

## Kenmore Teams of 3 by Richard Fox

Teams massed in the Kenmore library rooms in 3 grades, each consisting of an experienced South player as captain and 3 novice/intermediate players. There was a generally friendly vibe around the room and hopefully all the newer players were able to enjoy the day and learn something (even if it's just that so-called experts make plenty of mistakes too!)

Teams bridge tactics are a bit different from matchpoint pairs (regular club bridge).

- In pairs if you have the best score in the room you get a top, whether that's 7NT redoubled or making one trick extra in 2 Clubs. In teams play it's much more intuitive – if you make a big score and your opponents make a much smaller score, you get a lot of points; no more “a bottom's a bottom”.
- Making your contract or beating their contract is key; unlike pairs, the overtrick or extra undertrick doesn't count for much.
- It pays to push your luck a bit to reach game, ironically more so when vulnerable because the bonus for making is bigger.

A few hands to illustrate the ups and downs:

### Unlucky Minus

Dealer N Nil Vul	♠ A 8 3 2 ♥ K 7 2 ♦ ♣ A Q 10 6 5 2	Match 1 Bd 8 3Cx by N
♠ Q 5 4 ♥ Q 8 5 3 ♦ Q J 9 8 5 2 ♣		♠ K J 7 ♥ A ♦ A 7 3 ♣ K J 9 8 7 3
	♠ 10 9 6 ♥ J 10 9 6 4 ♦ K 10 6 4 ♣ 4	

The bidding was a bit of a chapter of accidents. Partner (North) opened 1C and East doubled. The percentage action for East here is to pass, because partner may bid hearts in answer to what seems like a take-out double (no, you're not allowed to draw an extra-large black X as a penalty double!). As South I passed and West jumped to 2D because of the suit length. Reasonable, although I'd tend to show the major suit myself as that's the one I'd most expect partner to be interested in.

North unsuspectingly rebid 3C based on the good distribution and diamond void. Having decided to risk a rebid a take-out double is safer, keeping 2H or 2S options open, as partner's pass has promised not much.

The next double from East was clearly for blood. East-West had fallen on their feet and extracted a chunky 800 for four down. The other table was just in 3H by South down one.

## Revenge

We managed to pull back a swing on this board. North opened 1D, East overcalled 1S and I kept quiet as South with my 3 doubletons. West invited a bit cautiously with 3S – I think they should go to 4S or make some other forcing bid, as they don't want to miss out on game. I decided to keep stumm with my hearts, as I feared I might goad the opposition into bidding 4S after all.

Dealer N Nil Vul	♠ Q 5 3 ♥ A 9 2 ♦ Q 9 5 2 ♣ A 6 4	3S by East 7H lead
♠ K 10 8 ♥ K J 5 ♦ A J 10 ♣ Q 10 3 2		♠ A 9 6 5 2 ♥ ♦ K 8 6 3 ♣ K 9 8 7
	♠ J 7 ♥ Q 10 8 7 6 4 3 ♦ 7 4 ♣ J 5	

East wasn't under much pressure in 3 Spades. She drew trumps, unavoidably losing one trick, and could afford to guess the wrong way in the side suits still making 9 tricks. I felt good about this result because if they'd been in 4S they might well have played differently to make it.

Our team-mates evidently did bid game because N-S tried sacrificing in 5H, which went four down for an expensive -800.

## Have to Be In It to Win It

Sometimes you just have to be in the vulnerable game because you can't afford to miss it. I had the nice South hand and opened 1C, partner responded 1D and East overcalled 1H. A rebid of 2NT now would show 18-19 points but partner would have a choice to pass, and I hoped for a helpful heart lead so I made sure by bidding 3NT.

Dealer S All Vul	♠ Q 2 ♥ 10 7 2 ♦ 10 9 7 6 4 ♣ A 6 2	Round 4 Bd 7 3NT by South 4S lead
♠ J 8 5 4 3 ♥ 6 ♦ A Q 8 5 ♣ 8 7 3		♠ A 10 7 ♥ Q J 8 5 3 ♦ J 3 ♣ J 5 4
	♠ K 9 6 ♥ A K 9 4 ♦ K 2 ♣ K Q 10 9	

West (Andrew Sharp) hadn't read the script about being friendly and he led a spade. In this sort of situation a singleton in partner's suit often doesn't get you far, so they'll forgive you for not leading it! I needed to reach dummy to finesse the hearts twice, as I was sure East had the QJ, so I tried the QS hoping the lead was from the ace. No such luck – East won and persisted with spades forcing out my king. I reached dummy with the AC and successfully finessed a heart but it wasn't enough. I could only muster 3 hearts, 4 clubs and a spade this way so I tried leading the KD trying to stick East on lead. Didn't work either, West cashed lots of spades and diamonds and I was down two.

I reassured partner Chris that she was right to respond 1D; you have to with 6 points, can't be helped if things don't break.

The other table were in game, also going down so there was only a 3-IMP swing for the extra undertrick. They had an instructive accident, South stretching to open 2NT and North trying to bid 3D naturally. Andy Hung was South and read this as a transfer to hearts, which it should be, just as after 1NT. They finished up in 4H by South and Andy needed all his skill to keep this to just 1 off.

### So Much for Bidding Vul Games!

You can't blame a man for giving it a try. Peter Visscher made a well-considered try for a 5D game that ran into a double.

East opened 1C, perhaps prematurely counting extra for the void. A good lesson here – a void is only worth something when you know what trumps are going to be. Hopefully I wouldn't have opened that hand myself although a bit more stuffing in the clubs e.g. K1098, would make it tempting. A normal opening carries an expectation of 2 defensive tricks and that's not so certain with the actual hand.

