

# NSBC Summer Online Teams

## Big hands, big swings

by RAKESH KUMAR



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

In this almost-post-COVID environment, North Shore Bridge Club continues to regularly run congresses on RealBridge, which certainly makes them more accessible to those who don't live in metropolitan Sydney. Their Summer Online Teams on 8 January was the first such Congress of 2023, with 25 teams (plus a House team) participating. After 6 x 9-board rounds, the winners were WURTH (Michael Cartmell - David Wurth - David Hudson - Nick Fahrer) who held on to first place for most of the day. Second were GILL (Liz Adams - Jane Dawson - Tony Nunn - Peter Gill) who finished not too far behind, with FOSTER (Christine Gibbons - David Weston - Jenna Gibbons - Julian Foster) in third place.

WURTH got off to a flying start on Board 1 from the first round, with Hudson-Cartmell being the only pair to reach 7 ♦ on this board:

### Board 1

Dealer N | Vul None

<p>♠ A</p> <p>♥ Q4</p> <p>♦ AJT3</p> <p>♣ AQJ982</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 2px; width: 20px; margin: 0 auto; text-align: center;">N</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 5px 0;"> <span>W</span> <span>E</span> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 2px; width: 20px; margin: 0 auto; text-align: center;">S</div> </div>	<p>♠ J765</p> <p>♥ 7652</p> <p>♦ 97</p> <p>♣ T54</p>	<p>♠ KQ842</p> <p>♥ AT3</p> <p>♦ KQ82</p> <p>♣ 6</p>
	<p>♠ T93</p> <p>♥ KJ98</p> <p>♦ 654</p> <p>♣ K73</p>		

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

After 1 ♠ - 2 ♣ (game forcing) - 2 ♦ - 3 ♦ there are various ways that the auction might proceed, depending on your methods. Still, bidding the grand slam seems somewhat against the odds and isn't easy anyway – but who can argue with success?

From the same round came one of two huge hands that East held during this event. On this one, Cartmell-Hudson once again earned a swing for their side:

**Board 4**  
Dealer W | Vul All

<p>♠ J942 ♥ KJ9 ♦ 942 ♣ QT7</p>		<p>♠ T8653 ♥ 5 ♦ KT ♣ J9632</p>	<p>♠ AKQ ♥ AQT32 ♦ AQ5 ♣ A5</p>
	<p>♠ 7 ♥ 8764 ♦ J8763 ♣ K84</p>		

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

Do you have good methods for showing a 24+ hcp balanced hand? Those who open 2♣ and rebid 3NT rapidly run out of bidding room, leaving responder fumbling in the dark. That of course is one of the reasons for playing the Kokish convention, where after 2♣ - 2♦, a rebid of 2♥ is either a genuine heart suit or an extra-strong balanced hand – responder must bid 2♠ and opener now gets to describe her/his hand further, allowing the balanced hand to be shown at the 2-level. Perhaps the lack of suitable methods explains why only 4 of 26 East-West pairs bid and made a slam, two in hearts and two in notrumps.

This highly distributional deal from the last round yielded some big swings across the field:

**Board 46**  
Dealer E | Vul None

<p>♠ 5 ♥ AK642 ♦ AQT862 ♣ K</p>		<p>♠ QJT743 ♥ 5 ♦ J743 ♣ 94</p>	<p>♠ 982 ♥ JT7 ♦ K5 ♣ 76532</p>
	<p>♠ AK6 ♥ Q983 ♦ 9 ♣ AQJT8</p>		

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

After South opens 1♣, if West overcalls 1♦ North can bid 2♠ to show a weak hand with a long suit. Now South may well jump to 4♠, which as it happens is unbeatable even if declarer takes the losing club finesse. Over 4♠, a courageous West might rebid 5♥. Although in principle this is 2 down, in practice the defence usually allowed West to make 10 tricks. However, if West initially overcalls 2NT showing the lower unbid suits (or diamonds plus a major, depending on agreements) East-West may buy the contract in 4♥. Across the field, 7 North-South pairs made 4♠, while 8 East-West pairs played in hearts, often gaining IMPs in the process.

Also from the last round was the deal below. Vulnerable against opponents who are not vulnerable, after your partner passes and RHO opens 1NT, would you intervene by bidding 2♥ (or 2♦ showing a long major) with the South hand?

**Board 53**  
Dealer N | Vul N-S

♠ JT932  
♥ 4  
♦ 6542  
♣ 852

♠ 8765  
♥ A3  
♦ A3  
♣ KQ974

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K4  
♥ K762  
♦ KQJT9  
♣ A3

♠ AQ  
♥ QJT985  
♦ 87  
♣ JT6

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

That may not be such a good idea. The WURTH team gained 12 IMPs on this board after P-1NT (slightly off-shape but a good tactical bid)-2♦-X-P-P-2♥-X-P-P-P. That plus a little bit of luck going their way on other boards from the final round was sufficient to enable them to clinch victory. 🏆