



The 2023 Celtic Simultaneous Pairs

Thursday / Friday 7th & 8th December

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 !

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

Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

<p>♠ J 10 2 ♥ K 4 ♦ Q 7 4 3 ♣ Q 9 8 5</p> <p>♠ A 9 7 4 ♥ A J 6 3 ♦ J 10 8 ♣ 3 2</p> <p>♠ K Q 8 5 3 ♥ Q 8 5 ♦ 6 2 ♣ A K J</p>	<p>♠ 6 ♥ 10 9 7 2 ♦ A K 9 5 ♣ 10 7 6 4</p>
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Whether playing a weak or strong no-trump, almost every South will open 1♠. But some will settle in 2♠ by South, others in a no-trump partscore by North. 2♠ makes +110 on a club lead if the defence get their ruff, and +140 otherwise, on careful play. No-trump partscores are harder to evaluate; best defence holds N/S to just five tricks, but in practice anywhere from five to nine tricks is possible. If E/W can somehow play in hearts, they might make 140.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ A Q 8 4 ♥ Q ♦ Q 10 7 3 ♣ J 10 9 4</p> <p>♠ 10 9 5 3 ♥ 8 6 4 3 2 ♦ 9 8 6 ♣ 2</p> <p>♠ — ♥ A 9 5 ♦ K J 5 2 ♣ A Q 8 6 5 3</p>	<p>♠ K J 7 6 2 ♥ K J 10 7 ♦ A 4 ♣ K 7</p>
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When East opens 1♠ it looks natural for South to overcall 2♣ rather than to double (planning to come back in with a double at his next turn). Now, whether or not West jump-raises spades preemptively, N/S figure to end up in game. 3NT by

North makes on any lead but the ♥K, and fetches a fine matchpoint result, But some pairs may punt the club slam, and find the ♣K right to bring home +1370. That makes the sacrifice in 6♠ a paying one – in theory.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ 10 8 5 4 2 ♥ A 6 2 ♦ K 10 2 ♣ K 5</p> <p>♠ 9 ♥ 7 5 3 ♦ 8 5 4 3 ♣ A 9 8 6 4</p>	<p>♠ K Q J 7 6 3 ♥ Q J ♦ Q 7 6 ♣ 7 2</p> <p>♠ A ♥ K 10 9 8 4 ♦ A J 9 ♣ Q J 10 3</p>
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In third seat North might open 1♠, or he might preempt to either 2♠ or 3♠ – Matchpoints does funny things to people! A quiet 1♠ opening will see E/W find their way to 4♥, I expect. A preemptive opening might see E/W defend – collecting 800 would be vital, since +500 will not score well. In 3NT by West the top spade lead may see declarer guess hearts right to keep North off play – in fact a good guesser might even end up with 12 tricks.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

<p>♠ 10 8 7 ♥ Q 10 8 4 ♦ A Q 4 3 ♣ Q 8</p> <p>♠ Q 4 2 ♥ 9 7 ♦ K 2 ♣ A K 10 7 6 3</p> <p>♠ A K J 9 3 ♥ A 6 2 ♦ J 9 ♣ 9 4 2</p>	<p>♠ 6 5 ♥ K J 5 3 ♦ 10 8 7 6 5 ♣ J 5</p>
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West may open and rebid clubs, but unless he is prepared to risk competing to the three-level on his own South is likely to buy the hand in 2♣, one way or another. In that contract the defence will lead a top club and East may encourage the lead – even though he cannot beat dummy’s trumps -- for fear of a red-suit switch if he does not. The play in 2♣ is complex but there are several practical lines that lead to +140 for N/S, probably for an above average result.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

<p>♠ 9 7 ♥ J 8 7 6 ♦ J 2 ♣ K 10 9 5 3</p> <p>♠ A J 5 ♥ 4 3 ♦ A Q 8 7 3 ♣ J 7 2</p>	<p>♠ 10 8 6 4 3 ♥ 9 5 ♦ K 10 5 ♣ Q 6 4</p> <p>♠ K Q 2 ♥ A K Q 10 2 ♦ 9 6 4 ♣ A 8</p>
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When South opens 1♥, West may stretch to double, and now the first issue is whether N/S can bid to 4♥. That looks easy enough to do, but bear in mind that South needs to find that doubleton diamond in the North hand to make his game. Second, will E/W find their sacrifice in 4♣? That costs 500 against a vulnerable game, and might earn E/W a good matchpoint score, if the field is getting to game on their opponents’ cards.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ K J 6 4 ♥ A J 3 ♦ J 10 9 6 5 ♣ 6</p> <p>♠ 5 3 ♥ K 8 2 ♦ 7 4 3 ♣ K 10 9 7 5</p>	<p>♠ A Q 10 8 7 ♥ Q 7 4 ♦ 8 2 ♣ A J 3</p> <p>♠ 9 2 ♥ 10 9 6 5 ♦ A K Q ♣ Q 8 4 2</p>
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Some people will open the East hand INT, others will prefer the more traditional 1♠. After the INT opening bid many N/S pairs will remain silent, and concede seven or eight tricks in a number of ways. But N/S can certainly do better by competing in a red-suit; eight tricks in diamonds look attainable, and -50 will still matchpoint well enough. This looks the sort of deal where +100 or better, either way, will collect a very decent share of the matchpoints.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

