

Summer Festival Four Stars Teams

By Brian Senior

Fifty-five teams started out in the Four Stars Teams on Friday evening. At the end of Saturday's play, after 10 matches of Swiss, the top eight teams split off into the main final with the next eight going into the B final, each of which was an all-play-all event on Sunday. The remainder of the field continued with five more rounds of Swiss on Sunday. Winners of the A final and the Four Stars Trophy was Bernard Teltscher's team of himself, Mark Teltscher, Zia Mahmood, Artur Malinowski and Tom Townsend. The Teltscher team finished 3 VPs clear of Ben Green, Andrew Murphy, Jon Cooke and Cameron Small. I suspect that Bernard is the oldest ever winner of the Four Stars and, if so, double congratulations to him for a fine win.

The B final was won by Chris Dixon, David Jones, Trevor Ward and Peter Shelley, and the Swiss Teams by Norman Selway, Kay Preddy, Sandra Penfold and Brian Senior. As usual, there were many interesting deals over the course of the weekend and we have room for but a few in this report. Let's begin with this deal from the first session.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
	Green		Murphy
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

This was a common auction, with East's 3♠ showing strength in the suit rather than four cards in a suit which partner had already denied, and West now having an easy 3NT bid. At my table North led a heart to the ten, queen and ace, after which it was a simple matter to play ace then jack of diamonds and, with three entries to the dummy, setting up and cashing four diamond tricks, two spades, three hearts and a club – plus one.

Ben Green chose to lead a spade and, imagining that West would be short in the suit, tried the queen in case he might pin a singleton honour in declarer's hand. Dummy's spade holding did not make the lead look that good at first, but actually declarer had serious problems whichever minor he chose to play on.

Declarer won the spade and played ace then jack of diamonds. Green won the king and played a second spade so declarer won and cleared the diamonds. Meanwhile, South had to find three discards and pitched two spades and a heart, while declarer threw clubs.

There was only one exit card which would not present declarer with an entry to the established diamonds and that was the eight of clubs. When Green duly switched to it, the eight ran round to declarer's queen. Declarer exited with a club but Murphy could win the

jack and ace and exit with his last club to put declarer in hand and the queen of hearts was the setting trick.

Declarer could have succeeded in the endgame by ducking the eight of clubs. North has to lead a major now and that resurrects the dummy. So what if South plays the nine of clubs on the eight? Declarer wins and can now succeed by playing three rounds of hearts! South can choose whether to be endplayed himself and win the third round with the queen, but his weakened club holding means that he has only one more club winner and declarer gets home, or can unblock the queen and nine and allow partner to win the heart but then be endplayed. North gets two hearts but then has to put dummy in to cash the remaining tricks and there is no defensive club trick.

Finally, if declarer covers the eight of clubs with the ten, South plays the jack and declarer wins. If he now plays a club South has two winners then exits with the two and declarer has to concede a heart at the end. And if declarer instead plays three rounds of hearts? South wins and returns the ♣2. If declarer has to win that trick he is endplayed to lead back to the ♣AJ for down one. He could succeed had he discarded the ♣5 and ♣6 to retain the three. Now the ♣2 runs round to dummy's four and dummy has a rather unusual entry, while the play of the ace or jack would give declarer three club tricks and only one club loser.

Of course, some of that is rather double dummy.

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Senior		Penfold	
—	—	—	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

This one comes from Session 4. There was a slightly curious auction in which 2♥ was alerted as FSF yet South was willing to jump to 3NT with only jack-doubleton heart. Now, what to lead from the West hand?

More often than not, declarer will have a singleton spade on this auction and, with no particularly attractive alternative, I tried the queen of spades, just like Ben on the previous deal in the hope of pinning a bare ten or jack. Superficially, the lead has given an extra spade trick, but things are not quite so simple from declarer's point of view as communications are an issue. He won the ace of spades and took a successful club finesse then led the jack of hearts. That threatened to establish heart tricks so, on winning the ♥K, I had an easy play of a second spade to take the entry out of dummy. Where should declarer win this trick?

In practice, declarer won the ♠J in hand and played ace and another club, losing to the king but establishing an extra trick for himself also. Had he instead played the second heart I would have been endplayed. East returned a diamond. Declarer put in the jack and, when that lost to the queen, was down. I could play the ten of spades to dummy and the ♠6 and ♥A meant down one.

