

The SUMMER SACRIFICE

Summer sacrifices

The Trumps Summer Teams on 15 February was a good demonstration of the decimalised VP scoring scale at work – coming into the sixth and last round, the first 3 teams were on scores of 65.47, 65.06 and 65.05 VPs respectively! ZHU (Wayne Zhu-Robert Sebesfi, David Wurth-David Fryda) were in second place and went on to comprehensively beat the leaders, winning the event by a margin of over 6 VPs.

They earned some of their IMPs the hard way. Consider this hand from the first round:

Board 1	♠65	
Dlr: N	♥	
Vul: Nil	♦AQT9763	
	♣AT43	
	♠KQ93	♠AT2
	♥AQ942	♥KJT8765
	♦J	♦2
	♣KJ5	♣82
10	♠J874	N: 2 ♣4♦
16 8	♥3	S: 2 ♣4♦
6	♦K854	E: 5 ♥4♠
	♣Q976	W: 5 ♥4♠

Wayne Zhu as North opened 1D, and I overcalled 3H. Partner raised to 4H and Wayne rebid 5D. Now, feeling that I had a bit in reserve opposite a partner who surely had 3+ hearts with one or both missing honours, I committed the supposedly cardinal sin of preempting and then bidding again. Bob Sebesfi looked at my 5H for a moment, then bid 6D, which I doubled. But it was only 2 off for +300 to EW, whereas 5H was bid and made at the other table, for 3 IMPs to ZHU. Bob said later that he trusted me to have bid expecting to make, so the sacrifice seemed reasonable – he was right!

Now here are a couple of opening lead problems for you. Firstly, as North you hold:

♠A9842
♥T95
♦KQT5
♣Q

RHO deals and passes. Let's say you do too (assume you're not playing a weak 2S showing 5 spades and a 4+ minor) and LHO starts proceedings with 1C. RHO responds 2NT (10-11 hcp by a passed hand, no 4-card major) and LHO raises this to 3NT, passed out.

Secondly, as South you hold:

♠J97
♥AT63
♦T976
♣84

West	North	East	South
1D	P	1NT	P
3NT	P	P	P
It is South's lead???			

Meanwhile, there was another interesting sacrifice hand at the end of the day:

Board 20	♠K64		
Dlr: W	♥QJ84		
Vul: All	♦KJT9		
	♣K5		
	♠AT98753	♠QJ2	
	♥T3	♥AK62	
	♦	♦Q5432	
	♣QT98	♣3	
	13	♠	N: 2 ♣3♦2♥1NT
	6 12	♥975	S: 3 ♣3♦2♥1NT
	9	♦A876	E: 5 ♠
		♣AJ7642	W: 4 ♠

At our table, partner opened 3S and I raised to 4S, but South found the courage to back in with 5C, which I doubled. We took this 2 off for +500, but again lost IMPs as our opponents made 10 tricks in spades. Five of 14 NS pairs found the sacrifice, with 3 to 9 IMPs changing hands.



Back to those lead problems. On the first hand, fourth-highest of your longest suit doesn't work – declarer wins a spade, then simply ignores that suit and cashes another 10 tricks! Across the field, 7 EW pairs made this contract, but 4 went down, while 2 played in clubs which turns out to be much safer.

Board 24	♠A9842		
Dlr: W	♥T95		
Vul: Nil	♦KQT5		
	♣Q		
	♠KQT	♠J3	
	♥AJ4	♥KQ83	
	♦9864	♦J	
	♣JT9	♣AK8432	
	11	♠765	N: 1 ♠
	11 14	♥762	S: 1 ♠
	4	♦A732	E: 5 ♣1♦5♥2NT
		♣765	W: 5 ♣1♦5♥2NT

On the second hand, a spade lead is lethal, but 5 of 9 declarers made their game on a heart lead – again, there's no question of trying for another trick in the suit led as the spade shift will surely be found, so it's the diamond finesse or nothing. However, this turns out not to be a finesse at all, because after cashing ♣AQ, the queen pops on the lead of a low diamond from dummy and 9 tricks are duly made.

Board 4	♠AQT85		
Dlr: W	♥542		
Vul: All	♦Q		
	♣T652		
	♠K64	♠32	
	♥KQ7	♥J98	
	♦A5432	♦KJ8	
	♣AQ	♣KJ973	
	8	♠J97	N:
	18 9	♥AT63	S:
	5	♦T976	E: 3 ♣3♦2♥1NT
		♣84	W: 3 ♣3♦2♥1NT