<p>♠ Q 6 ♥ A J 10 4 ♦ 6 5 ♣ A J 9 5 3</p> <p>♠ K J 8 4 2 ♥ 9 2 ♦ A 7 2 ♣ K 10 6</p>	<p>♠ 9 7 3 ♥ 3 ♦ J 10 9 8 4 3 ♣ 8 4 2</p> <p>♠ A 10 5 ♥ K Q 8 7 6 5 ♦ K Q ♣ Q 7</p>
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After South opens 1♥ and West overcalls 1♠ North will, in the modern style, bid 2♣ to show a limit raise or better in hearts. After that start N/S will probably end up in 4♥, making 12 tricks when clubs behave perfectly. Since 6♥ really needs clubs 3-3 or the ♣10 doubleton, as well as the ♣K onside, it is not the best slam you ever saw. But when it makes, you’d like to find a way to get there!

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

<p>♠ A 7 3 ♥ Q 10 7 2 ♦ A Q J 10 8 ♣ K</p> <p>♠ 6 ♥ K J 8 6 5 4 ♦ 5 4 2 ♣ Q 9 2</p>	<p>♠ 10 9 8 ♥ 9 3 ♦ K 9 7 6 3 ♣ A J 7</p> <p>♠ K Q J 5 4 2 ♥ A ♦ — ♣ 10 8 6 5 4 3</p>
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West will open 2♥, leaving North no good bid – a practical 2NT overcall is the most sensible action I can think of. What now for South? The textbooks do not tell you what to do here? I’d close my eyes and bid 6♣, but a cue-bid in hearts to get partner to choose the black suits might also work – if you have one in your armory. Today 6♣ by South is a fair contract, but on a trump lead I only see 11 tricks; what about you?

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

<p>♠ K 10 3 ♥ 9 7 5 3 ♦ K 5 4 ♣ 7 3 2</p> <p>♠ A 7 ♥ Q 10 6 2 ♦ 7 6 2 ♣ A Q 6 5</p>	<p>♠ J 6 5 2 ♥ K 8 4 ♦ J 3 ♣ K J 10 4</p> <p>♠ Q 9 8 4 ♥ A J ♦ A Q 10 9 8 ♣ 9 8</p>
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South's 1♦ opening will temporarily silence West (wash your mouth out if you doubled!). When North responds 1♥, South's 1♠ rebid may end the auction. Best defence is to lead and continue hearts – now 1♠ will struggle. But if West leads ace and another trump – often right here -- declarer has eight tricks. Since E/W can make a small club partscore here, and N/S +110 in diamonds, this looks the sort of deal where any plus score will not do so terribly.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

<p>♠ 2 ♥ Q 9 5 2 ♦ Q J 7 4 ♣ K J 10 9</p> <p>♠ K Q 10 5 ♥ A 7 ♦ 8 ♣ A Q 8 7 6 4</p>	<p>♠ 9 8 ♥ K 8 6 4 3 ♦ A 10 9 6 2 ♣ 3</p> <p>♠ A J 7 6 4 3 ♥ J 10 ♦ K 5 3 ♣ 5 2</p>
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Unless East has a two-suited opening bid available he will pass, letting South open a weak 2♠ or a Multi – surely none of you would think this was worth a 1♠ opening would you? After this start, things may get hairy: it is far from clear whether anyone can make anything! As Bobby Wolff once said “Last bidder gets the zero” and penalties of 300 or greater figure to be the order of the day. I think East can make a partscore in hearts and West might make 3♣.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

