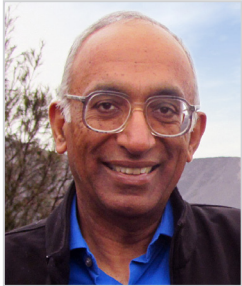


Margaret Smith Memorial Teams 2016

A margin less than paper thin...

by RAKESH KUMAR



Rakesh Kumar describes himself as an enthusiastic non-expert who makes enough errors to have plenty of material for bridge columns.

This year's Margaret Smith Memorial Teams was again held at the Manly Leagues Bridge Club and was once more generously sponsored by Ron Smith. As in the past, the organisation was excellent and the atmosphere was friendly. In 2016, there were 36 teams competing for the various prizes.

At the end of the 6 matches, the winners were LISLE (Ian Lisle - Vicky Lisle - Terry Bodycote - Wayne Zhu) from BOCK (Steven Bock - Rakesh Kumar - Julian Abel - Kevin Davies) and GRIGSON (Barry Dalsto - Henk Sluyter - Patricia Grigson - Shirley Arnold). Only a thin film of nanoparticles separated the top 3 teams – using the decimalised scale that has been around since 2013 and is now the default, the final scores were respectively 83.99, 83.88 and 83.55 VPs.

The day seemed to be full of bidding challenges, with the outcome sometimes dependent on the methods used by the partnership. For example, take this hand from the second match:

Board 12

Dealer W | Vul N-S

♠ K9432
♥ T95
♦ A96
♣ K4

♠ AJ8
♥ KQ86
♦ KJ
♣ AQ75



♠ T76
♥ 742
♦ T5
♣ JT983

♠ Q5
♥ AJ3
♦ Q87432
♣ 62



| W | N | E | S |
|-----|----|----|---|
| 1C | 1S | P | P |
| 1NT | P | 2C | P |
| P | P | | |

Natural in this sequence

| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| N | - | 2 | - | 1 | 1 |
| S | - | 3 | - | 2 | 1 |
| E | 3 | - | 1 | - | - |
| W | 3 | - | 1 | - | - |

Most played in 2NT or higher, leading to scores from -50 to -150, although a handful made 8 or even 9 tricks on soft defence. A few surrendered to NS in diamonds, usually leading to -110. But why shouldn't East-West have a plus score? After 1♣ by West and a 1♠ overcall by North, if West re-opens 1NT showing 18-20 hcp (or 19-20 hcp if you play 1NT as 15-18) then East's responses should be natural (Stayman is not useful in such an auction). That would allow EW to play in 2♣, or even 3♣ if NS compete in diamonds. However, there were only 2 pairs in a club partscore after North-South got into the auction.

The winners – Wayne Zhu, Terry Bodycote, Ian & Vicky Lisle with Ron Smith.



The next board was easily the most interesting, and in some respects the most difficult, challenge of the day. In first seat, what will you bid as West with this hand?

♠ AKQT9652
♥
♦ 5
♣ J985

You could start with 1♠; or bid 2♦ to later show 8 playing tricks, if that's part of your multi-2♦ opening; or 4♦ if you play Namyats; or 4♠ if you think there's likely to be a lot of competition and you're banking on partner having the usual boring hand.

Partner didn't. However, if you bid 1♠, the spotlight is now on North, who may bid 2♠ if playing Michaels two-bids, or 3♣ if playing Ghestem and not fearful of the vulnerability. While East would readily bid 3♣ over 2♠, the Ghestem bid creates an awkward problem, which might persuade East to double, showing the suit. In that case, South will surely bid 4♥ in view of the double fit. And the problem comes back to West: should the rebid be 4♠, 5♣ or even a gambling 6♣?

Board 20

Dealer W | Vul All

♠ 74
♥ AJT74
♦ QJ943
♣ 4

♠ AKQT9652
♥
♦ 5
♣ J985

♠ 8
♥ 532
♦ KT7
♣ AKQT63

♠ J3
♥ KQ986
♦ A862
♣ 72

8
10 12
10

| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| N | - | 2 | 3 | - | - |
| S | - | 2 | 3 | - | - |
| E | 6 | - | - | 6 | - |
| W | 6 | - | - | 6 | - |

If West starts with a multi-2♦, East will bid 2♥ just in case West has a weak 2 in hearts, and will hear a 3♠ rebid showing 8 playing tricks in spades. But being unaware of the exceptional fit in clubs, the partnership is most unlikely to reach slam.

In fact only three East-West pairs played in 6♠, with another two in 6♣. One West solved the problem in a most creative way – he opened a game-forcing 2♣!! Who needs high-card points when you've got the boss suit?

Here's a board that might test the ability of your partnership to get out of trouble. The usual auction was 1♦ by North, followed by a perfectly reasonable 2♣ overcall by East, two passes and a re-opening double. When South passes this for penalties, what will you do as West?

