

## Brian's Brighton The Summer Meeting 2015

### Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> – The Swiss Teams Qualifying

There were many interesting boards in the qualifying stage of the Swiss Teams Four Stars Championship. Here are just a few.

Session 1. Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

	♠	K 10		West	North	East	South
	♥	Q J 8		-	-	-	Pass
	♦	10 5		1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
	♣	10 9 6 5 3 2		2NT	Pass	3♠	Pass
♠	A 9 7 4 2		♠	4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
♥	A 7 2		♥	4♥	Pass	4♠	All Pass
♦	A 9 7		♦				
♣	K Q		♣				
	♠	J 8 3					
	♥	10 9 8 5					
	♦	Q J 2					
	♣	8 7 4					

If E/W are playing a strong no trump, the deal is a very easy one, as West's opening 1NT will tell East that slam is very unlikely and he will settle for game.

Playing weak no trump and four-card majors, the deal is not quite so straightforward. West opens 1♠ and rebids 2NT, 15-19 game-forcing. Naturally enough, East checks back for a five-three spade fit, and now West has such good controls that he is worth a mild slam invitation. After all, a slittle as ♠KQx ♦KQxxx makes for a roughly 50% slam, and add the jack of diamonds and that goes up towards 70%.

East needs to find partner with a very good hand for slam to be good, but has sufficient good cards to be worth one cuebid and now it is automatic for west to show the heart control - another cuebid below game level does not promise any extra values, merely a control in the suit. Now East has done his all with the 4♦ cuebid so signs off. If West has the really good hand that East requires, he will go on because he knows his partner was willing to at least show some mild willingness to consider slam. With his actual hand, West has made his effort and can do no more so accepts the sign off to complete a well-controlled auction. The rule here is that a player can only be the first to go past game if he has a positively good hand in context of the auction. If you remember that rule, you should be able to explore but then stop safely in game when slam is, as on this deal, hopeless.

In my match, the deal was flat in 6♠ down one - oh dear!

Session 2. Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

	♠	J 9 7 4 2		West	North	East	South
	♥	8 7 6		-	Pass	1♥	Dble
	♦	9 5 3		1♠	Pass	3♥	Pass
	♣	K 3		4♥	All Pass		
♠	K 6 5 2		♠	-			
♥	4 3 2		♥	K Q J 10 9 5			
♦	A 8 6 4 2		♦	K J			
♣	Q		♣	A 8 7 6 2			
	♠	A Q 10 2					
	♥	A					
	♦	Q 10 7					
	♣	J 10 9 5 4					

How many declarers went down in 4♥? At my table South led the jack of clubs to the queen, king and ace, and the contract is now cold. However, declarer ruffed a club, crossed to hand with the king of diamonds and ruffed another club. That was over-ruffed and there was no way to avoid the loss of two more clubs and the ace of hearts for down one.

Declarer failed to look at the club spots. The eight-seven-six are equals against the ten-nine, so all that is necessary is to ruff the two in dummy, draw trumps and concede two clubs to establish the tenth trick. But there is one more trap to avoid. If declarer takes the club ruff immediately, South wins the heart ace and gives partner a club over-ruff and we are back to one down. But declarer is only looking for one ruff so can afford to play a trump at trick two. South wins and is powerless. Declarer wins the return, ruffs the two of clubs and draws trumps then sets up the extra club winner and has ten tricks.

Session 3. Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

	♠	5 4 3		West	North	East	South
	♥	10 9 8 6 5		-	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♦	6		2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
	♣	K J 9 7		3♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass
♠	A 9		♠	J 7 6			
♥	K Q J		♥	A 7 3 2			
♦	A J 5 3		♦	9 8 7 4 2			
♣	A Q 8 2		♣	6			
	♠	K Q 10 8 2					
	♥	4					
	♦	K Q 10					
	♣	10 5 4 2					

North led the ten of hearts. Declarer won the jack and cashed the king and queen before playing ace and another diamond. How should South defend?

