

# IBA Chris Diment Memorial Congress

## When not to be greedy at matchpoints

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 Illawarra Bridge Association held its major annual tournament, designated the Chris Diment Memorial Congress, over the weekend of 2nd and 3rd June. The Figtree Community Hall was full on both days as keen bridge players came from all around (Sydney, Canberra, Southern Highlands) to join the local enthusiasts. The friendly atmosphere and good food made the event thoroughly enjoyable for all those who participated.

On Saturday, the Pairs was won by Grant Cowen - Marelle Irvine, with Helena Dawson - Dave Weston in second place and Les Grewcock - Rakesh Kumar in third. The morning qualifying session seemed to involve a lot of minor suit contracts, not usually a preferred choice at matchpoint pairs. Here are a couple of hands for you to think about.

Both vulnerable, after 2 passes, you open 1♠ with:

♠ AKQ62  
♥ 53  
♦ AQ753  
♣ 6

LHO bids 4♣ natural, which is passed back to you. What will you do?

Nil vulnerable, partner deals and starts proceedings with 3♣. RHO bids 3♠. What will you do?

♠ A3  
♥ A73  
♦ KT98  
♣ J952

On that first hand, you bid 4♦, did you? So did I. LHO now bid 5♣ and partner quite reasonably doubled. However, this didn't turn out too well.

### Board 4

Dealer W | Vul All

♠ T8753  
♥ KJT9  
♦ 964  
♣ J

♠ J94  
♥ AQ864  
♦ 82  
♣ 932

♠ AKQ62  
♥ 53  
♦ AQ753  
♣ 6

♠  
♥ 72  
♦ KJT  
♣ AKQT8754



	W	N	E	S
P	P	1S	4C	
P	P	4D	5C	
X	//			

5  
7  15  
13

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	5	-	-	-	1
S	5	-	-	-	1
E	-	2	1	2	-
W	-	2	-	3	-

As you can see, the 5♣ contract is completely unbeatable: because the heart ace is on side, there are two entries to dummy in the form of the club jack and the heart king, allowing declarer to lead diamonds up to hand and lose only one trick in that suit.

On the second hand, perhaps you decided to try 3NT. I did and South bid 4♠, which was passed back to me. Now what do you do?

In fact bidding 5♣ turned out to be a very good idea, because these were the four hands:

**Board 8**

Dealer W | Vul None

♠ KQT984  
♥ KT92  
♦ J7  
♣ T

♠ 75  
♥ Q85  
♦ 3  
♣ AQ87643



♠ A3  
♥ A73  
♦ KT98  
♣ J952

♠ J62  
♥ J64  
♦ AQ6542  
♣ K

W	N	E	S
3C	P	3NT	4S
P	P	?	

	9	
8	□	12
	11	

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

On the 1-1 trump break, partner established the diamonds to make 11 tricks.

In the afternoon session, I learnt a salutary lesson about card play at matchpoints. In some respects, this tends to be all about greed. Instead of making the safe and sensible play to ensure the contract, as in a teams match, one seems to be constantly striving, often at great risk, to maximise the number of tricks taken. The proviso is that such risks should only be taken when the contract is expected to be the "normal" one across the field. So ... what should you do as declarer on this hand?

**Board 16**

Dealer W | Vul E-W

♠ QT  
♥ JT7  
♦ AQ7  
♣ KQ765



♠ AJ9853  
♥ A98  
♦ T92  
♣ 3

W	N	E	S
1NT	P	2H	P
2S	P	4S	//

The bidding has gone 1NT (14-17 hcp) by West-2♥ transfer-2♠-4♠ and North leads the ♦3. Dummy's 10 is covered by the king and you take the ace. At trick 2 you play a top club honour and North takes the ♣A to return ♥6. You duck this to South's king and a diamond comes back, so you rise ace, discard dummy's losing diamond on the other top club and play a spade from hand. It holds. Now what? Do you repeat the spade finesse, playing for what seem to be 10 sure tricks? Or take the apparently likely-to-succeed split honour finesse in hearts to make 11?