I doubled as South, West bid 1D and partner Rachel answered 1H. After West's bid this shows something like 6+ points because if weaker there's no need to bid after West has taken you off the hook. East followed through with a 1S rebid, I passed and West thought carefully before taking a shot at 5D. From the bidding I expected the KS to be the right side of the ace, I had two other aces and partner had shown a few points, so I decided to double.

Dealer E All Vul	♠ Q 8 ♥ J 10 7 4 3 ♦ 10 2 ♣ Q J 10 8	Match 5 Bd 10 5Dx by West JH lead
♠ J 6 3 ♥ 6 2 ♦ K Q J 9 8 5 3 ♣ A		♠ A 9 7 5 ♥ K 9 8 ♦ ♣ K 9 7 4 3 2
	♠ K 10 4 2 ♥ A Q 5 ♦ A 7 6 4 ♣ 6 5	

Rachel started with the JH and continued the suit when everyone played low. West ruffed the third heart, unblocked the club ace and started on trumps. I took the AD and decided to play the KS, trying to lock them in dummy and get a ruff with a small diamond. Declarer took the AS, pitched a spade on the KC, and ruffed a third club in hand. Now he'd shown out of both hearts and clubs so Rachel knew to hang on to the QS for the second undertrick.

We won the battle but lost the war; although this result gave us a head-to-head win our opponents finished ahead of us in second place – well done.

### Partnership Trust – Answering a Double

Poor Rachel was stuck with a zero-point hand here, forced to play at the 5-level doubled.

Playing the last round, West opened 1H and East raised to 2H. With my good hand I doubled for take-out, West went 4H and I doubled again. The second double doesn't cancel the take-out message; nobody had slipped me a few hearts, so all I was showing was "please answer, I've got extra stuff." Rachel understood and with understandable trepidation pulled to 5D, doubled by West.

Dealer W All Vul	♠ 9 2 ♥ 9 2 ♦ 10 7 6 5 3 2 ♣ 8 7 4	Match 6 Bd 20 5Dx by North 2C lead
♠ K ♥ A K J 7 5 4 ♦ 9 4 ♣ A Q 5 3		♠ A 8 7 6 5 3 ♥ 10 8 6 3 ♦ ♣ J 9 2
	♠ Q J 10 4 ♥ Q ♦ A K Q J 8 ♣ K 10 6	

We lost two clubs, two spades and the AH for -800. This didn't look too bad against a likely 650 or 680 for East-West playing in hearts. As it happened Larry Moses had done the same as me and the result was a flat board, 5Dx -3 at both tables. Even when a result looks as if it might be bad, it pays to maintain optimism because the other table faces the same tricky dilemmas and you never know what they might do.

## The Vital 7 of Hearts

Finally here is a hand where West had no easily fathomable reason to hang on to his 7 of hearts, but it turned out to be a vital card.

Dealer E EW Vul	♠ 8 7 ♥ J 9 6 ♦ A Q 6 3 ♣ J 10 8 7	Match 6 Bd 22 4S by South AC lead
♠ 10 9 4 ♥ 7 3 2 ♦ J 10 9 8 5 ♣ A 3		♠ 6 3 ♥ K Q 10 8 5 ♦ K 4 2 ♣ K 9 4
	♠ A K Q J 5 2 ♥ A 4 ♦ 7 ♣ Q 6 5 2	

East opened 1H and I overcalled 1S. Some would double first with this hand showing extra strength, which is fair enough although not my personal preference. West raised to 2H, North and East passed and I had the chance to bid 2S, which I felt was a good picture of my hand. East took the push to 3H, which is a bit risky without any extra trump length. Rachel piped up with 3S, recognising that her hand had become very good in context as she hadn't shown anything yet. That was all the encouragement I needed to go on to 4S.

Across the room this was a common contract, and quite a few people made it. Our West found the killing lead of AC followed by a club to partner's king. I nonchalantly dropped the QC on the second round but they weren't being put off and took their club ruff. West sent back a low heart to the 9, 10, ace and I had to try to take all the remaining tricks.

Looking at the high card points, East had to have the K♦ as well as the KQ of hearts, else she didn't have a viable opening bid. No chance for the diamond finesse then. I started playing the spades and the last club. East might feel as if she was being squeezed by the J♥ and the AQ♦ but I'd have to play before her and she could still keep the correct winner.

However another chance presented itself when West could see no value in his hearts and threw them all away to preserve his diamond sequence. Then the 4♥ in my hand became part of a two-pronged attack on East and she really was squeezed.

Dealer E EW Vul	♠ 8 7 ♥ J 9 6 ♦ A Q 6 3 ♣ J 10 8 7	Match 6 Bd 22 4S by South AC lead
♠ 10 9 4 ♥ 7 3 2 ♦ J 10 9 8 5 ♣ A 3		♠ 6 3 ♥ K Q 10 8 5 ♦ K 4 2 ♣ K 9 4
	♠ A K Q J 5 2 ♥ A 4 ♦ 7 ♣ Q 6 5 2	

In the position above I played the last trump, throwing the JH from dummy and East pitched the KH, making my 4H good. By this point there was nothing she could do.

West could with clairvoyant powers have saved the day. If he'd thrown a diamond and kept the 7H, then my 4 wouldn't have come good. Also if he'd made the less obvious play of JD instead of partner's bid heart suit, that would have messed up my communications and put kibosh on the squeeze.

This was only a moral victory for our team. Congratulations to Larry, Ian, Helen and Elizabeth, our opponents in this match, who won the C grade by a healthy margin with steady play throughout.