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## 4 February 2018

### Excitement at the Swiss Pairs

Chris Bayliss

On Saturday we had an excellent day of Swiss Pairs. There were many challenging hands and the result was in doubt right up to the end.

In the last round, most of the excitement was at table one and all four players produced some excellent bridge. On board 17, Eric and Patricia bid a good 6♠ and then on board 20 they did very well to stay out of the doomed slam.

<b>BD: 23</b>	♠AQ854	<b>Dir: S</b>
	♥A	<b>Vul: All</b>
	♦J984	
	♣KJ2	
♠JT6		♠92
♥9863		♥T72
♦KQ2		♦AT7653
♣T95		♣73
	♠K73	
	♥KQJ54	
	♦	
	♣AQ864	
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT	
N	7 1 7 7 1	15
S	7 1 7 7 1	6 4
E	- - - - -	15
W	- - - - -	

Perhaps the highlight of the round was on board 23 where Rob and Mardi were the only pair in the room to find the slam. They got there with this sequence.

S	W	N	E
1♥	Pass	1♠	2♦
Dbl <sup>1</sup>	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT <sup>2</sup>	Pass	5♠ <sup>3</sup>	Pass
6♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Notes:

1: Support double showing three card support

2: Roman Key Card

3: Two key cards and the queen of trumps

It is interesting to note that east's interference made it easier for north-south to find the spade fit.

Well done to you all.

6 February 2018

## Hand evaluation

Rakesh Kumar

<b>BD: 27</b>	♠Q	<b>Dir: S</b>						
	♥K64	<b>Vul: None</b>						
	♦J8642							
	♣AQT3							
♠KT97		♠AJ62						
♥AQT9873		♥J5						
♦9		♦Q753						
♣2		♣875						
	♠8543							
	♥2							
	♦AKT							
	♣KJ964							
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT							
N	5	4	-	-	2	12		
S	5	4	-	-	2	9		8
E	-	-	3	2	-	11		
W	-	-	3	2	-			

The dealing computer was having fun on Monday 5 February: East-West were dealt a couple of 6-5 hands and three 7-4 hands. These can be tricky to evaluate.

What would you do with this West hand if South passes as dealer?

It's much too strong to open pre-emptively. You could ignore the 4-card spade suit and try 4H but even though you have only 9 high-card points, on the face of it there are only 5 losers, plus you have both majors ... why not open 1H? If the opponents get into the auction, you can just keep bidding hearts.

So I did, and when partner responded 1S I had pause for thought. It was possible partner had a singleton or void in hearts and that we really did belong in spades. However, with so much distribution and no desire to table my hand, I elected to ensure that hearts were trumps. The spade ruff wasn't found so 4H made.

<b>BD: 19</b>	♠QT742	<b>Dir: S</b>						
	♥98	<b>Vul: E-W</b>						
	♦AK43							
	♣Q8							
♠A8		♠K63						
♥AK74		♥QJT653						
♦6		♦75						
♣A97654		♣KJ						
	♠J95							
	♥2							
	♦QJT982							
	♣T32							
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT							
N	-	1	-	1	-	11		
S	-	1	-	1	-	15		10
E	6	-	6	-	1	4		
W	6	-	6	-	1			

An even more interesting hand evaluation question came up on this board. Although not so wildly distributional, the West hand is rich in top controls and has a long suit plus a good fit with partner.

After 1C by you as West, North overcalls 1S and partner bids 2H. What is your rebid?

This isn't a time for science. Assume a spade loser to the overcaller, then where are partner's 10+ high card points? Surely the hearts must be pretty good and there must be top honours in the minors. You have 4 keycards anyway, as well as shortage in diamonds, so why not just bid 6H directly? That would certainly be my recommendation. Only 3 EW pairs reached this contract, which turned out to be cold, even though partner's points weren't where I thought they would be!

