

April 01, 2017  
 Courier-Mail Bridge Column by Tony Jackman

The Australian National Championships (ANC) are on the horizon, though at the moment it is a distant horizon. The ANC rotates through the states, usually played in late July, and has a format similar to the Sheffield Shield. There is a round robin, sometimes double, then a final between the two top ranking teams. Presently, our trials have started, first for the Open Team, being played at the QCBC with one 3 match session to go. Pele Rankin/Therese Tully on 589 have a nice lead over Jill Magee/Terry Strong then Paul Hooykaas/Ralph Parker, Jim and Pam Evans and Kevin Steffensen/Neville Francis. At conclusion the top three pairs will become our Open Team for this year's ANC to be held in Canberra. Queensland has long selected its teams via pairs trials often with less than stellar results. Should this continue, it may be time for an alternative method.

Meanwhile the Sunshine Coast Bridge Club last Sunday hosted an Open Swiss Graded Teams at their Buderim clubhouse. Despite the clash with the trials that caused a number of absentees, it was a near capacity field at their excellent clubhouse. A Grade winners were M & S Phillips with B Stacey, A Mellings ahead of G Olsen, C Palmer, R Rusk & A Dunlop. In B Grade, victory went to D Beil, T Matthews, A Gulley, K Balmanno and in second place R Walsh, K Avunduk, M & D Robertson. C Grade was won by C Bellis, R Grills, C Sharp, J Walker with M Gibbens, P Hagan, R Macnee, U Sheldon in second place.

E Dealer N/S Vul

	<b>North</b>		
	♠KJ8		
	♥AK10974		
	♦7		
	♣K53		
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>	
♠85		♠1094	
♥QJ82		♥5	
♦AK842		♦QJ63	
♣J4		♣Q9876	
	<b>South</b>		
	♠AQ732		
	♥63		
	♦1095		
	♣A102		
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
		Pass	1S
2D	2H	Pass	2S
Pass	4NT	Pass	5S
Pass	6S	All Pass	

Most of the Souths who had our hand today decided it was too light for a first round opening. This turned out to be a good decision because they then stopped in game, either 4S or 4H, both contracts making with no trouble. A couple were more ambitious and North went slamming the 5S response to his Roman Keycard Blackwood showing 2 aces and the trump queen. DA was led and the contract failed given the bad heart break. It can be made but it is a double-dummy play: have some fun with it.