It being matchpoints, I decided to take the split honour finesse as it was the last time I would be in hand to do so. But that failed ... and now I realised that I had creatively found a way to go off unless North's ♠K dropped doubleton!! Very fortunately for me, it did, so I made 10 tricks.

As partner gently pointed out, what I failed to realise is that having reached 4♠ because of the thin 1NT opening – which would not be the preferred action across most of the field – I was already ahead if I made the game. In fact only 2 of 7 in the Final, 3 of 7 in the Plate, and one pair in the Consolation sections reached 4♠.

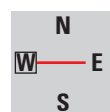
As if any further proof was needed that greed is not always good at matchpoint pairs, if I had played sensibly and repeated the spade finesse, then when I cashed the ♥A in anticipation of conceding a heart trick, the queen would have dropped ... which would have allowed me to make 11 tricks!!!

**Board 16**

Dealer W | Vul E-W

♠ K6  
♥ 65432  
♦ J863  
♣ AJ

♠ QT  
♥ JT7  
♦ AQ7  
♣ KQ765



♠ AJ9853  
♥ A98  
♦ T92  
♣ 3

♠ 742  
♥ KQ  
♦ K54  
♣ T9842

	9	
14	□	9
	8	

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

Sunday was the Teams, played as 6 × 9-board matches. This was won by GREWCOCK (Les Grewcock - Rakesh Kumar - Marilyn Chadwick - Toni Sharp) who narrowly beat DAWSON (Helena Dawson - Dave Weston - Richard Douglas - Bob Sebesfi) with STEAD (Chris Stead - John Brockwell - Graham Evans - Kevin Tant) coming in third.

Success at Teams is of course primarily about getting to games, playing/defending carefully and making fewer errors than one's opponents. However, there are usually a few hands on which there's an opportunity to shine in the bidding. That didn't seem to happen until quite late in the day in this event, as most of the swings were around errors that were or were not made – or errors that one could get away with! Anyway, here are two hands for you to think about.

Firstly, vulnerable against not, you deal and open 1♣. LHO passes and partner bids 1♠. RHO also passes. What will you rebid?

♠ 3  
♥ K7  
♦ J974  
♣ AKQT54

W	N	E	S
1C	P	1S	P
?			

Secondly, again vulnerable against not – so that game bonus once more beckons very strongly – you deal and open 1♣. Opponents are silent and partner's bid of 1♥ comes back to you for further consideration. How will you solve the rebid problem?

♠ KJ7  
♥ A98  
♦ A  
♣ KQJT62

W	N	E	S
	1C	P	1H
P	?		

Returning to the first hand, an immediate bid of 3NT is the practical bid at this point. Across the field of 28 teams, 11 East-West pairs were in this contract. It turned out to be quite easy when the hands were thus:

### Board 16

Dealer W | Vul E-W

♠ AQ76  
♥ T6432  
♦ A82  
♣ 8

W	N	E	S
1C	P	1S	P
3NT	//		

♠ 3  
♥ K7  
♦ J974  
♣ AKQT54

♠ JT82  
♥ AJ9  
♦ KT3  
♣ J97

♠ K954  
♥ Q85  
♦ Q65  
♣ 632

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

10  
13 □ 10  
7

The second hand is a challenge for most natural systems. Our opponents didn't get past 3♥. Our teammates did rather better: North rebid 1♠, was raised to 2♠ and promptly bid game on the 4-3 fit. This rolled home with an overtrick.

### Board 21

Dealer N | Vul N-S

♠ KJ7  
♥ A98  
♦ A  
♣ KQJT62

W	N	E	S
	1C	P	1H
P	1S	P	2S
P	4S	//	

♠ T3  
♥ T75  
♦ KQT743  
♣ 53

♠ 9852  
♥ KJ3  
♦ J82  
♣ A84

♠ AQ64  
♥ Q642  
♦ 965  
♣ 97

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

18  
5 □ 9  
8

Across the field, four North-South pairs played in 4♠, another four in a rather more fragile 4♥, and four more found their way to 5♣, while the remainder stopped in partscores. But with a shapely 18 hcp and a positive response, you want to be in game ... just keep bidding! ♠