

2008 Gold Coast Seniors Pairs

After our 2nd place in 2007, John Brockwell and I approached the 2008 event with eager anticipation, but in spite of producing a scrappy win in one of the Saturday night walk-ins, we were never travelling well enough to qualify for the final let alone win it.

In the Plate on the Monday and Tuesday, we continued on in the same fashion and finished around mid-field with Qld Pair R. Lorroway & J. Dooner in 2nd place.

Queensland did have a hand in the Final, when Tony Jackman and Tony Hutton qualified easily and finished 1st in a good field.

Q 1	95			On board 6 in the first qualifying John picked an unfortunate time to try a little psyche.
Bd 6	J4			
Dir E	AQ874			Playing Acol with 4-card suits, I was more than happy to raise John's 1S response over the double to the 2-level, but was a little suspicious when he then jumped to 4H, as this auction is a standard one for a 1S psyche. While not certain of the psyche when he bid 5H over 5D, I was betting on the sure thing by passing.
Vul EW	T962			The psyche worked against us in the play, as South had no hesitation in leading the top spades and giving his partner a ruff, followed by the top diamonds.
762				Thus I was 3 off before I even had time to blink, and then a 4 th spade would have left us 4 off, but South must have placed me with a 5-card suit because he exited with a trump.
AQ9865				It mattered not in a pairs event, as -300 was still a poor score, since NS could only make 10 tricks in diamonds.
J9				
Q5				
	AKT4			
	3			
	K652			
	K743			
W	N	E	S	
		1H	X	
1S!	2D	2S	3D	
4H	/	4H	/	
5H	//			

Q 1	J7			On board 10 in the first qualifying I did not open on the East cards with a weak two in spades as I had a 7-card suit, and I did not open 3S because the suit was too weak.
Bd 10	A9864			
Dir E	Q943			However, I had no hesitation in making a weak-jump overcall after NS had bid the red suits, as John could infer my hand did not qualify for a weak two or a 3S opening.
Vul All	94			South could bid 3C over 2S, but chose 2NT to at least show the stopper. Now North should have shown the diamond support, but instead she passed 2NT. Over 3D John may have bid 3S, but unlikely.
A8				John led 2 rounds of spades, so South could not afford to lose the lead to me, but she had a number of options, including playing me for a 7-card suit and John to have the DK, or me to have the singleton DK, or John to have the singleton DJ.
Q732				Cashing the DA and leading towards dummy caters for both of the first 2 options, but declarer followed the 3 rd line by going to dummy with a heart and leading the DQ, which I covered, and finished 3 off (+300).
J5				
KJ762				
	KQ			
	J5			
	AT762			
	AQ53			
W	N	E	S	
/	1H	/	1D	
//	2S	2S	2NT	

Q 1 95
Bd 26 Q732
Dlr E QJT
Vul All QJT3
 JT Q87643
 T84 A9
 A94 753
 AK974 62
 AK2
 KJ65
 K862
 85
W N E S
 4H / 2D X
 / 5H! 4S /
 X // /

On board 26 in the first qualifying we had a routine multi 2D auction to 4S, but before he passed, South seemed quite interested in John's 4H bid, explained as correctible, which seemed to place a cloud over North's 5H bid, especially when I saw her hand.

When dummy hit the table, it was hard to see why South was interested in anything we bid other than 6S, but who is to know! A double, passed out, would have reaped all of the MPs, as there are 5 unavoidable losers in a spade contract.

I led a spade and declarer won on the table to lead to the HQ, and when I won my HA I switched to a club, and was then able to ruff the 3rd round of clubs with the H9, setting up a second trump trick for John and a satisfying +500.

We did not question North's 5H bid, but how many players would bid 5H on that flat hand without the questioning? South has not even got a full take-out double, so I do not know what his plans were if North had bid clubs.

Q 2 T5
Bd 7 3
Dlr S AKQ973
Vul All KQT9
 Q962 J874
 J5 KT986
 865 J2
 J875 A4
 AK3
 AQ742
 T4
 632
W N E S
 / 2D / 1H
 / 4NT / 3D!
 6D // 5H

On board 7 in the first qualifying the bidding looked confident so I led the CA to look at dummy, and that eliminated declarer's first problem, and my club continuation eliminated her next problem.

Actually I was amazed when dummy went down with only Tx in trumps, I was glad I had grabbed the first trick, as it seemed likely on the bidding that dummy's trump holding was a disappointment to declarer and that John could have had Qxx or even 9xxx in diamonds for the setting trick.

Alas, declarer had no trump loser, and my lead had presented the slam to her on a platter for another bottom to us. Maybe some NS pairs had bid to 6NT, which seems a more likely contract.

Slam is cold, but my hand can make it harder by ducking if declarer plays from dummy to the CK. If declarer plays to the CT at the first opportunity, there is nothing EW can do.

