Spring Charity Bridge Festival

Commentary
for the
u3a Spring Charity Bridge Festival

Wednesday 26th March 2025

Dear Bridge player

Welcome to our fourth national Bridge Festival, uniting and re-uniting u3a bridge players from across the United Kingdom. Games will be played all week both offline locally and online.

All results submitted will be included in the overall national scoring and the names of each day's winning pair will be posted on the u3a Bridge website as soon as possible once all the results have been received.

Having raised over £5,000 for charities over the past three years, we hope you'll help to raise even more for Macmillan Cancer Support this year.

Thank you for joining in, playing and donating at https://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwor/bw.cgi?club=u3abridgegroup&pid=display_page177
Have fun, spread the word and enjoy yourselves.

Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

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

North opens a weak 1NT; East overcalls 2♥ and South competes with 2♠. When West jumps to 4♥, North needs to exercise self-discipline and pass. While the spade support is good, the heart holding is horrible offensively and the rest of the hand is poor. 4♠ doubled can go down 800. Even if the defenders drop a trick, missing the diamond ruff perhaps, it is still too costly. 4♥ makes an easy 11 tricks, 12 on any lead other than a spade.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

Despite the devalued doubleton diamond jack, East probably opens 1NT. West then transfers into spades and gives East a choice of games by rebidding 3NT. With a ruffing value and spade support, East clearly prefers 4♠. This is on despite the position of the ♠K: throw one of West's hearts on the third round of clubs. Even if it made, 3NT would score only 400. In fact, a diamond lead and a heart switch at trick two or three defeats the no-trump game.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

South lacks the playing strength for an Acol 2♥ or Benjamin 2♣ and opens 1♥. Two passes follow and East reopens with a double. South may redouble and is likely to finish in 2♥ in any event. Unless the defenders lead spades, the key to making 140 is using the ♦A entry to lead towards the ♠K. The stakes are higher if North-South stretch to 3NT. In 3NT, you may need to take the ♦A at trick one and play a spade at trick two to make the game.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

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

If West passes, North opens 2♣ and South senses the slam possibilities. They will loom even larger if South responds 2♦ and North jumps to 3NT. Life is much tougher if West opens a weak 2♥ or a Multi 2♦. North will find it hard to convey such a high point count. All ways on, someone will need to guess well, and this is not just in the bidding. 'Eight ever nine never' says to try dropping the ♣Q. However, West's bidding may induce declarer to finesse.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

Given the vulnerability, West may well get to open 1♣ in North seat. East responds 1♥ and let us say South again passes. In this case, West rebids 1♠ and 4♠ will soon be the contract. 10 tricks are easy via a ruffing club finesse. Indeed an overtrick is on by means of a heart/club squeeze or a second club ruff. If South opens 3♦ and West doubles for takeout, East may well judge to defend. 3♦ doubled goes for 800 assuming East gets a club ruff.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

After East opens 1♣, South might bid 2♣, Michaels, to show both majors. Whatever West does North jumps to 3♥ and South goes on to 4♥. With four top losers, 4♥ has to go down one. This might not matter as East-West can make 130 playing in either minor. 4♣ is the easier make, just needing the diamond guess or a favourable lead. In 4♦ on a spade lead, declarer has to pick up the trumps and, if South ducks the second round of spades, later finesse the ♠6.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

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

If West opens 1NT, weak, it is a moot point whether East raises all the way to game. West will not have stretched to open vulnerable in second seat; then again, 4333 shapes often do not play well. In any case, West would accept if East invites. Nine tricks are there if declarer guesses well. North's lead of the ♠J may help in reading the spade position. There is also the club suit to negotiate; cashing the ace-king and later leading from dummy is one way to it.

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

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

With East-West silent, 1♥-2♣-3♥-4♦-4♥ seems a fair sequence. South's cue bid of 4♦ agrees hearts and denies a spade control. Being minimum for the 3♥ rebid, at least in high cards, North declines to go beyond game. Double dummy declarer can make 12 tricks if East leads a minor: discard a club on a diamond and ruff two clubs. Most will make only 11 for 450. With 11 tricks available in 3NT, any South who decides ♠9-5-3 is a stopper may score a goal.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

East-West can make 5♦. How they get there, I cannot tell you. They may get no further than 1NT – it depends upon on style whether East opens 1♠ or 1♣ and whether West responds 1♦ or 1♥. If East opens 1♠, South will be in with a take-out double either at once or after West raises to 2♠. East makes 1NT exactly assuming the defenders get on to their club tricks. 2♠ is also makeable, notwithstanding the 5-1 spade split. North-South can make 3♣.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

