



Forever fearless ...

It's a bidder's game, they tell me. Here are some examples of no-fear bidding from recent congresses. Not all of them yielded good results!

This first hand is from the **Trumps Autumn Teams in May**, where our team of Julian Foster – Jenna Gibbons, Steven Bock – Rakesh Kumar was successful. Jenna Gibbons was once a member of the NZ Junior Team, and subsequently a member of the Womens Team on a number of occasions. Proving that she is as youthful as ever, she generated a swing in the last round with a bid that might even scare one of the current crop of under-25s. On the hand below, at our table Steven Bock opened a multi-2♦, which could include an 8-9 playing trick hand in a minor, and with opponents silent, the bidding went 2♥-3♣-3♥-4♥. In contrast, at Jenna's table, East opened 1C and Jenna, as South, vulnerable against not, overcalled 1♠!!

After this, it was no surprise that Julian bid competitively to 4♠, which no one felt like doubling. Thus whereas we made the +680 forecast by Deep Finesse, the opponents collected only +100 against 4♠ going one down.

Board 26 ♠AK863
 Dlr: E ♥2
 Vul: All ♦KQ973
 ♣76

♠JT2		♠
♥AQ864	+	♥KJ7
♦J42		♦AT85
♣83	👤	♣AKQ542
	12	♠Q9754
	8	♥T953
	17	♦6
	3	♣JT9

Board 27 ♠JT7
 Dlr: S ♥QT763
 Vul: Nil ♦32
 ♣985

♠KQ98	♠64
♥94	♥AK52
♦KT8	♦AQJ75
♣KQ76 👤	♣A2
3	N:
13	S:
18	E: 5♣6♦3♥5♠6NT
6	W: 5♣6♦3♥5♠6NT
	♠A532
	♥J8
	♦964
	♣JT43

I've become quite a fan of the notion of trying for slam with hands where the estimated combined point count is in the 29-31 range and there's some suggestion of a good fit or a running suit. On this hand from the **Wollstonecraft Congress in June**, only 2 out of 20 Easts found the fearless 6NT on 31 high card points. In fact all it needs is an on-side ace of spades. The slightly more cautious ought to find their way to the glacially cold 6♦, which can cater even for a 4-1 trump break and an off-side ace of spades, but no one bid this. How would you deal with this hand? Much depends on your methods e.g. do you play a weak or a strong no-trump, and if the latter, do you play "checkback" when the bidding starts 1♣-1♦-1NT?

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Fearlessness probably should have its limits, however ... the wildly distributional hand below, from the **Brisbane Water Super Congress in July**, was guaranteed to yield a few stories. In fact scores at the 49 tables ranged from +710 to -1400 for NS! As West, I opened 1♠ and North bid 2♠ (Michaels i.e. hearts and an unspecified minor). South bid 2♣, which was alerted as correctable (!) and, in no-fear mode, I bid 4S, believing that the opponents must have clubs and that I ought to be able to make something of the hearts. When the club ace was led and dummy came down, I figured that although South was obviously void in hearts, I might get out cheaply if North was 1-5-2-5, because after ruffing the club, I could play AK of diamonds, give up a diamond, and hopefully ruff my last diamond. Not quite. South ruffed my diamond king and NS began a cross ruff, so I finished 3 down, mercifully undoubled.

The story was quite different at other table, because North's 3♣ overcall was "Ghestem", showing diamonds and hearts. West knew not to try to ruff a diamond and simply drew 3 rounds of trumps, finishing only one off.

Oh well, a mere 5 IMPs out. That's not going to stop me bidding next time!!!

Board 4	♠93	
Dealer W	♥AQ654	
Vul Both	♦QJ953	
	♣A	
♠AKQ54		♠82
♥KJT8		♥9732
♦AKT6		♦874
♣		♣K843
13	♠JT76	
20 3	♥	
4	♦2	
	♣QJT97652	

By Rakesh Kumar