

2008 Qld Mixed Pairs by Richard Wallis

The Qld Mixed Pairs were held on the weekend of 15 & 16 November, in conjunction with the Seniors Pairs, which in some part, accounts for the reduced entry in both events. As the entry was only 10.5 tables in the Mixed and 5 tables in the Seniors, the two events were run concurrently in a full 16 table Howell over 4 sessions, but each pair was only eligible to win the event for which they entered.

The 2007 winners were Janine Solomon and Neville Francis, and they jumped to the lead early on and won running away, almost 4 tops ahead of Rosa Lachman/Bill Hunt and Meta Goodman/Tony Jackman in equal 2nd, with Therese Tully and myself in 4th place. We were never playing well enough to win and considered ourselves lucky to scramble into 4th place.

The format was good, with every board over the 4 sessions being important, and this rewarded the consistent results of Janine and Neville.

M 3	KJ963			Board 10 in the 1 st session was a test of counting that I failed.
Bd 10	Q72			Therese's 2D reverse showed longer clubs, and my 2S was wrong for
Dlr E	QT52			the main reason that we were playing Blackout and it was the weakest
Vul All	A			bid I could make. I should have bid 2NT or preferably 3C, both of
A87		2		which force to game.
AJ963		K		When Therese rebid 3D, this did not necessarily show reversing
93		AKJ86		values, but it did show at least 65 in the 2 suits, so we could be wide
Q63		KJT875		open in spades and now my value bid is 5C, since after my earlier
	QT54			weak response of 2S, 4C may have been passed.
	T854			I did not fully count out her hand to the 65, and when I bid 3NT I
	74			thought I was saying that I only had 1 spade stop, and if Therese had
	QJ7			a singleton spade, she was to rebid clubs, but of course that was only
W	N	E	S	in my head and 3NT became the hopeless contract.
		1C	/	How galling when dummy appeared to see that 6C was cold and I had
1H	/	2D	/	no chance in 3NT on the spade lead.
2S!	/	3D	/	
3NT	//			

M 6	KJ			On board 23 North rebid 3NT secure in the knowledge that he could
Bd 23	AK3			control the first or second trick on a spade lead, and there might be a
Dlr All	AQ954			play for 9 tricks after South's negative double showed some values.
Vul S	KT3			However, Therese was not about to give North an easy first trick and
2		AQT7543		instead made a negative lead, hoping that I could get in before North
9752		Q8		could run 9 tricks.
T762		8		In choosing a negative lead Therese did not lead her singleton, nor
A974		865		would she lead from her heart honour, so that left the club suit, and
	986			she led the C6 as a MUD lead denying interest in the suit. Luckily for
	JT64			us I was able to win the first club trick and lead a spade to give
	KJ3			declarer no chance.
	QJ2			That was the first 8 tricks to us for 4 off and +400.
W	N	E	S	Notice that on a spade lead, North can actually make 12 tricks since I
			/	have the CA and only a singleton spade, and on a red-suit lead North
/	2NT	3S	X	has 9 tricks thanks to the lucky lie of the HQ.
/	3NT	//		

M 7 J98
Bd 25 T9542
Dir N 8632
Vul EW 9
 A763 54
 A 8
 Q95 AKJT4
 AK852 QT763

 KQT2
 KQJ763
 7
 J4

W	N	E	S
	/	1D	1H
2C	4H	5C	/
6C	6H	X	//

On board 25 in the 1st session we were powerless when North beat us around the head with the vulnerability.

My hand looked good when I first saw it but it improved out of sight when Therese opened 1D and South overcalled 1H. The less points Therese had in hearts, the more she had in my 2 suits.

North made the obvious bid of 4H over my 2C response, and I made the all too obvious raise to slam when Therese supported my clubs, as with no heart losers, it was almost certain that I could find 12 tricks somewhere.

North has absolutely no tricks in defense, and the 5-card heart support ensures at most 1 heart trick for South, so they took a chance that South did not have 2 tricks and sacrificed in 6H.

The great fitting cards in the NS hands produced an easy 9 tricks, thus we could only gain +500 rather than +1370 in 6C. If I had passed 5C and so did North, we would have scored better!

M 17 T95
Bd 4 2
Dir W Q7
Vul All KQ98765
 Q 732
 T9853 J764
 KT92 J843
 AT2 43

 AKJ864
 AKQ
 A65
 J

W	N	E	S
/	3C	/	3S
/	4H!	/	6S
//			

Board 4 in the 3rd session was made for our system.

After my 3-level opening, any new suit from responder such as the 3S response is natural and forcing, looking for 3-card support. Opener bids 3NT to show 0 or 1 card in support, raises the suit with a doubleton, or cue-bids a control with 3-card support.

The 4H rebid confirmed 3-card support for spades and showed a heart control, and that was all the encouragement Therese needed to have a crack at slam.

Thinking to try and cut down on ruffs in dummy, West lead the SQ, which eliminated any problems in the trump suit, although 6S is not in danger from any lead.