It is very tempting to play the king of spades, but that isn't good enough. Declarer can win the ace and play a third diamond and South wins but is powerless. Kay Preddy was one who saw the problem. She switched to a club rather than a spade, and now declarer was in trouble. He put in the queen, losing to the king, and Norman Selway switched to a spade. That set up the spades, and Preddy had the king of diamonds with which to get in. The contract was down three for -300. Five Diamonds failed by a trick at the other table so the Preddy team gained 5 IMPs.

What if declarer had gone up with the ace on the spade switch and cleared the diamonds? Now Preddy could have played the ten of clubs through and North's clubs are good enough that the defence comes to three club tricks for down one, whether or not declarer covers.

Session 3. Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

	♠	A J 9 2		West	North	East	South	
	♥	Q 9 4 3 2			Simonsen		Berg	
	♦	K 2		-	-	-	1♦	
	♣	A Q		1♠	2♥	Pass	3♥	
♠	K Q 7 6 5 3		♠	10 4	Pass	3NT	Pass	4♦
♥	A K 6		♥	10 5	Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠
♦	-		♦	10 8 6 3	Pass	6♥	Pass	Pass
♣	10 5 3 2		♣	K 9 8 7 6	Dble	All Pass		
	♠	8						
	♥	J 8 7						
	♦	A Q J 9 7 5 4						
	♣	J 4						

The Anglo-Norwegian Erichsen team topped the qualifying rankings. On this deal, however, the Norwegians, Steffen Simonsen and Erik Berg had a bit of a disaster.

Around the room, South opened 1♦, 3♦ or 4♦, after which there were many different decisions made, some successful, some less so. Erik Berg judged that he was too good for a pre-empt so opened at the one level and west made a simple overcall. Two Hearts was natural and game-forcing and it seems that south forgot that his 3♥ raise was forcing and therefore stronger than a direct raise to game. Simonsen therefore made a (semi-)balanced slam try of 3NT and Berg, who thought that was in the context of his having made a non-forcing 3♥ raise, cuebid the diamond control. Simonsen decided that, with his weak trumps, he had done enough with one slam try so signed off - a controlled auction as we discussed a couple of deals ago - but Berg thought he was worth a second cuebid and now Simonsen bid the slam. That was down two for -500. How many IMPs would you think the Norwegians lost on the deal?

No, they gained seven! This was the action from the other table:

	West	North	East	South
	Erichsen		Liggins	
	-	-	-	4♦
	4♠	Dble	All Pass	

When South opened with the big pre-empt, Espen Erichsen made the normal 4♠ overcall and north was very happy to double, ending the auction.

North led the king of diamonds so Erichsen ruffed and played a club. North won the ace and played a second diamond. Erichsen ruffed again and led a low spade towards the ten. North played low so the ten scored and declarer continued with a second spade to the king and ace. North exited with the queen of clubs to dummy's king so declarer led a heart to his ace and played queen and another spades to North's jack. North could only return a heart now but Erichsen had three clubs winners plus the heart king so had ten tricks and his contract; +790 and +7 IMPs.

There were many decisions to be made on the deal. Firstly, whether South should open at the one-, two- or three-level. Very much a matter of personal or partnership style, I would have thought.

One Diamond would usually get to either a heart or, possibly, no trump game. Four Hearts can be defeated by a diamond lead for West to ruff, after which a club through sets up the fourth defensive winner.

Three Diamonds sees west overcall 3♠ and now North has a decision - pass, double and 3NT are all options. Personally, I cannot stomach a pass, though I know of those who chose that call. 3NT requires that partner has a good diamond suit, and that is where partnership style comes in - you have to know what to expect. To me, double is the best option, though it is disastrous on the actual deal, with 3♠ unbeatable. However, 3♠ will go down a very big proportion of the time with that North hand sitting over the overcall, and +500 looks far

more likely than -730. As with all things in bridge, take the long-term view and accept the odd disaster. Four Diamonds surely sees west overcall 4♠ and now the double looks clear. Accurate defence leads to one down, a slight disappointment from North's viewpoint, but it is the best that N/S can do.