10 February 2018

## Should I have sacrificed, partner?

Rakesh Kumar

In the endless struggle for matchpoints, sacrificing is encouraged much more than at Teams or Swiss Pairs. Still, it isn't always easy to diagnose when a sacrifice is appropriate. This was certainly the case with two boards played on 10 February.

<b>BD: 13</b>	♠T85	<b>Dir: N</b>	
	♥JT94	<b>Vul: All</b>	
	♦7		
	♣A9743		
♠32		♠Q4	
♥AQ8		♥6	
♦AJ9854		♦KQ63	
♣65		♣KQJT82	
	♠AKJ976		
	♥K7532		
	♦T2		
	♣		
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
N	- - 4 3 -		5
S	- - 4 3 -	11	13
E	4 4 - - 1		11
W	4 3 - - -		

On this first board, East began proceedings with 1C and South bid 2C showing both majors. West came in with 2D and my partner, pleased with her diamond shortage and 4-card support, showed no hesitation in bidding 2H. When East bid 3D I had even less hesitation in raising to 4H, which was passed out.

As you can see, because of North's diamond shortage and double fit, the game is unbeatable even though two trump tricks have to be lost.

Unsurprisingly, our East-West opponents were disappointed that they didn't find the sacrifice. Several pairs did, although going one off in 5D wasn't as profitable as one might have hoped, because altogether too many North-South pairs bid to 5S, which has no chance.

<b>BD: 2</b>	♠AK93	<b>Dir: E</b>	
	♥4	<b>Vul: N-S</b>	
	♦542		
	♣97532		
♠4		♠Q52	
♥AKQT9		♥J732	
♦KQ76		♦JT983	
♣Q64		♣A	
	♠JT876		
	♥865		
	♦A		
	♣KJT8		
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
N	3 - - 3 -		7
S	3 - - 3 -	16	8
E	- 4 4 - 2		9
W	- 4 4 - 2		

We failed to find our sacrifice on the second board of interest, at least in part because the adverse vulnerability meant sacrificing involved skating on very thin ice.

No one played in 4S by South, although the hand is cold for one off, losing a diamond, a heart and 2 club tricks. But who would have dared when red against green? In any case East-West might have gone on to 5H – in fact those playing in 4H almost always made 11 tricks. Deep Finesse holds the contract to 10 tricks by leading a diamond, getting a spade return and giving South a diamond ruff. Not in real life!

19 February 2018

## The Rule of Nine

Chris Bayliss

The internet can be a rich source of ideas for bridge players. A while ago, I discovered the "rule of nine" and this has proved to be a welcome addition to our armoury. An example occurred yesterday in the Gold Coast match point Swiss pairs.

**Board 8**  
*Dealer W*  
*Vul None*

♠ T9  
 ♥ J7654  
 ♦ Q87  
 ♣ KQJ

♠ AK65  
 ♥ 9  
 ♦ AT654  
 ♣ A32

♠ Q82  
 ♥ KQT8  
 ♦ J9  
 ♣ T976

♠ J743  
 ♥ A32  
 ♦ K32  
 ♣ 854

Makeable contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	3	3	2	2	3
W	3	3	2	2	3

9  
 15 8  
 8

As dealer, West opened 1♦ and North made a risky overcall of 1♥ with a sub-standard suit. East bid 1NT and South bid 2♥.

West doubled primarily for takeout but also giving partner the option of leaving the double in for penalties. East now applied the rule of nine.

1. Count the number of trumps. In this case four.
2. Count the number of trump honours. Here there are three (K, Q, T).
3. Note the level of the contract. In this case two (2♥).
4. Add the three numbers. Here, we have 4+3+2 = 9.
5. If the total is nine or more, leave the double in for penalties.

So east passed and the contract was 2♥ doubled. That was worth +500 to east-west and 98% on the board.

One last point on the rule of nine. To be effective, your side should have approximately half the total points (or more). In yesterday's hand east had 8 HCP and the knowledge that partner had opened.