Since there are now 2 trump entries to dummy which will allow trumps to be drawn, Therese simply gave up a trick to the CA and claimed 12 tricks.

M 18 -
Bd 6 K86
Dir E 9862
Vul EW AKQ986
 9654 AKT87
 AQT4 J32
 72 K54
 T75 J2

 QJ32
 975
 AQJT
 43

W	N	E	S
		1S	/
1NT!	2C	/	/
2S	3C	/	/
3S	/		X
//			

Board 6 in the 3rd session was a slam that we were never going to reach, but a good score came our way none the less.

The 1NT was forcing, although why you would use it with this hand is a puzzle to me.

Maybe West valued the hand as a balanced limit-raise, and intended to bid 3S next to show this type of hand, but the extra room enabled me to bid my fine club suit twice, but I could not mention the ratty diamond suit. I could have doubled 2S myself for takeout, but the club suit seemed to be eminently re-biddable.

Therese had no hesitation in doubling 3S when she finally had the chance. If the truth be known she probably wanted to double 2S if I had not bid 3C in front of her.

Against 3SX Therese made the obvious club lead and we took our 7 tricks in comfort for +800 and more than adequate compensation for our missed game.

M 18 A97
Bd 8 A76
Dir W 72
Vul All KJ952
 85 KQT6
 T93 QJ4
 QJ964 KT83
 876 Q3

 J432
 K852
 A5
 AT4

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

Board 8 in the 3rd session was a likely bottom when I did not accept the game invitation.

The 2NT rebid did not promise a major suit, although Therese had both, and I elected to consider my hand a minimum, in spite of holding a respectable 5-card club suit and 2 Aces.

East led the SK, so Therese's fragile spade holding was now worth a 2nd trick, and I won immediately to finesse the CT which would guarantee 8 tricks even if it lost.

When the CT won, I had at least 9 tricks so I ducked a heart to East in case that suit was breaking.

If East had counted out the hand, I had already shown the major suit Aces and the CK, but had passed 2NT, so West must have at least the DQ and a diamond switch was automatic.

East might have counted out the hand, but cashed the SQ first, and now I had 11 tricks for +210, but a poor score.

M 20 Q
Bd 13 A32
Dir N QJ54
Vul All AT765
 972 A854
 J965 KQT874
 87 3
 QJ32 K8

 KJT63
 -
 AKT962
 93

W **N** **E** **S**
 / 1D 1H 2H
 / 2NT / 5H
 / 6D / 7D
 //

Board 13 in the 3rd session was our first use of Voidwood, and I recognized the 5H bid as just that.

I opened 1D to prepare a rebid, but showed my heart stop when Therese forced with 2H, which agreed diamonds. Probably I would have been better to continue my original plan and rebid clubs, but the heart stop could have been vital to the final contract.

5H, above game in our agreed suit was asking for Aces and the DK, but excluding the HA!

I surmised this, but old habits die hard and I slipped into my 2 with the trump Queen response, instead of 5NT to show 1 Ace.

Therese was suspicious on my 6D response, but dutifully bid 7D, and was not surprised when East cashed the SA at trick 1.

-100 was not quite as good a score as +1370 would have been.

M 21 AQJT2
Bd 17 865
Dir N 32
Vul Nil 743
 84 3
 KQJT4 A92
 AT8 KQJ76
 JT6 AKQ9

 K9765
 73
 954
 852

W **N** **E** **S**
 / / 1D /
 1H 1S X /
 4H / 4NT /
 5S / 6H //

Board 17 in the 3rd session was a great example of the relatively new "support double".

Therese's double of the 1S overcall showed exactly 3 hearts, and that was enough for me to bid game.

Now Therese's hand increased in value, since she had the spade singleton, so when I showed my 2 Key Cards and the trump Queen with 5S, slam was not only easy to bid, but forced by the high-level response to RKCB.

This illustrates that the 4NT bidder must be prepared for the high level response, or else Blackwood is not the right bid.

In the latest version of our system the 5S bid also denies any outside Kings, although on this occasion, the SK (shown by a 5NT response) would have been wasted.

North led the SA, but there was nothing to the play and 12 tricks were claimed very quickly.

M 21	43			
Bd 19	86542			
Dir S	T87			
Vul EW	865			
QJT2			AK97	
AQT9			K3	
AKJ4			Q3	
Q			AKT97	
	865			
	J7			
	9652			
	J432			
W	N	E	S	
	/	/	/	
1H	/	2C	/	
2NT	/	3C!	/	
3S	/	4NT	/	
5S	/	7S	//	

Board 19 in the 3rd session was a routine grand slam that we probably got below average for, in spite of bidding to 7S. As is evident we hold all the honours except for 2 Jacks, so everyone will be in a grand slam, and the trick is to get to 7NT.

