

THE 2018 CELTIC PAIRS WEDNESDAY 5TH DECEMBER



Session # 6372

Dear Bridge Player

Thank you for supporting the Celtic Simultaneous Pairs - I hope you enjoyed the hands and the commentary, which was written by Stewart Pinkerton - many thanks to him for the time he has spent on it. Now you will be able to see if he got it right!

The Celtic Nations Simultaneous Pairs were started to raise funds for the Celtic teams participating in World and European events. It is organised by each of the Celtic Nations in turn - this one has been organised by the Scottish Bridge Union and we would like to thank our commentators for giving their expertise and writing these booklets for your enjoyment.

The results of this event can, as always, be found at <https://www.ecatsbridge.com> - just click on the link to Sims and you will see how to find them.

Best wishes - and enjoy your bridge!

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Board 1. Dealer North. Vulnerability None

<p>♠ A J 10 7 5 ♥ 9 7 5 ♦ 9 4 3 ♣ K 3</p> <p>♠ K 8 6 2 ♥ 10 ♦ A Q 10 6 ♣ Q 7 5 4</p>	<p>♠ 4 3 ♥ A K 8 4 3 2 ♦ K 7 ♣ A J 2</p> <p>♠ Q 9 ♥ Q J 6 ♦ J 8 5 2 ♣ 10 9 8 6</p>
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North passes, East opens 1 heart, South passes, West bids 1♠, North passes, East bids 3♥, South passes and finally West bids 3NT. It might not strike North as a spade lead, but the alternatives are not very positive either.

I expect most Norths to either lead a spade or a diamond. A diamond makes the contract a bit easier but the hand comes down to the fact that the spade suit can be blocked.

Board 2. Dealer East. Vulnerability NIS

<p>♠ Q J 5 4 3 ♥ 10 4 3 2 ♦ K Q ♣ 8 2</p> <p>♠ A K 8 6 ♥ J 8 ♦ 10 7 6 5 3 2 ♣ J</p>	<p>♠ 10 9 7 ♥ K 9 7 6 5 ♦ 8 ♣ K Q 9 5</p> <p>♠ 2 ♥ A Q ♦ A J 9 4 ♣ A 10 7 6 4 3</p>
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East will probably pass unless a 2 heart opener is 2 suited. South opens 1♣, many aggressive Wests will consider bidding 3♦ here. This is probably a bit much but only bidding 2♦ is very unlikely to cause NS to go wrong. I feel 2♥ will be a more common bid though. Over 2♥ North can either double or bid 2♠. East passes and South can decide how many NT to bid. Playing weak NT, you should opt for 2NT which may or may not end the auction. 3NT is a doomed contract since clubs are not 3-2.

Board 3. Dealer South. Vulnerability E/W

<p>♠ Q 7 5 4 3 ♥ 10 7 ♦ K 3 2 ♣ K Q 9</p> <p>♠ K 9 6 ♥ K J 8 6 5 3 ♦ Q J 9 ♣ 6</p>	<p>♠ J 10 2 ♥ 2 ♦ 10 8 5 4 ♣ A 10 8 7 5</p> <p>♠ A 8 ♥ A Q 9 4 ♦ A 7 6 ♣ J 4 3 2</p>
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South opens 1 club, West overcalls 1 heart, North bids 1♠, East passes, South bids INT, and West passes. NS may or may not have some tools to check for a 5-3 spade fit. A simple method is to bid 2♣ checkback (a bit like Stayman) where partner will show some unbid aspects of his hand. Here however, all roads will lead to 3NT by South.

The broken heart suit is undesirable as a lead and West partner is unlikely to hold more than a 5 count. This means that a spade lead is very likely to cost a trick, so a diamond lead is preferable here. Declarer has several lines here, but even if clubs do come in for 3 tricks, he will still need several spade tricks. In which case declarer should begin with the ace of spades and another spade, should he win the second spade, he must continue another while the ♦K is still in dummy. West will play another top diamond, which South can win in dummy (or duck in case of QJ doubleton), cash his spades and lead a club. The defence can cash the last diamond but the contract has now made with 4 spades, 2 clubs, AK diamonds, 1 heart.

