy and declarer plays a club to the Ace and a club towards the Jack. South gets only one Club trick. Note that it would be wrong to cash AK of clubs on the basis that a 3-2 break is a 68% chance. You need 4 tricks from the suit and the recommended line delivers them even if they are 4-1 and regardless of whether N or S has four. (If N has Q10xx, you can finesse against him on the third round).

3NT fails on a heart lead. North wins the K and returns the suit (NB the 3 not the 9!!).

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

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

North	East	South	West
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

6♥ is normal here and NS really should get there. 4NT is keycard blackwood, where there are 5 Aces including the King of trumps. 5♥ shows 2 of the 5 without the Queen of trumps. I'd expect 12 tricks to be the norm, but 13 are possible. South can ruff two Clubs in dummy, West can ruff in, and South then has to finesse against East's trump Queen.

### Board 4. All. Dealer West

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

North	East	South	West
			1♦
1♥	1♠	3♥	Pass
Pass	X	Pass	4♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

OK I admit that 3♥ made is the most likely result here, but I want to show you a different possibility. The key moment arrives when 3♥ comes back to East. S/he can assume NS have 10 hearts, so West has a singleton. Even if West has 6 Diamonds (he's only shown 4), he's got to have 3 spades or 4 clubs. Pairs is about competing the partscore, so East doubles 3♥ to get West to bid 3♠ or 4♣. Plus 130 for EW should score very well and well done if you did so!

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

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

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	INT	Pass
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

The first point about the bidding here is that I'd never recommend opening a weak 2 in a major suit when you've got four of the other major, so I think North should pass here.

The second point is a convention I would commend to you. After partner rebids INT, 2♦ is now an artificial game force. Here South would bid 2♠ if he had four. 2NT also denies three hearts. North knows partner has 2 hearts so with his 6 he can go to game.

(The other part of that same convention applies if North has invitational, rather than game-forcing, values. He bids 2♣ over INT and this commands partner to bid 2♦. Now a bid of 2♥ from North is invitational. South has 4 tens so should accept the invitation).

Declarer ought to be able to restrict his losers to a spade and a trump. I must tell you that typing the words "trump" and "loser" in the same sentence is immensely satisfying.

#STOPTHESTEAL !!!

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

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

North	East	South	West
Pass	INT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Perhaps West is betwixt and between as regards inviting or jumping to game. For me, the length and quality of the diamonds justifies going straight there, but all roads should lead to 3NT.

South will lead a high club and switch. 9 tricks should be very common.

#### Board 7. All. Dealer South

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

North	East	South	West
2♦	Pass	INT	Pass
Pass	Pass	2♥	Pass

I expect a heart partscore making 9 tricks to be normal, but the most interesting aspect of the hand is East's final pass. There's a bridge truism that says you should always compete the partscore, and if at all possible you shouldn't sell out at the 2-level. From East's viewpoint, NS have decided they don't have the values to bid or invite game. That means partner has a smattering of values. So there's case for East to bid 2NT, showing the minors. West will bid 3♣ and it's very hard for South to bid 3♥ now, since partner's transfer bid might be based on no points at all.

I appreciate that most club players would not consider bidding over 2♥ as East, but I feel it's worthwhile highlighting the benefits of competing. Well done to any EW pair who made 9 tricks in clubs.

#### Board 8. None. Dealer West

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

North	East	South	West
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

North has a very tricky rebid once South responds 1♠ as he should. Remember MAFIA – Majors Always First In Answering, so 1♠ is better than 2♦. North's spades are very good, so a raise to 2♠ may be best. South may invite game with his good shape but 3♠ is the limit and the fortunate 3-3 break means it makes. A club partscore will just bring in 130.

But I expect a number of NS pairs to reach game and go down.

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

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

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	1♣	X
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Key to the auction is to realise that West is far too strong to overcall 1♦. Instead s/he should double and then bid diamonds. That shows 18 plus points and very good diamonds, so East can suggest game with 2NT and West will go on from there.

East can't be stopped from making 3NT. If the Great Shuffler is smiling on East, South will lead a small club or go Ace and another. East will take a spade finesse (it is pairs!) and run the diamonds. That's 11 tricks. Seeing through the backs of the cards, you can take 4 spade tricks (Q covered by K, J fells the 9 from North and then a finesse against the 8). That's twelve.

