

## 2014 Great Barrier Reef Open Pairs by Richard Wallis

It was the turn of Townsville to host the GBR on the long weekend in 2014, and a fine job they did of it too. The venue was the Townsville Convention Centre alongside Jupiters Casino, and while not a large complex like its big brother at Broadbeach, it was plenty big enough to accommodate the 29 tables for the Open Pairs and 12 tables for the Restricted Pairs, held on Friday night and Saturday morning. Even though it was almost a week for me and over a week for Therese since returning from Ireland, we were both still jet-lagged, and occasionally it would show through our bidding and play.

Still, after a loss at the beginning, we got it together for third place, albeit well behind the runaway leaders, Nathan Van Jole and Paul Weir. The event was played as a Swiss Butler, over 8 rounds of 7 boards, with Imp results converted to Victory Points using the new WBF scale, so every trick mattered. A win in the last round gave us a chance for second, but the leaders lost their only match to Barry and Agnes Kempthorne, which rewarded them with second place.

At one stage Townsville had decided not to have the Pairs, but luckily for most of us they changed their mind, and conformed to the programme used at Cairns and Mackay, so we had a full weekend after all. To me it seems a long way to come just to play the teams event, even if 2 extra matches are played, so I am glad others thought the same way.

<b>M 1</b>	AJT4			Board 3 in the first match was a prime example as to how the quality of the suit for making overcalls has gone out the window! People overcall on very poor suits at the 1-level, but generally have a better suit for overcalling at the 2-level, but not this time.
<b>Bd 3</b>	K7532			
<b>Dlr S</b>	AJ2			
<b>Vul EW</b>	5			
KQ965			73	Besides the poor suit held by North, the other negative is the spade holding, which will probably make it difficult for EW to make a game unless they are very strong. On both counts, I am for passing with the North cards over 1S by West.
AQJT4			86	
K			QT95	
J9			KQT76	
	82			North did overcall 2H, and Therese made a normal take-out double, which generally indicates poor support for my suit. My spade suit is not great, and I do not have support, so in spite of the Vulnerability being in favour of bidding game, I elected to pass and take my chances in 2HX, After all, I have a great chance of 4 heart tricks.
	9			
	87643			After the lead of the S8, I won the SJ at trick 2 and cashed the HA, before giving Therese a ruff with her trump and we took the contract 3 off for +500 and 11 Imps against the board average of +20.
	A8432			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
			/	
1S	2H	X	//	

<b>M 1</b>	T83			On board 7 in the first match it was not clear to me who was bidding to make and who was sacrificing!
<b>Bd 7</b>	A92			
<b>Dlr S</b>	J632			My take-out double hit home when Therese jumped to 4S over the simple raise by North, but then South went again and I was on the horns of a dilemma.
<b>Vul All</b>	J63			
QJ94			AK7652	I did not think we were making 5S (right), and while a spade trick looked unlikely given South's bidding, it looked like I had 3 tricks in the minors, so I doubled, which prompted Therese to pass.
7			QJ	
QT5			9	
AKT42			9875	
	-			The lead of the CK showed poor prospects there, and as expected, South ruffed the first spade, so we had to get 2 diamond tricks, or the CQ had to be a false-card, to defeat 5HX.
	KT86543			
	AK874			
	Q			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
			1H	South suckered me in by cashing the DA, and instead of next cashing the DK in case the DQ dropped, she led a small diamond to the table and I ducked!
X	2H	4S	5H	
X	//			-1050 was the first board of the match and we were lucky to lose only 7 Imps, since others were also doubled.

<b>M 2</b> <b>Bd 12</b> <b>Dlr W</b> <b>Vul NS</b>	KJT53 K96 T62 54		I got complacent on board 12 in the second match, and missed an easy additional overtrick when West missed the obvious defence to my simple 2D contract. Not critical in teams scoring? Maybe not, but using the new WBF VP scale, every Imp converts to a fraction of a Victory Point.
Q972 J754 A A987		84 AQT 873 JT632	West made a small effort to get her side into the auction with her double of my 1D, but East was not inclined to bid her 5-card suit at the 3-level when her partner could not open the bidding as Dealer, although this could have netted 10 tricks for EW.
	A6 832 KQJ954 KQ		In spite of Therese bidding spades naturally, West chose the S2 as her opening lead, and dummy's SJ won the first trick. When West played the CA and another club when he won the DA, I was able to unblock the SA, and enter dummy with the DT to discard a heart on the SK for 9 tricks and +110.
<b>W</b> / X //	<b>N</b> / 1S	<b>E</b> / /	<b>S</b> 1D 2D  If I had won with the SA at trick 1, and West had played the same defence, I could have now finessed the ST, ruffed a spade, and entered dummy with the DT to discard 2 hearts on the spades and make 10 tricks for +130, and 1 more Imp.