<p>♠ A Q 10 6 3 ♥ J 9 7 6 2 ♦ K 8 ♣ 5</p> <p>♠ J 7 2 ♥ Q 8 4 ♦ 7 5 4 ♣ K Q 4 3</p>	<p>♠ K 9 ♥ A 5 3 ♦ 10 6 ♣ A J 10 8 7 2</p> <p>♠ 8 5 4 ♥ K 10 ♦ A Q J 9 3 2 ♣ 9 6</p>
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South will open 1♦ at most tables, I expect, and now N/S should find a way to get to spades. But at what level? With precisely half the deck between them, it is nonetheless easy to see that North might try for game once he finds a fit. In fact, as the cards lie, defending to 4♠ is far from easy. The defence need to lead diamonds early to cut declarer's communications. Even then, if declarer guesses hearts, he should find a way to ten tricks.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

<p>♠ 2 ♥ K Q J 6 3 ♦ A K 4 ♣ 10 9 7 4</p> <p>♠ 10 9 6 4 ♥ 10 9 ♦ Q J 9 3 ♣ Q 8 2</p>	<p>♠ A K Q 8 7 ♥ 7 2 ♦ 10 6 5 ♣ A 5 3</p> <p>♠ J 5 3 ♥ A 8 5 4 ♦ 8 7 2 ♣ K J 6</p>
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North has a normal 1♥ opening bid, over which East will overcall 1♠, and South will raise to 2♥. Now should West compete to 2♠? It is all a matter of style. If he does, North will re-compete to 3♥ and probably buy the hand there for a straightforward +140, no doubt for an average result or so. But maybe E/W will go to the well again and try 3♠? Even if doubled there, they can escape for –100 with the ♣K onside, for a fine matchpoint result.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

Many people will open the North hand 2♠ (despite the vulnerability, weak suit and outside defence – need I say more?). East will probably overcall – 3♣ looks enough, though a Michaels 3♠ is not out of the question, if a decided overbid. Even if the defence take the diamond ruff, North can in theory make 3♠ – not that many will! By contrast, E/W can only make at most nine tricks in clubs or hearts; so any making partscore will score very well for either side.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

After East's 2NT opening (is there an alternative?) some Wests will simply raise to 3NT. Others will use Stayman and on finding the fit might try to explore for slam. Eleven tricks in both strains look easy enough. But in no-trumps East will have to decide whether he can risk the club finesse. After, say, a heart lead, he should run five rounds of spades first. Indeed, if North pitches too many diamonds, declarer might be able to drop the doubleton ♦Q offside.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ 9 8 6 4 3 2 ♥ 10 6 ♦ J 9 ♣ Q 5 3</p> <p>♠ — ♥ K Q 8 7 3 2 ♦ 10 7 4 ♣ 10 8 7 6</p>	<p>♠ A 7 ♥ J 9 5 ♦ Q 8 6 ♣ A K J 9 4</p> <p>♠ K Q J 10 5 ♥ A 4 ♦ A K 5 3 2 ♣ 2</p>
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After a 1♠ opening bid by South some Wests will try a preemptive 3♥ – well, the hand is certainly weak enough! One way or another, you'd expect N/S to get to 4♠, but some might find themselves at the five-level (either after a 5♥ sacrifice or under their own steam). 5♥ figures to go for 100 or 300, while 4♠ cannot make more than ten tricks. All things considered, that 3♥ preempt is looking better and better...

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

<p>♠ Q 9 8 7 ♥ J 10 6 5 ♦ 9 6 2 ♣ K 4</p> <p>♠ A 10 2 ♥ 9 4 2 ♦ K Q 5 ♣ A 10 5 3</p>	<p>♠ J 5 ♥ 7 ♦ J 10 8 7 4 3 ♣ J 9 8 6</p> <p>♠ K 6 4 3 ♥ A K Q 8 3 ♦ A ♣ Q 7 2</p>
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A weak no-trump from West will see East transfer to diamonds (we all have a transfer available don't we?) That will surely tempt South to double for take-out and raise his partner's choice of major to game, hoping to find a useful card or two opposite. Curiously, 3♦ figures to make by E/W – the defence need to take a club ruff to beat it. Meanwhile 4♥ by N/S is easy, 4♠ (because of the possible club ruff) a trifle more awkward, though still perfectly makeable.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

