

The Seniors Interstate Teams Selection Event

As of last year, I'm old enough to take part in Seniors' events, so of course I joined the field.

by RAKESH KUMAR



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

No, it's not really a Congress, but in 2015 this event was run as 2 days of Butler Pairs, playing a full round-robin of 6-board matches against the other 19 pairs, so it was a bit like a double Congress event. However, rather than Swiss scoring, for every match a draw was considered to be 36 IMPs each, then this figure was adjusted by net positive or negative aggregate IMPs. As of last year, I'm old enough to take part in Seniors' events, so of course I joined the field. Before I tell you what happened, though, here are a couple of hands for you to puzzle over.

- ♠ T9
- ♥ Q97
- ♦ AK854
- ♣ J32

You	N	E	S
P	P	3S	3NT
?			

Not vulnerable against vulnerable, you deal and pass, as does LHO. Partner pre-empts with 3S. RHO gives this some thought, then bids 3NT. What will you do? And if you decide to defend, what will you lead?

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This time, with neither side vulnerable, LHO starts proceedings with 3S and RHO raises to 4S.

- ♠ 8
- ♥ K7
- ♦ AKQ93
- ♣ T9743

W	N	E	You
3S	P	4S	?

What will you do?

.....

And finally, once again not vulnerable against vulnerable, what will you bid with this hand?

- ♠ K962
- ♥ 6
- ♦ KQJT842
- ♣ 2

W	You	E	S
	1D?	1H	X
P	?		

Supposing you decide that you won't pre-empt with an outside 4-card major suit (good idea!) and instead figure that with a notionally 5-loser hand and a strong suit, you can afford to upgrade a bit (well, maybe more than just a bit) and open 1D. LHO overcalls 1H and partner doubles to show 4 spades. Now what?

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At the end of the first day of proceedings, the leading scores (after 10 rounds) were *Bob Sebesfi – Richard Douglas* 412, *Theo Antoff – Simon Stancu* 407, *Kevin Davies – Rakesh Kumar* 397, *Lynn Kalmin – Lorna Ichilcik* 396, *Mike Hughes – Kim Morrison* 393.

Slam Hands

There were very few slam hands on day 1, or at least very few slams that could realistically be bid, but things warmed up on day 2. Mostly, though, the slams weren't bid. For example, only 2 pairs (of 10) reached the cold 6D on this hand:

Board 15

Dealer S | Vul N-S

<p>♠ QJ832 ♥ 43 ♦ T94 ♣ Q96</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td> </td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ AT9654 ♥ KT76 ♦ K7 ♣ A</p>	<p>♠ 7 ♥ QJ985 ♦ 5 ♣ JT8742</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
		<p>♠ K ♥ A2 ♦ AQJ8632 ♣ K53</p>										

Kevin Davies and I had the machinery to get to slam on this hand:

Board 20

Dealer W | Vul Both

<p>♠ JT5 ♥ T ♦ JT9843 ♣ JT3</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td> </td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ 2 ♥ QJ986 ♦ A76 ♣ KQ95</p>	<p>♠ AQ964 ♥ 754 ♦ K52 ♣ 62</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
		<p>♠ K873 ♥ AK32 ♦ Q ♣ A874</p>										

12
3 9
16

W	N	E	S
P	1H	1S	4D!
P	4S		

needs a cue bid to show
1st or 2nd round control

Because we play a (mostly home-grown) Strong Club system, our 1M-4M raises are either weak or strong but without slam interest, so we are able to reserve splinter bids to show genuine prospects of getting to slam. After my 1H opening, East overcalled 1S and Kevin splintered with 4D. I should now find a bit of courage and cue 4S to show first or second round control, after which bidding to 6H would be easy. But I didn't. Only 3 pairs reached the slam, which is of course cold.

This was a freaky hand which probably defies any attempt at systemic bidding:

Board 30

Dealer E | Vul None

<p>♠ J5 ♥ J7543 ♦ 873 ♣ 874</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td> </td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ A873 ♥ Q ♦ 5 ♣ AQJT652</p>	<p>♠ KT9642 ♥ 98 ♦ Q6 ♣ K93</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
		<p>♠ Q ♥ AKT62 ♦ AKJT942 ♣</p>										

13
2 8
17

W	N	E	S
		2D!	X
P	5C	P	6D

A defense to the Multi-Two:
X = takeout of Spades
2H = takeout of Hearts

East opened a multi-2D. We play the ACBL-recommended defence to the multi-two, in which double is a takeout of spades (or a highly distributional strong hand) while 2H is a takeout of hearts. Thus partner's double implied hearts and support for the other suits, so I jumped to 5C. Partner pondered the implications of that and, having no shortage of courage, bid 6D, making all 13 tricks after a successful ruffing finesse.

