

MasterBridge

August Online Swiss Pairs

Tactical bidding

by RAKESH KUMAR



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

Through the pandemic, MasterBridge Online has been running a string of Sunday congress-style events as well as regular single-session pairs competitions. The COVID delta variant-induced lockdown in Sydney has meant that just about every bridge event of late has had a very large number of entries. So it was with the Swiss Pairs on BBO that MasterBridge Online held at the beginning of August. There were 62 pairs in the Open section and another 22 in the Restricted section!

The Open was won by Elli Urbach and Kevin Davies, who were one of only 2 pairs to win 5 of their 6 matches, the other being Sally and Garry Clarke, who finished third. In second spot were Paul Dalley and Tony Nunn, who thrashed yours truly in the last round to climb 7 places (while partner and I crashed by 24 places – such is the nature of the last round reshuffle).

Tactical bidding generated many swings on the day. Most of the time, we found ourselves on the receiving end of it. With that background, here are a few bidding problems for you. Firstly, as dealer, not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents, you hold:

♠ T73
♥ QJT64
♦ J7
♣ K62

What, if anything, will you bid?

Secondly, you have been dealt this good looking hand:

♠ QJ
♥ AQJ7
♦ AKQ54
♣ J9

With neither side vulnerable, partner passes and RHO opens 1 ♥. You double, LHO passes and partner bids 2 ♣. RHO backs in with 2 ♥. What will you do?

Thirdly, you are vulnerable against opponents who are not vulnerable. LHO deals and opens a weak 2 ♠, promising 5 spades and a 4+ minor suit. After 2 passes, it's your turn:

♠ A7
♥ A93
♦ T875
♣ AJ72

And finally, again vulnerable against opponents who are not vulnerable, you hear LHO as dealer open a 15-17 hcp 1NT. Playing multi-Landy, partner overcalls 2♦ showing a hand with a 6+ major suit and you bid a pass-or-correct 2♥, which partner converts to 2♠. Will you bid?

♠ KJ8
♥ Q3
♦ 832
♣ J6432

Back to that first hand. At our table, South opened a multi-2♦, ostensibly showing a 6-card major suit.

Board 3

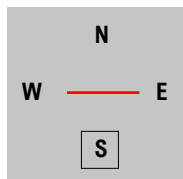
Dealer S | Vul E-W

♠ KJ
♥ K7
♦ A986
♣ AJT85

♠ A952
♥ 853
♦ KQ4
♣ Q74

♠ Q864
♥ A92
♦ T532
♣ 93

♠ T73
♥ QJT64
♦ J7
♣ K62



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

North of course made a strong inquiry with 2NT and on hearing South's 3♥ rebid, showing a poor hand, continued to 4♥ anyway. No one else reached this contract, which cannot be beaten. Two pairs did reach 3NT, but most of the field played in a part-score, so this was a significant swing against us.

Of course 5-card weak 2 openings are becoming increasingly popular and I'm certainly a fan of such openings when holding a 5-card major and a 4+ minor suit. However, a 5332 hand is still a bit rich for me ...

On the hand related to the second problem, you have choices. One is to double again, which would certainly be for penalties and on this occasion could yield a rich reward, because it is possible for 2♥ to go 3 down. However, no one played in 2♥ doubled, although one North did go for -500 in 3♥ doubled.

Board 24

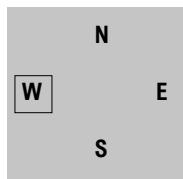
Dealer W | Vul None

♠ 2
♥ KT9654
♦ J9
♣ AKQ2

♠ A65
♥ 82
♦ 762
♣ T7643

♠ QJ
♥ AQJ7
♦ AKQ54
♣ J9

♠ KT98743
♥ 3
♦ T83
♣ 85



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

If you really wanted to maximise your profits, though, a reasonable alternative is to take the risk and bid 3NT. Partner did and fortunately, this was again a unbeatable contract. There were only 3 pairs in it so that was a useful gain.

The third deal of the set features another moderately revolting weak 2-bid. This time the opener did at least have shape, but there was a slight shortage of high card points ...

Board 35

Dealer S | Vul E-W

♠ Q8
♥ QJ54
♦ A9432
♣ Q5

♠ JT62
♥ K87
♦ KQJ6
♣ K6

♠ A7
♥ A93
♦ T875
♣ AJ72

♠ K9543
♥ T62
♦
♣ T9843

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

At the 8 tables where South chose to open, the weak 2-bid gave East quite a problem, because s/he did not hold 4 hearts. Thus at 4 of those tables South was left to play in 2♠, going 2 or 3 down for a large swing, as 3NT is cold.

And so to that last deal. Most folks would open the North hand 1♦, although some 4-card major devotees might start proceedings with 1♥. In either case, East doesn't have a problem: double followed by a rebid in spades conveys the shape and strength, so the unbeatable 4♠ ought to be reached. Despite this, several pairs stopped in a part-score.

Board 41

Dealer N | Vul E-W

♠ 43
♥ AJ72
♦ AKQ65
♣ 87

♠ KJ8
♥ Q3
♦ 832
♣ J6432

♠ AQT972
♥ K96
♦ 9
♣ AKT

♠ 65
♥ T854
♦ JT74
♣ Q95

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

However, at our table, Paul Dalley as North opened 1NT! Across the entire field, no one else did. Had West raised immediately to 3♠, East might have bid game. As it was, North got away with playing in 3♦, which was only 1 down. Another 2 North-South pairs played in 4♦ and also gained a significant number of IMPs, while three sacrificed in 5♦ doubled, which saved a few IMPs.

Daring and unorthodox tactics indeed ... maybe I should try some! ♠