

# Southern Highlands Online IMP Swiss Pairs

## Thoughtful defence required

by RAKESH KUMAR



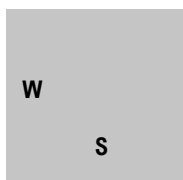
*Rakesh Kumar describes himself as an enthusiast who makes enough errors to have plenty of material for bridge columns.*

The IMPs pairs event that comprised the second day of the [Southern Highlands Online Congress](#) had a large field in the Open section: there were 36 pairs, of whom the majority were strong or very strong. The Restricted section had 16 pairs, including a number from the Southern Highlands region.

The Open was won by Paul Weaver – Terry Bodycote, who stormed into first place with a huge win in the last round, finishing on +85 IMPs. Pam Crichton – Ross Crichton were second on +70 IMPs. The Restricted was won by Cheryl Waters – Marie Pickering, who were in contention throughout that event and finished on +60 IMPs.

As is always the way when playing IMPs Swiss Pairs, many swings depended on getting things right in defence – the opponents have of course overbid and the question is whether you will let them get away with it. Here are two defensive problems to consider. Firstly, you are West and the opponents have bid to 4♠ via a weak 1NT opening (12-14 hcp) and a Smolen auction in which South's 3♥ promised 4 hearts and 5+ spades:

♠ J43  
♥ 4  
♦ 543  
♣ AKQ653



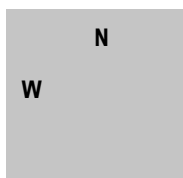
♠ KQT872  
♥ A753  
♦ J  
♣ J7

W	N	E	S
	1NT	P	2C
X	2D	P	3H
P	4S	//	

Partner leads ♣10 and you cash 2 club tricks. Now what?

Secondly, you are North and the opponents have reached 3NT via the auction shown. Partner leads ♥6, declarer plays low from dummy and takes the trick with ♥K. Next he leads a diamond to the ace and plays a low club from table. Will you rise with the ♣A?

♠ KT92  
♥ 732  
♦ Q9  
♣ A863



♠ A853  
♥ JT5  
♦ AT  
♣ J954

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

Some days it's all in the bidding, especially slam bidding. That wasn't the case on Sunday 8 November, as there were not many slam deals through the day. However, this board generated a bit of excitement. Would you get to a grand slam on the East-West cards?

**Board 36**

Dealer W | Vul All

♠ T76  
♥ 64  
♦ K8654  
♣ 854

♠ A9  
♥ AQT97  
♦ 3  
♣ KJ972

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ KJ42  
♥ K83  
♦ AQJ  
♣ AQ6

♠ Q853  
♥ J52  
♦ T972  
♣ T3

W	N	E	S
1H	P	2NT	P
4C	P	4NT	P
5S	P	5NT	P
6C	P	7H	//

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

One approach is via 1♥-1♠-2♣ and a fourth suit forcing bid by responder: both John Friesen-Richard Harman (from Albury) and Vicky Lisle-Ian Lisle took this path, the former to 7♥ and the latter to the top spot of 7NT. Another is via Jacoby 2NT: partner and I play that a 4-level rebid shows a second 5+ suit and 14+ hcp, so at least small slam was automatic after I rebid 4♣. When I was able to show 2 keycards plus the queen of trumps, as well as ♣K, reaching 7♥ was easy.

Only 3 of 18 pairs bid a grand, so finding your way to one was worth 11 IMPs.

Back to the first defensive problem. At trick 3, you have to switch to a heart. Declarer needs to establish diamond tricks, but when partner comes in with ♦A, s/he can now give you a ruff, which will earn your side 7.2 IMPs.

What about if declarer draws all the trumps? Bridge Solver demonstrates that the contract can then be made on a trump squeeze, but if West had switched to a heart at trick 2 there would be no escape – provided that East did not cover ♥Q! In the real world, none of those things happened.

**Board 13**

Dealer N | Vul All

♠ A95  
♥ QJ2  
♦ KQ82  
♣ 982

♠ J43  
♥ 4  
♦ 543  
♣ AKQ653

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 6  
♥ KT986  
♦ AT976  
♣ T4

♠ KQT872  
♥ A753  
♦ J  
♣ J7

W	N	E	S
	1NT	P	2C
X	2D	P	3H
P	4S	//	

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

Note that the same logic applies on an auction where South becomes declarer in 4♠. As opening leader, you cash 2 club tricks and now must switch to your singleton heart to have any hope of beating the contract. In the event, 9 pairs made 10 tricks in spades, while 8 pairs were held to 9 tricks.

Here's the board relating to the second defensive problem. At our table, partner opened a slightly off-shape 1NT and after the opening lead, could see 8 tricks if diamonds split 3-2. He immediately crossed to dummy with ♦A to lead a club up, hoping to sneak a ninth trick.

**Board 47**  
Dealer S | Vul N-S

♠ KT92  
♥ 732  
♦ Q9  
♣ A863

♠ A853  
♥ JT5  
♦ AT  
♣ J954

♠ 76  
♥ AK  
♦ K87654  
♣ KQ7

♠ QJ4  
♥ Q9864  
♦ J32  
♣ T2

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	3	4	1	2	2
W	3	4	1	2	2

That worked – to beat the contract, North has to rise with the ♣A and continue hearts. Finding that line of defence gains 7.8 IMPs, whereas not doing so loses 2.9 IMPs. On the day, 10 pairs made 3NT – some on slightly more "interesting" lines of play – while 3 were defeated. 🍀