Board 4. Dealer West. Vulnerability All

<p>♠ 10 4 ♥ A Q 7 4 3 ♦ K 10 9 7 ♣ J 4</p> <p>♠ A J 9 8 7 3 ♥ 8 2 ♦ 6 2 ♣ K 9 3</p>	<p>♠ Q 5 2 ♥ K J ♦ J 8 5 ♣ Q 10 8 7 2</p> <p>♠ K 6 ♥ 10 9 6 5 ♦ A Q 4 3 ♣ A 6 5</p>
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West opens a weak 2 spades, North is a bit too weak to scrape up a 3♥ bid, so should pass and hope partner can say something. On this Board East will bid 3♠ preventing NS from finding their 9 card heart fit, ad will end the auction. Since every major card is right, this contract will make on a club guess.

Board 5. Dealer North. Vulnerability NIS

<p>♠ K 2 ♥ 8 4 2 ♦ K J 3 2 ♣ J 10 8 4</p> <p>♠ 10 8 4 3 ♥ K 7 5 ♦ 10 8 6 ♣ A Q 6</p>	<p>♠ 7 5 ♥ J 10 9 3 ♦ A 9 5 4 ♣ K 5 3</p> <p>♠ A Q J 9 6 ♥ A Q 6 ♦ Q 7 ♣ 9 7 2</p>
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2 passes to South who opens 1♠, West passes and North bids INT which ends the auction. East can lead a heart to beat the contract but I expect more East to lead a diamond than a heart, which give declarer no trouble, and they will make at least 7 tricks.

Board 6. Dealer East. Vulnerability E/W

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

Two passes and West is up. I never see the benefit in opening these hands 2♣. I get to describe my hand 2 levels higher than I wanted

and most of the time, if partner cannot respond to 1♦, I probably don't want to be in game anyway. So this is a 1 diamond opener. North passes and East bids 1♥. South overcalls 1♠. West bids 3♣, North bids 4♣ and nothing less at this vul. Two passes and West will bid 5♦ without any hesitation. This is likely to end the auction, although 5 spades is a decent sacrifice at -3 for 500 against the 600 for 5♦

The contract itself is a little bid tricky. After 2 spades are cashed, declarer has to play at most 2 rounds of trumps and hope that the hand

with the third club only has 1 diamond. Then declarer cashes two top clubs and exits the third, hoping for some kind of endplay.

Here South wins and either has to give a ruff and discard or lead away from the king of hearts. A 2-2 diamond break makes this slightly easier, but it is exactly the same idea, hoping to endplay someone to open up the heart suit.

Board 7. Dealer South. Vulnerability All

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

South passes. Playing a strong NT, I would open this 1♦. However playing a weak NT, I don't see why I should be forced to pass so I would open 1NT. North likely passes at this vulnerability, allowing East to transfer and bid game in hearts.

The defence, as it happens, can cash 3 rounds of clubs and North can pitch a diamond. I expect weak NT who open this hand to make all the tricks since North will lead a diamond. However, strong NT will play this the other way and may go off at a lot of tables I suppose this is a win for the weak NT.

Board 8. Dealer West. Vulnerability None

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

West is opening this hand, it's just a question of how high. The distribution might favour a 3 spade opener but in an attempt to be cautious

I will say that 2♠ would be more common. North bids 2NT and South can transfer to 3♥ which is already too high. Hopefully this ends the auction. This is now a disaster, but an unfortunate one. There are lines, albeit a bit double dummy, to hold this to one off but I do not expect some number of hearts some number off to be an uncommon result. Aggressive West who open 3♠ will prevent this and will end up in an unmakeable contract which is likely -2.