Answers

Back to those problems. Here's the first hand:

Board 12

Dealer W | Vul N-S

♠ T9	♠ J	♠ KQ76432
♥ Q97	♥ KT65	♥ 84
♦ AK854	♦ 97	♦ QT63
♣ J32	♣ K97654	♣
	♠ A85	♣
	♥ AJ32	
	♦ J2	
	♣ AQT8	

	7	
10	□	7
	16	

You	N	E	S
P	P	3S	3NT
4S			

2 pairs made 3NT
5 pairs made 11 tricks

Your partner opened 3S and South bid 3NT. If you raised to 4S, you did very well as it happens to be unbeatable – indeed 5 pairs in spade contracts made 11 tricks. If you chose to defend, you'd have to be courageous and assume that as declarer was ready for a spade lead, something else would be a better idea. A diamond lead beats the contract by one trick, but the 2 declarers in 3NT were both successful.

Board 24

Dealer W | Vul None

♠ KJ76532	♠ T4	♠ AQ9
♥ Q2	♥ A95	♥ JT8643
♦ J2	♦ T754	♦ 86
♣ K6	♣ AQJ2	♣ 85
	♠ 8	
	♥ K7	
	♦ AKQ93	
	♣ T9743	

	11	
10	□	7
	12	

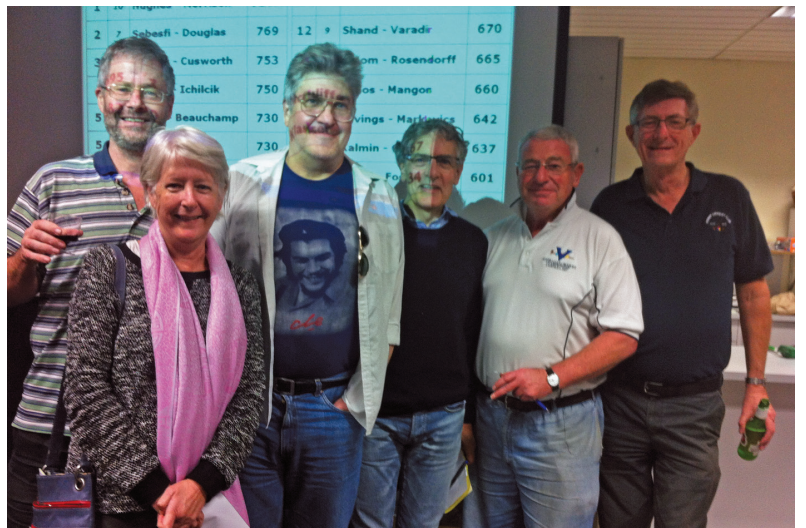
W	N	E	You
3S	P	4S	4NT!
P	5C / 5D		

4NT for the minors. 4 pairs made 12 tricks in either clubs or diamonds!

After 3S by LHO, raised to 4S, what will you do? I certainly hope you will bid 4NT for the minors. Only 4 pairs played in a minor suit game, making 12 tricks in either clubs or diamonds (quite reasonably, no one bid to the odds-against slam).

After 12 rounds, *Hughes – Morrison* had established themselves in first place and proceeded to demonstrate their vice-like grip on a place in the Interstate Team. *Sebesfi – Douglas* were in second place and mostly remained in that position for several rounds thereafter. *Kalmin – Ichilcik*, *Antoff – Stancu* and *Davies – Kumar* were all hanging around in the next few places, together with *Peter Jeffery – Heather Cusworth*.

The Seniors Team was born. From left to right – Peter Jeffery, Heather Cusworth, Bob Sebesfi, Richard Douglas, Mike Hughes and Kim Morrison.



Round 18 was a setback for us, because *Peter Fordham – Frank Budai* pulled off a couple of coups. One was on this hand:

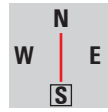
Board 15

Dealer S | Vul N-S

8
9 15
8

♠ K962
♥ 6
♦ KQJT842
♣ 2

♠ T54
♥ AKT74
♦ 5
♣ J974



♠ 87
♥ QJ53
♦ 973
♣ KQ53

♠ AQJ3
♥ 982
♦ A6
♣ AT86

W	Me	E	S
1D	1H	1S	P
4S	P	4NT	P
5C	P	6S	

Only 3 pairs bid slam

Frank opened the hand 1D, I overcalled 1H and Peter bid 1S – in their methods this did not promise 5 cards. Frank jumped to 4S, in their methods showing a shapely minimum as he did not cue-raise. Peter asked for keycards, found one and bid the slam. Only 2 others did so. As Fordham – Budai also bid a cold game found by only 3 others, we were displaced from 4th spot which we had held for the last 4 rounds. So coming into the last round, *Hughes – Morrison* were well in front on 766, followed by *Sebesfi – Douglas* on 730 with a bit of a margin to *Jeffery – Cusworth*, who had had a huge win to catapult from 6th to 3rd on 715.

The Seniors Team was born

The standard of bridge across the field in the last round suggested quite a few “senior moments” at this late stage of the event. However, when the smoke cleared, *Hughes – Morrison* had had another large win to finish first by over 60 IMPs, while *Jeffery – Cusworth* also had a win and overtook *Sebesfi – Douglas*, so they finished 2nd and 3rd respectively. *Kalmin – Ichilcik* were 4th and we remained in 5th place. Let’s hope the Seniors Team does brilliantly in Fremantle! 🍀