

Illawarra Bridge Association Online Swiss Pairs

(Not) bidding slams all day

by RAKESH KUMAR



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

The [Illawarra Bridge Association Online Swiss Pairs](#) was held on the last Sunday in September and was very popular: there were 40 pairs in the Open section and another 26 in the Restricted section. The Open was won by Elliott Kaplan - Nigel Rosendorff, who finished a long way ahead of everyone else. In second place were Nick Hughes - Nicoleta Giura. The Restricted was won by Pat Berry - Stephen Smith from John Hodsdon - Val Hodsdon.

Sometimes one can play 20 or 30 boards without a slam coming along. In this event, there was a slam deal in every 8-board match! However, whereas partner and I did a good job of avoiding getting to makeable slams, our opponents did much better. I'll show you 2 of the slams we missed and one that was bid against us ... but first, here is an opening lead question. After RHO opens 1♥ as dealer and LHO makes a 3-card invitational raise, RHO rolls out Roman Keycard Blackwood, finds LHO with one keycard and arrives in 6♥. What will you lead from this?

- ♠ J853
- ♥ 97
- ♦ 74
- ♣ A9876

The first slam we managed to miss was on the deal below. After 1♦-2♣ (which partner and I do not play as forcing to game) it's actually not that simple for both sides to show strength and find their way to a slam. Among the 20 East-West pairs, 10 bid to 6NT and 2 to 6♦. However, 2 intrepid pairs found their way to the optimum contract of 7NT. One of these was Rosendorff-Kaplan, the eventual winners, who bid 1♦-1♥-2♠ (strong reverse)-3♣ (game forcing)-3♦-4NT and having found 3 keycards in diamonds, plus ♦Q and ♥K, made it all look easy.

Board 20

Dealer W | Vul All

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♠ AQT9 ♥ KJ ♦ AKQ765 ♣ 6 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♠ K ♥ A532 ♦ 92 ♣ AKT982 |
|---|--|---|

| |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♠ J7 ♥ T98764 ♦ JT ♣ 754 |
|---|

| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| N | - | - | - | - | - |
| S | - | - | - | - | - |
| E | 6 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 7 |
| W | 6 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 7 |

The only other pair to reach 7NT was Bill Fotheringham and Martin Bunder from IBA, playing Schenken Club. Those not into strong club systems may not be familiar with this – it antedates Precision by several years, having been introduced back in 1963.

Then came this deal, in which the North hand is the one that features in the opening lead problem above. Did you lead a spade? That's the only way to set 6♥ by West. However, most defenders laid down the ♣A, after which the slam is cold.

Board 35

Dealer S | Vul E-W

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|-------|---|-----------------------------------|
| ♠ QT ♥ AKJ843 ♦ AKQ ♣ Q3 | <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 | ♠ A762 ♥ Q62 ♦ J62 ♣ KJT |
| N | | | | | |
| W — E | | | | | |
| S | | | | | |
| ♠ K94 ♥ T5 ♦ T9853 ♣ 542 | | | | | |

| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| N | - | - | - | - | - |
| S | - | - | - | - | - |
| E | 2 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 6 |
| W | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 |

Of the 9 East-West pairs in slam (all played from the West seat) only one received a spade lead. At our table, we right-sided the contract, because with 2 doubleton queens I downgraded the West hand and treated it as a 5-loser. Therefore I opened a multi-2♦ (including hands with 8 playing tricks in a major) and when partner bid 2♥ (pass or correct) she became declarer. Twelve tricks were duly made, but we had stopped in game ...

Our opponents didn't seem to have too much difficulty reaching their slams. In the last round, Murray Green and Jane Dawson had a more-or-less scientific auction on this deal, demonstrating quite nicely how one can/should push for slam with a hand that has great playing strength:

Board 42

Dealer E | Vul All

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|-------|---|-----------------------------------|
| ♠ J642 ♥ ♦ Q97 ♣ J96542 | <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 | ♠ 3 ♥ T7 ♦ AJT653 ♣ KQT3 |
| N | | | | | |
| W — E | | | | | |
| S | | | | | |
| ♠ AQ8 ♥ AKQJ62 ♦ K842 ♣ | | | | | |
| ♠ KT975 ♥ 98543 ♦ ♣ A87 | | | | | |

| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| N | - | - | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| S | - | - | 7 | 5 | 1 |
| E | 4 | 3 | - | - | - |
| W | 3 | 3 | - | - | - |

After 3 passes, Murray as North opened 1♥ and partner overcalled 2♦. The bidding continued (East-West now silent) with 3♦ by South (good raise to at least 3♥)-3♠ (cue)-4♥ (minimum)-5♣ (cue)-6♣ (cue)-6♥. Murray made 13 tricks without effort.

There were *much* more interesting auctions at some of the other tables. Sitting North, Heath Henn, Nick Hughes and Bill Fotheringham each heard LHO open 1♦ and partner overcall a Michaels 2♦ showing 5+/5+ in the majors. Each of them simply bid 6♥ directly.

However, sitting South, Helen Lowry faced a more difficult problem: her RHO opened 3♦! When playing against her earlier in the day, I had introduced my partner to Helen via the BBO chat bar, explaining that I regarded her as one of the most aggressive overbidders I knew. Helen took that as a compliment. No doubt in a determined effort to live up to the description, she proceeded to bid 4♦ over East's pre-empt (!) so of course her partner Frances Lyons could now jump to 6♥ as well. 🟩