

Trumps Autumn Teams

Sparkling diamonds!

by RAKESH KUMAR



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

The change of season began with the Trumps Autumn Teams on 5th March, with 19 teams contending. The event was won quite convincingly by WATTS (Marlene Watts – Adam Eddgton and David Hudson – Peter Gill). Second was the WU team (Michael Wu – William Zhang and Terry Bodycote – Wayne Zhu) with EMUL (Cevat Emul – Titus Ling and Kevin Davies – Rakesh Kumar) in third place.

Before I tell you all about the diamonds that glittered during the closing round of this event, here's something to think about. Dealer on your right opens 1NT (11-14 hcp), your left-hand opponent bids 2♣ simple Stayman, RHO rebids 2♦ (denying a major) LHO bids 2NT invitational and RHO carries on to 3NT. What will you lead?

- ♠ 876
- ♥ KQ32
- ♦ 8432
- ♣ 54

Early in the day there was a not-so-glittering diamond suit that offered an interesting opportunity for a sacrifice. On the board shown below, the usual result was 4♥ making 11 tricks (it takes the lead of ♣A followed by a club ruff to hold North to 10 tricks).

Board 2

Dealer E | Vul N-S

- ♠ K85432
- ♥ 4
- ♦ KJT76
- ♣ T

- ♠ JT
- ♥ AKQ9862
- ♦ A
- ♣ J94



- ♠ 7
- ♥ T3
- ♦ 98432
- ♣ AQ832

- ♠ AQ96
- ♥ J75
- ♦ Q5
- ♣ K765

15
7 6
12

W	N	E	S
		P	1C
2C	4H	5D	P
P	5H	P	P
6D	X		

Ghestem showing spades and diamonds

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	–	4	–	3
S	–	–	4	–	3
E	–	4	–	1	–
W	–	4	–	1	–

However, partner and I play Ghestem, arguably the world's most frequently forgotten convention. This time, his overcall of South's 1♣ opening bid, which specifically showed spades and diamonds, led to a very exciting auction: 1♣-2♣-4♥-5♦-P-P-5♥-P-P-6♦-X-all pass. Even doubled, 6♦ cost only -300, for an 8 IMP gain. Two other pairs saved in 5♦ doubled, while one was allowed to play there undoubled.



Back to that defensive problem, which came from the afternoon session:

Board 17

Dealer N | Vul All

♠ J52

♥ T76

♦ AK7

♣ KQJT

♠ KQT94

♥ 95

♦ 965

♣ A93



♠ 876

♥ KQ32

♦ 8432

♣ 54

♠ A3

♥ AJ84

♦ QJT

♣ 8762



	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4	2	3	-	2
S	4	2	3	-	3
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

The bidding makes it clear that LHO has at least one 4-card major. Still, your lead has to be one of the majors – what you would like to do is find the one in which LHO is short and your partner has some length. The best bet for that is in spades: if you led one, well done! The contract makes on any other lead.

Coming into the last round, the leading teams were EMUL, WATTS, ADAMS (Liz Adams – Andrew Peake and George Bilski – Ron Speiser) and WU. In that final match, there were two very big swings, both relating to strong diamond suits.

The first depended on diagnosing the 6-2 fit:

Board 25

Dealer N | Vul E-W

♠ Q985

♥ 83

♦ 72

♣ KQJ62

♠ J73

♥ AKQJT

♦ Q4

♣ A75



♠ AT42

♥ 7

♦ AKJ985

♣ 84

♠ K6

♥ 96542

♦ T63

♣ T93



	W	N	E	S
		P	1D	P
1H		P	1S	P
2C!		P	2D	P
2NT		P	3D	P
4NT		P	5D	P
7D				

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	1	7	7	5	7
W	1	7	7	5	7

Most of the field played in a pedestrian 3NT making 13 tricks (10 pairs) while some played in their 5-1 heart fit (4 pairs). The real battle was between WATTS and ADAMS. At one table, Bilski-Speiser as East-West did well to reach 6NT for +1470. However, at the other, Gill-Hudson bid thus:

1♦ – 1♥

1♠ – 2♣ (fourth suit forcing to game)

2♦ – 2NT

3♦ (now showing a 6+ suit) – 4NT (RKCB)

5♦ (0 or 3, obviously 3) – 7♦ (can count 13 tricks if trumps break 3-2 or partner has the ♦)

The grand slam was worth +2140 and 12 valuable IMPs!



Then on the very next board came this:

Board 26

Dealer E | Vul All

<p>♠ 9 ♥ 5 ♦ AKJ9652 ♣ AK86</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W — E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W — E	S	<p>♠ J632 ♥ KJ93 ♦ Q3 ♣ QJT</p> <p>♠ KQT84 ♥ AQT ♦ T4 ♣ 974</p>
N					
W — E					
S					
<p>♠ A75 ♥ 87642 ♦ 87 ♣ 532</p>					

10
15 11
4

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	—	—	—	—	—
S	—	—	—	—	—
E	5	6	3	4	5
W	5	6	3	4	5

Again, the usual contract was a game, either 3NT (7 pairs) or 5♦ (6 pairs). And again Gill-Hudson outbid the field, finding their way to 6♦ for +1370 and another 12 IMPs. The near-maximum win in the final round assured the WATTS team of a very well earned first place, and diamonds were indeed Marlene's best friend. 🍀