

# WITS Swiss Pairs 2020

## Why overthinking is bad for you

by RAKESH KUMAR



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

Sunday 9 February was one of Sydney's wettest days for many months. At the NSWBA, 15 pairs continued their battle for the top 3 places in the Women's Interstate Teams Selection, while a Swiss Pairs competition ran in parallel. Remarkably, despite the weather, there were 30 pairs playing in this. After 6 rounds, the winners were Ashley Bach – Arlene Dalley, who finished a long way ahead of Hugh Grosvenor – Tania Lloyd, closely followed by Andre Korenhof – Warren Lazer.

Before I show you a few boards, try a couple of problems. Firstly, you hold:

♠ A62  
♥ Q7542  
♦ AKQJ3  
♣

Both vulnerable, RHO passes as dealer and you open 1♥. LHO overcalls 2♠ and partner bids 3♠, showing a good raise in hearts. Your hand has improved considerably so you bid 4♣ (first or second round control) and partner now bids 4♦, obviously shortage. Will you move further? If you try RKCB, partner shows 1 keycard. What then?

Now for a defensive problem at trick 2. Shown below are dummy and your hand:

*(Dummy)*

♠ KQ3  
♥ 753  
♦ AQJ6  
♣ A86

*(You)*

♠ 9  
♥ AJ62  
♦ 975432  
♣ 43

As dealer you pass, so does LHO, then partner opens 1♣ (2+ cards) and RHO overcalls 1NT. You pass and LHO surprises you by bidding 4♠. Partner leads the ♥8 to your ace, declarer following with the ♥Q. What will you return?

As is usual for Swiss pairs, aggressive bidding was the order of the day. This board from the afternoon was one of those where the bidding, play and defence were all very relevant to the outcome – it therefore generated quite significant swings in both directions.

At most tables, the auction began 1♠ – P – P – double by South. At our table, West rebid 2♠ and North bid 3♥, raised to 4♥ by South, which was passed out.

This contract can only be beaten legitimately if East leads a diamond. But who is going to find that? In real life, West is more or less endplayed after winning the ♠AK. If she also cashes the ♣A, the outcome depends on whether North decides to try to drop the ♥K or not.

**Board 8**

Dealer W | Vul None

♠ AK8654 ♥ K ♦ K842 ♣ A7	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W	E	S	♠ QT ♥ QJ87532 ♦ 976 ♣ 6  ♠ 932 ♥ 94 ♦ JT3 ♣ JT932  ♠ J7 ♥ AT6 ♦ AQ5 ♣ KQ854
N						
W						
E						
S						

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

In practice, 3 players sitting North made only 9 tricks in hearts (one in a part-score, one doubled in 4♥). Another 3 made their game contract, but 2 more who also made 10 tricks were in 5♥ doubled, after East-West competed to 4♠. Meanwhile, 7 Wests played in 4♠, sometimes doubled: 5 of these went down but 2 somehow made 10 tricks. Reflecting the fact that the scores were all over the place, the datum was NS -70.

Another board from the same match needed aggressive bidding, but this was mostly not in evidence.

**Board 7**

Dealer S | Vul All

♠ A62 ♥ Q7542 ♦ AKQJ3 ♣	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W	E	S	♠ KJT975 ♥ 6 ♦ 54 ♣ AT62  ♠ Q4 ♥ AJT983 ♦ 9 ♣ Q974  ♠ 83 ♥ K ♦ T8762 ♣ KJ853
N						
W						
E						
S						

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	-	-	-	-
S	1	-	-	-	-
E	-	4	7	-	4
W	-	2	7	-	2

After West's 1♥ opening and North's 2♠ weak jump, East's 3♠ is very encouraging, but even after cue bidding and RKCB, it seemed to be just too difficult for East-West to find their way to slam because of all the things that East couldn't show (6-card support, ♥A rather than ♣A). Thus only 4 of 15 reached 6♥, but it is noteworthy that 2 of the 3 top finishers did get there (all 3 were sitting East-West on this round).



*Arlene Dalley and Ashley Bach won the WITS Swiss Pairs. Runners-up Hugh Grosvenor and Tania Lloyd.*

Finally to that defensive problem, which proves that overthinking is bad for your bridge. Here's the full board, now in its actual orientation:

**Board 15**

Dealer S | Vul N-S

♠ A2  
♥ KT98  
♦ T8  
♣ KJ975

♠ JT87654  
♥ Q4  
♦ K  
♣ QT2

♠ 9  
♥ AJ62  
♦ 975432  
♣ 43

♠ KQ3  
♥ 753  
♦ AQJ6  
♣ A86

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

My partner's lead of ♥8 was the only one to give our side a legitimate chance to beat the contract (it's completely safe after the usual diamond lead). But I had to return a club – did you? I didn't! Somehow I convinced myself that declarer's play of ♥Q was a falsecard and that he actually had 3 heart losers, so I returned a heart. The operation was a success (it was indeed a falsecard) but the patient died (there was only one more loser in the heart suit). Thus I allowed our opponents to join the other 7 (of 13) who were in 4♠ and made their contract ... 🟩