### Board 10. All. Dealer East

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

North	East	South	West
	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

It's common enough to have partner transfer into a suit where you have four, as here in hearts. So you need an agreement about breaking the transfer, i.e. in this case, West bidding something other than the 2♥ he was told to bid. I play that jumping to 3♥ shows 4 hearts and a minimum. 2NT shows 4 hearts and a maximum. Any other suit shows xx or xxx (so 3♣ in this case) plus 4 hearts. Now East knows that all West's values are supporting his own good values in the other suits, so can take a shot at game. West plays a heart, up pops the lady herself et voila – Robert is your mother's brother!

Maybe your glass is half empty, and you'd view West as a minimum rather than maximum, so you'd bid 3♥. East will probably drop it then. I wouldn't worry, it's really a 50-50 call.

Right now, my own glass is completely empty, so I'm off to replenish it. The Chardonnay is sliding down most agreeably, thanksh for ashking.

### Board 11. None. Dealer South

♠ 4 3 ♥ 9 5 4 3 2 ♦ K 7 4 ♣ Q 7 3  ♠ K 10 8 7 ♥ J 6 ♦ J 9 6 ♣ A 8 6 5  ♠ A Q J 2 ♥ K Q 10 8 ♦ Q 8 2 ♣ 9 2	♠ 9 6 5 ♥ A 7 ♦ A 10 5 3 ♣ K J 10 4
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North	East	South	West
		INT	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

I love watching PMQs from Westminster, especially where the PM gives the standard reply "I refer the Honourable Member to the answer I gave some moments ago". (I had a sheltered childhood). In this case I refer the honourable reader to the comments I gave one board ago. Bless my soul, just after I described transfer breaks as "common enough" on board 10, up pops another one! So 3♣ from South shows a good INT opening and 4 hearts and xx or xxx in clubs. North of course signs off in 3♥.

I expect 3♥ to go down one (the defence to knock it by two is very hard to find). Either way, its just fine – EW can make 2♠ and 3 of either minor.

What would happen if South simply complied with the transfer and bid 2H? Well North would pass, and now East HAS to reopen with a takeout double. As I said on board 7, you simply must compete the partscore. East can stand West bidding any other suit. Remember, North's transfer could be based on nothing at all! In addition, NS have told East they don't have the values for game, so West has to have some values.

Congrats to those who conceded cheaply in hearts.

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

♠ Q J 9 7 ♥ A Q 8 5 4 2 ♦ — ♣ J 8 4  ♠ 8 6 ♥ 7 6 ♦ K 9 8 2 ♣ 10 9 6 5 3  ♠ A 10 5 ♥ J 10 3 ♦ A Q 10 3 ♣ K Q 7	♠ K 4 3 2 ♥ K 9 ♦ J 7 6 5 4 ♣ A 2
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North	East	South	West
			Pass
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

North is worth opening 1♥. (There's a thing called the "Rule of 19" which many countries use to define an acceptable 1-level opening bid. It says that your high-card points added to the number of cards in your two longest suits must come to at least 19. North qualifies here). As with board 5, opening 2♥ is not advisable when holding 4 of the other major. South has a flat 3343 shape which strongly suggests that NT is the place to play.

West will lead a club, East will win and return the suit and that's 11 tricks and a top (a diamond switch would hold it to ten). But I think 4H+1 is going to be the most common result.

### Board 13. All. Both vul. Dealer North

♠ A K 8 4 ♥ K 8 6 ♦ Q 9 8 ♣ A 10 6  ♠ Q 3 ♥ A 7 5 2 ♦ 6 3 2 ♣ K 9 8 4  ♠ 10 ♥ Q 10 9 ♦ A J 10 7 4 ♣ J 5 3 2	♠ J 9 7 6 5 2 ♥ J 4 3 ♦ K 5 ♣ Q 7
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North	East	South	West
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
INT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

A similar auction to board 5, where again we see that after a INT rebid by opener, 2♦ from responder is an artificial game force. North shows his spades, South his second suit and North bids the obvious 3NT. I'd expect 10 tricks to be the norm with the right view in hearts.

Not much to this hand, so I want to take the bare look off it. A couple of years ago I made up a joke, and the patent has just now come through. What do you call a surprised Chinese? Ho Li Mo Li. I just know that the royalties are going to allow me to give up the day job. Or not.

#### Board 14. None. Dealer East

<p>♠ A K 10 4 ♥ 9 8 5 2 ♦ 10 2 ♣ Q 7 5</p> <p>♠ Q J 9 8 5 ♥ K Q 10 3 ♦ 5 4 ♣ A 10</p> <p>♠ 7 3 ♥ J 7 4 ♦ A 9 7 3 ♣ J 8 3 2</p>	<p>♠ 6 2 ♥ A 6 ♦ K Q J 8 6 ♣ K 9 6 4</p>
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North	East	South	West
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

On this fairly normal auction, 3NT is par. Careful defence will beat it. After a heart lead won in West, declarer starts diamonds and South wins the second round and pushes a spade through. Declarer has nowhere go.

