

State of Play by *Derrick Browne*

At the NSW Bridge Association on 15 November, the finals of the State Open Pairs was won by Tom Snow and Tony Nunn, while the Swiss Pairs was won by Frances Lyons and Heather Cusworth.

You hold the West hand below. Your partner is dealer and passes. South opens a strong 2C. What action do you take? You are not vulnerable and your opponents are vulnerable:

S 8
H 7
D Q652
C AQJ7543

With 7-4 shape and favourable vulnerability, some would pre-empt 5C. Say instead you content yourself with a 4C bid. North bids 5C (a bid of the enemy suit to force partner) and South bids 6C (again an artificial bid of the enemy suit, suggesting a void). North bids 7H, corrected by South to 7S, passed out.

This has been the rather unusual auction:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	<i>Nunn</i>		<i>Snow</i>
		Pass	2C
4C	5C	Pass	6C
Pass	7H	Pass	7S
All pass			

What do you lead?

There is little merit in leading the singleton heart against a grand slam, as partner will never get in to lead it back for you to ruff. In fact, against a grand slam, the theory is to find as passive a lead as possible – typically a trump – and just wait for your trick (if any) to come to you. That would not work well this time as the complete hand was:

Dealer East, NS vul.

NORTH		EAST	
S —		S 73	
H KJT954		H Q8632	
D AJ3		D KT97	
C 9862		C KT	
SOUTH		WEST	
S AKQJT96542		S 8	
H A		H 7	
D 84		D Q652	
C —		C AQJ7543	

Declarer's only loser is a diamond. After drawing trumps and unblocking the HA, declarer crosses to dummy with the DA to cash the HK on which the diamond loser is discarded. An opening diamond lead from West would knock out dummy's entry prematurely but that was not found against Snow so he wrapped up 13 tricks for a 94% score (two other pairs achieved the same result).

The next deal comes from the qualifying rounds of the pairs the previous day. Cover the North-South cards. You land in 5D after the auction shown. South leads the A-K of hearts, then a third round. How do you hope to make the rest of the tricks?

Dealer South, EW vul.

NORTH
S 9
H T8763
D 92
C KJT52

WEST
S AK3
H J54
D AK653
C A8

EAST
S T874
H Q9
D QJT874
C 6

SOUTH
S QJ652
H AK2
D —
C Q9743

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Dble	Pass	2D	1S
3NT	4C	5D	3C
			All pass

South is marked with five spades, leaving North with a singleton; the only hope is that it is the S9. After drawing trumps, lead the S10. South must cover to prevent this from winning, but when the S9 falls from North, declarer crosses back to hand to lead the S8 or S7. This time if South covers, it promotes East's other top spade as a winner. Making 11 tricks.