Board 9. Dealer North. Vulnerability E/W

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

North passes and East opens 1♥. South passes and West bids 1♠. North passes and East can bid 3♠ which will end the auction. North will probably lead the Q♦, and will get a third round diamond ruff. A club switch from South the secured that this contract is 1 off.

Board 10. Dealer East. Vulnerability All

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

Two passes (South may show a 2 suiter somehow). I always like bidding 3rd in hand but at this vulnerability, I

think it would be wise to pass unless you play a strong NT. North can then open 1 spade. East passes. From South perspective, this is very likely to be a ten card fit, and with his 5-5 shape I would very much consider splintering. It is best for partnerships to agree something about 3♥ over 1♠, so that it is clear that 4♥ is a splinter. Over 4♥, West will pass and North should only bid 4♠. Yes, he does have a 19 count and partner has splintered but North needs 3 aces and maybe a few jacks from partner to make slam. He also passed earlier, so cannot have these. 4♠ should cause declarer no trouble and it is up to the defence to cash their 3 aces before they disappear.

Board 11. Dealer South. Vulnerability None

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

South opens 1 club, West passes and East bids 1♦. West passes and South now has to contemplate a 2♣ or 3♣ rebid. This hand seems very control heavy and my suit is not that poor so I will persuade myself to try 3 clubs. Over which North bids 3NT, ending the auction. As it stands, finding the ten of clubs is the only real way to make this contract, whether it be by pin or by finesse.

Board 12. Dealer West. Vulnerability N/S

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

Again, I like to open these playing a strong NT, but playing a weak NT I see no reason as to why I can open this INT. Over INT, North doubles and West should bid 4♠ (if it is natural). There are two reasons to not transfer. Firstly, partner probably doesn't have that many more values than I do, so we are not really keeping the strong hand hidden. Second, 4♠ is a make or save bid, I don't want them finding 4♥ if it is on and if it isn't, I must have play for 4♠. There is no reason to give your opponents the room if you only have once contract you want to play in. Two passes to North who may consider 3 bids: pass, 5♣ or double. And now you 4

should see the point of 4♠. Transferring at the two level gives North room to bid 3♣ and solves the problem. Here he has 2 losing options. I favour pass at pairs, since my club tricks could not be cashing.

Board 13. Dealer North. Vulnerability All

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

North opens INT, East might find a double (although I hate doubling with 4333 15 counts). South transfers to spades, West passes, North completes and that ends the auction. If East doubles, declarer can pick up more or less everything and make 9 tricks, especially on the king of diamonds lead. Others might not have this luxury and only make 8 tricks.

Board 14. Dealer East. Vulnerability None

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

East passes, South opens 1 diamond, West passes, North bids 1 heart, East passes, South bids INT. Two passes and East should balance with 2♣. Two passes and North can either bid 2♦ himself or make a take-out double. Either will end up in 2♦. West should not raise the 2♣ bid since East has had several opportunities to bid club, so can hardly be strong. This has plenty of play despite the 4-1 diamond break

Board 15. Dealer South. Vulnerability N/S

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

South opens INT, West passes, North bids 2♦. This is a position which requires partnership agreement. Is 2♥ a Michael type bid or is it a take-out of hearts. I think it is more useful to be a takeout of hearts (double being hearts),

in which case 2♠ should be bid. Over 2♠, South should bid 3♥, and West will bid 3♠ which will end the auction unless North decides that this is a huge fit. This could force EW to a 4♠ contract, which is not clever: thus I feel

2♠ is likely to end the auction. 4♠ makes as long as one of the black finesses works, since there is a double 8 card fit. EW pairs will do well to find 4♠ over a weak NT opening.

Board 16. Dealer West. Vulnerability E/W

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

West opens INT, North might think of bidding but I think a 7 count is a bit too much to bid on. East will go through Stayman, but all roads lead to 3NT here. When North leads the K♠, declarer can duck, but the ♠T is a huge card here. Declarer can now enter hand and lead towards the ♦6, when that fails he can enter hand again and lead towards the ♦7. This gives declarer 2 spades, 1 heart, 3 diamonds and 3 clubs.

