

## 2011 Coffs Harbour Teams by Richard Wallis

Coffs Harbour was a congress I had planned to play in next year, but John Brockwell and Elaine Leach's other pair had to pull out due to illness just a week before, so I was asked to play with Nick Van Vucht from Canberra to make up the team. We had never played together before, but quickly agreed a system after meeting before the first match, and except for a few slight hiccups along the way, were always in the hunt, but never close enough to fully threaten. Unfortunately our last match was our worst loss, and dropped us from 9<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>.

A Victorian team won well, but Therese Tully and Pele Rankin, playing with a Sydney pair, came in 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Paul Hookyaas and Janine Solomon, playing with Richard Ward and Lindy Vincent, were in a close 4<sup>th</sup> position, just out of the money.

The format was similar to the Barrier Reef Congress, consisting of 8 x 14 board matches played over 4 sessions, day time play only. I always think that this is a bit of a waste of 2 nights when you have to travel so far for the congress, and those that came from further away, Canberra was a 9.5 hour drive away, had to come the day before. However, it seems that I am alone in wanting to play at night!

<b>M 1</b>	Q5	Board 1 in the first match had so much promise when Nick opened 1D, but abated a little when East overcalled 2C, and turned out to be a big disappointment.		
<b>Bd 1</b>	9			
<b>Dlr N</b>	AKT9876			
<b>Vul Nil</b>	Q86	I forced Nick to give me preference, so I knew he may not have 3-card support, and the club overcall warned me that we were getting potentially the worst lead, so when Nick only showed 1 Ace, I stopped out of slam.		
JT96		83		
842		T653		
J43		Q2		
T97		AK532	The SQ in dummy was a bonus, but other than that Nick's hand was only moderately useful, but at least 5S was playable. After the lead of the CT I tried to dissuade East from cashing the CK by dropping the CJ, but it did no good, and even though the club return survived, the contract was scuttled by the 4-2 trump break, and I had to settle for one down and -50.	
	AK742			
	AKQJ7			
	5			
	J4			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
/	1D	2C	2S	
/	3D	/	3H	
/	3S	/	4NT	
/	5D	/	5S	
//			At the other table, NS were not put off by the lack of controls, and bid slam anyway, going down 2 doubled, for a 6 Imp gain.	

<b>M 1</b>	62	Our new partnership was tested on board 6 in the first match when I opened a strong 2NT holding weak spades and a 5-card heart suit. Our system allowed for this and I felt there was no better way to describe my hand.		
<b>Bd 6</b>	JT5			
<b>Dlr S</b>	KJT863			
<b>Vul EW</b>	65	Nick could have checked for a 5-card major with 3C, and gave thought to bidding 4D looking for slam, but when he gave up on slam he also gave up on a major suit fit, and simply raised to 3NT.		
KQT		AJ975		
862		93		
Q52		74		
Q842		T973	Not wanting to give too much away on the opening lead, West had a reasonable opening lead of the SK, and hit paydirt. I watched helplessly as EW peeled off the first 5 tricks for -50.	
	843			
	AKQ74			
	A9			
	AKJ			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
/	3NT	//	2NT	
			At the other table NS stayed out of the hopeless slam, but made all 13 tricks in 4H by South anyway after a minor suit lead for -510 and 11 Imps away.	

**M 1** J32  
**Bd 10** KJ654  
**Dir E** QT852  
**Vul All** -  
 AQT985  
 32  
 J76  
 85

6  
 AQ987  
 K943  
 J76

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
		1C	1H
2S	4H	4S	5H
/	/	6C	/
6S	//		

On board 10 in the first match 2S by West was a negative free bid, so East was content to just bid game over Nick's 4H pre-empt.

It thus looked safe for me to go again over 4S, but now suddenly East re-evaluated the hand and thought that slam was a good prospect. What had I done?

Having received spade support, West removed 6C to the inferior 6S, and there the matter rested, with Nick leading the H5, won by me with the HA.

Now is the time to count the clubs and realize that there are only 2 missing (the lead of the H4, probably not 4<sup>th</sup> highest may have given me a clue), but to my shame I got lazy and led back a diamond!

Now a funny thing happened. West called for the S4 from the table, and after I followed with my singleton S6, he played the S5! Partner was so surprised at this that he did not notice it was my S6 holding the trick and won with the SJ to defeat the contract. If the S6 held the trick I could have finally led a club and taken it 2 off. Declarer had thought he had played the SK from the table, hence the low card from his hand. Slam was missed at the other table but still 12 Imps in.