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

<p>♠ 10 8 6 2 ♥ Q 8 7 4 2 ♦ Q 3 ♣ J 8</p> <p>♠ A 9 4 3 ♥ J 10 6 5 3 ♦ K 7 5 ♣ 10</p> <p>♠ K 7 5 ♥ 9 ♦ J 9 8 2 ♣ A 9 7 6 5</p>	<p>♠ Q J ♥ A K ♦ A 10 6 4 ♣ K Q 4 3 2</p>
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North	East	South	West
Pass	1♣	Pass	Pass
Pass	2♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	3NT

2♦ from East is a reverse, showing 16+ points. And note that East did not rebid INT, which would have shown 15-17 balanced. 3NT is clear now for West. 2NT would be an underbid because you'd bid that without the DK.

Today 3NT fails because hearts break badly. That happens about 15% of the time, so minus 50 should be average.

Maybe I should write a bridge book on hands like this, entitled "Breaking Bad". I am the one who knocks.

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

<p>♠ 7 2 ♥ 9 8 6 3 ♦ A 5 ♣ K 10 6 4 2</p> <p>♠ K 10 6 5 4 ♥ — ♦ K Q 4 3 ♣ A 8 5 3</p> <p>♠ A Q 8 ♥ A K J 4 2 ♦ J 10 8 7 ♣ J</p>	<p>♠ J 9 3 ♥ Q 10 7 5 ♦ 9 6 2 ♣ Q 9 7</p>
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North	East	South	West
Pass	2♠	3♥	1♠
Pass	Pass		Pass

There's no doubt that 3♥ from South will have North thinking about game, and I reckon it's a close call, but on balance I'd pass.

West is endplayed on lead! A spade gives a trick, as does DK, as does CA. So I expect to see a good number of 170s and a few 420s.

(If you are an aspiring world-class player, you'd lead a small club!! Now South "knows" that you never underlead an Ace against a suit contract, so he'll play low from Dummy and if East is also in inspired form, he'll win the Queen and play a spade. Now 9 tricks is the limit.)

### Board 17. None. Dealer North

♠ Q 9 7 4 ♥ 8 7 ♦ A J 7 ♣ K 7 6 4  ♠ A K J 10 6 ♥ K 9 2 ♦ 10 2 ♣ 9 8 5	♠ 2 ♥ A J 5 3 ♦ K 9 8 5 4 ♣ A 10 3  ♠ 8 5 3 ♥ Q 10 6 4 ♦ Q 6 3 ♣ Q J 2
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North	East	South	West
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

No need for West to get over-excited. I last got over-excited the first time I saw Debbie Harry (Blondie) on TOTP. OH OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH. MMMMMMMMMMMM. Nurse – Mr Murphy in the Acute Wing urgently requires sedation!!

East might only have an 11-count for his 2♦ rebid. 2NT shows 11-12 and East with a minimum and a singleton in West's suit, will have an easy pass.

On a club lead, declarer will win the Ace on the 3<sup>rd</sup> round and knock out the SQ to come to 8 tricks.

### Board 18. N/S. Dealer East

♠ J 10 9 6 2 ♥ 6 2 ♦ 8 7 5 3 ♣ 4 3  ♠ A K ♥ A 10 9 8 7 4 ♦ A Q J ♣ 8 7	♠ 8 ♥ K J 3 ♦ 10 6 4 2 ♣ A Q 9 5 2  ♠ Q 7 5 4 3 ♥ Q 5 ♦ K 9 ♣ K J 10 6
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North	East	South	West
	Pass	1♠	X
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Whether or not South opens 1♠ (I think he should), EW ought to get to 6♥. On the given auction, East jumps to 3♣ to show good values in response to West's double. When East then raises 3♥ to 4♥ West can see that slam has to

be very good. S/he can use Blackwood but I just think 6♥ is clear.

Stating the obvious, West can count 28 points on his side. That leaves 12, and South has opened the bidding vulnerable. So that clears up the location of DK, CK and HQ. You therefore play King and another heart, and if South were to play low on both, you'd finesse with confidence. DK comes down in two rounds, so that's 13 tricks.

