

The Trumps Summer Teams was won by Derrick Browne, Joshua Wyner, Richard Douglas and David Vaughan. They finished with 24 VPs in the last round (using the "old" and well-loved VP scale that is now in its death throes – anyone for decimal time?) in part because of a significant swing on this board:

Board 21 ♠A987532
 Dlr: N ♥
 Vul: N-S ♦763
 ♣AJ3

| | | |
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| ♠ | | ♠QJ4 |
| ♥QT75 | | ♥82 |
| ♦KJ85 | | ♦AQT942 |
| ♣KQ652 | 👤 | ♣T9 |
| 9 | ♠KT6 | N: 3♥5♠ |
| 11 9 | ♥AKJ9643 | S: 3♥5♠ |
| | ♦ | E: 4♦1NT |
| 11 | ♣874 | W: 4♦1NT |

At our table, after a rather odd auction, we played in 5D, amazingly undoubled, for a mere -50. Surely, we thought, that must have turned a substantial profit. But it wasn't so – teammates bid to 6S and went for -100. Derrick Browne and Joshua Wyner took the push to 5S and made +650 but at the other table their opponents also conceded -100 in 6S. If North opens the bidding with 1S it's tempting to bid to slam ...


The last round also contained this curious hand:

Board 25 ♠6
 Dlr: N ♥765
 Vul: E-W ♦J7632
 ♣J642

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| ♠AQ7 | | ♠T9542 |
| ♥T | | ♥AJ832 |
| ♦AQ85 | | ♦4 |
| ♣AQ973 | 👤 | ♣85 |
| 2 | ♠KJ83 | N: |
| 18 5 | ♥KQ94 | S: |
| | ♦KT9 | E: 4♣1♦2♥4♠3NT |
| 15 | ♣KT | W: 4♣1♦2♥4♠2NT |

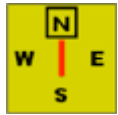
After 2 passes, South might open 1NT playing 15-17/18 hcp, which makes life very awkward for West. In this position, our double would be conventional, so I passed. Partner has never been in danger of being described as timid and reopened with 2C showing both majors! Simple arithmetic says he has at best 5-7 hcp so must have some shape, but would you bid game? I didn't. At the other table, teammates were playing a 12-14 hcp 1NT, so the opening was 1D and 4S was duly bid, and it made. Making the contract is no picnic, however – 4S was reached at both tables in the Browne match, doubled at one table and going 1 off in both cases.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch (i.e. the NSWBA) the Mixed Teams occupied most of February. The first night offered a couple of lessons in not shying away from playing in a 7-card trump suit. This was one of them:

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| Board 9 | ♠T72 | |
| Dealer N | ♥KT764 | |
| Vul E-W | ♦J | |
| | ♣AQT6 | |
| ♠AKQ94 |  | ♠J5 |
| ♥2 | | ♥QJ |
| ♦K9865 | | ♦AQ73 |
| ♣K7 | | ♣J9853 |
| | ♠863 | |
| | ♥A9853 | |
| | ♦T42 | |
| | ♣42 | |

We defended 4H for +50 rather than play in 5D for an expected -100, but 4S was never a consideration after P-P-P-1S-2H-x-3H-4D-4H. At the other table, North opened a weak two and the auction proceeded 2H-P-3H-3S, so a raise to 4S was not that difficult. Of the 18 tables, 7 played in 4S and 2 others in spade partscores, while 7 played in diamonds – interestingly only 2 of those were held to 10 tricks.

Another lesson of this event, unfortunately all too familiar, was that in defence, as in life, timing is everything. Witness this hand from the final night:

| | | |
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| Board 21 | ♠AQJ3 | |
| Dealer N | ♥74 | |
| Vul N-S | ♦T543 | |
| | ♣K73 | |
| ♠86 |  | ♠KT752 |
| ♥KJ653 | | ♥AQT8 |
| ♦J82 | | ♦Q9 |
| ♣Q54 | | ♣A9 |
| | ♠94 | |
| | ♥92 | |
| | ♦AK76 | |
| | ♣JT862 | |

After a 1S opening by East, 8 pairs played this in 4H and the usual lead was a top diamond. Against my 4H, Peter Gill similarly led the ♦K but then unerringly switched to the ♣J, so I simply didn't have the timing to get a club discard and duly went 1 off. However, 3 declarers were allowed to make and another 5 made 10 tricks in a part score in hearts. Peter's team finished second: the winners were Nick Rodwell, Fraser Rew, Leigh Matheson and Margaret Foster.