**M 2** A95  
**Bd 17** 42  
**Dir N** AT953  
**Vul Nil** AK2  
 QT43  
 AQ7  
 42  
 J864

J82  
 J5  
 KQJ76  
 T83

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
	1NT	2H	2NT!
3H	/	/	X
//			

After a 14-16 loss in the first match we were well on the way to another similar result in the second match when I let the balance of points persuade me to double 3H for penalties.

Dummy's doubleton diamond was a big disappointment to me, but it was even worse when East ruffed the second diamond. 10 of our points amounted to only 1 trick!

We were still in with a chance if declarer miss-guesses the spades, or clubs, but after drawing trumps he pulls a small club off the board, and our only hope is for Nick to duck and allow declarer to mis-guess, but of course after I show up with the DK and DQ, he cannot guess wrong, and we have to write down -530.

At the other table a different bidding sequence subsides with NS in 4D off 2, so the loss is 10 Imps.

Of course if we had been playing a weak 1NT, Nick would have opened 1D and now I know about the fit and duplication of values, so double of 3H would not be an option.

**M 2** J986  
**Bd 20** K3  
**Dir W** QJ74  
**Vul All** A87  
 Q754  
 Q752  
 98  
 Q94

AT  
 T864  
 AK6532  
 6

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
/	/	1C!	1D
/!	2C!	//	

On board 20 in match 2 we were disadvantaged by East's imprecise explanation, but understandably, got no sympathy from the Director.

1C was artificial (ala Precision), and after West passed my natural overcall of 1D, East alerted, and when Nick asked its meaning, East said that the pass showed that the 1D had taken his partner's bid.

Nick now bid 2C, which I took to be natural, as the 1C was not natural, and while I would have preferred to rebid my good 6-card suit, interpreted East's explanation to mean that West had diamonds as well.

2C was not a good contract, and Nick did well to make 4 tricks, but that was still 11 Imps out when 2D made 10 tricks at the other table.

After it was obvious that West did not have diamonds, I called for the Director, but now East said that he added the rider that the 1D bid that West wanted to make was not natural. I definitely did not hear this and Nick did not remember it, but EW agreed it had been said so we had no recourse.

<b>M 3</b>	4			
<b>Bd 7</b>	AT			
<b>Dlr S</b>	AKQ654			
<b>Vul All</b>	9653			
QJT2		97653		
Q8763		92		
932		T8		
*		QJT7		
	AK8			
	KJ54			
	J7			
	AK42			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
/	1D	/	1C	
/	4C	/	2NT	
/	6C	//	5C	

On board 7 in the third match I was looking at my losers in hearts and diamonds and not concentrating on my good controls. Since I had only shown 3 clubs by my 1C opening and 2NT rebid, I expected Nick to have 5 clubs, so 5C was okay in teams, rather than the higher scoring 4NT.

To my surprise, Nick raised my sign-off to slam, and when dummy went down I thought that we had lost 2 Imps, as 6NT was cold, it was worse than that however, as the 4-1 club break consigned 6C to the scrap heap, and we lost 17 Imps, our largest loss of the competition.

Of course I should have cue-bid 4S rather than bid game, and then Nick would have been more interested in 6NT as his singleton spade is covered.

Should we be playing in clubs anyway? Nick has likely got 7 tricks in his own hand, and I have shown 18-19 points, so surely I can supply the other 5 tricks in notrumps? A simple 6NT over my 2NT rebid would seem to be a reasonable shot rather than pinning our hopes on clubs.

<b>M 4</b>	QJT43			
<b>Bd 17</b>	AJ6			
<b>Dlr N</b>	KQJT3			
<b>Vul Nil</b>	-			
72		9865		
975		K43		
987		6		
JT765		AK932		
	AK			
	QT82			
	A542			
	Q84			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
/	1S	/	2D	
//	4C!	/	5D	

On board 17 in the fourth match I was concerned about my wasted club values when Nick showed his shortage and East doubled, so did not consider the slam possibilities. This was short-sighted, as my hand has good controls, and the AK in Nick's first-bid suit are of enormous value.

However, there is a very good way to use these lead-directional doubles to your advantage, and this would have worked out well here!

The procedure is simple, a redouble should show first-round control, and since I did not have it, I can pass and see if Nick has a void in clubs instead of the singleton.

After his redouble I can cue-bid the SA and then we will have to decide whether to bid 6 or 7. It will be easy to identify that the HK is missing and stop in 6D.

The slam was missed at the other table, so just another flat board.

