

# Sweating the small stuff...

## Interesting part score hands in the Wollstonecraft Swiss Pairs

by RAKESH KUMAR



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The Wollstonecraft Swiss Pairs was won by Les Grewcock & Peter Jeffery, with Joshua Wyner & Derrick Browne in second place and Andrew Peake & John Newman coming third.

In Swiss Pairs, overbidding is the norm – all hands with any real potential for making game are automatically played in a game contract in any reasonably strong field. Failure to bid a makeable game is usually lethal. However, in a match where both pairs are playing solid bridge, part scores become much more important, even at IMPs – a couple of part score swings can determine the outcome of an 8- or 9-board match. So just for a change, in this column I will focus on a few interesting part score hands from the Wollstonecraft event.

Here's one, a perfectly normal competitive hand. West will open 1♠, any sane North will pass, and East is likely to bid 1NT. What will South do? The hand isn't good enough for 2♦. Would you bid a pre-emptive 3♦? If you pass, West will rebid 2♥ and East will usually return to 2♠.

### Board 8

Dealer W | Vul None

♠ K73  
♥ A8765  
♦ JT4  
♣ 84

♠ AJ962  
♥ K432  
♦ Q  
♣ AQ2



♠ Q8  
♥ QT  
♦ 987  
♣ KJ9763

♠ T54  
♥ J9  
♦ AK6532  
♣ T5



W	N	E	S
1S	P	1NT	?

*what would you bid?*

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

I'm not suggesting there is a right answer, but on this hand partner bid 3♦ and it worked out well, making 8 tricks for the smallest possible negative score. Across the field, common contracts were 3♦ by South and 2♠ or 3♠ by West, the latter usually making 10 tricks. Those who found the club fit usually ended in 5♣ going down: only Peake-Newman managed to stop in 4♣. The overall IMP turnover was from +5 to -4 for North-South, but of such swings are Swiss Pairs results made.

Here's another board that proved to be quite interesting. How will you bid the West hand? If you open 1♦, North will overcall 1♠ and South will raise to 2♠ or 3♠.

### Board 19

Dealer S | Vul E-W

♠ KQJ54  
♥ Q5  
♦ 872  
♣ A97

♠ 7  
♥ A94  
♦ AKQJ94  
♣ KJ2



♠ T93  
♥ JT72  
♦ 5  
♣ Q6543

♠ A862  
♥ K863  
♦ T63  
♣ T8



W	N	E	S
			P
2D!	P	2H	P
3D	//		

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

At our table, I started with 2♦ as West, because our multi-2 opening includes hands with 8 playing tricks in any suit. This dissuaded North from overcalling, so the auction went 2♦-2♥-3♦-P. Playing in spades, North-South invariably made 8 tricks, so 3♠ scoring -50 was again the smallest possible negative score. However, with a 5-loser hand, shortage in the opponents' suit and a bullet-proof 6-card diamond suit, it makes sense for West to back in and compete to the 3- or 4-level. Indeed, East-West in a diamond part score often made 11 tricks for +150, although those who bid game didn't make it. So the IMP turnover was +4 to -3 and once again, every little bit added up.

As the previous hand illustrates, the methods you play can influence the outcome of the part score battle. That's true not only for openings but also for competitive bidding. On this board, when West opens a strong notrump, North will undoubtedly have a strong desire to bid something – but what?

**Board 8**

Dealer W | Vul None

♠ T  
♥ K652  
♦ AT  
♣ QJ8753

♠ K865  
♥ J743  
♦ Q732  
♣ 4

♠ QJ743  
♥ 8  
♦ J965  
♣ A62

♠ A92  
♥ AQT9  
♦ K84  
♣ KT9



W	N	E	S
1NT	?		

Do you have a bid?

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

If you play that a double of a strong notrump shows a 4-card major and 5+ minor suit, North doesn't have a problem and 3♣ is likely to be found – at the table, this made as often as not. Without the double, if playing simple Stayman, East can inquire and pass whatever partner rebids. That's how it went at our table: 1NT-2♣-2♥ all pass was -3 IMPs for us, whereas making 3♣ would have been worth +3 IMPs. Small numbers, certainly, but the IMPs accumulate.

In the final round, this part score hand involved a somewhat larger range of swings. The auction would usually often have commenced with two passes, a 1♦ opening by South and a 1♥ overcall by West, but then North has various options.

**Board 21**

Dealer N | Vul N-S

♠ A93  
♥ K6  
♦ Q982  
♣ JT76

♠ T752  
♥ JT  
♦ JT63  
♣ 543

♠ J84  
♥ Q953  
♦ AK54  
♣ K2

♠ KQ6  
♥ A8742  
♦ 7  
♣ AQ98



W	N	E	S
	P	P	1D
1H	?		

what's your choice of bid?

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

A cautious 1NT might buy the contract, while a courageous 2NT bid showing 10-12 high card points would be more likely to land the North-South partnership in a failing 3NT contract. If the 1♦ opening promises at least 4 cards, another possibility is that North might raise. When 2♦ is passed back to West, what next? West could double and North-South may then go on to 3♦. This contract is tricky to play, given the 4-1 break, which contributed to the turnover of +6 to -6 IMPs on the board.

If there is a moral to these stories, it seems to be that one should be bidding whenever possible, especially with shape. The pressure on the opponents may mean that they end up too high, thus contributing a few IMPs your way ... ♠