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

If South opens 4♥ (or a Texas 4♣), West comes in with 4♠. North then has no problem in bidding 5♥. East surely competes to 5♠. If South opens the more pedestrian and theoretically correct 1♥, North will feel uncomfortable about raising any higher than 3♥. To defeat 5♠ North has to find the inspired lead of a low diamond. On any other lead, South loses the diamond ruff. 5♥ doubled is down only one, which means 6♥ doubled is also cheaper than game.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

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

Again, North-South have a paying sacrifice against an opposing game. If declarer gets the clubs right, 4♠ doubled is down only one, cheaper even than conceding a part-score. Of course, 4♥ is tough to reach. If they had a free run, East-West might well bid simply 1♦-1♥-2♥. In practice, South will come in, most likely with a two-suited bid over 1♥. To make 4♥ East needs to take the heart finesse and, if South leads a diamond, reject the diamond finesse.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

Playing a weak no-trump, 1♦-1♠-1NT-3NT is the normal Acol sequence. North has too few high cards to reverse but too many for a simple 2♦ rebid. The cards lie so well that two overtricks for a score of 660 are possible. If East leads a low club, dummy's ten can win the first trick. If South somehow became declarer, a club lead from West would prevent the eleventh trick. Eleven tricks are also there with hearts as trumps, though this scores only 650.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

The freak distributions make it hard to predict the outcome. Three players have a seven-card or longer suit while South has a four-loser hand. The par result is for East-West to sacrifice in 6♠ doubled, going down 800, to stop North-South from making 6♥. Of course, as East and West each hold an ace, it will be hard for them to judge that 6♥ is making. 6♣ is not on if East leads a heart, while 7♦ doubled is down 1700, more than any slam (including 6♥ doubled).

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

After East opens 1♦, South comes in either with 1♠ or a Michaels 2♦ (both majors). Either way West competes in diamonds. If South has shown both majors, North might well try 4♥. This is not the deal for a sacrifice. For one thing, 4♥ is going down with a trick in each suit to lose. For another, if South scores a ruff, 5♦ doubled is down 500. If South has shown spades only, North will not be bidding game.

East-West can make 3♣ but will rarely play there.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

North has a tricky rebid after 1♠-2♦-2♠. 3♦, 3♠, 2NT and even pass are all contenders. 2NT would make, though South would probably raise. So long as West does not block the hearts or cover the ♦10, 3NT fails with four hearts and another trick to lose. With careful play, 4♠ is on: win the second heart and run the ♣J. You lose just a heart, a spade and a club. Ten tricks are easier in diamonds. Unfortunately, 130 loses to anyone who has made 140 or more.

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

The bidding may begin and end with 1NT from West. With unattractive holdings in all four suits, North leads the ♥3 and hopes for the best. To say this finds South at home is an understatement. The issue then is whether North blocks the hearts by taking the second round with the ten. Without the blockage, they score the first seven tricks, more if West goes up with the ♣K on South's switch. For East-West, 3♦ and 3♠ are both on. North-South can make 2♥ (or 2♣).

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

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

After North opens 2NT it should not matter whether South looks for a fit in either major or just shows the hearts. All routes lead to 4♥, usually from the North seat. East is hardly going to lead a spade, especially into a 2NT opener, so the defenders should get at least two tricks. If declarer takes an inspired view in the club suit or endplays East, forcing an eventual spade lead into the ace-queen, two is all they get. Making 11 tricks will be worth many matchpoints.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

3NT is a poor game, needing a spade blockage and more besides. Even if East opens, there are various ways of stopping short: 1♦-1♠-2♦-2NT is one; 1NT-2♣-2♥-2NT is another. As the cards lie, the defenders get three spades, a heart and presumably a diamond so that 2NT makes exactly. 3♦ also makes; it will need to be with an overtrick – throwing a spade on a club if the defenders do not cash their spades early – to produce a good score.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

East may double North's third seat 1NT opener. South is taking out to 2♠ regardless. If East has doubled 1NT, West may double 2♠. East needs to remove such a double and the partnership needs to stay out of game. Double dummy North-South can make 2♠, leading the ♥J late on and then forcing East to give a ruff and discard. 2♦ is rather easier to make. 3NT by East fails on a spade lead as South can duck the next spade. 2NT is unbeatable, as is 3♣.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

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

East-West should arrive quickly in 4♠. East might raise 1♠ all the way to game. West would go on over 3♠ anyway. In theory, North needs to find a club lead to stop any overtricks. In real life, declarer will not risk going down by finessing North for the ♥K. A ruffing finesse, playing South for the ♥K, is far safer. If the defenders do take their club tricks, West will not want to any finessing. A crossruff is one way home, as is setting up the fifth heart.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

As soon as North opens 1♠, South is thinking of a slam. Five losers, great controls and super trump support look like all the ingredients required. As North will show limited enthusiasm, it should not be too hard to stay out of 7♠. There are several of ways to make 12 tricks. Five trumps, three hearts, an ace and two ruffs is one route. If East-West buy the contract, they should get a good score. 7♦ doubled is down 1,400, pipping all the scores of 1,430.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