<b>M 4</b>	A7542			
<b>Bd 26</b>	652			
<b>Dlr E</b>	K			
<b>Vul All</b>	AQ97			
J3		86		
AQJT974		K8		
QJ3		AT64		
K		JT854		
	KQT9			
	3			
	98752			
	632			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
1H	1S	/	/	
4H	4S	//	3S	

Board 26 in the fourth match was a rarity, a double vulnerable game swing, when we bid and made 4S at our table, and John and Elaine bid and made 4H at the other table.

The opening lead was the HK, followed by the CJ, won by Nick who led a trump to the table and led a diamond, losing to East's DA.

East led another club, and West ruffed Nick's club loser. Now West made a fatal mistake when he led a diamond, ruffed by Nick who led a trump to dummy to ruff another diamond.

A heart ruff enabled the 4<sup>th</sup> diamond to be ruffed, setting up the 5<sup>th</sup> diamond to discard a club loser, with the 3<sup>rd</sup> heart ruff available as an entry to dummy.

If the diamond cashes, it is the setting trick, but it is never going away, and a heart return instead of a diamond will defeat 4S. That would still have been 11 Imps to us, instead of the 15 Imps from the double game swing.

**M 5** J97654  
**Bd 1** 86  
**Dlr N** Q42  
**Vul Nil** J7  
 A83 Q2  
 AK QJ97  
 A976 JT53  
 QT92 K83  
  
 KT  
 T5432  
 K8  
 A654  
  
**W N E S**  
 / / / 1H  
 1NT // //

Board 1 of in the 5<sup>th</sup> match was a lucky swing to us when East was a bit conservative following his partner's 1NT overcall. Many players, with additional help in hearts and such intermediate values would jump straight to game, or at least invite with 2NT, and West would likely have accepted.

Luckily Nick ignored my 1H opening bid, and led his long suit, setting up a problem for West. West made the normal (but wrong in this case) play of the SQ at trick 1, and ducked my SK. However Nick was able to overtake my ST at trick 2 and set up his spades.

West unblocked the top hearts, and then only had to get to dummy to cash the last 2, but I obviously had the CA and could keep him out by ducking the CQ, which I did. However, when West next led his CT to dummy, my duck was to no avail as the C8 is now an entry, with the C2 in hand to access it. West only made 8 tricks, so maybe East was right after all.

To make 3NT West has to play low from dummy at trick 1 and duck spades twice, then run the CT through North This was found by John at the other table after the same opening lead and +400 was 7 Imps.

**M 5** 5  
**Bd 8** J753  
**Dlr W** AQJ53  
**Vul Nil** AQ6  
 93 QJT8764  
 T92 8  
 K972 T84  
 9853 KT  
  
 AK2  
 AKQ64  
 6  
 J742  
  
**W N E S**  
 / 1D 2S 3H  
 / 4H //

Board 8 in the 5<sup>th</sup> match looked to me like I had my outside honours and shortage in the wrong suits. The SK figured to be of limited value, even though my 3-card holding suggested that Nick was short.

When Nick raised my forcing 3H to game, I could envisage 2 club losers in his hand opposite my poor holding, so I subsided in game in spite of my good hand.

Of course all I really needed was the CA, as if he had solid diamonds and Axx in clubs I could draw trumps and discard my club losers. Even the CK in his hand would give 6H some play if the CA was on side, so I should have bid 4NT and check we had all the Aces.

At the other table they NS were not so restrained and sailed into 6H, making 12 tricks for -980 and 11 Imps away.

**M 6** K84  
**Bd 15** T9  
**Dlr S** T92  
**Vul NS** AJT98  
 QJ963 2  
 4 J863  
 AQJ 876543  
 KQ62 43  
  
 AT75  
 AKQ752  
 K  
 75  
  
**W N E S**  
 X 1NT / 1H  
 / 4H / /  
 4S X 5D X  
 //

On board 15 in the 6<sup>th</sup> match West was goaded into making what was likely to be a phantom sacrifice, as 4H, even played by South requires carefull play, probably of a double-dummy variety.

Bidding 4S on such a shaky suit was always going to be dangerous, as we only had a tentative fit in hearts, brought about by my jump rebid, so there is less chance that EW have a fit in spades.

East removed to their 6-card suit, but that was a dreadfull contract, and a trick was lost in the play to be 5 off and +1100 to us.

At the other table John and Elaine did not have to make the decision, as South stopped in just 2H, making only 9 tricks, so we picked up 14 Imps.

