

# 5+/5+ at Ingleburn

Hands with 5+/5+ shape are fairly common and can have great playing strength if there is a fit with partner, but they do need to be handled with care.

by RAKESH KUMAR



*Rakesh Kumar describes himself as an enthusiastic non-expert who makes enough errors to have plenty of material for bridge columns.*

August kicked off with the Ingleburn RSL Teams, which had 25 entries, with teams coming in from the Southern Highlands and heading out from the city. There was the customary good lunch, plus superb cakes, biscuits and other temptations available throughout the day. I gained a significant amount of weight that Sunday! The event was won by the BOCK team (*Steven Bock-Les Grewcock, Kevin Davies-Rakesh Kumar*) who edged into the lead after 5 of the 7 rounds and finished 8.5 VPs clear.

Hands with 5+/5+ shape are fairly common and can have great playing strength if there's a fit with partner, but they do need to be handled with care. There were quite a few 5+/5+ hands at Ingleburn, some of which posed interesting problems.

However, before I tell you about those hands – have you ever played in a match where not one single board involved the same contract at both tables? We did, in round 5:

Board	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Table 1	2♠/W	3♥/N	4♦/E	4♣/N	2♠/S	4♣/W	4♥/S	3♥/N
Table 2	2♥/N	3♦/E	3NT/W	4♣/S	1NT/E	6♣/W	2♠/S	2♦/W

In fact 7 times out of 8, the contract wasn't even in the same strain! This moved Les Grewcock to ask if we really had been playing the same boards.... unsurprisingly, there were a lot of swings in this match!!

On to those potentially tricky 5+/5+ hands. The first one turned up in round 1:

## Board 6 in Round 1

Dealer E | Vul E-W

	♠ AK753		
	♥ AKJ652		
	♦		
	♣ 52		
♠ QT6	N	♠ J84	
♥ 4	W — [E]	♥ Q973	
♦ K93	S	♦ J852	
♣ QJT984		♣ 63	
	♠ 92		
	♥ T8		
	♦ AQT764		
	♣ AK7		

A possible auction:

W	N	E	S
		P	1D
P	1H	P	2D
P	2S	P	2NT
P	3H	P	4H
P	?		

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	4	6	5	4
S	3	4	6	5	4
E	—	—	—	—	—
W	—	—	—	—	—

Holding a strong 5+/5+ hand as responder can pose some challenges in the bidding. After South opens 1D, even if there is no overcall by West, reaching 6H is difficult. A sequence such as 1D-1H-2D-2S (game-forcing reverse)-2NT (denying 3-card support, showing a club stopper)-3H (promising extra length, presumably a 6-card suit)-4H could be a springboard to the heart slam, but no one bid it, although a few NS pairs came to grief in 6NT.

Some people – including my partner Kevin Davies – seem to hold the view that there is no limit to how much one can bid on a 5+/5+ hand. Or to how little one needs to get into the bidding! Witness this:

**Board 1 in Round 4**

Dealer N | Vul Nil

♠ K86  
♥ 83  
♦ J9864  
♣ K32

♠ T5  
♥ AQ9  
♦ AKT7  
♣ A764

♠ J7432  
♥ 76542  
♦ 3  
♣ T9

♠ AQ9  
♥ KJT  
♦ Q52  
♣ QJ85



7  
15  17  
1

W	N	E	S
	P	1NT	2C!
X	2S	P	P
X	P	P	P

To show both majors

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	–	–	–	–	–
S	–	–	–	–	–
E	6	5	4	2	6
W	6	6	4	2	6

After East opened 1NT (15-17 hcp) Kevin overcalled 2C, showing the majors. Our agreement is that overcaller notionally promises 10-14 hcp, but may have less with shape. Evidently Kevin feels that agreement is open to very liberal interpretation! West doubled, I bid 2S and when this came around to West he doubled again, for penalties. However, I managed to go only 2 off for -300, which unfortunately means it is unlikely that Kevin will be dissuaded from bidding like this in the future, as EW were cold for game. Anyway, we were confident of a 4-5 IMP gain – but it wasn't so. The odds-against slam is tempting, and our teammates were tempted into 6C, which only makes if one plays Ace and a small club, successfully compressing the 10-9 out of existence. This didn't happen, so in fact we lost 8 IMPs on the board. Four EW pairs made 6NT, while almost everyone else was in game.

Sometimes, however, it's not a good idea to pre-empt when holding a 5+/5+ hand. Neil Kimelman, in his book "The Thin Fine Line", points out that before making a pre-emptive bid, one ought to ask "What am I accomplishing? Who am I helping?" Those would have been useful questions to ponder on this hand:

**Board 24 in Round 4**

Dealer W | Vul Nil

♠  
♥ 762  
♦ K9862  
♣ K6542

♠ J74  
♥ 98  
♦ AQ43  
♣ J987

♠ KT85  
♥ KQT5  
♦ JT75  
♣ 3

♠ AQ9632  
♥ AJ43  
♦  
♣ AQT



6  
17  8  
9

W	N	E	S
1S	?		

A 2NT (both minors) bid may give away too much information

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

After West opens 1S, if North bids 2NT, it pinpoints the likely spade shortage. Presumably such an action contributed to the success of the 7 declarers who finished with 10 or 11 tricks in spades, the latter made possible by the lead of a low diamond. However, if the bidding doesn't give away too much information, West will usually go off in 4S – 15 declarers did.



Finally, here's another very swingy board featuring a 5+/5+ hand, on which there was no fit to be found, so a bit of caution was advisable. West may open the bidding with 1C: if so, do you have a mechanism for showing a strong 5+/5+ hand? We did, and staggered into 3NT. This often makes, especially because on the likely diamond lead, East may cover when declarer plays the  $\heartsuit 9$  from dummy. In fact 4 declarers made 3NT, while 5 went off.

**Board 28 in Round 4**

Dealer W | Vul N-S

$\spadesuit$  AKJ43  
 $\heartsuit$  A8  
 $\diamondsuit$  KQT92  
 $\clubsuit$  9

$\spadesuit$  986  
 $\heartsuit$  KQ64  
 $\diamondsuit$  753  
 $\clubsuit$  AQJ



$\spadesuit$  QT7  
 $\heartsuit$  92  
 $\diamondsuit$  J864  
 $\clubsuit$  8652

$\spadesuit$  52  
 $\heartsuit$  JT753  
 $\diamondsuit$  A  
 $\clubsuit$  KT743

17  
 12  3  
 8

W	N	E	S
1C	?		

*Do you have a mechanism for showing a strong 5+/5+ hand?*

	$\clubsuit$	$\diamondsuit$	$\heartsuit$	$\spadesuit$	NT
N	2	3	3	4	2
S	3	3	3	4	2
E	—	—	—	—	—
W	—	—	—	—	—

In theory it's possible to make 4S but in practice only one declarer did so. A few stopped in a spade partscore, making. Take a plus, any plus...