

The Championship Teams Qualifying Swiss.

The team of Peter Crouch and Simon Cope, Glyn Liggins and Espen Erichsen, topped the qualifiers at the end of Saturday's play, earning them a place in Sunday's A final. Peter gained his team a game swing with a great opening lead on this deal from Round 9.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

		♠	A Q J 9 7 2		
		♥	Q		
		♦	Q 8 6		
		♣	A Q 10		
♠	8 6 3			♠	K 5
♥	10 9 2			♥	K 8 7 6 3
♦	10 3			♦	A J 9 7
♣	J 9 5 4 3			♣	K 7
		♠	10 4		
		♥	A J 5 4		
		♦	K 5 4 2		
		♣	8 6 2		

West	North	East	South
Cope		Crouch	
–	–	1♥	Pass
Pass	Dble	Pass	1NT
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Realising that his partner could hold almost nothing and that the hearts were sitting over his king, Petter led the ace of diamonds, then continued with a second round! When he got in with the king of spades, he could give Simon a ruff. There was no way for declarer to avoid taking the club finesse, losing to the king, so that was one down.

In the other room, a less inspired lead saw the same contract come home for a 12-IMP swing to the Crouch team.

At my table, Brian Callaghan was declarer in 3NT from the South seat. The ten of hearts went to the queen, king and ace, and Brian ran the ten of spades to my king. He ducked the heart return, won the next heart, then rattled off the spades. My hand was crushed. Seeing the coming endplay, I bared the king of clubs, but Brian had no difficulty in reading the position after I had discarded four times and cashed the ♣A to drop the king; nine tricks and +600.

Different approaches to bidding the same hand can be interesting. We have seen North above double then jump to 4♠ over the 1NT response. In my match, my team-mate doubled then made an invitational jump to 3♠ and South passed, while Chris Duckworth for the opposition doubled then bid 2♠. That obviously showed a strong hand, as Brian Callaghan now jumped to 3NT. So three different experts bid 2♠, 3♠ and 4♠ in the same position.

In the same round, Barry Myers and Sally Brock did well to get to a cold slam in the face of opposition pre-emption on this next deal.

Board 16. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠	J 6
♥	K Q J 8 6
♦	9 7 5
♣	K J 4

♠	K 10 9 8	♠	A Q 5 4 3
♥	A 9 5 4	♥	7 3
♦	Q 10 2	♦	A K 6 4 3
♣	A 8	♣	7
	♠		7 2
	♥		10 2
	♦		J 8
	♣		Q 10 9 6 5 3 2

West	North	East	South
Myers		Brock	
1NT	Pass	2♥	4♣
Pass	4♥	Dble	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♦	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

One No Trump was weak and Sally transferred to spades. South's 4♣ overcall silenced Barry for the moment (usually a difficult feat, as all who know him will agree), but Sally made a take-out double of North's 4♥ and, when Barry admitted to spades support, made a 5♦ slam try. Looking at the aces of hearts and clubs, four spades to the king, and the fitting queen of diamonds, Barry was delighted to jump to the cold slam.

At my table, Sandra Penfold also opened a weak no trump and Chris Duckworth overcalled 2♥. Now our rather primitive methods required that I jump to 3♠ to force and Sandra simply raised to game. With no reason to imagine that I was facing such a suitable hand, and with the lead coming through a potentially delicate heart holding, I was unwilling to risk the five level and passed, missing the slam.

Though West no doubt assumed that we were just looking for the best game, she should cuebid on the way to 4♠, just in case East has greater things in mind. Over 3♠ it could go 4♣ – 4♦ – 4♥, and now East will surely drive to slam. And if West has any fears that 4♣ could be a natural bid on a hand containing only two low spades and no heart stopper – a perfectly reasonable way to play – she can simply cuebid 4♥ over 3♠ to show a suitable hand for slam.

On a slightly different issue, it would be a big plus to be playing transfers over the intervention as that would allow E/W to protect a vulnerable heart holding in West's hand. I know that at the table I was very concerned with having to bid 3♠ and perhaps receiving the defence of three rounds of hearts with dummy holding king to three and left-hand-opponent a doubleton.