Q 2 T4
Bd 16 9753
Dlr W T7542
Vul EW J8
 Q83 J9
 T62 AQ84
 AKQ8 963
 T52 AKQ7
 AK7652
 KJ
 J
 9643
W N E S
 / / 1H 1S
 2D / 3C 3S
 4H //

On board 16 in the first qualifying we landed in the inferior contract of 4H instead of the rock-solid 3NT.

John had a choice after my 3C and South's 3S bid, and since I looked like having 5 hearts, he chose the major suit game as the most likely, as even though his Q83 was likely to be a stopper, there was no guarantee that we had 9 tricks.

Prospects did not look good when I first saw dummy, as I was reasonably confident that the heart finesse was wrong.

As I saw it my only chance was KJ or K9 in the South hand, so I overruffed North on the 3rd round of spades and played a heart towards dummy, South winning the HJ. If they had won with the HK I would have most certainly gone wrong, playing them for K9.

When the hearts were how I wanted them and the clubs were favourable, I scored up +620 for one of our few good boards.

F 1 -
Bd 5 AKQ98654
Dir N A94
Vul NS K3
 KT9753 2
 - J7
 J63 Q8752
 JT87 AQ965
 AQJ864
 T32
 KT
 42
W N E S
 / 2C 2NT 3S
 // 4H / 6H

On board 5 in the first round of the final John opened a forcing 2C, and my 3S was natural and also showed at least an Ace and a King, or some other combinations, which was not at all reassuring to John. However I did not know how disinterested he was in my spades, so pressed on to slam just on the basis of my trump support and good suit. East made an unwise choice of leading their singleton in my long suit, and it got a predictable result when it killed partner's holding and made it easy for John to take all 13 tricks. Even if John had held one spade, the lead would have warned him off the normal finesse and pointed to a ruffing finesse that he may have not found on his own. It is hard to be sure of a top on any board, but +1460 had to be at least equal.

F 1 A9
Bd 8 AQ3
Dir W KJ73
Vul Nil AK54
 KJ8532 2
 87 QT3
 2 JT62
 QT72 QT85
 63
 74
 K954
 A964
 J98
W N E S
 / 2D / 2S
 X 2NT / 3NT
 //

On board 8 in the first round of the final John showed his balanced 20-22, and we did not heed that warning from West when he doubled my 2S bid (pass or correct). This is one of those hands where a double stop is useful in 3NT, but the Moysian fit may be easier to handle for 10 tricks. East dutifully led the SQ and John won the 2nd round with plenty of prospects, but only the least likely one working. He tried the clubs first, to see if the CQ was doubleton, then hearts looking for a 3-3 break, and then finally had to try the diamond finesse, but West scuttled that when he showed out on the 2nd round. The only winning line is to take the double club finesse, slightly better than 25% (lead the CJ in case East has the singleton CT), which is clearly inferior to his adopted line. In 4H, Deep Finesse suggests that 10 tricks are available, probably also via the double club finesse.

F 1 AQJT
Bd 13 -
Dir N KQJ7
Vul All A9873
 K76 82
 AT9754 QJ832
 AT 986
 Q2 KT6
 9543
 K6
 5432
 J54
W N E S
 4H 1C 1H X
 X //

On board 13 in the first round of the final I made a light overcall in second seat, and quick as a wink I was in game (as would anyone with John's hand). North had an easy take-out double over 4H, and South had nowhere to go on his poor hand, so took a chance and passed. On a non-club lead I have 4 top losers, but can get to hand via the CK to take the successful heart finesse. When South led the C4, I could see the contract making if I could just get to cash my 2 club tricks to get a diamond discard, but first I had to get to hand. North won the CA (otherwise I am in hand to take the trump finesse) and exited with a club. The DK would have left me without resort. I still had the remote possibility that the hearts would break or the SA was on side, so I played 2 rounds of trumps and finished 1 off.

F 2 KQ9872
Bd 3 AT
Dlr S KQ3
Vul EW A7
 AJT 4
 Q65 K74
 J9654 A
 94 KQJT8652

 653
 J9832
 T872
 3

W **N** **E** **S**
 / 1S 5C /
 X //

On board 3 in the second round of the final we were fortunate that East did not avail herself of a slight extra chance to make 5CX.

After the lead of the S5 declarer is in dummy for the first and last time (assuming North is not asleep and wins a high club from hand), and should use it to lead a heart, not a trump, which can be led from hand.

Our declarer led a trump off the table and thereafter had to lose 2 heart tricks for 1 off and +200 to us.

It is likely that North has the HA for his opening bid, and it costs nothing to lead the first heart off the table.

If the hearts are 4-3, nothing is gained, as 2 hearts must be lost, but if they are 5-2, with North having Ax, as here, the HK will win and then a heart is ducked to the now bare Ace making 11 tricks.

Being able to visualize these little extra chances are what made Tim Seres and his ilk such great players.

