

Central Coast Online Congress 2022

Slams going begging...

by RAKESH KUMAR

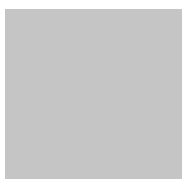


Rakesh Kumar describes himself as an enthusiast who makes enough errors to have plenty of material for bridge columns.

The Central Coast Congress was played on the RealBridge platform over the weekend of 26-27 March. The Swiss Pairs was convincingly won by Michael Courtney - Eugene Gordon, with Mathew Vadas - Terry Brown in second place. The Teams was an equally convincing win for Liz Sylvester - George Fleischer - Yumin Li - Axel Johannsson, with Paul Mcgrath - Michael Simes - Chris Dibley - Peter Livesey finishing second.

Here are a few deals of interest from the Teams. I will present a couple of them to you as problems. Firstly, your RHO opens 2♦ (multi), your LHO bids 2♥ (pass or correct) and partner doubles for takeout, so you find yourself in 2♠. LHO leads ♥A and continues with a heart to RHO's ten. How will you play?

♠ AJ8
♥ 54
♦ AKJ74
♣ A96



♠ Q965
♥ Q
♦ T953
♣ KQ42

Secondly, your RHO opens 1NT (15-17) and in response to 2♣ (simple Stayman) by LHO, rebids 2♠, which is promptly raised to 4♠. What will you lead?

♠ T64
♥ 8765
♦ KT9764

Several slam contracts were available through the day but all seemed to be too difficult for most of the field to reach. For example, only 2 of 23 reached the slam on this board from the first match:

Board 7

Dealer S | Vul All

♠ QJT32
♥ 6
♦ AK97
♣ 654

♠ 9865
♥ QT3
♦ JT643
♣ 8

	N			
W		E		
			S	

♠ AK7
♥ KJ985
♦ Q85
♣ 32

♠ 4
♥ A742
♦ 2
♣ AKQJT97

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	6	-	-	2	4
S	6	-	-	2	4
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

South opens 1♣ and North responds 1♠. East often inserted a 2♥ overcall, the wisdom of which some may question, vulnerable with a rather ordinary suit and in the sandwich seat. However, doing so meant that South's 3♣ rebid was now not a jump and North-South therefore ended either in 3NT (after a stopper ask) or 5♣. When an unimpeded auction began 1♣-1♠-3♣ it was possible for North to bid 4♣ as Minorwood and reach 6♣.

Here is the deal related to the first of the problems. North's multi-2♦ really wasn't supposed to have 4 cards in the other major, but it found a good fit and made South's opening lead easy. West didn't feel like bidding 3♦ over 2♥ so the Moysian part-score was reached.

Board 17

Dealer N | Vul None

♠ K432
♥ KJT973
♦ 82
♣ T

♠ AJ8
♥ 54
♦ AKJ74
♣ A96

	N			
W		E		
			S	

♠ Q965
♥ Q
♦ T953
♣ KQ42

♠ T7
♥ A862
♦ Q6
♣ J8753

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

What did you play on the heart continuation? At our table, declarer very sensibly discarded a club, seeking to maintain control of what appeared to be a rather fragile trump suit. That worked as North switched to ♣10, won in hand to take a spade finesse. North won ♠K, but with ♠10 falling on the second round and diamonds breaking 2-2, it was now possible for declarer to make 10 tricks. Those who played in spades but ruffed the second round of hearts did not fare so well.

At a number of tables, North passed and West opened 1NT, then after an overcall showing hearts or both majors, played in 3♦, which readily made 10 tricks. A handful successfully made game in either direction.

This deal was another not-often-bid slam:

Board 20
Dealer W | Vul All

<p>♠ T7 ♥ J8764 ♦ A5 ♣ JT93</p>		<p>♠ 84 ♥ AKQT52 ♦ K4 ♣ K72</p>	<p>♠ J9 ♥ 9 ♦ QJT7632 ♣ Q84</p>
<p>♠ AKQ6532 ♥ 3 ♦ 98 ♣ A65</p>			

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

After 1♥-1♠-3♥-3♠ (forcing)-4♠-4NT-5♣ (1 or 4 keycards for spades) what will you do? Yes, there may be 2 quick diamond losers. Then again, partner may have ♦ KQ. Faint heart never won anything much ... so bid on and whether or not West leads ♦ A, you can draw trumps and subsequently either pitch both of your diamonds or a losing club on top hearts. Seven N-S pairs found their way to slam: 3 reached 6♠, one played in 6NT, but 3 finished in the failing 6♥.

This is the deal related to the second problem. You would really like to put partner in to get a club ruff, so a heart lead doesn't seem too bad ... did you find it? Now it should not be too difficult for partner to return a club, even if s/he didn't expect you to ruff it!

Board 33
Dealer N | Vul None

<p>♠ QJ872 ♥ QJ94 ♦ A ♣ T96</p>		<p>♠ 5 ♥ AK2 ♦ J82 ♣ Q75432</p>	<p>♠ AK93 ♥ T3 ♦ Q53 ♣ AKJ8</p>
<p>♠ T64 ♥ 8765 ♦ KT9764 ♣</p>			

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

The contract wasn't always played by East. However, only 5 of the 17 sitting South who were on lead against 4♠ found the heart lead, and only 3 of their partners found the club return ... 📌