<b>M 4</b> <b>Bd 21</b> <b>Dlr N</b> <b>Vul NS</b>	K76 AKT5 KQ7 J62		On board 21 in the third match I had slam aspirations if Therese had a spade suit, and probably would have looked for a club game if she had neither major, but when she passed my jump to 3NT (promising a 4-cad spade suit) over her 2H response, I assumed that we did not have a good fit.
A84 Q96 J6542 85		QJ9 J8743 T83 T7	East led the H4, and Therese entered dummy with a club, and cashed 4 clubs to allow EW to signal, and then a spade off the table, playing the SK when West played low, and duly claimed 12 tricks for +690.
	T532 2 A9 AKQ943		Looking at the NS cards, and assuming East does not make it easy by leading the SA, slam is strictly a 50/50 proposition, making whenever West has the SA and going down if East has it!
<b>W</b> / //	<b>N</b> 1NT 2H	<b>E</b> / /	<b>S</b> 2C 3NT  This appears to make it a borderline slam, but in reality, some Easts would lead the SA to a 6NT contract, which just tips it over to a reasonable risk. Some pairs must have bid the slam, as the board average was -840, so we lost 4 Imps.

<b>M 4</b> <b>Bd 27</b> <b>Dlr S</b> <b>Vul Nil</b>	8742 8 AQJ9 J974		On board 27 in the fourth match I had excellent cards when Therese showed a diamond shortage, but failed to investigate slam and was very disappointed when I saw dummy and realized that 6S was an excellent contract.
QJT5 Q2 T752 KT3		AK93 AKJ43 4 AQ6	West led the H8, which looked ominously like a singleton considering he had overcalled 2D, but slam is still cold on a 3-2 spade break. Luck was with us when I cashed 2 spades, and with both majors breaking badly, slam was no chance (?).
	6 T9765 K863 852		A few pairs were in slam going off, but at least 2 pairs managed to somehow make 6S, so the board average was a modest -360, and we gained only 3 Imps.
<b>W</b> / 1S 4S!	<b>N</b> / 2D //	<b>E</b> 1H 4D!	<b>S</b> / / X  How can EW make 12 tricks? There is no legitimate line, and the only thing I can think of is that South must have carelessly discarded a heart, giving up 12 tricks.

<b>M 5</b> <b>Bd 4</b> <b>Dir W</b> <b>Vul All</b>	T862 QT2 A7 9863		On board 4 in the fifth match we got overboard when East came to life on the second round with 2D, and Therese thought I had jumped to 2NT, showing 18-19 points instead of the 15-17 I was trying to show. The 1S bid by Therese warned West about leading a spade which would have given me my 9 <sup>th</sup> trick, so prompted by his partner's support, he led the D9. Prospects looked poor when dummy appeared, but it appeared as if East had 3 points in diamonds, and would thus be unlikely to have the CQ, so I won the DA and cashed the top clubs, getting the first bit of good news. Since it was certain that West had the HK, at trick 4 I led the H4 towards dummy, and when West played low, the HQ brought my trick tally to 8. Now back to my HA to 2 club tricks hoping West would discard a diamond, assuming East had 5. West discarded 2 diamonds (?) and when I cashed the DA and exited with the H6 he had to give me a spade trick after all for +600 and a very lucky 10 Imps.
AK95 KJ7 9842 Q4		J7 9853 QJT3 752	
	Q43 A64 K65 AKJT		
<b>W</b> 1D / / /	<b>N</b> / 1S 3NT	<b>E</b> / 2D //	<b>S</b> X 2NT

