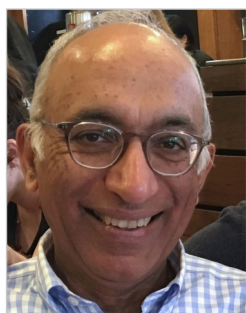


# Hunters Hill Teams 2018

## Full of bidding challenges

by RAKESH KUMAR



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

The Hunters Hill Teams was won by HUDSON (David Hudson - Anita Curtis - Kim Neale - Linda King) who stormed in with a 19.4 VP win in the last round. WATTS (Marlene Watts - Peter Gill - Martin Bloom - Tony Nunn) were second. The large margin of HUDSON's victory over the LI team (Yumin Li - Wei Zhang - William Zhang - Michael Wu) meant the latter finished in third place, despite having led for most of the day.

There's something about slams on board 1 at the Hunters Hill Teams – in 2016, my column about this event started with one such hand! In fact the first board was one of several bidding challenges during the day, the hands being such that they raised questions about what to bid or even whether to bid at all. The auction on this board typically commenced with 1♣ by North and 1♠ by South, but after that North has choices. With 4-card support, aces and a singleton, at the very least North wants to strongly invite game. So one possibility is a 3♠ rebid. Of course North might judge that the hand is good enough to push to game even opposite a minimum 1♠ response, in which case an alternative rebid is a splinter of 3♥.

### Board 12

Dealer N | Vul None

	♠ K983		
	♥ 2		
	♦ A876		
	♣ AQJ7		
♠ Q5	N	♠ J6	
♥ K43	W	♥ JT976	
♦ Q542	E	♦ K93	
♣ 9843	S	♣ 652	
	♠ AT742		
	♥ AQ85		
	♦ JT		
	♣ KT		

W	N	E	S
	1C	P	1S
P	?		

*3S? Or 3H splinter?*

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	5	4	3	7	5
S	5	4	3	7	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Opposite a 3♠ rebid, South is more than happy to get involved in investigating whether slam is on – if playing that cue bids show first or second round controls, South might bid 4♣, otherwise 4♥. However, opposite a splinter in hearts, South's hand appears to be somewhat devalued. Perhaps this is why so many didn't bid the slam: across the Open field, 17 reached 6♠ but 21 did not.

Now here are some problems for you. Firstly, both vulnerable, partner passes and RHO opens 1♦. Do you overcall 1♠?

♠ KQT92
♥ Q98
♦ 84
♣ T43

Secondly, nil vulnerable, you open 2♠ (weak), LHO passes and partner raises to 4♠. RHO now bids 4NT, showing two places to play, and LHO bids 5♦. Do you bid 5♠ when it comes back to you?

♠ KQ9754  
♥ 5  
♦ 4  
♣ QT982

Thirdly, vulnerable against not, partner passes as dealer and RHO bids 3♣. Do you bid 3♦?

♠ A93  
♥ 873  
♦ AJT852  
♣ K

Back to the first hand. Many in the South seat would overcall 1♠ "for the lead, partner". LHO would then make a negative double and partner would certainly raise your overcall, possibly even to 3♠. Nothing could be more certain to ensure that East-West played in 5♦.

Now see what happens if South passes. West bids 1♥, East rebids 1NT and West has a problem. At our table I tried 2♣ checkback, thinking that if East had 4 spades and only 2 hearts I would hear a 2♠ or 3♠ rebid and could then safely bid 3NT. Alas, partner rebid 3♥ – so he had a good 1NT rebid, he did have 3 hearts and he might still have 4 spades but I could never find out. With a known 27 hcp between the hands, should I correct to 5♦ or hope that 9 tricks would be rather easier than 11? I passed.

**Board 13**

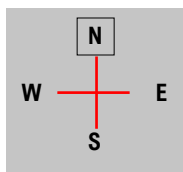
Dealer N | Vul All

♠ AJ75  
♥ J54  
♦ 763  
♣ 875

♠ 4  
♥ KT73  
♦ AQ52  
♣ AJ62

♠ 863  
♥ A62  
♦ KJT9  
♣ KQ9

♠ KQT92  
♥ Q98  
♦ 84  
♣ T43



	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	5	6	5	1	2
W	5	6	5	1	2

Across the field, 12 East-West pairs went off in 3NT, whereas most made 12 tricks in diamonds – and one was even in the slam! Maybe I should have considered bidding 4♥ – six pairs made 10 tricks in that contract.

On the second hand, it's true that 5♠ is only one off, but bidding 5♠ seems to be the only way to push East-West into a glacially cold 6♦ contract, or a slightly more fragile – but still cold – 6♥ contract.

**Board 11**

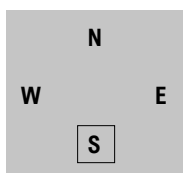
Dealer S | Vul None

♠ A632  
♥ 432  
♦ 53  
♣ A763

♠ JT8  
♥ T986  
♦ T9872  
♣ J

♠ AKQJ7  
♦ AKQJ6  
♣ K54

♠ KQ9754  
♥ 5  
♦ 4  
♣ QT982



	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	-	-	4	-
S	2	-	-	4	-
E	-	6	6	-	-
W	-	6	6	-	-

So these two hands illustrate the potential virtues of keeping quiet. Unfortunately I don't think they offer any obvious guidelines about *when* to keep quiet. Overbidding can sometimes be handsomely rewarded, as on this third hand.

After my 3♦ overcall, partner, a passed hand, now bid 3NT! I felt very uncomfortable about what might happen next, but he took the club lead on table, played on diamonds and in due course made 4 diamond tricks and 2 tricks in every other suit, for an overtrick!!

**Board 22**

Dealer E | Vul E-W

♠ JT752			
♥ AQ96			
♦ K74			
♣ 7			
♠ A93	♠ Q86		
♥ 873	♥ KJT4		
♦ AJT852	♦ 96		
♣ K	♣ AT92		
♠ K4			
♥ 52			
♦ Q3			
♣ QJ86543			

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

Deep Finesse says the contract should go down, but that would involve leading the ♠K! Across the field, 9 East-West pairs bid and made 3NT, 5 with an overtrick. 🟩