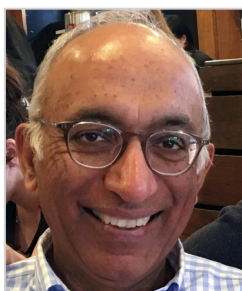


Keeping your WITS about you

A few reflections on tactics at Swiss Pairs

by RAKESH KUMAR



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

In parallel with the Final of the Womens Interstate Teams Selection event, the NSWBA runs a Swiss Pairs event, imaginatively (?) called the WITS Swiss Pairs. This year, it was won by Elliott Kaplan – Peter Gill, followed by Pauline Gumby – Warren Lazer, with Matt Smith – Johnno Newman in third place. It is a remarkable fact that all 3 pairs scored exactly 14.87 VPs (i.e. a 13 IMP difference) in the last round. Unlucky for their opponents!

See if you can keep your wits about you on a few interesting problems. Firstly, after either $1\heartsuit-2\heartsuit-4\heartsuit$ or $1\heartsuit-3\clubsuit$ (Bergen)- $4\heartsuit$, you are on lead with the hand below. What will you choose?

♠ KT42
♥ 5
♦ Q64
♣ A6543

Secondly, partner opens $1\clubsuit$ showing 2+ cards. What will you bid with this extraordinary hand?

♠ AKQJT8542
♥ A
♦
♣ JT6

And thirdly, you're vulnerable and the opponents are not, and as dealer LHO opens a natural weak $2\heartsuit$, passed around to you. What will you do with this hand?

♠ KJT73
♥ Q
♦ KT98
♣ A83

Winners of WITS Swiss Pairs – Peter Gill and Elliott Kaplan.



Swiss Pairs is all about (1) bidding 'em up (2) defending as tightly as possible. In round 2 our opponents put this into practice, at our expense!

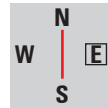
To take the last hand first, on this board, after 2♥ by East, or a multi-2♦ and 2♥ correctable by West, North has options. It's possible to just overcall 2♠, or to show a bit more courage and double. Supposing North does double, what should South do now? The spade suit isn't actually a thing of beauty, but at our table, South figured that his hand was nevertheless quite a bit better than it might have been, so bid 3♠. The raise to 4♠ was then automatic. However, across the field, only 6 of 17 North-South pairs reached 4♠. Our opponents were, of course, one of those pairs ...

Board 2

Dealer E | Vul N-S

♠ KJT73
♥ Q
♦ KT98
♣ A83

♠ AQ9
♥ J52
♦ A6543
♣ T2



♠ 6
♥ KT9863
♦ Q7
♣ J965

♠ 8542
♥ A74
♦ J2
♣ KQ74

13
11 □ 6
10

W	N	E	S
		2H	P
P	X	P	?

what would you bid?

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	1	-	5	2
S	2	1	-	5	2
E	-	-	2	-	-
W	-	-	2	-	-

The opening lead on the first problem was really important, because a game swing depended on the choice.

Board 3

Dealer S | Vul E-W

♠ KT42
♥ 5
♦ Q64
♣ A6543

♠ A53
♥ KQJ96
♦ AK2
♣ QT



♠ Q87
♥ A732
♦ T987
♣ 82

♠ J96
♥ T84
♦ J53
♣ KJ97

9
19 □ 6
6

W	N	E	S
			P
1H	P	2H	P
4H	//		

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

The most common lead was a low spade. Declarer was looking at 5 potential losers, but would no doubt have breathed a sigh of relief when the ♠Q held. S/he could then draw trumps and play ♦AK and a third diamond, probably breathing an even louder sigh of relief when the fourth diamond was established for a spade discard.

However, there were no sighs of relief at our table: our North led a low diamond and the contract was now doomed. Across the field, 10 East-West pairs made 4♥, but 7 went down.



And so to the amazing hand. Partner has opened 1♣, but does s/he actually have good enough clubs to take care of your ♣JT6 if you head for slam? Can you find out? Around the room, I heard of various continuations ranging from bidding a conservative 4♠ (hardly Swiss Pairs tactics) to 4NT Blackwood (highly unlikely to be useful) to just bidding 6♠ directly (not the worst idea ever). How about a devious 1♣-1♠-1NT-4♣ (keycard in clubs!)-4NT (2+queen)-6♠? Of course that may not work if West overcalls 1♦ and East raises pre-emptively to 3♦ ... anyway, 8 pairs bid and made slam when the full hand proved to be:

Board 26

Dealer E | Vul All

♠ AKQJT8542

♥ A

♦

♣ JT6

♠

♥ Q873

♦ KQT85

♣ A974



♠ 93

♥ T964

♦ J9632

♣ 53

♠ 76

♥ KJ52

♦ A74

♣ KQ82

15
11 1
13

W	N	E	S
		P	1C
P	?		

will you consider slam?
If so, what would you bid
to try to get your pair to
slam?

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

However, another 4 went all the way to 7♠ and duly went down. There do have to be limits to bidding 'em up!! ♠