

IBA Swiss Pairs

Deals of Doom

by RAKESH KUMAR



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

The Illawarra Bridge Association had 80 entries for its Swiss Pairs tournament held on RealBridge at the end of September. The event was won by Margaret Foster – Colin Clifford, who had been in the top 5 all day, then had a big win in the final round. Anita Curtis – Karen Creet, who had led for most of the day, finished second with Wei Zhang – William Zhang in third place.

When playing Swiss Pairs, it's usually a good idea to bid vigorously whenever game just might be a possibility. However, this was a day on which the card gods offered up several "deals of doom" where the declaring side was always going to get into trouble – the only question being just how bad that trouble might be!

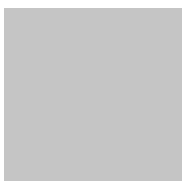
Here are a few problems for you to get your teeth into. Firstly, with customary aggressive enthusiasm, you have staggered into 4♠ on these combined holdings:

♠ A873

♥ AT653

♦ J

♣ AQ2



♠ J962

♥ 97

♦ AT62

♣ JT8

Your LHO leads ♥ K. How will you play the hand?

Secondly, partner as dealer opens 2♠, showing a weak hand with 5 spades and a 4+ minor. Your RHO doubles and you pass. LHO bids 3♥, showing values as s/he did not go via Lebensohl, and RHO converts to 3NT. What will you lead?

♠ A3

♥ QT7542

♦ 62

♣ K62

Thirdly, your LHO opens 1NT (15-17) and RHO transfers to hearts, then jumps to game. Partner leads ♠ 3. How will you defend?

(dummy)
 ♠ T7
 ♥ KJ9876
 ♦
 ♣ Q7653

(you)
 ♠ AQ82
 ♥ T54
 ♦ JT953
 ♣ 8

And finally, one more lead problem. RHO opens 1♠, LHO responds 1NT (forcing for one round) and RHO rebids 2♠ (showing 6+). Now LHO jumps to 4♠. Your choice?

♠ QT2
 ♥ AQ85
 ♦ J762
 ♣ Q3

Here's the board related to the first problem. Things look tricky when dummy comes down, but provided the ♣ K is inside and that the black suits break evenly, prospects are reasonable.

Board 14
 Dealer E | Vul None

♠ J962
 ♥ 97
 ♦ AT62
 ♣ JT8

♠ KQT
 ♥ 842
 ♦ Q93
 ♣ 9763

♠ A873
 ♥ AT653
 ♦ J
 ♣ AQ2

	N		♠ 54
W		E	♥ KQJ
	S		♦ K8754
			♣ K54

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

What you need is to get a cross-ruff going, while testing the clubs at the first opportunity and hopefully establishing a heart trick. At our table, North played the hand to achieve just that: a heart back at trick 2, the spade return ducked to West (who cannot return a spade without giving up on a second trump trick) and the switch to diamonds won with the ace. Now the club finesse, and when 3 rounds of clubs survived, the cross-ruff would always yield 10 tricks one way or the other.

Across the field, only 7 bid and made 4♠, while another 9 made 10 tricks in a spade part-score.

This second problem relates to one of the "deals of doom". East-West have a good fit in diamonds and quite a few high card points between them, but should not be able to make game in either the minor or in notrump. However, the defence has to get its tricks, otherwise West might get away with daylight robbery.

Board 19
Dealer S | Vul E-W

♠ A3
♥ QT7542
♦ 62
♣ K62

♠ KJ52
♥ KJ
♦ KQ543
♣ T9

	N		
W	—	E	
	S		

♠ Q6
♥ A986
♦ AJT98
♣ 83

♠ T9874
♥ 3
♦ 7
♣ AQJ754

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

At our table, after the somewhat brave auction to 3NT, partner decided that the only real hope would have to be tricks in my minor suit. Rather than trying to guess which minor to lead, he laid down ♠ A. Shortly thereafter, the contract was 3 down ...

Across the field, many were successful in diamond partscores or defeated 2♠. However, 7 were allowed to make game, while 8 went down.

The third featured deal comes from the always-critical last round. The defensive problem is really not that difficult – to defeat 4♥, the best hope is that after winning the spade ace, North-South will be able to get a heart trick, a club trick and a club ruff. Playing for that, South should return ♣ 8 at trick 2.

Board 48
Dealer W | Vul E-W

♠ J543
♥ A
♦ K864
♣ KT42

♠ K96
♥ Q32
♦ AQ72
♣ AJ9

	N		
W	—	E	
	S		

♠ T7
♥ KJ9876
♦
♣ Q7653

♠ AQ82
♥ T54
♦ JT953
♣ 8

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

This works out well because North comes in with ♥ A, cashes ♣ K and then gives South the ruff. However, 16 East-West pairs were allowed to make 4♥, for +7 or +8 instead of -5 cross-IMPs. All of the first three place-getters were among them.

The last round also included a "deal of doom" on which I met my fate, putting partner into an impossible game contract for a significant loss of IMPs. A more interesting story, though, is that of the final problem, which was also the final deal of the day.

What did you lead? After either a forcing 1NT or a 10+ hcp 2♣ response by North, if South rebids 2♦ that may dissuade West from leading the suit. However, if South rebids 2♠, a diamond lead is quite likely. Then it's easy to generate 10 tricks as long as trumps break.

Board 54

Dealer E | Vul E-W

♠ J7
♥ JT42
♦ 5
♣ AKJT87

♠ QT2	N	♠ K3
♥ AQ85	W — E	♥ 9763
♦ J762	S	♦ KT84
♣ Q3		♣ 964

♠ A98654
♥ K
♦ AQ93
♣ 52

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

On any other lead, South has to bravely take the diamond finesse to make, or else get some help from the defence trying to cash ♥ Q. Across the field, 4♠ made 16 times, with a swing of 11 IMPs depending on whether or not the contract was successful. ♠