<p>♠ J 6 2 ♥ 6 5 4 ♦ K 10 8 4 3 ♣ 6 4</p> <p>♠ K 5 4 ♥ A K 10 3 ♦ A ♣ K Q 9 8 2</p>	<p>♠ 10 9 8 3 ♥ J 9 ♦ J 9 6 5 2 ♣ A 7</p>
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<p>♠ A Q 7 ♥ Q 8 7 2 ♦ Q 7 ♣ J 10 5 3</p>	
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In third seat is that South hand an opening bid? I say no – but not everyone will agree! If South passes West will open 1♣, and thereafter it is hard to see E/W staying out of 3NT, a reasonable contract from the West seat. On a diamond lead West should win, cross to the ♣A and pass the ♥9, repeating the finesse if necessary. With the ♠A outside, all routes seem to lead to at least nine tricks, with +430 being close to a shared top, I expect.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ A 10 7 3 2 ♥ J ♦ 8 7 6 5 2 ♣ 6 4</p>	<p>♠ K J 9 8 6 5 ♥ K Q ♦ K 3 ♣ J 8 3</p>
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<p>♠ 4 ♥ A 7 3 2 ♦ Q 9 4 ♣ Q 10 9 7 5</p>	
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After 1♠-4♠ North has to decide whether to double (cards, and optional) or to sell out and pass. Since 4♠ has only nine tricks, it looks as if the double should work. But might South remove the double? If so, a 4NT call to show a two-suiter might be best. If N/S play 5♣ or 5♥ West has to lead a diamond through North's ace early on to set the game... most will find that play won't they?

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ — ♥ A Q 9 7 4 2 ♦ K 7 4 2 ♣ A Q 4</p>	<p>♠ A J 10 7 5 ♥ 10 ♦ A J 8 3 ♣ J 5 3</p>
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<p>♠ K 2 ♥ J 6 5 3 ♦ 10 9 5 ♣ 9 8 7 2</p>	<p>♠ Q 9 8 6 4 3 ♥ K 8 ♦ Q 6 ♣ K 10 6</p>
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After a 1♥ opening and 1♠ overcall East will pass smoothly, awaiting a reopening double. West will probably make that call (yes a trump void is a flaw, but he does have fine defence). After two rounds of hearts declarer can be held to five tricks (East may have to be careful to avoid being caught in a trump coup). Note though, that 4♥ is makeable for E/W as indeed is 3NT, so collecting a small penalty here may not be enough to get a decent matchpoint score.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

<p>♠ 10 8 6 ♥ K 8 ♦ J 10 9 8 5 2 ♣ K 6</p>	<p>♠ A 9 5 4 ♥ A Q 10 7 3 2 ♦ A ♣ Q 7</p>
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<p>♠ 7 3 2 ♥ J 6 ♦ K 7 ♣ A 10 9 5 4 3</p>	<p>♠ K Q J ♥ 9 5 4 ♦ Q 6 4 3 ♣ J 8 2</p>
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In fourth chair North will be allowed to open 1♥ at most tables, and over a 2♣ response will bid 2♠. Now I assume South will bid 2NT or 3♣, and raise a 3♥ bid to 4♥. East might well lead a trump here (imagine dummy with 2-2 in the majors to see why). However, as the cards lie, I suppose the best lead is a club – not that anyone will find it. In practice, 10 or 11 tricks in hearts or no-trumps look normal, with spades also producing the same sort of result.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

The North hand is way too good for a 4♠ opening. Perhaps an Acoll 2♠, or a Benjaminized 2♣ is best, or a simple 1♠ call if neither of those calls is available. Today, the route to game is irrelevant. North will play 4♠ at 95% of the tables. With a spade and a heart to lose off the top, the game hinges on the diamond guess – and so 1 figure making 4♠ here will be worth a 65% Board or so, since more will get it right than wrong.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

Hardy types will open INT as West in third seat (at unfavourable vulnerability, yet!) cowards like me will open 1♣, planning to pass the response. The INT call works like a charm; declarer will win the heart lead and finesse in clubs, then play on diamonds, and emerge with as much as +150. Conversely a 1♣ opening bid might get you to 3♣, where +110 is the limit. Do you suppose some yellow-bellies might pass this Board out altogether?

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

Bidding 1♥, (planning to reverse into spades) may be a more efficient way to bid the West cards than opening 2♣. The auction might be: 1♥-INT-2♣-3NT-4♠, though West's last call is a blind guess, and passing 3NT might work better today. In 4♠ on a club lead West will win the ace and should simply play to ruff hearts in dummy. If South overruffs and leads back a club, declarer's goose is cooked. Anyone making game here will deserve to score well.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

A sequence like 1♣-1♥-2NT-3NT will lead West to the best spot. North has an awkward lead – both a heart and a diamond might work badly, though I expect the latter to be the popular choice. We can all see 11 easy tricks here, but the 12th would be worth a lot of matchpoints. There is no legitimate way to bring home the bacon, though there is quite a lot of pressure in the endgame.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

I'd expect East to open 1♥ and raise INT to 2NT here, giving West a close decision; his intermediates argue for aggression. On a spade lead declarer does not seem to have time to establish the long club does he? One winning line is to take the ♠Q, cash the ♥AK, then play a club, and eventually cross to hand with the ♠K, take two diamond finesses and lead up to the ♥9. There are other winning strategies though, so 3NT making will not be that uncommon.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

