

# International Competition in the Slow Lane

A team from down under, the Sydney Harbour Bridgers, sailed into the wards. Their wild bidding led to an exciting match.

*North/South Game. Dealer South.*

	♠ 9764 ♥ 10832 ♦ 9632 ♣ 5		
♠ 5 ♥ Q7 ♦ K ♣ AKQ1087632	N W E S	♠ K10832 ♥ 94 ♦ QJ104 ♣ 94	
	♠ AQJ ♥ AKJ65 ♦ A875 ♣ J		

One of the tables had a quiet, if poorly judged auction.

West <i>Rick</i>	North	East <i>Ann</i>	South
—	—	—	1♥
5♣	Pass	Pass	Dble
Pass	5♥	All Pass	

The Antipodean North failed to appreciate that his shortness would duplicate his partner's, and so he pulled to an unmakeable contract. After a spade switch at Trick 2, South drew trumps. He cashed two more spades and then went to dummy with a trump. After ruffing the fourth spade, South exited with a low diamond to go down only one. His clue had been East's club nine, which allowed the divination of West's distribution.

At the other table, Crocodile Martin played poker for high stakes.

West <i>Croc</i>	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♥
3NT	Pass	Pass	Dble
All Pass			

Andrew led the heart eight, which according to Slow Lane methods could have been top of a doubleton, second highest from four or more small, or lowest from three. Marcia

won the king and eyed declarer's seven suspiciously. Although West's large knife glinted brightly in the cool fluorescent lighting, this was the first board and the Croc was an unknown quantity. Looking to find partner's entry for a spade shift. Marcia cashed the diamond ace. When the king appeared, there was little else to try but the heart king. Declarer's picture this time could not be a false card, and when the jack was played next Andrew could tell that he was not supposed to unblock. Down four was a good start.

*Love All. Dealer North.*

	♠ A4 ♥ AKQJ ♦ AK7 ♣ J1084		
♠ Q7 ♥ 1063 ♦ Q109832 ♣ A2	N W E S	♠ 103 ♥ 872 ♦ J654 ♣ KQ63	
	♠ KJ98652 ♥ 954 ♦ — ♣ 975		

After a normal American transfer auction, Andrew played four spades from the North position for an uninteresting 510. But in the other ward, the Kangaroo Club gave Ann a chance for a brilliancy, and she seized it.

West	North	East	South
—	1♣*	Pass	1♠
3♦	3NT	4♣!	4♠
All Pass			

Rick led the ace of clubs, and declarer was doomed.

But the match was not all beer and macadamias for the home team. As is often the case with venturesome bidders, the Aussies were excellent declarers. Marcia and Digger Wombat both reached four spades after an opening bid by East, and both received a heart lead to East's king. But Marcia muddled about for eight

tricks, and Wombat took ten. Even with all the cards exposed the winning line is not easy to spot.

	♠ J63 ♥ J10 ♦ Q109852 ♣ 102		
♠ K94 ♥ Q642 ♦ J7 ♣ 8765	N W E S	♠ Q2 ♥ K953 ♦ AK43 ♣ J43	
	♠ A10875 ♥ A87 ♦ 6 ♣ AKQ9		

South won the opening lead and took three rounds of clubs, felling East's jack. Having pitched a heart from dummy, he next ruffed two of those using the spade ace as an entry. Needing to return to hand to play a second trump and so avoid the club ruff, Digger Wombat found the only winning continuation, the diamond queen.

The Croc could handle the dummy too. While our guys played a routine four spades (for which I took credit, having drummed on at the advantage of a 6-2 fit over a 5-3 fit), Martin had to play four hearts on a diamond lead:

	♠ A10 ♥ J94 ♦ A1062 ♣ K1063		
	N W E S	♠ J98743 ♥ AKQ83 ♦ Q ♣ J	

Winning the diamond ace, declarer drew trumps in three rounds. Then he played a spade to the ace and overtook the ten on the next round. As his left hand opponent indeed held K-Q-x-x, this care was necessary.

The matched seemed desperately close as the final board was placed on the table. In fact, we were leading by 2 IMPs. The board looked flat, if a grand slam deal can ever look like a flat board. The Kangaroo Clubbers took eight rounds of bidding to get there, but the final contract was never in doubt.

*North/South Game. Dealer South.*

	♠ AK7643		
	♥ A1052		
	♦ —		
	♣ AQ9		
♠ 92	N	E	♠ QJ105
♥ 7	W	S	♥ J63
♦ QJ97632			♦ A1084
♣ 1032			♣ 86
	♠ 8		
	♥ KQ984		
	♦ K5		
	♣ KJ754		

At the other table, everyone had a chance to be clever.

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♥
3♦	5NT	6♠!	7♥
All Pass			

Crocodile Martin's three diamond pre-empt allowed Dingo Gilly to make one of the best bids I have ever seen. Gilly realised that North must have a long suit as well as a diamond void, and hoped that long suit was spades. Holding lots of spades, North would envisage East's void, infer some length in South's hand, and escape from the surely doomed heart grand to a possibly successful spade grand. This true brilliancy could fail only against a North of Andrew's stolidity. Infatuated with his use of the grand slam force, Andrew passed seven hearts without a care in the world. Crushed, East put his tail between his legs.

Of course, alcohol is not allowed on the wards. But Crocodile Martin promised us a shout if we ever made it to Sydney. "The first three rounds are on that bloody Dingo. He had to try to win the match by 20 IMPs. Damn fool."

"What do you mean?" I asked. "His six spades was a great bid. It would have worked against me."

"Yes," replied Crocodile Martin, "but it didn't work against your player. All Dingo had to do to win the match was to take the obvious seven spade save. He knew the grand was laydown, and he knew he could take two tricks. That's down only 2,100, and we win the match. Bloody fool."