F 2 J5
Bd 6 T2
Dlr E AJ97543
Vul EW Q9
 64 AQT98
 Q94 AK76
 K86 T2
 AJ863 K2

 K732
 J853
 Q
 T754

W **N** **E** **S**
 1NT 3D 1S /
 3NT // /

On board 6 in the second round of the final West had a difficult play problem in 3NT on the lead of the D7.

John's jump overcall showed at least a 6-card suit and less than an opening bid, but where are the SK, SJ and CQ?

It is too hard for West to play North for a 7-card suit and duck the DQ, and yet, if it is not a 7-card suit, any losing finesse will enable NS to cash 5 more diamond tricks,

If dummy had 3 clubs, a good line would be cash the top 2 clubs hoping to see if the CQ drops, then assuming the CQ does not appear, try the hearts for a 3-3 break and if that works, finesse the SQ for the 9th trick. All in all a pretty long shot,

On the actual hand, due to the 7-1 diamond break, almost any line works, except declarer's adopted line of taking the 2nd round club finesse. 3 off.

F 2 5
Bd 7 AK73
Dlr S KJ983
Vul NS J85
 A86 T743
 J85 QT9
 AT7 42
 KQ97 A642

 KQJ92
 642
 Q65
 T3

W **N** **E** **S**
 1NT 2D // /

On board 7 in the second round of the final North's 2D was Splash, and South was not optimistic enough to think that South's other suit was spades, so he passed, and got lucky, when they stopped in their 5-3 fit.

How would he have felt if they stopped in a 4-3 fit instead of a 5-5 spade fit?

I got off to a good start with a trump, ducked to North, who led a spade to dummy, won by John with the Ace to return a heart.

My good lead came to nothing when North won the HA and led a club towards dummy and I ducked! John returned another heart, but North won and led another club, and now it is too late to stop declarer entering dummy to cash a spade, or trump a club - -90.

If I rise with the CA and lead another trump, John covers dummy's trump (to deny an entry) and can then cash the DA and 2 more clubs for 1 off.

F 3 72
Bd 2 T43
Dir E J98653
Vul NS J7
 J43 T9865
 J762 85
 Q42 K7
 AK4 T832
 AKQ
 AKQ9
 AT
 Q965
W **N** **E** **S**
 / / 2C
 // 2D / 2NT

On board 2 in the third round of the final, John hated passing my 2NT (showing 23-24), and thought that he was wrong to do so, but when I did not have diamond support, it should have proved to be the right decision.

On a neutral lead, declarer can try everything obvious for the 9th trick, but I guess that it would elude all but the most gifted players without the sight of all 4 hands.

The winning line appears to cash the top 3 spades and lead towards the CJ. If West ducks, the CJ will win and ducking clubs twice will set up the CQ as the 9th trick.

If West cashes the top clubs they must exit with a diamond to prevent presenting the 9th trick immediately, and then a diamond exit endplays them for the 9th trick.

I received a heart lead giving me the 8th trick straight away, and the club was my 9th, but a poor score for us as many were in 3NT making 9 or 10 tricks.

F 3 AQT53
Bd 11 T865
Dir S K7
Vul Nil T7
 976 -
 93 AKQJ74
 A543 QJ982
 K854 63
 KJ842
 2
 T6
 AQJ92
W **N** **E** **S**
 / 4S 4NT 1S
 6C / 6D 5C
 // //

On board 11 in the third round of the final East bid 4NT over 4S to show 2 suits, although I would have thought that the heart suit did not need any help (and scores better).

I wanted to suggest a lead for John, so I bid 5C, but West carelessly tried to bid 5C as well as me!

5C by West was intended as pass or correct, and since the 6C cue-bid still asks East to bid the lowest red suit, declarer allowed her to bid 6C without penalty.

We did not know what was going on and omitted to double, and I led the H2.

Declarer played 2 rounds of trumps and John was quick to lead back a club for 1 down as soon as he won the DK, and that was the only other trick for our side.

If West had concluded that my 5C indicated the red suits in the East hand and bid 5D, they may have stolen the hand.

F 3 KJ94
Bd 16 K62
Dir W 873
Vul EW K87
 83 AQT75
 T854 J3
 42 JT65
 Q9643 J2
 62
 AQ97
 AKQ9
 AT5
W **N** **E** **S**
 / / / 1C!
 / 2NT / 3C
 / 3S / 3NT
 // //

On board 16 in the third round of the final NS were playing Precision and 3C was Stayman, so I was warned off my normal spade lead by North's bid, and nothing else stood out, so I selected the HJ.

Sometimes you vainly look for some help in partner's hand, but this time John had every card I needed him to have.

Declarer could not see that the diamonds would yield 4 tricks by way of the double finesse (25% chance), and instead tried the 75% chance of John having either the SA or SQ, so after testing the hearts, used the diamond entries to lead spades off the table.

On winning the first spade, I had to find another exit card, and chose the CJ, but on winning the next spade I had to hope John had the clubs under control and led my last club.

Even now declarer could have end-played me with the DJ to give him a spade trick at the end, but he failed to find this line and finished 1 off.