

Peninsula Swiss Pairs

Swimming against the tide

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 Peninsula Swiss Pairs, played at the end of July, was a 7-round event that was convincingly won by Mark Kolodziejczyk - Les Grewcock on the remarkable total of 114.46 VPs. They thus averaged 16.35 VPs per round, despite one small loss! Daylight came second, with a gap of over 21 VPs to Colin Clifford - Catherine Chaffey, then came Judy Osie - Witold Chylewski close behind.

My partner and I played the eventual winners in round 2 and were duly beaten up. Mark's approach to bidding can be a bit idiosyncratic, but it works. Witness this hand:

Board 15

Dealer S | Vul N-S

<p>♠ Q92 ♥ AKJ97 ♦ KT92 ♣ 8</p>	<p>♠ KJT853 ♥ T86 ♦ 8 ♣ T73</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: 60px; text-align: center;"> <p>N W S E</p> </div> <p>♠ 7 ♥ Q5432 ♦ J54 ♣ Q542</p>	<p>♠ A64 ♥ ♦ AQ763 ♣ AKJ96</p>
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W	N	E	S
			1C
1H	1S	4H	5D
P	6C	//	

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	7	1	-	7	2
S	7	2	-	7	2
E	-	-	2	-	-
W	-	-	2	-	-

Ordinary mortals open the South hand 1♦, expecting to make a jump rebid of 3♣. Mark, however, chose to open 1♣! Partner overcalled 1♥ and Les boldly bid 1♠. In the methods that Mark and Les use, this promised only a 4+ suit, not necessarily 5+ cards as would be the common interpretation. However, it seemed obvious to me that Les must have length in spades, so I thought I would try to stop our opponents finding the spade slam and jammed with 4♥. Mark rebid 5♦!!

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Les gave this some thought and reached the same conclusion as the rest of us *viz.* that Mark must have 2-0-5-6 shape with a very strong hand. So he bid 6♣ ... and despite the fragility of the contract after Mark had to ruff the opening lead and then play four rounds of trumps to pick up the queen, he proceeded to make all 13 tricks via the spade finesse. Only 4 pairs bid to slam (two in 6♣ and two in 6♠) but only Mark managed to make it, for +15 IMPs.

I asked him later about his choice of opening bid later on. "Well", he said, "there are many ways to bid any strong hand." I suggested that his approach might amount to swimming against the tide. "So what's new?" said Mark "I have been doing that all my life!"

Through the day there were a number of hands that proved to be tricky to bid. Here's one. How would you respond after partner opens 1♣, promising 2+ cards?

♠ K63
♥ Q65
♦ AKQ
♣ K943

And here's another intriguing hand. What would you do after partner opens 1♣ and in response to your 1♦, rebids 2♥ showing 16+ hcp and 5+4 shape?

♠ AK64
♥ K76
♦ JT9754
♣

That first hand is problematical for many modern Standard or 2/1 players. In the good (?) old days, a 2NT response to 1m showed 13-15 hcp without a 4-card major, while a bid of 3NT showed a 16-18 hcp hand. Nowadays it's the 13-15 hcp hand that responds 3NT, so what does one do with extra strength?

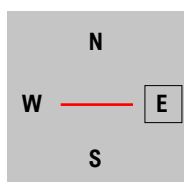
One could, of course, raise to 2m if playing inverted minors, which my partner and I certainly do. However, he found a different solution – he bid 1♦. I rebid 1NT showing 11-13 balanced and he raised me to 3NT. On this occasion, the role reversal turned out to be fortuitous, because the full hand was:

Board 22

Dealer E | Vul E-W

♠ K63
♥ Q65
♦ AKQ
♣ K943

♠ JT874
♥ AT
♦ J3
♣ T652



♠ AQ5
♥ 984
♦ 984
♣ AQJ7

♠ 92
♥ KJ732
♦ T7652
♣ 8

W	N	E	S
		P	1C
P	1D	P	1NT
P	3NT	//	

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

If North declares 3NT the likely lead is ♥3 and East-West quickly take the first 5 tricks, as happened 5 times. With South declaring, a spade lead is normal and the contract is then cold.

The second hand is an interesting example of the potential benefits of using fourth suit forcing to game. After 1♣-1♦-2♥ West has very good stoppers in spades so 3NT is certainly one option, but bidding 2♠ FSF yields a 3♦ rebid by East. Now it's possible to reach 6♦, which partner did via 4♦ as a keycard ask ("minorwood") and a subsequent queen ask.

Board 9

Dealer N | Vul E-W

<p>♠ AK64</p> <p>♥ K76</p> <p>♦ JT9754</p> <p>♣</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; 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>♠ Q52</p> <p>♥ T542</p> <p>♦ A2</p> <p>♣ Q876</p> <p>♠ 9</p> <p>♥ AQJ3</p> <p>♦ KQ6</p> <p>♣ AK952</p> <p>♠ JT873</p> <p>♥ 98</p> <p>♦ 83</p> <p>♣ JT43</p>
N					
W — E					
S					

W	N	E	S
	P	1C	P
1D	P	2H	P
2S	P	3D	P
4D	P	4S	P
4NT	P	5C	P
6D	//		

Minorwood asking for keycards in diamonds

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

Across the field, there were six pairs in 6♦ and two who chose, despite a void, to play in 6NT, which also makes. ♠