It is marvelous the number of times that bad sacrifices are made by non-vulnerable players to protect against a game by the vulnerable opponents. The favourable vulnerability seems to give players a death wish.

<b>M 6</b>	8642			
<b>Bd 18</b>	83			
<b>Dir E</b>	8652			
<b>Vul NS</b>	AT8			
QJT9			AK53	
KJ94			AQ6	
J4			T7	
QJ3			K976	
	7			
	T752			
	AKQ93			
	542			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
		1C	1D	
3D!	/	3NT	//	

On board 18 in the 6<sup>th</sup> match EW were not on the same wavelength and finished up in the ridiculous 3NT contract, allowing me to cash the first 5 tricks in diamonds, with Nick's CA making it 2 off for +100.

1C was Precision style, and East thought that West's 3D was natural, or at least showed a diamond stopper, although not many partnerships would have that agreement.

I think that West was just trying to make a forcing bid, and was looking for clarification from East, 3NT being taken at face value.

West clearly has a problem, with game values but no 5-card suit, but surely a 2D bid would have been easier for East to interpret, and experience has suggested that it is safer to make it as easy as possible for partner.

At the other table John and Elaine got to a safe 4S for 11 tricks and 11 tricks and 11 Imps.

<b>M 7</b>	T852			
<b>Bd 2</b>	T4			
<b>Dir E</b>	A76542			
<b>Vul NS</b>	8			
96			AKQJ4	
J			AKQ652	
KQJ93			-	
AJ963			52	
	73			
	9873			
	T8			
	KQT74			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
		1C!	/	
2D	/	2H	/	
3C	/	3S	/	
4C	/	5S	//	

On board 2 in the 7<sup>th</sup> match EW were handicapped by the Precision system forcing East to open 1C instead of starting off with her longest suit.

From her point of view it is quite likely that we could cash the first 2 tricks in clubs, and Blackwood does not help with her diamond void.

She did the best she could by jumping to 5S over West's 4C rebid, hoping that West knew what to do, but he did not, so he passed, and 12 tricks were easy. In fact, double dummy, 13 tricks are cold in either major, by way of the ruffing finesse in diamonds, and the HJ in dummy giving an additional entry.

At the other table John and Elaine had a natural auction, and when the misfit came to light, preferred the safety of 6NT. This was worth 11 Imps

<b>M 7</b>	QT5			
<b>Bd 6</b>	J4			
<b>Dir E</b>	QJ76			
<b>Vul EW</b>	AJ75			
6432			K987	
852			AQT96	
843			T5	
864			KQ	
	AJ			
	K73			
	AK92			
	T932			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
		1C!	1NT!	
/	3D	//		

On board 6 in the 7<sup>th</sup> match EW were playing an artificial 1C opening, and my 1NT overcall showed the minors.

Bidding 1NT on such a strong hand was a mistake when East's 1C could be only a minimum opening bid, and I did not know whether Nick's 3D was obstructive or invitational. Have a look at the West hand, luckily you rarely get a hand where all of the pips add up to only 63.

Since there are so few points missing I doubt that Nick would have got it wrong, but during the course of the play in 3D, East led the CK, making it very easy to set up 11 tricks for +150.

At the other table NS played in 3NT, and it looks as if this would go down on the lead of the HQ, but East has to find 2 discards on the diamonds, so 1 heart has to be discarded, allowing clubs to be set up for the 9<sup>th</sup> trick. 6 Imps away.

**M 8**  
**Bd 17**  
**Dir N**  
**Vul Nil**  
T92  
QT872  
JT4  
Q2

J875  
6  
K965  
AKJ8

AKQ3  
AKJ3  
Q732  
5

64  
954  
A8  
T97643

**W**  
2H

<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>
1D	X
/	4H

<b>S</b>
/
//

On board 8 in the 8<sup>th</sup> and final match EW reached a good game in hearts after East made a somewhat unorthodox take-out double and struck it lucky.

If Nick had chosen to open 1C, I had an easy 3C bid after the double, making it harder for West, but I could not sensibly bid after the 1D opening.

Nick led the CK, asking for natural count, but when the singleton showed up on the table, I played a hopeful C3, trying to suggest a diamond switch, but he missed the inference and instead led a trump, thus 4H made 10 tricks for -420.

At the other table was brother Jim, who also led the CK, his partner duly giving count with the CT, but unfortunately for John, Jim realized when he saw dummy that the only way to beat 4H was for his partner to have Ax in diamonds so he duly switched to a diamond for 1 off and 10 Imps to his team.