



The Hunters Hill Teams was a full house, with 40 teams in the Open event and another 12 in the Restricted section.

The Open was won convincingly by LOWRY (Helen Lowry-Berri Folkard, Toni Sharp-Kim Morrison) from SPEISER (Ron Speiser-George Bilski, George Fleischer-Peter Gill) and GUMBY (Pauline Gumby-Warren Lazer, Matthew Vadas-Andrew Peake). The Gumby-Lazer partnership topped the datums by a very large margin ...

A surprising number of significant bidding decisions arose during the day.

One theme was playing 4 of a major vs. 3NT.

In the first match, this turned up:

Board 6	♠J8732		
Dealer E	♥875		
Vul E-W	♦6		
	♣K532		
♠AT9		♠6	
♥A96		♥JT42	
♦T32		♦AQ8754	
♣T876		♣J4	
	♠KQ54		
	♥KQ3		
	♦KJ9		
	♣AQ9		



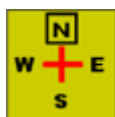
Deep Finesse assures us there are only 9 tricks available in spades whether played by N or S, but that 3NT by S should make 9 tricks. In practice, five of the 6 pairs in 3NT made their contract, with 2 making 10 tricks. The outcome in spades was much more variable, with 16 making 4♠ and 2 making 10 tricks in 2♠. However, 12 made only 9 tricks in spades, when the ♥J was led. At our table, South opened a strong club and after my 1♦ response was doubled, South passed awaiting developments. When I backed in with 1♠, this was raised to 2♠ and that's where we played. East led the ♦A and switched to a club, so 10 tricks were fairly automatic, but we lost 6 IMPs as our opponents did indeed bid to 4♠.



This hand from Round 2 was an interesting variation on the same theme.

The likely contract is in spades, but once again 3NT seemed to do rather better, even though Deep Finesse asserts that 4♠ is unbeatable whereas 3NT should only make 8 tricks.


Board 13	♠Q53		
Dealer N	♥J2		
Vul Both	♦J984		
	♣A952		
♠KJ		♠T97642	
♥AK973		♥T	
♦5		♦AQT7	
♣QJT73		♣K4	
	♠A8		
	♥Q8654		
	♦K632		
	♣86		



In fact, the 3 who were in 3NT made it, and one in 2NT made 9 tricks as well. In contrast, we set 4♠ whereas our teammates made 10 tricks in a spade partscore, for a gain of 7 IMPs. Overall, 10 pairs made 4♠, 11 made 10 tricks in a spade partscore and 13 made fewer than 10 tricks.



The next board, from the third match, seemed to baffle the field. No one bid either of the reasonable grand slams, presumably because the initial bidding was 1♥-1♠-1NT, which would have been fairly discouraging. If there are any partnerships out there that still play old-fashioned strong jump shifts, they could perhaps do better – then in response to 2♠, the hand with tricks in hearts and doubleton support might be able to move.

Board 17	♠74	
Dealer N	♥732	
Vul None	♦J52	
	♣KQ543	
♠AKQT53		♠82
♥4		♥AKQJ8
♦AT9		♦K43
♣AJ9		♣T82
	♠J96	
	♥T965	
	♦Q876	
	♣76	



Now for a competitive bidding conundrum, from Round 4.


What's a sensible auction after 1♦ by East? First question: should South overcall in clubs, hoping to reverse later, or double? Secondly: if South doubles, how many diamonds should West bid? That may depend on whether 1♦ guarantees 3 or 4 cards. Third question: if West cautiously raises to just 2♦, what should North do? Would it be best to double to show both majors? If not, how do you interpret 2♥ by North, as compared to 3♥?

Board 2	♠T643	
Dealer E	♥KJ9854	
Vul N-S	♦6	
	♣75	
♠J95		♠87
♥T763		♥AQ2
♦Q8742		♦AJ93
♣8		♣Q962
	♠AKQ2	
	♥---	
	♦KT5	
	♣AKJT43	

I certainly don't know the "right" answers to all of these questions, so I subsequently asked the opinion of a handful of NSWBA experts. They were divided 60-40 in favour of the double, but most then suggested that North's logical response is 3♥, which everyone agreed would create problems. That's exactly what happened at our table, so we ended up in a notrump contract, which is a bad idea as 3NT doesn't make. The diversity of scores says that many others didn't untangle this either. There were 8 in 4♠; 6 in 5♣ including 2 doubled, all making (which would not happen on a club lead and continuation); 4 somehow making 11 tricks in notrump; 10 partscores; and a litany of unhappy landings. You might want to discuss this hand with your favourite partner and make sure you're on the same wavelength.



Finally, just for fun ...as East, would you bid this?

Board 28	♠ 873	
Dealer W	♥ K4	
Vul N-S	♦ J942	
	♣ 8542	
♠ 5		♠ AQJ9642
♥ QJ9832		♥ 75
♦ A6		♦ KQ83
♣ AKT9		♣ ----
	♠ KT	
	♥ AT6	
	♦ T75	
	♣ QJ763	

Partner opens 1♥, you bid 1♠, and partner rebids 2♣. Now what? Julian Abel jumped straight to 6♠!! He received a club lead and promptly disposed of his losing hearts, then played ace and king of diamonds to ruff a diamond with dummy's solitary trump. There were 10 other EW pairs who made 12 tricks on a club or diamond lead, but they were merely in game:+980 was a unique score!

Rakesh Kumar, September 2014