

# SBC Charity Swiss Pairs

## Is there such a thing as overbidding?

by RAKESH KUMAR



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

The Sydney Bridge Centre "Christmas in July" Congress was intended to be a face-to-face weekend tournament, but it became another victim of the COVID outbreak. As a replacement, SBC organised a BBO Swiss Pairs competition, with one-third of the entry fee donated to the Salvation Army's Red Shield Appeal. This triggered a huge response, with a field of 87 pairs. Of these, 55 were in the Open event, which was won by Mathew Vadas - George Fleischer, who overtook most-of-the-day leaders Eric Lippey - Kerry Boytell in the last of the 6 rounds, while Nick Hughes - Nicoleta Giura finished third.

The day got off to an exciting start: only 7 of 28 reached this cold grand slam on Board 1. Naturally, our opponents were one of those seven, promptly leading to a 7 IMP swing against us. Would you have bid it?

### Board 1

Dealer N | Vul None

<p>♠ 975 ♥ QJ942 ♦ 85 ♣ K74</p>	<p>♠ AKQT4 ♥ ♦ KJ943 ♣ T83</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ 863 ♥ T875 ♦ 72 ♣ 9652</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	<p>♠ J2 ♥ AK63 ♦ AQT6 ♣ AQJ</p>											

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

In Swiss Pairs, small differences in the approach to bidding can lead to big differences in the results obtained. Here are a couple of bidding questions for you. Firstly, with both sides vulnerable, you hold:

- ♠ A52
- ♥ 953
- ♦ J9876
- ♣ 73

Partner deals and opens 1♠. Your RHO overcalls 1NT. Will you raise?

Secondly, with neither side vulnerable, you hold:

♠ AK873  
♥ 42  
♦ 4  
♣ Q7542

LHO opens 1♦ as dealer (promising 4+ cards) and partner passes. RHO responds 1♥. What will you bid?

And while you're thinking about those, here is an opening lead problem for you. This is your hand:

♠ JT5  
♥ A85  
♦ QJ843  
♣ J3

RHO opens 1♦ as dealer (again promising 4+ cards) and LHO responds 1♠. When RHO rebids 2NT, LHO raises to 3NT. Your choice?

Swiss Pairs does not reward caution, so aggressive bidding to thin games was of course endemic. However, there may be such a thing as overbidding. On this board from round 1, which is the basis of the first bidding question above, virtually everyone opened 1♠ as South, after which West overcalled 1NT. But if North raises to 2♠, East bids 3♥, forcing to game, and plays in 4♥, which makes easily on the normal lead of a spade or ♦5.

**Board 7**

Dealer S | Vul Both

<p>♠ KJ8 ♥ J72 ♦ AT2 ♣ AKJ2</p>	<p>♠ A52 ♥ 953 ♦ J9876 ♣ 73</p>		<p>♠ 9 ♥ KT864 ♦ KQ43 ♣ T86</p>
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♠ QT7643  
♥ AQ  
♦ 5  
♣ Q954

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

In contrast, if North passes, East transfers and it is West who plays in 4♥. At those tables where North now chose to lead her/his doubleton club, the contract went down: although BridgeSolver indicates that 4♥ can make from either side, for West to succeed after the club lead requires setting up a spade trick early, to be able to discard a club from dummy.

This board from round 3 is the basis of the second bidding question. At most tables, after 1♦ by West and 1♥ by East, South bid 1♠. At our table, after 1♦-P-1♥, South bid 2♦, an efficient way of showing both black suits. After a 1♠ overcall, East-West were usually allowed to play in 4♥, which of course went down, but that wasn't at all expensive. However, 11 North-South pairs reached 4♠. The usual lead was ♦K, followed by a switch to ♥Q, taken by the ace. Trumps were drawn in 2 rounds and a low club led off the table, ducked by West and won by declarer with ♣K. At this point the only chance is for West to have started with a doubleton ♣A, so declarer needs to play a low club back, refusing to cover East's ♣9. All but one of those in 4♠ made it, including 4 declarers who were doubled.

**Board 24**  
Dealer W | Vul None

♠ T952  
♥ AT  
♦ 8753  
♣ KT6

♠ J4  
♥ K753  
♦ QJ962  
♣ A3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q6  
♥ QJ986  
♦ AKT  
♣ J98

♠ AK873  
♥ 42  
♦ 4  
♣ Q7542

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

And finally, here is the board that relates to the opening lead question. After 1♦-1♠-2NT-3NT, did you lead a spade? Unless you do so, the contract makes.

**Board 40**  
Dealer W | Vul None

♠ JT5  
♥ A85  
♦ QJ843  
♣ J3

♠ 82  
♥ KQ32  
♦ AKT96  
♣ AK

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A764  
♥ T96  
♦  
♣ Q98642

♠ KQ93  
♥ J74  
♦ 752  
♣ T75

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

It is a testament to the ability of our top experts that George Bilski, Bruce Neill and Peter Gill (who did have a bit more information from the auction at their table) found the necessary lead when 3NT was played by West (as happened 15 times) and set the contract. The rest of us can ponder over how we should have worked this out ... 🚩