### Board 19. E/W. Dealer South

♠ Q 10 2 ♥ K Q ♦ Q 10 8 2 ♣ A 10 9 8  ♠ 6 ♥ A 9 5 ♦ K 9 5 ♣ K J 7 6 3 2	♠ A K 8 4 3 ♥ 6 4 ♦ 7 6 3 ♣ Q 5 4  ♠ J 9 7 5 ♥ J 10 8 7 3 2 ♦ A J 4 ♣ —
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North	East	South	West
		Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	2♥	Pass
Pass	X	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

A nice competitive Pairs partscore hand.

For the third time (see boards 10 and 11), you don't open a weak 2 with 4 of the other major. South passes. Discipline, mes braves!!

Lo and behold, South gets to come in with hearts at his second turn. In fact if you were inclined to bid 3♥ rather than 2♥ at this point, I wouldn't have a huge problem with that. A bid of 3♣ over 2♥ would show a better hand than West has – don't you just hate that singleton in partner's suit. The spotlight falls on East, and at Pairs as I said before, you don't get rich by selling out at the 2-level. East therefore doubles. This is not penalties, it's just saying "Partner I don't want to defend 2♥. I can stand 2S, 2NT, 3C, 3♦ or pass from you – please do something sensible!!"

Of course West bids 3♣ and now it's North who has a close decision. Does he defend 3♣ or compete with 3H? I think North's clubs just sway it in favour of defending. As it happens, 3♥ would be the winning action as it's just one down. 3♣ makes, because West can pitch a diamond on the SK and later ruff a heart in

dummy – he loses two clubs a heart and a diamond.

All of which means that any pair making a partscore on this hand should score well.

### Board 20. All. Dealer West

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

North	East	South	West
1♠	2♦	2♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		Pass

2♠ ought to be the common spot (hard to find the heart fit) and 9 tricks are there – North must lead hearts twice towards Dummy in order to lead a club to his King. That way, he gets to ruff a club in dummy. Even if EW have a heart ruff, it's with a natural trump trick.

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

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

North	East	South	West
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

2NT shows 18-19 and South has a minimum, so I'm a passer. I must be getting old. East will lead a black suit and that is 2NT made (on a club lead you play Ace and a spade). A Diamond lead beats 2NT and well done if you found it.

If you bid 3NT you deserve your minus one or two. Multum in parvo!!

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

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

North	East	South	West
2NT	Pass	1♣	1♦
	Pass	Pass	Pass

Another hand where the dictum of “look for plus scores at Pairs” holds sway. 2NT is plenty. The lie of the minor suits makes 8 tricks easy, and it is possible to squeeze West in the minors for a ninth, but 120 should be par.

### Board 23. All. Dealer South

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

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	1♠	INT
		Pass	

Whichever way you slice and dice it, NS have at most 4 hearts and 2 diamonds to take, and that is INT made.

Since we're nearing the end, I'll share with you the fact that I got married last May. It's wonderful and all that of course. I don't deserve her and she most certainly doesn't deserve me, but there you go. Sic transit Gloria mundi. God loves a trier.



### Board 24. None. Dealer West

<p>♠ J 10 8 3 ♥ K Q 8 7 3 ♦ 9 8 6 5 ♣ —</p> <p>♠ Q 2 ♥ 10 ♦ J 7 4 3 ♣ K 9 8 7 6 2</p>	<p>♠ A K 9 7 6 4 ♥ 6 5 2 ♦ 10 ♣ A Q 3</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ A J 9 4 ♦ A K Q 2 ♣ J 10 5 4</p>
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North	East	South	West
Pass	3♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	4♠

This is a really instructive bidding hand. Modern bidding theory urges us to pre-empt at every opportunity, especially non-vul, often on a 6-card suit. Here West is perfect for 3♣ – 6 clubs and a 4-card side suit. Importantly, he does not have a 3-card major. East knows partner has at most 2 spades, but has an easy 3♠ bid, forcing, because if West bids 4♣ that's fine – East might even try 5♣.

While all this is going on, N\S are cold for 5H! 4♠ and 5♣ are most likely 2 down. What a result for the pre-emptors!

Maybe you think South should come in with a double over 3♠ – not clear since 3♠ is forcing. North will bid 4♥ and West 4♠. North will double and that's just 300 away, compared to 450.

So hats off to any EW who played this in a black suit. Remember – the only excuse for not pre-empting is that it isn't your turn to bid!!

