

# NSBC@Lindfield

## Greg Quittner Swiss Pairs

### Putting the defence to the test

by RAKESH KUMAR



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

This one-day face-to-face tournament is named in honour of Greg Quittner, who founded the Gordon Bridge Centre back in 1988 – it eventually became the East Lindfield venue of North Shore Bridge Club almost 30 years later. And no, just because the event is named after him doesn't mean he isn't around any more – Greg is very much alive and kicking! These days he lives in Melbourne but is no longer active in bridge.

The 2023 event had a field of 15 tables and was won by Maurits Van Der Vlugt - Warren Lazer, who finished a very long way ahead of everybody else. In second place were Michael Cartmell - David Hudson, closely followed by Steven Bock - Rakesh Kumar. The Restricted section was won by Jenny Barnes - Fiona Fawcett.

It's axiomatic that at Swiss Pairs, one should bid aggressively. Overbidding to game on a bit of shape and a lot of hope is entirely normal – it puts the onus on the defending side to actually beat your contract. With that in mind, here are a couple of defence problems for you. First an easy one – in the diagram below, dummy is at the top and you are at left:

	♠ AKQ9
	♥ J85
	♦ KJ65
	♣ A9
♠ 8742	
♥ AT962	
♦ 8	
♣ KT6	

Both sides are vulnerable. You pass as dealer and LHO opens 1♦. Partner passes, RHO responds 1♠ and LHO raises to 4♠. You lead ♦8. Partner wins the ace and returns ♦10 which you ruff. What next?

Now one that's perhaps not so simple. This time dummy is again at the top but you are at right:

♠ 86	
♥ QT74	
♦ AKQ876	
♣ Q	
	♠ 9532
	♥ A52
	♦ JT42
	♣ 65

Again with both sides vulnerable, partner passes and RHO opens 1♦. You pass, LHO responds 1♥ and partner overcalls 1♠. Now RHO invites game by jumping to 3♥ and LHO continues to 4♥. Partner cashes ♠A and ♠K as all follow, declarer playing ♠10 and ♠Q. Partner switches to ♣7 and dummy's queen holds the trick. Now declarer leads ♥4 from dummy. What is your plan?

Meanwhile, speaking of aggressive bidding, what would you do with this hand, vulnerable against opponents who are not vulnerable, after RHO passes as dealer?

♠ KT987  
♥ Q82  
♦ 6  
♣ AJ42

Here's the deal associated with the first problem, now in its correct orientation:

**Board 26**

Dealer E | Vul All

<p>♠ JT653 ♥ 4 ♦ Q93 ♣ QJ54</p>		<p>♠ 8742 ♥ AT962 ♦ 8 ♣ KT6</p>	
<p>♠ KQ73 ♥ AT742 ♦ 8732 ♣ 8732</p>	<p>♠ AKQ9 ♥ J85 ♦ KJ65 ♣ A9</p>		

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

Partner's return ♦10 is of course suit preference for hearts. But did you cater for the possibility that partner might have 4 hearts? You have to put your faith in partner's signal and underlead ♥A, otherwise the contract makes. In the event, 9 of 15 made 10 tricks in spades.

This was the full deal for the second problem, again back in its proper orientation:

**Board 23**

Dealer S | Vul All

<p>♠ 9532 ♥ A52 ♦ JT42 ♣ 65</p>		<p>♠ QT ♥ KJ86 ♦ 953 ♣ AKT4</p>	
<p>♠ 86 ♥ QT74 ♦ AKQ876 ♣ Q</p>	<p>♠ AKJ74 ♥ 93 ♦ ♣ J98732</p>		

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

At trick 3 it appears that declarer has at least 3 heart tricks, 3 club tricks and enough diamond tricks – possibly after establishing the suit by ruffing out your jack – to make game. So is there any hope? Partner has at most 2 hearts, but if she does have 2 hearts and a void in diamonds, you just might be able to beat the contract if you rise with ♥A and switch to a diamond. It's a slender chance, but on this deal it works.

You might have been more likely to consider this line of defence if you played weak 2 bids based on a 5-card major and a 4+ minor suit (5+ when vulnerable). However, over this type of weak 2♠ opening, after West's likely takeout double North can and should raise to 3♠. Remarkably, North-South can actually make 4♠! Across the field, at 5 tables East-West were pushed to the 5-level and duly went down. Four pairs made 4♥ but only one pair in 4♥ was beaten.

And so to the bidding problem. Here is the deal – you were East:

**Board 6**

Dealer E | Vul EW

♠ 642	♠ KT987
♥ T7	♥ Q82
♦ 853	♦ 6
♣ QT653	♣ AJ42

  

♠ AQJ	♠ 53
♥ AK953	♥ J64
♦ K9742	♦ AQJT
♣	♣ K987

  

♠	N	E	S	♠
♥	W	E	S	♥

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	2	4	6	6	5
W	1	4	6	6	5

At this vulnerability, were you prepared to open 1♠ in second seat? If you were, your partnership would easily reach 6♥ after 1♠–2♥ (game forcing if you play 2/1)–4♥ (sign-off with a weak hand if you play "fast arrival")–4NT etc. Otherwise, however, the double fit never comes to light.

Note that even if you do play 5/4+ weak 2 bids, this is not a good hand for a 2♠ opening because (i) you don't have 5/5 shape, which I think is mandatory at adverse vulnerability (ii) in second seat there is only one opponent left to pre-empt (iii) you have 3-card support for the other major and it might be your partner who is being shut out. With 10 hcp and a 7-loser hand, opening 1♠ instead makes a lot of sense. In this event, only 4 of 15 bid a slam. ♠