<b>M 6</b> <b>Bd 8</b> <b>Dir W</b> <b>Vul Nil</b>	Q K973 T974 KQ86		On board 8 in the sixth match I was not content to let South play in a sedate 1NT, although it is possible that North intended to invite with 2NT anyway, so I bid a very risky 2C. North probably expected Therese to bid 2S, since she is marked with some spades, otherwise a double of 2C seems logical. Looking at all 4 hands, I would have led the SA, and Therese would have unblocked the DJ, which sets up 6 tricks for the defence and gives South no chance, but I led the ST, and South was in with a chance. South led to the CA at trick 2 and advanced the C9, intending to run it, but I covered, so he won on the table and led to the DA for the club finesse, After cashing the 4 <sup>th</sup> club, he led the DT, but he went up with the DK and exited with a diamond, giving Therese 2 tricks in the suit, on the last of which declarer discarded a spade, so we took the rest of the tricks for 1 off and +50 and a meagre 3 Imps.
AT9754 A Q2 JT42		J8 QT654 J863 75	
	K632 J82 AK5 A93		
<b>W</b> 1S 2C	<b>N</b> / 2NT	<b>E</b> / //	<b>S</b> 1NT

<b>M 7</b> <b>Bd 15</b> <b>Dir S</b> <b>Vul NS</b>	52 KQT542 532 K2		On board 15 in the seventh match South put it to us with a jump to 4S after her partner showed some values with a forcing 1NT response. Since the Vulnerability was in my favour, I took the push to 5C, which may make on a good day. Looking at all 4 hands, this was a mistake, but North was now in the spotlight. North probably placed South with a stronger hand for the 4S rebid, so he expected at least his heart values to be useful as he bid 5S over my 5C, and I doubled this when it came around to me. The lead was the C5 and declarer played the CK at trick 1, and ruffed the second club, but dummy was completely useless in 5S, and declarer lost 2 diamonds, a club and spade trick for 2 off and +500 to us, Careful defence will also achieve 2 off in a 4S contract, as declarer will be forced to lead diamonds themselves and thus lose 3 diamond tricks, which explains why the board average was -200, but that led to a gain of 7 Imps for us.
K83 93 A76 QT853		J J876 KJ9 AJ964	
	AQT9764 A QT84 7		
<b>W</b> / 5C X	<b>N</b> 1NT 5S //	<b>E</b> X / /	<b>S</b> 1S 4S /

<b>M 8</b>	T4			<p>On board 22 in the eighth match my 2C over the strong 1NT opening is part of Multi-Landy, and shows both major suits. Therese was happy to bid 2S, and rebid 3S when North balanced with 3C.</p> <p>South has nothing except partner's bid to guide him and led the CA, which gave us a head start, and Therese ruffed in dummy and led a diamond to the DQ, taken by South who led a heart, taken by Therese in hand to play the SA and another trump.</p> <p>South cashed his other trump, and then led a club, but Therese could win the CK and play a diamond to dummy for 3 discards, losing just 4 tricks for +140. The board average was zero, so that was +4 Imps.</p> <p>Of course South could have made it much harder by ducking the first diamond, but Deep Finesse allows East to make 9 tricks in spades against any defence. Double-dummy, after ruffing the CA, Therese could have run the S5 from the table at trick 2, and later ran the SQ from hand to pin the ST in the North hand.</p>
<b>Bd 22</b>	T5			
<b>Dlr E</b>	9864			
<b>Vul EW</b>	QJT98			
A975			Q862	
Q962			K73	
KJT75			Q2	
-			K532	
	KJ3			
	AJ84			
	A3			
	A764			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
2C!	/	2S	1NT	
/	3C	3S	/	
			//	

<b>M 8</b>	AQ765			<p>On board 24 in the eighth match North could have opened with a 2D bid to show both majors and a limited hand, but chose to open with a full-blooded opening bid.</p> <p>The 2C response by South was also a bit of a push, especially with a singleton in his partner's long suit, but it is easy to take an optimistic view in the heat of the moment.</p> <p>I led the DT, and the sight of dummy must have made South regret the overbidding on both of their parts. Declarer tried a hopeful DJ, but ducked when Therese covered.</p> <p>Declarer next ducked a heart to Therese and she returned a diamond, won by Declarer who then finessed the SQ, won by Therese, The final result was 7 tricks to us and only 6 tricks to Declarer, for +150 and surprisingly enough, a flat board!</p> <p>The board average was -140, but I could not work out how this score came about unless most NS pairs bid way too high!</p>
<b>Bd 24</b>	A952			
<b>Dlr W</b>	J4			
<b>Vul Nil</b>	63			
J843			KT9	
T74			QJ3	
T985			Q63	
AJ			KT82	
	2			
	K86			
	AK72			
	Q9754			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
/	1S	/	2C	
/	2H	/	2NT	
/	3NT	//		