Board 17. Dealer North. Vulnerability None

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

North opens 1 heart, East passes, South passes and West can try a protective INT showing 11-14. This does not promise a heart stop in general. Based on North position of values, he must fancy his chances to take INT on, moreover he doesn't want to get involved since he may get doubled in 2♥ or 2♠. For me INT ends the auction. North lead the ♠K. Count signals are important here, as the ♠K should ask partner to give count. Once South plays low, North should know that there are 3 cashing spade tricks. Careful declarers know that even finessing the club only guar-

antees 5 club tricks when South has K doubleton club, so should cash A and lead to the queen. This should lead declarer to 8 tricks.

Board 18. Dealer East. Vulnerability N/S

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

East passes and South opens INT. West passes and North bids 2D. East should pass, and South will complete. After two passes, East should come in with 2♠. This will end the auction. I count 3 spade losers, 1 diamond and 1 club loser, so 2♠ should make easily.

Board 19. Dealer South. Vulnerability E/W

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

Both South and West pass. Third in hand, you have to open this 2♠ especially at this vulnerability. East likely will pass, expecting partner to balance, but South will bid 3♠ which will end the auction. Any EW pair who can find 4♥ will be surprised to find that they get a top. Lucky them. Every finesse works for 3♠ and every finesse fails for 4♥ so 3♠ will go one off as will 4♥.

Board 20. Dealer West. Vulnerability All

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

West opens 1♥. With a 12 count, North has to bid. Most will try 2♥, showing spades and minor: 2♠ is the only UCB here, so 3♥ shows this hand well. South has a clear 4♠ bid.

This should cut EW out of the auction as they have a 5♣/♥ sacrifice here. I expect 4♣ to be a regular contract, with 5♥/♣ doubled to be the top score.

Board 21. Dealer North. Vulnerability NIS

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

Two passes to South who opens 1♣. Both West and North pass which allows East to double, even with his 8 count. South can bid 2♣, and West will bid 2♥. This will likely end the auction. 2♥ is makeable because you can pin the queen of diamonds, and the king of hearts is onside and doubleton. However, 2♥ one off is good against a very making 2♣ contract as -50 is a better match point score than +90 for 2 clubs making.

Board 22. Dealer East. Vulnerability E/W

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

This is a problem for rebidding. It is standard to open the East hand 1♣, but what do you do over a 1♠ bid? The system to play here is the canapé system. This is opening 1♦ and rebidding 2♣. An alternative is to treat this as a strong NT and rebid 1 NT when you open 1♣. The auction will likely be uncontested going something like, 1♣-1♠-INT-4♣. Since the diamond finesse is working, most declarers should make 11 tricks.

Board 23. Dealer South. Vulnerability All

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

South has no choice but to open this 1♦. West passes and North will bid 2♦. East passes. This is now up to system agreement. Over this auction, all bids should be semi-natural, mainly showing a stop and looking for 3NT (normally invitational).

So South can bid 2♥, North will bid 3♦, rejecting the invite. Now South bids 3♣, showing a game forcing hand and showing a heart and spade stop. Thus he is looking for a club stop. North now has no choice but to bid 3NT. This now right sides the contract.

East leads the ♥Q. This hand will normally go down when diamonds break badly (and the spade finesse fails). I believe there is a double dummy strip squeeze on, eventually endplaying West to lead toward the queen of clubs.

Board 24. Dealer West. Vulnerability None

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

West opens INT. North passes, and East has a 7 card suit with a ten count, so should bid 3NT without much hesitation. This is a pure pairs hand, as overtricks will be so important here. It is important for both hands to be careful of what they discard on the diamond suit.