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

Assuming East passes, South will open 1♦, planning to bid and rebid spades. When he shows his 6-5 pattern North will probably want to ask for aces and drive to 6♦. Nice try, but no cigar, as they say. West will lead his ♣A before the rats get at it (as they would today on a passive lead) and now on any continuation bar a trump 11 tricks are the limit. The optimum spot for N/S is 3NT, making ten or eleven tricks easily enough, on any lead but a spade.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

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

Unless South gets in his own way by pretending he has a weak spade one- or two-suiter, N/S will head to 4♥, which would be comfortable were it not for the bad diamond break. After a club lead, declarer will win and play ♦AK then ruff a diamond, and be overruffed. Even so, the fall of the ♦10 means declarer can still make ten tricks by the percentage play of drawing trumps and conceding a diamond. Registering +420 will surely score well today.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

When West opens 1♥, East will check the backs of the cards carefully! After a 2♦ overcall East will have to decide whether to take it slowly or make a delicate slam-try of 6♥. I can see why one might opt for caution here, but today partner comes through in the spade department. In fact the defence need to cash their diamond trick to stop 7♥ making! By the way, the N/S save in 7♦ is likely to escape for – 800 in practice, which may score reasonably well.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

<p>♠ 8 6 2 ♥ Q 7 5 2 ♦ K 8 ♣ J 6 4 2</p> <p>♠ K 10 5 3 ♥ K ♦ 10 5 4 ♣ A K 7 5 3</p> <p>♠ Q J 9 7 ♥ J 8 4 ♦ Q J 9 7 3 ♣ 8</p>	<p>♠ A 4 ♥ A 10 9 6 3 ♦ A 6 2 ♣ Q 10 9</p>
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Whether East opens 1♥ or INT he will surely end up in 3NT, most likely on a top diamond lead from South. Declarer can take nine tricks easily enough, but the tenth would need to come from a diamond-spade squeeze. The defence can break up the squeeze by repeated spade leads – but they probably won't. My guess is that making +630 will earn E/W a very respectable score here – but try and beat 6♣ (you can't, even on a trump lead).

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

<p>♠ 5 4 3 ♥ K Q 9 ♦ 6 4 3 2 ♣ A 8 5</p> <p>♠ K J 9 8 6 2 ♥ 6 4 ♦ K 5 ♣ 10 6 2</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 ♥ J 10 3 2 ♦ A 10 9 ♣ K Q J 3</p> <p>♠ A 7 ♥ A 8 7 5 ♦ Q J 8 7 ♣ 9 7 4</p>
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South's weak 2♠ call will get passed round to East, who should double for take-out as a passed hand – which will not thrill West. Mind you, 3♦ by West will handle for eight tricks easily enough, so maybe North has to bid on to 3♠ himself. South should record +140 easily enough there – for the same result had East not re-opened. But at least this way both sides get their money's worth in the bidding and play.

Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ 2 ♥ A Q 5 ♦ A J 8 4 3 ♣ J 10 9 2</p> <p>♠ A K Q J 10 7 ♥ K 7 4 ♦ 5 ♣ A Q 6</p> <p>♠ 6 4 ♥ 8 3 2 ♦ K 7 2 ♣ K 7 5 4 3</p>	<p>♠ 9 8 5 3 ♥ J 10 9 6 ♦ Q 10 9 6 ♣ 8</p>
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A classic old-fashioned Acol auction of 2♠-4♠, or the like will see West declarer in 4♠, making ten tricks when the heart finesse loses. This is the wrong vulnerability for N/S to try to get active; as you can see they might come quite close to making 5♣ if the minor-suit queens were swapped. Not today, where any such experiment would cost a minimum of 500 – though they might drive E/W overBoard in 5♠.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

<p>♠ 7 6 ♥ K Q J 8 ♦ K 10 7 3 ♣ A 8 6</p> <p>♠ A 10 9 8 ♥ 10 3 ♦ A 9 8 5 ♣ K 9 4</p>	<p>♠ K J 5 3 2 ♥ A 9 6 4 ♦ J 2 ♣ 7 5</p> <p>♠ Q 4 ♥ 7 5 2 ♦ Q 6 4 ♣ Q J 10 3 2</p>
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After West's weak no-trump North may show the majors if he can, allowing South to invite to game with a call of 3♠. West might lead a trump rather than the ♥K – saving South an awkward trump guess – but even after that start nine tricks appear to be the limit. North would actually do better to pass out INT and run the spades, to put E/W under pressure. Declarer has to be careful to hold his losses to –200, but that would still produce a poor matchpoint result.