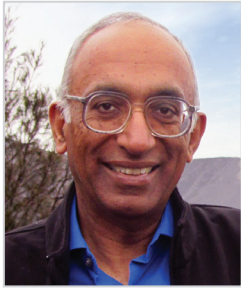


Wollstonecraft Teams 2016

The theme for the day seemed to be “just keep bidding and see if you can get away with it”.

by RAKESH KUMAR



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

The Wollstonecraft Teams was won by *Ishmael Del'Monte – Di Jagelman, Colin Baker – Ann Baker*, who finished a long way in front, with *Marlene Watts – Michael Prescott, Susan Crompton – Adam Edgton* in second place. It was a perfect day for bridge i.e. it was wet and miserable outdoors! Not that those around the 20 tables noticed very much, because we were all having too much fun.

The theme for the day seemed to be “just keep bidding and see if you can get away with it”. Sometimes, getting away with it was crucially dependent on who was the declarer – and no, I’m not referring to the relative competence of the two members of the partnership! What I’m talking about is how hard it can be to find the right lead against 3NT, and how the seat from which 3NT is played can make all the difference. For example on this hand in the morning:

Board 27

Dealer S | Vul None

♠ KQ653	♠ J84	♠ A72
♥ J94	♥ KT	♥ Q7632
♦ J	♦ KT64	♦ 952
♣ J754	♣ AQ93	♣ T8

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ T9	♠ A72
♥ A85	♥ Q7632
♦ AQ873	♦ 952
♣ K62	♣ T8

13
8 6
13

W	N	E	S
			1D
P	2C	P	2D
P	3NT		

West's decision to overcall or not makes a big difference to NS's final contract

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4	5	1	–	2
S	4	5	1	–	2
E	–	–	–	–	–
W	–	–	–	–	–

South opens 1♦ and West may well decide that her hand is not worth an overcall, as 1♠ is at best a bid of questionable merit. Now North is likely to bid 2♣ and then bash 3NT. With no guidance, East will almost inevitably lead his fourth-highest heart and NS will then make at least 10 tricks. Things are very different if South is the notrump bidder e.g. after a weak 1NT opening. Thus 6 declarers sitting North made their contracts comfortably, but 4 sitting South went down. However, if West overcalls South's opening of 1♦ with 1S, North can bid 2♠ asking for a stopper, and when this proves to be missing, NS should find their way to a diamond contract – 9 did so – and 5♦ is in fact unbeatable.

It was a perfect day for bridge.



Sometimes, though, finding the best lead against 3NT is just too hard. Take a look at this specimen:

Board 9

Dealer N | Vul E-W

♠ Q6
♥ Q8
♦ J87
♣ AKT863

♠ KJ9832
♥ 73
♦ 65
♣ 952

♠ T54
♥ KJ94
♦ KQ9
♣ QJ4

♠ A7
♥ AT652
♦ AT432
♣ 7



12
12 □ 4
12

W	N	E	S
	1C	P	1H
P	2C	P	3NT

The contract will go down if North is declarer

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

North opens 1♣ and, vulnerable against not, no sane East is going to make a weak jump overcall with that moth-eaten spade suit and nothing else. South will respond 1♥ and this effectively shuts out West, so when North rebids clubs South will again bash 3NT. With no clue to the lie of the spade suit, it would be a brave or crazy West who started with the ♠A! Of course even on a diamond lead, South doesn't have enough tricks, but finding the spade switch later is no less difficult. At Wollstonecraft, 10 declarers who were in 3NT from the South seat duly made it. You wouldn't want to be in 3NT from the North seat, however, as East's more-or-less inevitable lead of a low spade would see EW take the first 8 tricks!

The fifth match of the day featured a couple of hands with potential for good sacrifices, which of course meant one had to bid boldly and then hope to get away with it. Here's the first example:

Board 14

Dealer E | Vul None

♠ KT2
♥ T864
♦ KQT5
♣ AQ

♠ AQ87
♥ AJ5
♦ 96
♣ T973

♠ 4
♥ KQ9732
♦ A8732
♣ 2

♠ J9653
♥
♦ J4
♣ KJ8654



14
6 □ 11
9

W	N	E	S
		1C	1H
1S	2S	4S	5H
5S	X		

1-level overcall allows NS to find their cheap save in Spades against a cold Heart contract

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	3	5	-	2
S	-	4	5	-	2
E	3	-	-	3	-
W	3	-	-	3	-

If East opens 1♣ (and why not?) then if South overcalls 1♥, West is likely to bid 1♠. Now EW should be able to find their cheap save in 4♠ against a cold 4♥ – or even a relatively cheap save in 5♠X against 5♥! Things are likely to be quite different if South bids 2NT showing the lower two unbid suits, as this will probably shut West out completely.

And here's the second example, although on this hand the final result turned out to be quite a surprise for my partner and me:

Board 15

Dealer S | Vul N-S

♠ AQJ95
♥ AT7
♦ J
♣ J952

♠ K874
♥ 63
♦ T6
♣ KQ643

♠ T
♥ KJ98542
♦ 874
♣ T8

♠ 632
♥ Q
♦ AKQ9532
♣ A7



13
15 □ 8
4

W	N	Me	S
			2H
?			

what will you do if you were west?

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

We arrived in 5♦ by East when partner overcalled South's weak 2♥ with 3♥, showing a long running minor suit and asking me to bid 3NT with a heart stopper. South led ♠10 and when dummy came down, things looked very promising. However, North took the spade, cashed the ♥A and then gave South a spade ruff. We were disappointed, but returned to our home table to discover that our teammates had successfully got to 4♥. We didn't think we were bidding 5♦ as a sacrifice, but although 4♥ was not often bid, it was cold on the ruffing finesse in spades! 🍀