

In the Worldwide Pairs on 4 June, the Australian winners were Antoinette Rees and Sid Reynolds (63.04%), followed by Agi Szollos and Leo Kearley (62.36%) and Andrew Webb and Nola McMillan (60.86%), all well behind the overall winners, an Italian pair who scored 78.43%.

With over 2100 tables competing, it is interesting to see the range of results. On the deal below, what would you expect the top East-West and top North-South results might be? What is the best or "proper" contract?

Board 2. Dealer East, NS vul.

NORTH	
S A6	
H QT843	
D 753	
C QT4	
WEST	EAST
S KQT83	S 975
H 6	H AK2
D A96	D KQJT42
C K863	C 5
SOUTH	
S J42	
H J975	
D 8	
C AJ972	

Antoinette and Sid reached the top spot in a simple uncontested auction, 1D : 1S, 2S : 4S, with East (Antoinette) choosing to raise spades immediately even though partner might have only four of them. After winning the heart lead, declarer (Sid) led the S9, hoping to tempt a cover, but South (Marian Webb) played low smoothly so Sid rose with the SQ; now North (Marcia Yardley) ducked smoothly so Sid mispicked the spade layout and made just ten tricks, for an average board.

Nola started the same way but at trick two, North won the SA and returned a spade, solving her problem in the suit.

The best score for North-South was making 4H (two declarers). Best score for East-West was making 6S (eight declarers). These are contracts that Kokish (understandably) did not even consider in his commentary.

On the deal below, see if you can guess what the most common contract was:

Board 7. Dealer South, both vul.

NORTH			
S 65			
H QJT82			
D 864			
C Q54			
WEST			EAST
S A7			S KQJT984
H A64			H K9
D AKT532			D J
C 93			C A72
SOUTH			
S 32			
H 753			
D Q97			
C KJT86			
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass
1D	Pass	1S	Pass
3D	Pass	3S	Pass
4S	Pass	4NT	Pass
5C	Pass	5NT	Pass
6D	Pass	7S	All pass

With 15 HCP and a good 6-card suit, West is worth a jump rebid of 3D, showing 16-18 points. Whether using the Roman Keycard sequence shown, or ordinary Blackwood, East discovers that partner has the three missing aces and a king, and bids 7S, figuring the diamonds can be established for club discards if necessary.

Kokish predicts: "7S will be the most common contract". Do you think he got it right? In fact, 198 pairs made 7S, while a few bid it and went down. Against that, 674 pairs were in 6S making 12 or 13 tricks. Moreover, 891 pairs stopped in game, mostly 4S. Like many experts, Kokish has little concept of actual results in a mass event.