24 February 2018

## The One that Got Away

Chris Bayliss

Grand slams don't turn up very often, so it is disappointing to miss out when the opportunity turns up. It is doubly disappointing when the opposition bid the grand slam on the last board of a close teams match and you don't. This is what happened to us in the Gold Coast teams.

**Board 14** ♠ K3  
 Dealer E ♥ AJT8  
 Vul None ♦ A87  
 ♣ A642

♠ QJT6		♠ 52									
♥ 32	<table border="1" style="background-color: yellow;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♥ 75
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♦ Q963		♦ T542									
♣ JT5		♣ KQ983									

♠ A9874  
 ♥ KQ964  
 ♦ KJ  
 ♣ 7

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	2	7	5	4
S	1	2	7	5	4
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

16  
 6    5  
 13

South opened 1♠ and sitting north, I responded 2♣. Now, south showed her second suit with 2♥ and I bid a very lazy 4♥. Thirteen tricks rolled home but we lost 14 imps on the board.

Would you have bid the grand slam? Naturally, we discussed the hand after the match and felt we could have/should have bid it using our current methods.

After the auction started 1♠ – 2♣ – 2♥, north's bid should have been 3♦, fourth suit forcing. In other words, "what more can you tell me, partner?"

South will now bid 3♥ to show 5-5 in the majors and now north can start thinking about slams. A 4NT Roman Key Card ask will elicit 5♠ from south showing two key cards and the queen. North continues with 5NT, asking for kings and gets the response of one king.

North knows that south has at most three cards in the minors (since she has at least 5-5 in the majors). These three cards are covered by north's two aces and south's king. With rock solid hearts and both the ace and king of spades, north should have no hesitation in bidding the grand slam.

Memo to self. Try and do better next time.

26 February 2018

## A hand from the Gold Coast Congress

Rakesh Kumar

Teams that included various members of SHBC did very well in the events at the GCC. My team, which was mostly comprised of Sydney players with whom I've played in assorted tournaments in the past, wasn't among them – in the Open Teams Qualifying we displayed a remarkable similarity to a yo-yo, climbing up to the top two rows to be beaten up, then descending into ever-deeper chasms, from which we eventually never did emerge ...

However, I did have the pleasure of watching my partner, Julian Abel, play several hands in exemplary fashion, including the one below. This is quite an instructive board in terms of both bidding and play. The majority of the field found its way to 4S, often doubled, and had no hope of bringing the contract home. A small number of East-West pairs scrambled into 3NT – perhaps not an obvious contract but one that has the virtue of being unbeatable! Partner bid to the apparently more logical 5C, but then he had to make it.

**Board 12** ♠ J  
 Dealer W ♥ T92  
 Vul N-S ♦ T975432

♣ J7

♠ AKT764 ♠ 82  
 ♥ Q85 ♥ J  
 ♦ 8 ♦ KJ6  
 ♣ QT4 ♣ AK96532

♠ Q953  
 ♥ AK7643  
 ♦ AQ  
 ♣ 8

Makeable contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	2	2	-	-
S	-	2	2	-	-
E	5	-	-	3	4
W	5	-	-	3	3

2  
 11 12  
 15

South, who had bid quite vigorously along the way, led a top heart, noted the fall of the jack and decided there wasn't much future there. He switched to a spade. Julian took the ace and now North's jack dropped – as this too seemed highly likely to be a singleton, it was not going to be possible to ruff 2 diamonds in dummy, because South would lead another spade when in with the diamond ace.

So Julian drew 2 rounds of trumps finishing in dummy and led a diamond to the jack and queen. At which point South was completely end-played! Attempting to cash the diamond ace was obviously pointless; attempting to cash the second heart honour would set up the queen in dummy for a diamond discard; while a spade return would allow declarer to finesse the ten and discard one losing diamond on the king, then ruff the last diamond in dummy. Making eleven tricks ...