



**Wishing you a very slammish 2015!**  
**By Rakesh Kumar**

By the time this column appears, 2015 will be well under way. As usual, over the Christmas-New Year period, the annual Trumps Festival was the place to play bridge. I was away for most of that time, but did get to play in the **Festival Teams on 4 January**. This was well attended, with a strong field of 27 teams. Despite my best efforts to mess things up, our team (Wayne Zhu-Bob Sebesfi, Kevin Davies-Rakesh Kumar) was successful on the day. Wayne and Bob were North-South and demonstrated their bidding skills and systemic advantage on this board from round 4:

Dir: W     ♠9  
 Vul: All    ♥AKQT73  
               ♦75  
               ♣QT43

♠KT76532	+	♠QJ84
♥542		♥J986
♦J3		♦842
♣2		♣J5

♠A  
 ♥  
 ♦AKQT96  
 ♣AK9876

South has an extraordinary hand, but it isn't the easiest to bid in standard methods after North opens 1♥. However, Wayne and Bob were playing 2-over-1 game force, so their auction was 1♥-2♦ (GF)-2♥-3♣ (could be a 4-card suit)-4♣ (must be 4-card support)-7♣. As Bob points out, this could fail if the queen was missing and there was an adverse trump break, but with a 1-loser hand, he really wasn't interested in investigating further!

Things could get awkward if West opens 2♠ or even 3♠, but then again, that might goad NS into the grand slam. Across the field, 9 NS pairs reached 7♣, one played in 7♦ and one in 7NT, while 10 played in a small slam, usually in diamonds, and 6 stopped in game.



This slam hand, also from round 4, proved to be more difficult to bid:

Dir: N     ♠  
 Vul: Nil    ♥AKQJT9  
               ♦AK75  
               ♣J72

♠974	♠KQJ832
♥7642	♥83
♦T9	♦J3
♣Q853	♣A94

♠AT65  
 ♥5  
 ♦Q8642  
 ♣KT6

After 1H by North and a 1♠ overcall by East, would you bid 2♦ as South? And if your South bid 2♦, what would you now rebid as North?

At our table, South did bid 2♦ and Liam Milne found the excellent splinter rebid of 3♠. This should have got our opponents to the glacially cold 6♦, but fortunately for us there was a subsequent bidding misunderstanding and they fell short. Across the field, only 3 pairs played in 6♦, while one reached 6NT. Almost everyone else was in game making overtricks.



Here's an interesting hand from round 6, which was one that got away from us:

Dir: E ♠QJT8  
 Vul: E-W ♥A  
 ♦AK862  
 ♣AJ6

♠6	♠K97432
♥KJT9	♥7654
♦QT743	♦J5
♣KT3	♣Q

♠A5  
 ♥Q832  
 ♦9  
 ♣987542

At our table, the auction began with three passes, a Polish 1C by North, an optimistic 1S overcall by partner, a negative double, and NS arrived in 3NT. Partner did well to lead the ♦J. Declarer played the ♣A, dropping the queen, and the ♣J to my king. Recognising that the only way declarer could eventually reach dummy would be via the ♠A, I tried to knock out this entry while I still had the ♣10, so switched to ♠6. Declarer played the queen, but unfortunately partner couldn't see his way clear to covering this as the ♥Q still looked like a possible entry. So 3NT was made, and I thought we'd lose quite a few IMPs.

However, Wayne Zhu as declarer took a different line that proved to be almost unbeatable. After the same opening lead, at trick 2 he played ♣J. When East perforce captured this with the queen, it was a bit too hard for West to overtake and return a spade. As East could not profitably switch to spades himself, there was no defence on the subsequent play of ace and a low club to the king. Just another flat board!



A week later, the **Double Bay Swiss Pairs** was won by Martin Bloom-Tony Nunn from Jane Dawson-Peter Gill.


The early rounds of this event featured some bidding conundrums. Here's one:

♠J	Partner opens 1♦. Do you bid 1♥ or 2♣? In any case, partner now jumps to 3♦. What do you do next?
♥QT94	
♦A83	
♣AQ975	


Here's another. Vulnerable against not, in first seat you pick up:

♠5	Do you open 3♦?
♥42	
♦AJ987652	
♣J2	

Back to the first hand. I hope you found a way to make a move towards 6♦, possibly via 4♦ as a slam invitational raise or as a suit agreement keycard inquiry. Partner's hand makes slam completely secure, but only 6 of 16 NS pairs reached it. Our opponents were among those – bad luck for us!

	♠AK2	
Dealer N	♥A76	
Vul N-S	♦KQJT72	
	♣T	
♠Q9854		♠T763
♥532		♥KJ8
♦96		♦54
♣KJ3		♣8642
	♠J	
	♥QT94	
	♦A83	
	♣AQ975	

And what about that second hand? If you do open 3♦, partner has an easy raise to 6♦!! Yes, that's what happened at our table, and again slam was bid at only 4 tables across the room – more bad luck for us!!

Board 16	♠T9743	
Dealer W	♥KT865	
Vul E-W	♦	
	♣643	
♠5		♠A62
♥42		♥A7
♦AJ987652		♦QT43
♣J2		♣AK98
	♠KQJ8	
	♥QJ93	
	♦K	
	♣QT75	

Years ago, Warren Lazer said to me that the strategy for Swiss Pairs was to "bid anything that moves" and I think these 2 boards bear that out ...

