

# NSWBA Online Spring Matchpoint Swiss Pairs

## Irresistible force

by RAKESH KUMAR



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

The [NSWBA Online Spring Matchpoint Swiss Pairs](#) was the first NSW congress event to be played on RealBridge. This is a wonderful new online platform which allows players to see and talk to one another as if at a real bridge table: there is a video window at each seat of the virtual table, a virtual bidding box, and unlike BBO, one alerts partner's bids and provides explanations if asked. Playing on RealBridge retains all the positive features of online bridge e.g. no insufficient bids, no revokes etc. The platform is now in the late stages of development – NSWBA has contributed to testing it and to providing feedback to the developers.

Until we can safely return to face-to-face bridge for larger tournaments, RealBridge is likely to be a saviour. Among its many valuable features are that it enables proper movements for Swiss Teams competitions. RealBridge will soon be used to run national events, starting with the Sydney Spring Nationals Online Pairs in December.

The NSWBA event, which had a field of 26 pairs, was won by Tony Nunn - Paul Dalley. Their performance through the day was superb – they were first after the first round and never relinquished that spot. Nicoleta Giura - Nick Hughes finished second, with a massive win in the last round, while Pam Crichton - Ross Crichton finished third after a day of very steady bridge, always being in contention.

There were, of course, many interesting deals. As a lead-in to a few of those, here are a couple of hands to think about. Firstly, partner opens 2NT showing a 20-22 hcp balanced hand. What will you bid with this?

- ♠ 8532
- ♥ A9
- ♦ KQJT
- ♣ Q82

Secondly, as dealer you open the hand below with 1♣, LHO overcalls 1♠, partner doubles promising 4+ hearts and RHO bids a pre-emptive 3♠. What if anything will you bid?

- ♠ J
- ♥ A432
- ♦ K52
- ♣ A8543

Nunn-Dalley established their path to victory in round 1, when they crushed us. My contribution to their success was to go down in a cold contract, but the focus really should be on their excellent bidding. Firstly there was this board:

### Board 3

Dealer S | Vul E-W

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♠ KT6</li> <li>♥ T54</li> <li>♦ AQT</li> <li>♣ 9643</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♠ J953</li> <li>♥ A872</li> <li>♦ 9652</li> <li>♣ K</li> </ul>	<table style="border: 1px solid gray; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">—</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W	—	E		S		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♠ 4</li> <li>♥ K6</li> <li>♦ 87</li> <li>♣ AQJT8752</li> </ul>
	N											
W	—	E										
	S											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♠ AQ872</li> <li>♥ QJ93</li> <li>♦ KJ43</li> <li>♣</li> </ul>												

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

Partner opened 1 ♠ and I responded 3 ♣ showing 6-9 hcp and 4+ support. Paul Dalley unhesitatingly bid 5 ♣! When this came back to me I figured he was bidding 5 ♣ to make, so I saved in 5 ♠. Now Tony Nunn doubled. We duly went for -500, which was better than the -600 we would have scored for 5 ♣ making, but not by much ...

A few boards later, along came this:

**Board 8**

Dealer W | Vul None

♠  
♥ T732  
♦ 96542  
♣ J753

♠ AKJ9 ♥ QJ ♦ A3 ♣ AKT96	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">N</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">W</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">E</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">S</div> </div>	♠ 8532 ♥ A9 ♦ KQJT ♣ Q82
-----------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------

♠ QT764  
♥ K8654  
♦ 87  
♣ 4

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	6	6	1	6	7
W	7	4	1	5	7

As East, would you set about inquiring for a possible spade fit? Many did, and many of those who did had cause to regret doing so. Eight of 13 played in 6 ♠, but 5 went down. Nunn-Dalley bid 2NT-4NT (quantitative)-6NT. They were thus one of only two pairs to reach that contract. However, the other pair went down ... Tony Nunn took my diamond lead in hand, played the ♣ A and a club to the queen, then took the spade finesse, conceded a club to my jack and claimed, with 4 tricks each in clubs and diamonds, 3 in spades and one in hearts. This was almost a top – outdone only by Ross Crichton, who was doubled in 6 ♠ and proceeded to make it.

A little later in the day, this deal turned up; at our table, there was the vigorous bidding that I described. Did you bid 4 ♥, on the grounds that if North is weak, partner will have a good hand? If like me you chose to do so, you soon realised that it was going to be a little bit of a challenge to make your contract.

**Board 26**

Dealer E | Vul Both

♠ 7643  
♥ Q8  
♦ T8643  
♣ J7

♠ AK9 ♥ J765 ♦ J9 ♣ KQ62	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">N</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">W</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">E</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">S</div> </div>	♠ J ♥ A432 ♦ K52 ♣ A8543
-----------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------

♠ QT852  
♥ KT9  
♦ AQ7  
♣ T9

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

At our table, South led a spade, taken on the table, and I ducked a round of hearts. A club was returned. Now a heart to the ace and a club back to table allowed a diamond discard on another top spade and a ruff of the last spade. After that I could play on clubs and when South ruffed in, she was endplayed. In fact only 2 of 6 in 4 ♥ made their contract – I was gratified to note that I was in very good company, because the other successful declarer was Tony Nunn. Of course it might all have been easier if I had just passed: partner would have bid 3NT, which is a much less fragile contract and was made by 4 East-West pairs.

Nunn-Dalley continued to be an irresistible force through the afternoon and did not encounter any immovable objects among their opposition. Here's another example of excellent bidding from a later match. Almost the entire field played in 6 ♥ (11 of 13 pairs – one pair stopped in 5 ♥) but after a 2NT opening and an auction that would have had 6 ♥ played by East, Tony Nunn converted to 6NT.

**Board 40**  
 Dealer W | Vul None

<p>♠ KT6          ♥ AQ5          ♦ KJT5          ♣ AKQ</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%; height: 100%;"> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N			W			E		S			<p>♠ A743          ♥ T9          ♦ 986          ♣ T863</p> <p>♠ QJ852          ♥ 87          ♦ 42          ♣ 7542</p>	<p>♠ 9          ♥ KJ6432          ♦ AQ73          ♣ J9</p>
	N														
W			E												
	S														

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	3	6	6	2	5
W	3	6	6	2	6

This protected the ♠ K and as North quite reasonably did not lay down ♠ A, the result was 13 tricks, which translated as matchpoint gold: a 100% score for +1020 vs a majority result of +980 and a few +1010s. 🏆