Board 1

Dealer N | Vul None

♠ A975
♥ AK97
♦ K632
♣ 5

♠ KT42
♥ JT84
♦ Q985
♣ T

♠ J
♥ Q62
♦ AT7
♣ AQ8732

♠ 863
♥ 53
♦ J4
♣ KJ964

14
6 13
7

| | W | N | E | S |
|--|----|----|----|---|
| | | 1D | 2C | P |
| | P | X | P | P |
| | XX | P | ? | |

what will a redouble mean to you and your partner?

| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| N | 1 | - | - | 2 | - |
| S | 1 | - | - | 2 | - |
| E | - | 1 | 1 | - | 1 |
| W | - | 1 | 1 | - | 1 |

Something does need to be done, because the dozen Easts who played in some number of clubs, doubled, scored -300 to -500. What's needed is a redouble for rescue ... a contract of 2♥, even doubled by North, is nowhere near as bad and was allowed to make on one occasion. However, make sure you know what you're doing, because on another occasion, East left the redouble in, which was a quick -600. Do you and your partner have a clear set of understandings about when a redouble means "pick something else, partner, please ..."?

This last hand might test both your courage and your methods. It's an opportunity for a vulnerable sacrifice that will yield a small profit:

Board 23

Dealer S | Vul All

| | | | |
|---|---------|---|-------|
| ♠ | KT87652 | ♠ | 94 |
| ♥ | 842 | ♥ | KQJT5 |
| ♦ | 53 | ♦ | Q86 |
| ♣ | 3 | ♣ | QJ8 |

| | | | |
|---|---------|---|------|
| ♠ | 3 | ♠ | AQJ3 |
| ♥ | AKT9742 | ♥ | A976 |
| ♦ | 97542 | ♦ | J |
| ♣ | | ♣ | AKT6 |

| | |
|---|-------|
| ♠ | 94 |
| ♥ | KQJT5 |
| ♦ | Q86 |
| ♣ | QJ8 |

| | | | |
|---|---------|---|------|
| ♠ | 3 | ♠ | AQJ3 |
| ♥ | AKT9742 | ♥ | A976 |
| ♦ | 97542 | ♦ | J |
| ♣ | | ♣ | AKT6 |

| | |
|---|-------|
| ♠ | 94 |
| ♥ | KQJT5 |
| ♦ | Q86 |
| ♣ | QJ8 |

| | | | |
|---|---------|---|------|
| ♠ | 3 | ♠ | AQJ3 |
| ♥ | AKT9742 | ♥ | A976 |
| ♦ | 97542 | ♦ | J |
| ♣ | | ♣ | AKT6 |

| | |
|---|-------|
| ♠ | 94 |
| ♥ | KQJT5 |
| ♦ | Q86 |
| ♣ | QJ8 |

| | | | |
|---|---------|---|------|
| ♠ | 3 | ♠ | AQJ3 |
| ♥ | AKT9742 | ♥ | A976 |
| ♦ | 97542 | ♦ | J |
| ♣ | | ♣ | AKT6 |

| | |
|---|-------|
| ♠ | 94 |
| ♥ | KQJT5 |
| ♦ | Q86 |
| ♣ | QJ8 |

| | | | |
|---|---------|---|------|
| ♠ | 3 | ♠ | AQJ3 |
| ♥ | AKT9742 | ♥ | A976 |
| ♦ | 97542 | ♦ | J |
| ♣ | | ♣ | AKT6 |

| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| N | - | - | - | 6 | - |
| S | - | - | - | 6 | - |
| E | 2 | 3 | - | - | - |
| W | 2 | 3 | - | - | - |

As West, I was anticipating bidding 2NT for the minors after South's likely major suit opening. However, when South opened 1♣, the hand changed – if partner did not have good diamond support there might be lots of losers in clubs. So rather than risking 3♦ vulnerable, I bid 2♦ as a weak jump overcall. North passed this and South re-opened with a double. I took the opportunity to redouble, as it could do no harm, and when North bid 2♠, partner joined in the party with 3♦. Now when South jumped to 4♠, I promptly bid 5♦, as it seemed that 4♠ must be absolutely cold and we surely had a 10-card fit, with some hope for an outside trick. South doubled, which led to -500 for us, but we gained 4 valuable IMPs. North-South will always make 11 tricks – in fact the hand is cold for 12 on the lie of the cards, because the ♣Q can be ruffed out for a further heart discard on the ♣10. 🍀

5
13 14
8

♠ Q93
♥ Q95
♦ J3
♣ AKJ98

♠ KT
♥ T432
♦ 975
♣ QT64



♠ 82
♥ KJ876
♦ A4
♣ 7532

♠ AJ7654
♥ A
♦ KQT862
♣

| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| N | - | - | - | - | - |
| S | - | - | - | - | - |
| E | 3 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 5 |
| W | 3 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 5 |