

# The Swiss Teams Qualification Stage

## by Brian Senior

The first two days of the Swiss Teams, ten matches of eight boards, is the qualification stage to the two finals, with the top eight teams making Sunday's A final, the next eight the B final. In 80 boards there were, of course, several interesting ones, including...

Round 2. Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

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

I was North and my partner and I bid up to 4♥ then doubled West in 5♦. Gillian Fawcett did very well in the play, winning the heart lead and leading a low diamond to the six and ten – maybe I would have done better to go in with an honour? She continued with a first-round club finesse, leading low to the eight, and lost just three trump tricks for down one and – 100.

What I suspect may have interested many players who go through the deals after the event is that Deep Finesse tells us that 5♣ is unbeatable, double dummy, if played by East, but one down when West is the declarer. As the only thing that North can lead but South cannot, it must be that a low diamond lead for South to ruff is the way to defeat the contract, but how does declarer manage to make 5♣ on the more likely heart lead?

On the face of it, there are two diamond losers and, though one of East's diamonds can be discarded on the king of hearts, declarer doesn't appear to have the entries to take advantage of that play as the ace of diamonds is in danger of getting ruffed as he cannot pick up the trumps due to a shortage of entries to the dummy.

The winning line is to win the heart lead and cash the second heart, throwing a diamond from the dummy, then lead a low diamond towards the ten. North must win an honour. If instead he ducks, forcing South to ruff, South is then endplayed to give declarer an extra entry to the dummy and, for example, on a trump return, he can win cheaply in hand and duck a second diamond. North wins but a third diamond can be ruffed high, the jack of diamonds pitched on the ace of spades, and a trump finesse picks up the queen, losing just one diamond and one diamond ruff.

So North wins the first diamond with the queen but is endplayed and has to give an extra entry to dummy. Say that he returns a heart, giving a ruff and discard. Declarer ruffs low in

dummy and away goes a second diamond. A third diamond goes on the ace of spades and now a low diamond is led towards the ace. If South discards, the ace is won and the last diamond is ruffed high, just losing to the club queen and the earlier diamond. If North instead returns a spade at trick three, declarer wins the ace and leads a low club to the eight, back to the ace and a second club finesse, just losing two diamonds.

The reason why a diamond opening lead defeats the contract is that South can ruff but there is no endplay as he has a safe heart exit to declarer's ace-king.

Round 3. Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
	Mossop		Hackett
–	–	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

David Mossop was one of the declarers to find the winning line on this deal. Slam is not that great but it has the merit of making.

The defence led ace and another club. Mossop won the king and cashed all but one of the hearts, pitching the ten of spades from the dummy. The fifth heart squeezed West who, having already had to discard one diamond and one spade, had to give up control of one or other suit. When he chose to throw a diamond, Mossop played three rounds, ruffing, and the eight of diamonds was his twelfth trick.

The slam can be defeated if East leads a spade followed by a second round when in with the ace of clubs, as this destroys the communications for the squeeze. If he leads a spade at trick one but fails to continue with a second round, winning the ♣A and exiting with a club, for example, declarer comes down to ♠987, ♦2, ♥4 facing ♠K, ♦AK86. West has been squeezed and declarer either cashes the ♠K, felling the queen, then ruffs a diamond back to hand to cash the long spade, or ruffs out the diamond and crosses to the ♠K to cash the established diamond winner, a form of criss-cross trump squeeze.

Round 5. Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
–	1♦	Pass	2♦
2♠	3♠	Pass	4♦
Pass	5♦	Dble	All Pass

Several declarers managed to make 5♦ on this deal, though the winning play might not be obvious to anyone who is not familiar with the position.

Many defences started with two rounds of spades. Declarer drew trumps, ruffed another spade and played three rounds of hearts, ruffing. A simple soul would now rely on the finesse of the ten of clubs and go down, losing two club tricks. However, it looked as though East had the greater club length – against me West had overcalled 2♠ and East had followed with an honour to the third heart. With East exhausted of spades and the heart eliminated, the stage was set for an endplay. I led low to the queen and East could win the ace but then had to lead away from the ♣J to give the contract.

Barry Myers managed to find the same play without the benefit of any opposition bidding – well done.

Double dummy, 5♦ can be defeated. West has to overtake the spade lead and switch to a club, East covering North's card. That breaks up the ending and declarer is powerless. That really is double dummy, however. Even if West did find the defence, East would probably win the club switch with the ace and try to give him a ruff. There are a few pairs in the world who might find the winning defence, but most of them are currently banned for using illegal hand signals.

Round 9. Board 16. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
	Senior		Penfold
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♠	Pass	5NT
Pass	6♣	Pass	7♠
All Pass			

One Heart is one of those openings that make the five-card majorites laugh at Acol. However, it allowed for a smooth auction. With a strong hand South bids naturally, bypassing the four-card spade suit to show the longer minor, and North rebid 2NT, 15+ balanced. Now South showed the spades and the 4♠ raise showed the four-card support but also denied a maximum as North would then have cuebid along the way. South asked for key cards and 5♠ showed two plus the queen of trumps. Now south invited Seven, 5NT saying that all the key cards were present and offering North the opportunity to bid 7♠ if he wished to do so, failing which it asked about side-suit kings. Six Clubs showed the king of clubs and, after some thought, South bid the grand slam.

Seven Spades was, of course, a poor contract. Even had spades split three-two, it would have required a red-suit finesse for the thirteenth trick. As it was, declarer needed two finesses and, with both king offside, had to go down.

Many players would have made the same decision to bid 7♠ after finding partner with the ♣K. However, one should always think about the bids that partner does not make as well as the bids they do. South needed North to have another king and, had he held both the king of clubs and a red king, he would have been able to count 13 tricks, subject to there being a three-two spade break – four spades, five clubs, two aces, the red king, and a red-suit ruff in the North hand. He would therefore have bid 7♠ over 5NT. Once he failed to do so, he could not hold a red king and the grand slam could never be better than on a finesse.