

Trumps Festival AB Teams

Oh the things you could bid...

by RAKESH KUMAR



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

The Australian Bridge Teams, part of the Trumps Festival of Bridge between Christmas and the New Year, had quite a large turnout, with many strong teams entered. By round 3 of 6, those locked in battle for the first 2 places were KORENHOF (Andre Korenhof – Carola Hoogervorst – Maurits van der Vlugt – Lakshmi Sunderasan) and DAVIES (Kevin Davies – George Finikiotis – Les Grewcock – Avril Zets) and that was the order in which they finished. In third place was GREEN (Murray Green – Nicky Strasser – Peter Strasser – Andrew Peake).

The 6 rounds yielded many stories of exciting potential slam hands, thin games and doubled partscores. It seemed that the dealing computer had been busy generating an overbidder's paradise.

*Oh, the things you could bid! There are games to scored!
There are slams to be found. And you'll never get bored ...*
(with apologies to Dr Seuss)

For your first bidding problem, consider this hand:

♠ T5
♥ Q9
♦ AKJ543
♣ K85

Both vulnerable, LHO passes as dealer and partner opens 1♣. You respond 1♦ and partner rebids 2♠ showing 16+ hcp. What will you do now?

Next, both vulnerable again, you find yourself holding this rather woeful collection

♠ KT82
♥ 962
♦ 6432
♣ T8

LHO opens 1♠, partner doubles and RHO bids a pre-emptive 3♠. After you and LHO pass, partner doubles again. Your call?

And finally, you have this genuine powerhouse:

♠ Q
♥ AK4
♦ AKQ5
♣ AJ964

Partner opens 1♠, you bid 2♣ (natural, artificial or game-forcing – it matters not) and partner rebids 4♠ showing a weak opening hand with a long suit. What next?

Back to that first hand. As West, with at least 29 hcp between the two hands, an assured club fit and a potential source of numerous tricks in diamonds, you really should be thinking in terms of a slam. You have two obvious options – either head directly towards 6♣ via 4♣ minorwood, or first bid a fourth suit forcing 3♥. If you choose the latter, partner bids 3NT, so now you have the additional possibility of looking for 6NT.

Board 13

Dealer N | Vul All

<p>♠ T5 ♥ Q9 ♦ AKJ543 ♣ K85</p>		<p>♠ J98 ♥ KJ84 ♦ T962 ♣ Q6</p>
<p>♠ 7643 ♥ 7652 ♦ Q7 ♣ 742</p>	<p>♠ AKQ2 ♥ AT3 ♦ 8 ♣ AJT93</p>	

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

In any case, partner shows 3 keycards and denies ♣Q, so there's no very good reason not to get to a small slam and no reason to bid further. Despite this, only 13 of 28 bid a slam: 7 of those were in 6♣ and the others were in 6NT.

The second hand was perhaps the swingiest board of the day. There are basically 3 choices – be conservatively sensible and bid 4♦, be hopeful that your trumps plus partner's strength will add up to something and pass for penalties, or be brave (crazy?) and bid 3NT on very little indeed.

Board 13

Dealer N | Vul All

<p>♠ Q753 ♥ QJ83 ♦ 9 ♣ J742</p>		<p>♠ KT82 ♥ 962 ♦ 6432 ♣ T8</p>
<p>♠ ♥ AKT5 ♦ KQJT5 ♣ AQ95</p>	<p>♠ AJ964 ♥ 74 ♦ A87 ♣ K63</p>	

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

If you do choose to bid 3NT, as I did, East has to lead a heart, a low club or ♠J, otherwise you are going to make the contract. On the lead of a fourth-highest spade, North captures ♠Q with the king and attacks diamonds: the ♦6 eventually yields an entry to hand to take the club finesse.

Across the field, there were 5 pairs in 3NT, of whom 3 were successful. One declarer was defeated on the give-nothing-away lead of ♥7. Two North-Souths played in diamond part-scores that made, 2 somehow made 5♦ – one of them doubled – and several more were in diamond contracts going down. Five East-Wests were defeated in spade contracts, plus there were two successful doubled spade part-scores, which swung a lot of IMPs.

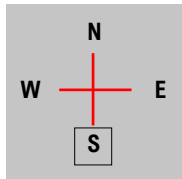
The last hand played a significant role in deciding the rankings after the final match. If you assume that partner must have at least 7 spades for the jump rebid, the logical next step is to bid 4NT and then hope, when partner shows 2 keycards, that either partner has extra length, or the ♠J as well, or if not, that spades break 3-2. In that case 7 spade tricks + 2 heart tricks + 3 diamond tricks + 1 club trick = 13 and you should bid the grand slam.

Board 23

Dealer S | Vul All

♠ Q
♥ AK4
♦ AKQ5
♣ AJ964

♠ 54
♥ JT987
♦ 72
♣ QT73



♠ 986
♥ 632
♦ 943
♣ K852

♠ AKJT732
♥ Q5
♦ JT86
♣

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

However, across the field only 8 of 28 Norths bid the grand slam – 6 of those finished in 7NT. Obviously I can't add, because I wasn't one of those 8 sensible folks. Note to self: got to keep bidding! ♠