

# NSWBA Spring Swiss Pairs

**Bid, then bid some more ...**

by RAKESH KUMAR



*Rakesh Kumar describes himself as an enthusiast who makes enough errors to have plenty of material for bridge columns.*

**T**he Spring Swiss Pairs at the NSWBA is the one-day companion event to the State Open Pairs Championship and always has a large, strong field. In 2019, the tournament was won by Pauline Gumby – Warren Lazer, who finished well clear of Peter Livesey – Peter Gill, with Andre Korenhof – Fraser Rew very close behind in third place.

I have previously quoted Warren Lazer in these columns – his advice to me about the strategy for Swiss Pairs was to "bid anything that moves!" Clearly he must have been practicing what he preaches ... with that in mind, consider what you will do with each of the following hands.

Firstly, not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents, you open 1♦ and partner responds 1♠. Your rebid?

♠ Q9  
♥ Q6  
♦ AKQ986  
♣ K64

Secondly, with both sides vulnerable, will you open this hand?

♠ Q8742  
♥ 95  
♦ AJ9652  
♣

Thirdly, your opponents are not vulnerable and you are vulnerable. LHO starts proceedings with 4♠ and partner doubles for takeout. What will you bid?

♠ 43  
♥ KT43  
♦ K98  
♣ KQ85



*Warren Lazer and Pauline Gumby won the Spring Swiss Pairs.*



*Runners-up Peter Gill and Peter Livesey.*



*Fraser Rew and Andre Korenhof came very close behind in third place.*

One could argue that technically, the first hand is perhaps best described via a 3♦ rebid, but that diamond suit has the potential to be worth 6 tricks and the ♣K needs to be protected. In the hope that partner has something in hearts as well as spades, the "bid anything that moves" approach is therefore to just blast 3NT, thus also satisfying Hamman's Law ("if you have a choice of reasonable bids and one of them is 3NT, then bid it"). However, only 13 out of 32 North-South pairs reached this contract. All but 4 of those made 10 tricks when the heart finesse succeeded.

**Board 16**

Dealer W | Vul E-W

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>♠ KJ5<br/>♥ 8532<br/>♦ T74<br/>♣ A83</p> | <p>♠ Q9<br/>♥ Q6<br/>♦ AKQ986<br/>♣ K64</p> | <p>♠ AT2<br/>♥ K974<br/>♦ 3<br/>♣ JT975</p> |
|---|---|---|

  

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| W | — | E |
|---|---|---|

  

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>♠ 87643<br/>♥ AJT<br/>♦ J52<br/>♣ Q2</p> | <p>♠ 87643<br/>♥ AJT<br/>♦ J52<br/>♣ Q2</p> |
|---|---|

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

The second hand is quite an advertisement for 5-card weak 2 openings. If West passes, North will open 1♣, East will not be able to overcall and South will respond 1♥. It is then quite likely that North will invite game with 3♥ and South will accept. This will usually make unless East, when in with the ♥A, decides to cash the ♣A and then gives West a ruff. Indeed 9 North-South pairs did make 10 tricks in hearts – 8 of them were in game.

In contrast, if West can open 2♠ showing a 5-card spade suit and an unspecified minor suit, which seems perfectly reasonable when holding a notional 6-loser hand, North has no sensible bid available and East can (should) raise directly to 4♠S. As it turns out, this contract loses just 3 spade tricks. Of course it requires the diamond finesse, but that usually proved not to be an issue, because the singleton diamond was led against 5 of the 7 pairs who successfully made the game – and two of them were doubled!

**Board 20**

Dealer W | Vul All

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>♠ Q8742<br/>♥ 95<br/>♦ AJ9652<br/>♣</p> | <p>♠ AKJ<br/>♥ Q432<br/>♦ 7<br/>♣ K8742</p> | <p>♠ 953<br/>♥ A<br/>♦ KT3<br/>♣ AJT965</p> |
|--|---|---|

  

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| W | + | E |
|---|---|---|

  

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>♠ T6<br/>♥ KJT876<br/>♦ Q84<br/>♣ Q3</p> | <p>♠ T6<br/>♥ KJT876<br/>♦ Q84<br/>♣ Q3</p> |
|---|---|

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

In one of the bulletins from the 44<sup>th</sup> World Championships 2019, David Bird had this to say in an article about the contest for the Bermuda Bowl: "Five-card two-level openings have been incredibly successful in these championships, bringing in IMPs by the bucket-load." Similarly on this board, the swing was from +11 to -12 IMPs against the datum. If your weak 2♥/♠ bids don't show or include 5-card suits, perhaps they should ...

The third hand was a challenge for North-South. At our table, partner opened 4♠, Toni Sharp doubled for takeout and I passed. Marilyn Chadwick, sitting South, found the bid for all seasons: 4NT, just in case North had a worthwhile 5-card suit somewhere. North did – and once Toni bid 5♣, we were always going to lose IMPs against the datum. I saved in 5♠ but Marilyn took the push to 6♣. This was clearly bid to make and sadly, lacking a mirror, I wouldn't have found the heart lead to beat the slam. Instead, although recognising that I was committing a form of harakiri, I carried on to 6♠ and we were duly doubled. While -500 was at least a smaller loss than -1370, this board was still a disaster for us in the last round.

**Board 28**

Dealer W | Vul N-S

♠

♥ A976

♦ AJ42

♣ AT932

|                                  |   |   |  |   |   |                                   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| ♠ KQJ9872<br>♥<br>♦ QT73<br>♣ J7 | <table style="border: 1px solid gray; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> | N |  | E | S | ♠ AT65<br>♥ QJ852<br>♦ 65<br>♣ 64 |
| N                                |   |   |  |   |   |                                   |
|                                  |   |   |  |   |   |                                   |
| E                                |   |   |  |   |   |                                   |
| S                                |   |   |  |   |   |                                   |

♠ 43

♥ KT43

♦ K98

♣ KQ85

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

Across the field, 14 pairs played in 4♠ (often doubled) and 6 pairs made it, while 9 pairs played in 5♠ (usually doubled). Although no one else bid 6♣, there were 2 pairs who reached 5♣ and were allowed to play in it. Interestingly, one of those was Pauline Gumby – Warren Lazer, for whom +620 earned 11 IMPs against the datum.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all! 🎄