

## Eastbourne Bulletin 6

By Michael Byrne

The Wednesday in Eastbourne saw a return to teams bridge, as the afternoon was the first half of the senior teams, and semi-finals of the knock out teams, followed by the special mixed pivot teams championship in the evening.

The mixed pivot event is always great fun since it is run on Hubert Phillips style arrangements, at least one man and one woman in the team, changing partners every 9 boards, lot of irregular partnerships and new systems.

The hands as usual were full of swings, even on the relatively sedate deals and there were plenty of interesting boards to look at.

Imagine you hold this hand, Dealer at love all:

♠ K7432  
♥ AQ643  
♦ 85  
♣ 5

Would you open?

What about this hand:

♠ AKJ75  
♥ AJ7  
♦ A106  
♣ J7

Partner opens 1♣ and responds 2♣ over your 1♠ response, what now?

And finally:

♠ A9653  
♥ Q862  
♦ 732  
♣ K

P 1♦ (4♣) ?

Let us return to the full hands and see how you did....

	♠ K7432	Board 1 Love all Dir N
	♥ AQ643	
	♦ 85	
	♣ 5	
♠ QJ8		♠ 106
♥ J		♥ 1095
♦ K109432		♦ QJ76
♣ K106		♣ 9742
	♠ A95	
	♥ K872	
	♦ A	
	♣ AQJ83	

A 5/5 9 count with bad intermediates does not normally lend itself to a first seat opening bid, but one of the features of this event is you need a big plus score inimps to win (the winners often get over 100) and both the chasing teams did elect to open 1♠. This worked well for both of them as they reached 6♥ quite comfortably, one table having a free run the other after diamond bidding from West.

At my table North passed and my partner came in with 2♦ over South's 1♣ opening, now North bid 2♠ and although game was reached hearts were never even in the picture.

Of the 30 teams playing just under half reached a slam so there were plenty of swings.

Hand 25 was the other popular slam bid by many, made by some.

	♠ Q86	Dir N Vul EW
	♥ K32	
	♦ J952	
	♣ Q32	
♠ AKJ75		♠ 93
♥ AJ7		♥ Q5
♦ A106		♦ K7
♣ J7		♣ AK109865
	♠ 1042	
	♥ 109864	
	♦ Q843	
	♣ 4	

East opened 1♣ at every table I imagine, and there the paths diverged. The leading team suffered a bad miss when West jump shifted to 2♠ and rebid 3NT over 3♣. Since classically in Acol this shows 16-18 with a 5332 shape (not a sequence I like in truth) East knows they have a 9 card club fit and should bid 4♣, he passed and the slam bonus went begging. Bracing themselves for a swing out EW were delighted to find they had gained 13imps since South at the other table had found a heart lead to 6♣. How would you play it now? There is surely a good chance of pitching the heart on spades s most declarers went up with the ♥A and tried the jack of clubs. When

North covered (not so silly if clubs had only been rebid once, perhaps declarer has AK9xxx) declarer's problems were over, but when North ducked smoothly East rose with the AK and got the bad news. Should you now take the spade finesse or play ace, king and ruff one?

In isolation playing them from the top will give you success when the queen is doubleton (16%) or the suit is 3-3 (36%), total odds of 52%. (The queen dropping singleton is of no use since the defence will ruff in and cash the ♥K before you have taken a discard). The finesse appears to be 50/50 but does the fact that South has a singleton club and thus more spades alter the odds? Perhaps, but the fact that South has led a heart from a sequence and then thrown a low one away might well suggest he has 5, and it wasn't a surprise to find that the *a priori* odds play was the winner today. I was pleased it was, since my partner, an England U20 player took that line to chalk up 1370.

After the featured auction of 1♣ – 1♠ – 2♣ I rebid 2♥ as a forcing bid and when partner bid 3♣ I used 4<sup>th</sup> suit forcing, supported clubs and reached 6♣ easily enough.

4 of the 30 teams went down in a slam, and 13 made a slam, with the other 13 stopping in game, so again there was a big swing in nearly every match.

The final hand in the set above was more about competitive bidding and again the imps were flying thick and fast:

	♠ -	Board 3	Dir S	EW	Vul
	♥ J105				
	♦ 986				
	♣ AJ109764				
♠ K72				♠ A9653	
♥ K94				♥ Q862	
♦ AKQJ				♦ 732	
♣ Q52				♣ K	
	♠ QJ1084				
	♥ A73				
	♦ 1054				
	♣ 83				

At my team-mate's table the auction started as described above, P 1♦ 4♣, and perhaps in an effort to show how brave he was, East tried 4S. South wielded the "Rod of justice" and East decided discretion was the better part of valour and ran away to 5♦ when it came round to him, doubled in turn by North. Although from a double dummy point of view running to 5♦ cost nothing (Spades makes 8 tricks and diamonds makes 9) this didn't turn out to be a wise decision since:

a) His poor partner had to play it, having made the mistake of opening a suit of AKQJ with ONLY a barren 18 count

and

b) His partner went for 800 anyway having little idea of the distribution of the hand.

Nearly every table went for a penalty, the only question was which way! For the winning team Bill Gardner was able to make a penalty double of 4♣ (Definitely the right bid when partner turns up with a flat 18 opposite!) and took 300 to go with 200 from 4♠ undoubled at the other table.

Only two pairs made a game EW, one was Tim Dickenson/Liza Furnival from Oxford, who bid 4♥. This looks like it has 4 top losers but watch what happens if South switches to the ♠Q upon winning his ace of hearts. If North makes the mistake of ruffing it then suddenly the defensive tricks have been squashed into 3.

The other pair to make game were Gary Hyett/Brian Senior, who managed to make 3NT on the ♣J lead when North waited carefully for a club return from partner to cash his 6 winners, sadly he is still waiting today and the event finished 13 hours ago.

Well done to the victors Diana Nettleton, Matthew Covill, Bill Gardener and Peter Griffin, whose score of +69 imps was enough to push my team (Ben Norton, Mike Bell, Sarah O'Connor) into second. Careful followers of the bulletins will realise this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time this week I have finished 2<sup>nd</sup>, but I am in no way bitter at all.