Declarer could have succeeded by winning the second spade with the king, crashing his jack. Now a second club finesse provides four club tricks without a loser and declarer can cash them then exit with a heart to endplay West. Of course, if West has five spades he will have too many winners to cash once the spades have been crashed.

This next deal from Session 1 features yet another example of the lead of an unsupported honour, but this time not until trick two.

Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Senior	Cope	Penfold	Nettleton
–	–	Pass	1♦
2♣	Dble	2♦	Pass
3♣	All Pass		

Simon Cope led the jack of diamonds and, while I had no particular reason to expect a six-one split, there was no benefit to covering so I ducked. Now Simon wanted to find an entry to Diana Nettleton's hand and he switched, in tempo, to the king of hearts!

I should have ducked this, but the switch came so quickly and smoothly that it didn't occur to me that Simon would not have the queen as well. Winning would leave the combination of ten and jack to provide a second heart winner so I won the ♥A and led my singleton spade towards dummy. Simon grabbed the ace and led a second heart to partner's queen. Diana cashed the ace of diamonds and continued with another diamond and I ruffed with the eight and was over-ruffed by the ten – down one.

That was rather careless. Not only did I win the first heart – had I ducked Simon would surely have continued with a second round and I would have been in control – but, still recovering from the shock of finding the ♥Q with South, I also failed to think about the likely distribution around the table when the third diamond was played. Ruffing the diamond with the eight played for South to hold the king and ten. Actually, bare king looks more likely, with North being 5-4-1-3 or 4-5-1-3. Ruff with the jack, lay down the ace, and the clubs can be picked up without loss and the fourth heart pitched on the king of spades. The ♥K was an excellent switch, made all the better by the speed with which it was made. Incidentally, the lead of an unsupported honour in hope of creating an entry to partner's hand is the Deschappelles Coup and dates back to the days of whist.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

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

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

This deal from Session 2 illustrates the difficulties that pre-emption can cause to the opposition. Not everyone opened the East hand, of course, but many did. At many of those tables South overcalled only 1♠, West bid 2♦ and North raised to 2♠. Where that ran round to West, he could cuebid 3♠ to ask for a stopper and East bid 3NT, an easy make.

See the difference when the overcall is 2♠ and North raises to 3♠. West's options become to jump to 5♦ or to make a take-out double. The problem with the double is that East may leave it in and settle for an inadequate penalty rather than bid 3NT. It is possible to get +300 on defence, but a slight slip would mean only +100, and either way a significant swing out against a vulnerable 3NT+1 at the other table.

What about 5♦? Well, if North leads the partnership suit, declarer puts in the ♠J and ruffs out the ace. Having drawn trumps he has to give up two clubs but has no heart losers so has 11 tricks. However, North has a couple of attractive alternative leads. Say that he leads the singleton club to dummy's king. Best is for South to duck – the position in the suit is clear as partner would not have led from any other club holding. Declarer can draw trumps and play on clubs but, having won the ace and jack, South plays the ace of spades to get off play and declarer can ruff but has to concede a heart at the end for down one. If South wins the opening club lead and gives North a ruff that works too as he still has a club stopper – just as long as North doesn't ruff the club return and switch to a spade, again setting up declarer's eleventh trick.

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

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

West	North Selway	East	South Preddy
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Norman Selway played 4♥ after a transfer sequence. East led the queen of diamonds. It looks as though the black suits are both badly placed and that the contract is doomed but Norman found an extra chance which allowed him to bring home his contract. He ducked then won the diamond continuation. On winning the second diamond, Norman tried a partial elimination. He played the ace and king of hearts then, leaving one trump out, played ace and another club, ducking when West played low in tempo, East won the ♣J, cashed the ♣K, and found himself endplayed. The options were to lead round to the ace-queen of spades or to lead a diamond. East actually chose the latter play but away went a spade from dummy as Norman ruffed in hand. Ace of spades and a spade ruff put him in dummy to draw the missing trump and that was 10 tricks.

That was nicely played, but the contract should have been defeated. East may not be certain of the diamond position, but he can see what might happen if he is on lead after cashing the third club as his opening bid marks North with the ♠AQ. If North can be trusted to have only three hearts as he did not break the transfer, East could win the king of clubs on the second round then return the jack for West to ruff. Now a spade through means down one. Alternatively, West might work out what the problem is and ruff the king of clubs on East's actual defence. There is no possibility that the jack of hearts will be allowed to make a trick in any other way, so to ruff the club to take partner off a possible endplay is a cost-nothing play.