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

<p>♠ 6 4 ♥ A K 9 3 ♦ Q 7 5 ♣ J 8 4 3</p> <p>♠ K Q 10 7 ♥ 4 2 ♦ K 9 8 6 ♣ K Q 7</p>	<p>♠ J 8 5 3 2 ♥ Q J 7 5 ♦ 10 2 ♣ 6 5</p> <p>♠ A 9 ♥ 10 8 6 ♦ A J 4 3 ♣ A 10 9 2</p>
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North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	INT	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	

One of the reasons I like playing weak NT is its pre-emptive value. On this hand EW are cold for 110 in 2♠, but they really can't get there once South opens INT. I expect INT to go one down at worst (it could even make), for just 50 away.

A lot of people say they don't play weak NT "because I'll get doubled and go for a telephone number". Well I've played it for 40 years and it just doesn't happen. There are many gadgets you can play if you get doubled. My way is that redouble shows diamonds or both minors – opener now bids his better minor and redoubler will either pass 2♣ with both minors or correct to 2♦ with just diamonds. 2♦ over the double shows the majors and 2♣ 2♥ and 2♠ are natural.

8 of tonight's 28 hands are weak NT openers. Food for thought.

### Board 26. All. Dealer East

<p>♠ — ♥ A J 9 2 ♦ 9 8 7 6 4 3 ♣ A J 7</p>	<p>♠ K J 10 ♥ 8 5 ♦ K J 2 ♣ K 9 8 6 4</p> <p>♠ Q 9 7 ♥ Q 10 7 3 ♦ A Q 10 5 ♣ Q 3</p> <p>♠ A 8 6 5 4 3 2 ♥ K 6 4 ♦ — ♣ 10 5 2</p>
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North	East	South	West
4♠	INT	3♠	X
Pass	Pass	Pass	X
Pass	Pass	Pass	

And the pre-empting theme continues for the third hand in a row!

South's 3♠ puts West in a very difficult spot. What does Double mean? Is it penalty? Does it show hearts? Can 4♦ be right on that moth-eaten suit? That of course is the whole point of pre-empting – to deny opponents bidding space and make it hard for them to locate their best level and strain.

I play double as takeout here, North will continue the barrage with 4♠ and it comes back to West who will double again, Pass being clearly out of the question as West can stand any action from East now, including Pass. In fact East is very likely to pass and take the money.

4♠ doubled costs 500. Not a bad outcome with EW cold for 4♥ or 6D!

So again – the only excuse for failing to pre-empt is that it isn't your turn to bid!!

### Board 27. None. Dealer South

	♠ K 10 8 4		
	♥ A 9 4		
	♦ K J 5 2		
	♣ A 10		
♠ Q J 9		♠ A 6 2	
♥ 10 5		♥ J 7 6	
♦ 10 7 3		♦ Q 9 8 4	
♣ Q J 9 4 2		♣ 8 6 3	
	♠ 7 5 3		
	♥ K Q 8 3 2		
	♦ A 6		
	♣ K 7 5		
<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
1♠	Pass	1♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
		Pass	Pass

A frequent question asked by improvers is "What do I do if I have a 5-card major but I'm also balanced and in my INT opening range?". The answer is that if your major is good enough to open and rebid, do so, otherwise open INT.

All roads lead to 4♥ and 11 tricks should result. If West leads ♠Q its easy – just cover with SK and after ruffing a club and drawing trumps you lead a spade towards the ten.

If West leads the ♣Q you ruff a club, draw trumps and lead a spade up, planning to insert the ten. If West splits his honours you play the King and later lead another spade up. You just lose 2 spades.

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

	♠ A Q 9 3		
	♥ 5 4		
	♦ Q 10 4 2		
	♣ A 10 6		
♠ J 4 2		♠ K 7 5	
♥ Q 10 8 2		♥ A J 9 7 6	
♦ A K 7 6		♦ 9 3	
♣ 4 2		♣ Q 7 5	
	♠ 10 8 6		
	♥ K 3		
	♦ J 8 5		
	♣ K J 9 8 3		
<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
INT	Pass	Pass	Pass
			Pass

A fitting finale!

Board 25 noted the pre-emptive value of the weak NT, and we sign off with one final illustration. EW have a 9-card fit in hearts but really cannot find it after INT by North.

INT will make if getting clubs right.

And now, if you'll excuse me, I'm off to rereplenish my glash, which hash been empty for the lasht fifteen secondsh.

Arrivederci. Au revoir. Tschuss. Sin a bhfuil. Ciao. It's been emotional. Remember to maximise your minimum income. Never draw to an inside straight. Death before dishonour.

Murphy out.