

# East Lindfield Teams

From little things, big swings grow...

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 East Lindfield Teams Congress at the end of August was won by the OSIE team (Judy Osie - Witold Chylewski - Wayne Zhu - Yumin Li) who climbed into first place after three rounds and stayed there, finishing well clear of all other contenders.

They must have done a lot of things right. For many of the rest of us, the day was all about apparently small decisions having quite significant consequences in terms of the resultant swing. To get you thinking about this, here are a couple of opening lead problems:

Problem 1 – opponents bid 1♥ (by RHO)-3NT (a balanced 3-card raise, choice of games)-4♥ and you hold:

- ♠ Q32
- ♥ 95
- ♦ AJ94
- ♣ QT65

Problem 2 – opponents bid 2♣ (by RHO: strong)-2♦ (waiting)-3♥ (extra strong)-4♥-6♥! This time you hold:

- ♠ Q985
- ♥ T32
- ♦ A8632
- ♣ 6

Before we look at the stories of those hands, however, here's a demonstration of how really small things seemed to matter on the day. On the hand below, across most of the field, South commenced proceedings with an opening bid of 1NT. For those who played this as 15-17, once North found a spade fit there was no question of being anywhere other than 4♠, because a 40% chance of making was more than good enough. But for those who played other ranges e.g. 14-16 or 14-17, it was more complicated.

## Board 10

Dealer E | Vul All

- |         |        |         |
|---------|--------|---------|
| ♠ 32    | ♠ AJ94 | ♠ T85   |
| ♥ AJ982 | ♥ T54  | ♥ KQ7   |
| ♦ QT8   | ♦ J7   | ♦ 95432 |
| ♣ A85   | ♣ QJ32 | ♣ 96    |



9  
11  5  
15

	W	N	E	S
			P	1NT
P		2C	P	2D
P		2S	P	3S
P		?		

*No 5-card Major*

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

In fact only 21 of 34 North-South pairs reached 4S on this board. At our table, partner bid 2♣ and I showed a 14-15 hcp hand with no 5-card major, so he bid 2♠, looking for the best spot to park. I raised to 3♠ to suggest that game was well worth considering, but with no particular shape and just 9 high card points including 2 jacks, he quite reasonably passed. Of course we lost IMPs on the deal!

This is the full hand relating to the first of the lead problems:

**Board 3**

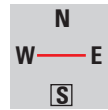
Dealer S | Vul E-W

♠ K5  
♥ AT2  
♦ QT2  
♣ KJ972

♠ AT864  
♥ 86  
♦ K63  
♣ 843

♠ J97  
♥ KQJ743  
♦ 875  
♣ A

♠ Q32  
♥ 95  
♦ AJ94  
♣ QT65



13  
9  7  
11

W	N	E	S
			1H
P	3NT	P	4H

A balanced 3-card raise,  
choice of games

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

Did you lead a low spade? Oops, you just solved declarer's problem in that suit and conceded the 10th trick. Is there a way to know that you shouldn't lead a spade? I don't think there is, really, and that's what makes bridge such a fascinating and occasionally exasperating game! Across the field, all but 2 of 34 were in 4♥, but 17 went down. As it turns out, passing 3NT is the winning action for North-South, because this is unbeatable.

Here's another hand where differences in methods/style could have a very large impact on the contract reached:

**Board 7**

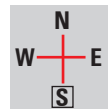
Dealer S | Vul All

♠ J8542  
♥ 8653  
♦ JT  
♣ K5

♠ KQ  
♥ AT74  
♦ A  
♣ JT9642

♠ A763  
♥ KQ2  
♦ 7654  
♣ Q7

♠ T9  
♥ J9  
♦ KQ9832  
♣ A83



5  
10  14  
11

W	N	E	S
			?

South's decision about opening  
could make a big difference  
to whether Ew find 3NT

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

South as dealer could open a genuinely disgusting 1♦, which would make life awkward for West, but then even more awkward for South if East re-opens with a double (North should of course rescue with 1♠ after West's pass). If South passes, West might open a weak 2♦ if that's part of the East-West system, or maybe 3♦ if feeling bold or desperate. For most partnerships, finding a sensible auction to 3NT is difficult. However, it's cold, as the five East-West pairs who played there discovered to their delight.

How bold or desperate you happen to feel at any given moment might also influence the auction and the outcome on a distributional hand such as this one:

**Board 13**

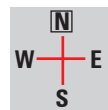
Dealer N | Vul All

♠ KQ652  
♥ 9  
♦ Q7654  
♣ 53

♠ A743  
♥ 3  
♦ 9  
♣ AKQ9876

♠ T9  
♥ KQJ754  
♦ AJT8  
♣ T

♠ J8  
♥ AT862  
♦ K32  
♣ J42



7  
9  13  
11

W	N	E	S
	2S!	?	

Showing Spades and a minor,  
at least 5/4

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

At our table, North opened a weak 2♠ showing spades and a minor, at least 5/4. If you were in the East seat, what would you do? Our East overcalled 3♣, so South could now compete with 3♦ (very likely to be partner's minor) but could also try 3♥. Would you simply have bid 3NT over the 2♠ opening, hoping for a spade lead and a trick with partner somewhere? What about after 3♥? Well, our East bid 3NT anyway! In fact 15 pairs were successful in this contract.

And finally to the hand relating to the second lead problem:

**Board 24**

Dealer W | Vul None

♠ 73	♠ JT642				
♥ 85	♥ K9				
♦ KT9754	♦ QJ				
♣ 842	♣ T975				
		♠ AK			
	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 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	♥ AQJ764
N					
W E					
S					
		♦			
		♣ AKQJ3			
	♠ Q985				
	♥ T32				
	♦ A8632				
	♣ 6				

7  
3  24  
6

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

Did you lead your singleton? Or did you think that, as you held an ace, there was no chance partner held another so no one was going to give you a ruff? Well, it turns out there's no entry to dummy so when partner gets in on the second round of trumps, you can take a trick with your third heart. Across the field, 12 East-West pairs bid and made 6♥, usually on the lead of ♦A or a low trump. Another 3 made the unbeatable 6♣, while 5 made 12 tricks in game contracts. However, 6 pairs went off on the lead of ♣6. Yes, it was right this time. Will it also be right next time? Who knows? I certainly don't! 📈