2NT was forcing to game, and 3C enquired about strength, with 3S natural and 17 or more HCPs, counting full value for the stiff Queen in Therese's suit. 19 opposite 17 with a good 4-4 fit looked like a possible grand slam, as long as the Key Cards were held, hence:

4NT was RCKB, and 5S showed all present and correct. However, although Therese knew that there was an almost certain 13 tricks in spades, she could not count to 13 in 7NT, as we could be missing the DK or HQ.

A new part of the system would have helped here, if I had remembered it! Since a 5S response generally commits us to slam anyway, I should have bid 6D, to show 2 Key Cards, the Trump Queen and the DK, and deny the CK.

Then it would have been easier to think about 7NT.

M 22	KJT			
Bd 22	AK4			
Dir E	QJ74			
Vul EW	J72			
93			A87542	
QJ953			-	
983			AKT2	
Q83			AK4	
	Q6			
	T8762			
	65			
	T965			
W	N	E	S	
	/	1S	/	
1NT	/	2D	/	
2S	/	4S	/	
/	X	XX	//	

Board 22 in the 3rd session was a classic top or bottom hand, and although Therese played well within the odds, it turned out to be a bottom instead of the top that was available from playing against the odds.

I had a marginal response to Therese's 1S opening, and with less spades, I probably would have passed.

Having chosen to respond (Therese could after all have 4 hearts), I felt a twang of regret when Therese jumped to 4S.

North had no hesitation in doubling (most would, although the spade holding may only produce 1 trick), and Therese, with the void heart as a surprise for North, quickly redoubled.

Therese won the CT in hand and played 2 rounds of trumps, and suddenly things were not so rosy for North when Therese next ruffed the HA.

The crux of the hand was reached when Therese entered dummy and led a diamond. The double finesse is about 75% if there is a second entry to the table, but only 25% with 1 entry. Playing the top diamonds works on any 3-3 break, and any 4-2 or 5-1 break that includes a short honour, amounting to over 50%, but alas not this time, and we scored up -400 for a bottom.

M 29 98
Bd 19 KJT85
Dlr S 94
Vul EW J542
 QJT A32
 932 74
 AKJ86 QT73
 K6 A973
 K7654
 AQ6
 52
 QT8
W N E S
 2D X 3NT 1S
 //

Board 19 in the 4th session was nearly a triumph for East's bluff heart stopper.

My double showed hearts and clubs, and it therefore seemed likely when East leapt to 3NT that he had a stopper in the 3 outside suits.

Apparently he was relying on West to supply the heart stopper, but while they added to his club and spade stoppers, no heart stopper.

Therese knew that I had at least 4 hearts but few entries, so trying to remove East's heart stopper early and set up my hearts, she led the HQ.

Since I could see the H9 in dummy, this was great for me and I covered, hoping that East would be forced to take his Ace on the 1st or 2nd round.

When the HK held, I continued with the HJ but to my surprise Therese overtook with the HA and returned the suit so we could cash out for 1 off.

M 30 J983
Bd 24 2
Dlr W A9
Vul NS KJ9752
 Q2 T5
 973 Q84
 KT4 QJ8653
 QT643 A8
 AK764
 AKJT65
 72
 -
W N E S
 / / / 1H
 / 2C / 2S
 / 3S / 5S
 / 6S //

When I passed on the first round and Therese opened on my singleton in 4th seat I never envisaged that we had a slam on, and it was only my 6-card suit that persuaded me to bid 2C (non-forcing by a passed hand) on the second round.

However, the subsequent reverse was game-forcing after my 2-level response, so I showed what I now considered to be a good hand by bidding just 3S instead of jumping to game.

The jump to 5S by Therese asked me to bid slam if I had 2nd round control of diamonds, and with 1st round control I probably should have bid 6D rather than 6S, just in case Therese was interested in the grand slam.

Since everything was friendly, even 6NT is cold, but 7S makes by way of the 2-2 trump break and the 3-3 heart break, so 6S was the best small slam.

The unusual feature of the hand is that we have only 24 HCPs, and 4 of them are opposite a void, a fit in only 1 suit, but slam is cold.

M 31 85
Bd 26 T74
Dlr E T2
Vul All 987653
 AQJT64 K92
 9 AK632
 96 KJ
 KQT2 AJ4
 73
 QJ85
 AQ87653
 -
W N E S
 2S / 3D /
 3S / 4C /
 4H / 4S /
 5C / 5S //

We missed a golden opportunity on board 24 in the 4th session to snatch a top out of the jaws of defeat.

My 2S was natural and forcing, and 3D by Therese showed at least 3-card spade support.

I had more than minimum, but no Aces to cue, so I marked time with a forcing 3S, and Therese obliged with a club cue-bid.

Now I could cue-bid my heart control, but with nothing more to say Therese went back to spades.

When I next cue-bid clubs, it was clear that I was interested in slam but had no diamond control, and with my hand declarer, the lead would be through Therese's diamond holding so 5S was the limit of the hand unless by some earlier transfer auction Therese had been declarer in 6S.

When dummy went down it was clear that we had 12 tricks on top as long as my hand was not declarer, and that could have been achieved by declaring 6NT from Therese's hand.