Board 25. Dealer North. Vulnerability E/W

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

North opens 1♦, East passes, South bids 1♥, West passes and North bids 1♠. After a pass from East, West should bid 3NT to protect his ♣K. West will lead a small club, which starts the defence off right. The position of the ten of clubs makes this a bit awkward for the defence as the 10 of clubs doubleton, and the ♣8 in dummy actually blocks the suit. If East parts with the ♣9, the 8 now becomes a stop. With this in mind, declarer needs to set up a spade trick or 2 and rely on the heart finesse at the very end.

Board 26. Dealer East. Vulnerability All

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

I really like considering this hand as a strong NT hand, so my plan with the East hand is to open this 1♣ and rebid 1 NT. Over 1♣, South will bid 1♦, West bids 2♥. North will pass and East can bid 1 NT, showing a strong NT as planned. South passes, and West should show a game forcing hand with six hearts, however that may be. I expect lots of checkback.auctions and lots of punts at 4♥. On a non-spade lead, the contract needs a 3-2 heart split, so you can finesse the club, ruff a spade and only lose 1 diamond, 1 heart and 1 club.

Board 27. Dealer South. Vulnerability None

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

This won't always get passed to East here. For example, South may pre-empt hearts. If this does get passes to East, they will open 1 club. Since North has now passed, South should now decide to pre-empt hearts. 2♥ is fine from South now. North should raise this, and East will bid 4♣ which ends the auction. This is unfortunate to go off as trumps are 4-0. Declarer can discard a heart on a spade and ruff one. Once trumps break badly, declarer has to rely on the failing diamonds finesse for 1 down.

Board 28. Dealer West. Vulnerability NIS

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

West passes, and North should start with a 1♥ opener, East then overcalls 2♣. South should bid 2♠. West can raise to 3♣. North should pass, East will often pass as well but they are very close to a try for 3 NT. Over 3♣, South might want to back in 3♦ hoping that North does not get too excited.

Board 29. Dealer North. Vulnerability All

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

North opens 1 NT. West should try to find a bid here if they can overcall at the two level, otherwise I want to defend this hand. Over a pass, South should not consider any other bid that 3 NT. Over 2♣, South can use Lebensohl to show a game going hand without a stop in club (probably just by directly bidding 3 NT). A heart lead looks best here to hold the contract to 9 tricks, but 10 tricks will probably not be an unusual result.

Board 30. Dealer East. Vulnerability None

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

East opens a weak NT, and South can start with a double. This will get passed to East who can rescue himself (somewhat) by bidding 2♥. South will make a takeout double. It is up to North to decide what to do now. Pass, bid some number of spades or bid 3 NT. It is clear that game is on for NS, so passing only gains if you can beat 2♥ by 3 or more. 500 against 400 odd. Passing gains the top score as you can beat 2 hearts by exactly 3. But 4♣ will be a very popular result. Should East not open the bidding, many NS pairs could find 6♣, which is a decent spot to play in.

THE CELTIC PAIRS

Why the name ?

This is essentially a joint venture by SBU/WBU/NIBU to foster their Celtic links.

What are the funds raised used for ?

The money raised is divided between the Celtic NBOs (i.e. Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland) and is used to support their international teams.

NEXT YEAR'S EVENTS ...

There will not be a Spring Celtic Pairs next year - the WBU will run their normal St David's Day Pairs at the end of February (25 February - 1 March) and the SBU will run a five-day Easter Pairs incorporating the Bobby Allen Trophy from 11th - 14th March.

In addition the SBU will be holding a one-off "Valentine's Pairs" to raise funds for their women's team which goes to compete in the 2019 Venice Cup having qualified through the European Zonal Championships. This will be held from 11 - 15 February but please be advised that there will only be one set of hands so you must not play on more than one evening!

We hope you will support these events as they are held by your own National Bridge Organisations - to enter them, just email anna@ecats.co.uk - it's all the "normal procedure" and we would really love to have your company.