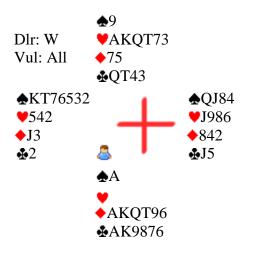


## Wishing you a very slammish 2015! By Rakesh Kumar

By the time this column appears, 2015 will be well under way. As usual, over the Christmas-New Year period, the annual Trumps Festival for most of that time, but did get to play in the

was the place to play bridge. I was away for most of that time, but did get to play in the **Festival Teams on 4 January**. This was well attended, with a strong field of 27 teams. Despite my best efforts to mess things up, our team (Wayne Zhu-Bob Sebesfi, Kevin Davies-Rakesh Kumar) was successful on the day. Wayne and Bob were North-South and demonstrated their bidding skills and systemic advantage on this board from round 4:

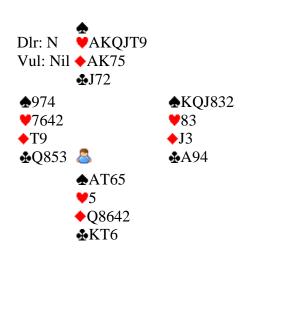


South has an extraordinary hand, but it isn't the easiest to bid in standard methods after North opens 1♥. However, Wayne and Bob were playing 2-over-1 game force, so their auction was 1♥-2♦ (GF)-2 ♥-3♣ (could be a 4-card suit)-4♣ (must be 4-card support)-7♣. As Bob points out, this could fail if the queen was missing and there was an adverse trump break, but with a 1-loser hand, he really wasn't interested in investigating further!

Things could get awkward if West opens  $2 \oplus$  or even  $3 \oplus$ , but then again, that might goad NS into the grand slam. Across the field, 9 NS pairs reached  $7 \oplus$ , one played in 7  $\bullet$  and one in 7NT, while 10 played in a small slam, usually in diamonds, and 6 stopped in game.

## \*

This slam hand, also from round 4, proved to be more difficult to bid:



After 1H by North and a 1 overcall by East, would you bid 2 as South? And if your South bid 2, what would you now rebid as North?

At our table, South did bid 2 and Liam Milne found the excellent splinter rebid of 3 . This should have got our opponents to the glacially cold 6, but fortunately for us there was a subsequent bidding misunderstanding and they fell short. Across the field, only 3 pairs played in 6, while one reached 6NT. Almost everyone else was in game making overtricks. \*

**♦**QJT8 Dlr: E ♥A Vul: E-W **•**AK862 ♣AJ6 **♠**6 **♦**K97432 ♥KJT9 ♥7654 **•**OT743 **•**J5 ♣KT3 르 **\$**0 **♠**A5 **V**Q832 **•**9 **4**987542

Here's an interesting hand from round 6, which was one that got away from us:

At our table, the auction began with three passes, a Polish 1C by North, an optimistic 1S overcall by partner, a negative double, and NS arrived in 3NT. Partner did well to lead the  $\blacklozenge$ J. Declarer played the  $\clubsuit$ A, dropping the queen, and the  $\clubsuit$ J to my king. Recognising that the only way declarer could eventually reach dummy would be via the  $\clubsuit$ A, I tried to knock out this entry while I still had the  $\clubsuit$ 10, so switched to  $\clubsuit$ 6. Declarer played the queen, but unfortunately partner couldn't see his way clear to covering this as the  $\clubsuit$ Q still looked like a possible entry. So 3NT was made, and I thought we'd lose quite a few IMPs.

However, Wayne Zhu as declarer took a different line that proved to be almost unbeatable. After the same opening lead, at trick 2 he played &J. When East perforce captured this with the queen, it was a bit too hard for West to overtake and return a spade. As East could not profitably switch to spades himself, there was no defence on the subsequent play of ace and a low club to the king. Just another flat board!

## \*

A week later, the **Double Bay Swiss Pairs** was won by Martin Bloom-Tony Nunn from Jane Dawson-Peter Gill.

The early rounds of this event featured some bidding conundrums. Here's one:

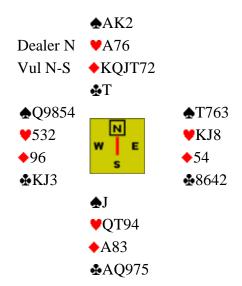
<b>≜</b> J	Partner opens 1♦. Do you bid 1♥
<b>♥</b> QT94	or 2 .?? In any case, partner now
◆A83	jumps to 3. What do you do
<b>♣</b> AQ975	next?

Here's another. Vulnerable against not, in first seat you pick up:

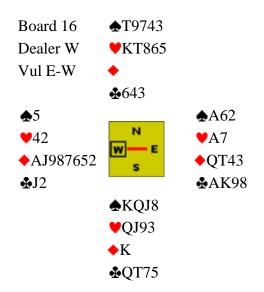
▲5
♥42
◆AJ987652
♣J2

Do you open 3 ??

Back to the first hand. I hope you found a way to make a move towards 6♦, possibly via 4♦ as a slam invitational raise or as a suit agreement keycard inquiry. Partner's hand makes slam completely secure, but only 6 of 16 NS pairs reached it. Our opponents were among those – bad luck for us!



And what about that second hand? If you do open 3, partner has an easy raise to 6?!! Yes, that's what happened at our table, and again slam was bid at only 4 tables across the room – more bad luck for us!!



Years ago, Warren Lazer said to me that the strategy for Swiss Pairs was to "bid anything that moves" and I think these 2 boards bear that out ...

## \*