This is a curious deal in any event, especially coming straight after 21. Despite their 5-5 fit and 24 HCP, East-West cannot make even game in spades. They have 9 tricks and no more. Can anyone find a way to 3NT? While East might well open 1NT, West is surely going to look for a spade fit. Actually, the deal belongs to North-South, who can make 4♣. Unless the defenders are helpful, there is too much work to do to make 11 tricks playing in clubs.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

What should West bid next if the auction starts as follows: 1♠-2♣-2♦-2NT? Pass, 3♦ and 3NT all have some merit. Of course, it may not go that way. East might show the diamond support rather than the heart stoppers and raise to 3♦. If you guess well, you can make an overtrick in 3NT. The winning view in diamonds is crucial, as is keeping South to one club trick via a hold up. 5♦ is the safer game; again, a lot depends upon guessing to play South for the ♦J.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

South is likely to get to open in fourth seat. Nothing is perfect. The controls are light for 2♣. The shape is off-centre for 2NT. An Acol 2♥ does not look quite right either. Since 4♠ makes, a successful choice is 2NT. North will then insist on playing in spades. This makes even on a diamond lead as all follow to three rounds of hearts; even if a defender could ruff, it might be with a natural trump trick. 3NT yields the obvious 9 tricks, as does 4♥.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

After East opens 1♦, South may bid a red-blooded 4♥ given the vulnerability. This gives West a problem, who may double. To extract 500 from 4♥ doubled West needs to lead a club very early. West can in fact make 4♠. You need to play North for a singleton heart and South for a singleton spade, arranging an ending that obliges North to ruff in and lead from the ♠K. This seems unlikely unless North doubles 4♠. 10 tricks are easier in diamonds.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

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

With East-West silent, 1NT-2♣-2♦-2NT-3NT seems a likely auction. With no tens or 5-card suit, North should settle for inviting game. 9 is the par number of tricks. No doubt, some will make 10 and some only 8. A spade lead does put declarer in line for an overtrick. The likelier club is not best as the cards lie but not fatal either. A heart works best, giving nothing away and attacking dummy's entries. You need to play well for 9 tricks on a heart lead.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

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

With North-South passing, 1♣-1♦-1♠-3NT is a possible auction. East might prefer to bid 3NT directly over 1♣. South has only one lead to be sure of stopping 12 tricks: the ♠6. Most declarers will have a shot at 12 tricks. All depends upon the club suit. It looks like a 50-50 guess whether to start low to the ten or whether to play ace and another. The former proves the winner today. Unless the lead gives a trick, it takes double-dummy play to make 6♣.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

Given the vulnerability, one of West or East is bound to pre-empt. West may have rather more success, with East able to raise and 4♣ cold. If East opens 3♦, South may double, when North will choose to defend. Any lead bar a heart can extract 500 from 3♦ doubled. What is good for one side should be bad for the other. So it proves. If South plays in 4♠, only a heart defeats it. On any other lead declarer can draw trumps and avoid losing a diamond ruff.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

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

Having opened 1♥ in fourth seat, West raises East's 1NT response to 2NT and finishes as dummy in 3NT. On a spade lead, East can come to 9 tricks, albeit via the unusual play of ducking the first heart and later endplaying South. 4♥ is the easier game the way the cards lie. Courtesy of the winning diamond finesse and reasonable club layout, West loses three trump tricks but nothing else. 5-card majorites, who have a better chance of reaching 4♥, may do well.

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

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

If West looks favourably on the three tens and opens 2NT, East will look for game and a major-suit fit. If West opens 1♣, as seems more normal, East will do well to dredge up a 1♥ response. You can make 4♥, though not everyone will as declarer may need an inspired view in the diamond suit. West can make 2NT, again probably depending on good guesswork. West should make 110 in clubs or diamonds. Any score better than 120 should be very useful.

Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

With 25 HCP between them, all suits stopped and no major-suit fit, North-South are likely to reach 3NT. The good news is that ♥A is onside, the bad that the ♣J and ♦K are not. On the best lead of spade, it takes the inspired line of going up with the ♠A and leading a heart to the ten to make 9 tricks. Not many people are going to do that. Many will go down, losing two hearts, a diamond, a club and a long spade. The diabolical diamond division defeats 3♦.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

Has a run of potential 3NT contracts reached its end? Well, yes in the sense that everyone will play in spades; no in the sense that 3NT is makeable. With East-West silent, 1♥-1♠-2♠-4♠ is one route to 4♠. North might jump to 3♠, though that has no effect on the final contract. Indeed little has any impact on the result. This board must win the prize for the flattest board of the night. Any score of other than 450 to North-South will be very good for someone.