

2011 QLD Seniors Pairs by Richard Wallis

After being cancelled in 2010 for lack of entries, entries were so slow leading up to the closing time for 2011 that the event looked like being cancelled again, but a late flurry ended with 22 pairs, which enabled an 11-table Howell to be played on the Sunday. This was satisfactory for the players, but not for the convenor, and Ralph Parker has vowed to see a few more tables for 2012.

The numbers were swelled somewhat by the lowering of the minimum age to align with WBF regulations, and it was disappointing to notice how many of the regular competitors in the ANC Seniors Trials failed to enter. Some when asked about non-attendance pleaded ignorance of the event, so please everyone look at the QBA calendar well in advance.

Nonetheless it was a great day, and Tony Jackman and I had our noses in front most of the time, and more importantly, when it mattered at the end! Terry Dempsey and Paul Collins were always on our tail, or slightly ahead of us, but we stayed ahead on the last match, with Rosa Lachman and Bill Hunt in third place.

We had some good boards through our own good play, and some ordinary boards through our own ordinary play, but the luck was with us a couple of times when our ordinary play was still worth a top.

R 2	AKJ642			There was much confusion on board 9 in the second round, when Tony doubled the 2D (Multi) opening and I reverted to the system I play with Therese where this shows a good hand, and I was looking for a slam.
Bd 9	Q7			
Dlr N	74			
Vul EW	T83			
Q75		3		I was surprised when my stopper ask of 2H was raised to game, so tried to bail out in 4NT, but Tony took this as RKCB. Then I thought he must have been doubling to show diamonds, so I bid 6D, and he subsided, after a lot of thought.
JT9		AK86532		
AK83		QJT		
AQ4		K2		
	T98			The real system that Tony and I had agreed to play was that a double of 2D shows hearts, as he reminded me when I asked about his 7-card suit, and 2H shows spades. However, I think a 7-card suit is worth showing in its own right by bidding 3H immediately, and I would have investigated slam.
	4			
	9652			
	J9765			
W	N	E	S	
	2S	X	2H	
3H!	/	4H	/	Thanks to his magic diamond holding, 6D was cold, although +1370 against +1430 does not score very well in a match-pointed pairs event, but slam was not bid at any of the other 10 tables, so we scored a top after all.
4NT	/	5H	/	
6D	//			

R 2 98643
Bd 20 AJ764
Dlr W 4
Vul All Q8
 2 KQT5
 KQT2 3
 97 AQ653
 AJ7542 T63
 AJ7
 985
 KJT82
 K9

W	N	E	S
/	/	1D	/
2C	/	2S	/
2NT	/	3NT	//

On board 20 in the second round EW got a little carried away on a misfit with too few high cards, and paid the penalty.

I considered doubling 3NT to ask for a diamond lead, which I think is best, but did not succumb to the temptation, and was disappointed when Tony led my worst suit, which is the one West might have been expecting when he bid 2NT.

After the cheap trick from the opening lead, declarer has a chance to make 3NT if the SA is onside by leading a spade at trick 2 and then setting up the club suit, but this will fail on the actual layout.

Declarer won the HT and took the diamond finesse, but I led back a heart and Tony ducked. Declarer next led a spade, and I won to lead back the DJ and pin the D9, setting up t more tricks.

Clubs never did get set up in time to be much use, and declarer finished 3 off for +300 to us. Of course with the misfit West should have rebid his club suit instead of 2NT, which would have been passed out, as I do not think that 2S was a reverse.

R 2 J54
Bd 25 QJ3
Dlr N AQ63
Vul EW T43
 976 AQT832
 KT82 A76
 KT4 J2
 KQ8 A5
 K
 954
 9875
 J9762

W	N	E	S
/	/	1S	/
3S	/	4S	//

Board 25 in the second round illustrated a good principle. Either finesse or not finesse, but do not half do it.

I got off to a fortunate diamond lead, and we took the first 2 tricks, and Tony exited with a diamond, so it was a simple matter for declarer to play the trumps for 0 or 1 loser.

Playing teams, the hand is easy to make 11 tricks as to guard against a singleton honour in the South hand, you cash the SA and then enter dummy to lead towards hand, losing only 2 trumps when South has both guarded.

This is still a good way to play a 6-3 fit, but declarer decided to finesse the SQ on the first round, and did not follow it up with a second finesse on the next round, so lost 2 spade tricks for 1 off.

Playing the SQ on the first round works if I have the stiff Jack, but loses if I have the stiff King. But why guess, bang down the SA and make at least 10 tricks.

R 2 -
Bd 30 T62
Dlr E KT97653
Vul Nil T73
 Q9765 8
 AKQJ73 95
 2 AQJ4
 5 AQJ984
 AKJT432
 84
 8
 K62

W	N	E	S
/	/	2C	3S!
4H	//		

The bidding was short and sweet on board 30 in the second round, but at other tables it was even shorter, when South bid a full-blooded 4S on the first round and suffered much carnage.

Since Tony could have had only 11 HCPs, but was bound to be short in spades, I elected for the positive action of bidding 4H, since it is not clear that Tony, not having 4 hearts, would re-open with a take-out double if I passed.

South led the C3, and I rose with the CA to lead a spade, and thanks to dummy's good trumps, and North's reluctance to Ruff with the HT and lead a trump, I emerged with 11 tricks for +450.

This was a poor score compared to the +1100 those that were able to double 4S received, or even the +800 available in 3SX, and we were lucky to get 30%.

R 1 QJ2
Bd 14 J9
Dlr E 543
Vul Nil QJ943
 A84 T93
 QT65 K32
 AQ62 987
 T5 8762
 K765
 A874
 KJT
 AK

W	N	E	S
/	1D	/	1C
/	2NT	/	1NT
//			3NT

Board 14 in the first round was a game of nip and tuck between me and West, and luckily I finished up on top.

Tony and I had a straight-forward Precision auction to a normal 3NT, and West led the H5. This was obviously a precarious contract, but the certain entry to dummy and the H9 gave me a chance.

I unblocked the clubs and led the S5 towards dummy, although the SK may have been a better idea, setting up the 8th trick, and West correctly ducked.

The problem with running the clubs was that I was squeezing myself, and had to hold onto all my hearts, so I let go 2 spades and the DT, while West discarded a spade and 2 diamonds, before exiting with the S2 to West.

Now West is endplayed, and does best to cash the hearts and give me my heart trick, collecting 2 diamonds in return for 1 off, but he cashed the DA to see if partner could help, and then I had the 2 extra tricks I required via the DK and H8.

R 1 J74
Bd 28 Q87653
Dlr W 42
Vul NS 63
 AQ6 T852
 AK92 JT
 KQ765 AT3
 T AQ76
 K93
 4
 J98
 KJ9842

W	N	E	S
1D	/	1S	/
2H	/	2NT	/
3D	/	5D	//

Board 28 in the first round appeared to be a disaster for us when one of Tony's cards disappeared from view.

EW had a natural auction to 5D, but especially playing MPs, I fail to see why East did rebid 3NT with such good club stoppers, and Tony led the C6.

Declarer won on the table and immediately ran the HJ, which held! When I ruffed the next lead of the HT, everyone looked puzzled.

In the fullness of time, declarer lost a spade, to make 11 tricks and -400 to us.

A disaster, yes, but a bad score, no! All of the other tables played in 3NT as EW, making 10 or 11 tricks so we got a complete top.

I was expecting the HQ to be in declarer's hand, but it wasn't when he faced his cards. It turned out that it was hidden behind some others in Tony's hand and that is why he missed it.