

2012 Teams of Three by Richard Wallis

The QBA Teams of Three was contested for 2012 at QCBC on 10 November, and I was fortunate to be teamed up with Alison Dawson, Craig Francis and Tim Runting. Twelve teams in all made for a competitive 6-round Swiss, although more teams would be preferable to allow more choice of opponents for the final rounds.

The format was for each captain to play two 8-board matches with each team member, and we elected to play them straight, even though we were all playing the same basic 2-over-1 system. We had a big win on our first match but this was followed up by 2 consecutive losses to drop us back in the field. Peter Hainsworth's team (Elaine Li, Chuan Qin, Charlie Lu) thus established a good lead, but we finished up with 3 good wins to draw level with them after the 6 matches, sharing the spoils for the day. A great day, and I encourage all aspiring players to enter for 2013, where it is likely that the maximum masterpoint level for the teams of three will be lowered to make a more even playing field, or the field will be split into two divisions.

M 1	A84				On board 3 in the first match I was not sure what Alison's 3C bid was meant to say, except that it was forcing! Of course each partnership should agree what a cue-bid means as part of their initial system discussion.
Bd 3	862				
Dlr S	A9743				
Vul EW	Q7				
KQ6			JT73		I could have rebid 3H to imply a 6-card suit, which may have ended the bidding, but I thought that my club stopper was an important part of my hand so chose to bid aggressively with 3NT.
53			QJ		
J			K8652		Alison had intended 3C as a limit raise, and thus I believe would have passed 3H, but decided that with her help in clubs 3NT was likely to be at least as good a spot as 4H and how right she was.
AJT9853			64		
	962				Game in hearts would only make if West decided to seek a diamond ruff by leading the DJ, or switching to the DJ after cashing the CA at trick 1. Then declarer could win the DA, draw trumps, and pitch a spade on an established diamond. This still needs a heart break, but when hearts broke, I had 9 tricks for +400 and 10 Imps.
	AKT974				
	QT				
	K2				
W	N	E	S		
2C	3C!	/	1H		
//			3NT		

M 1	AQT93				On board 5 in the first match I did give passing thought to opening 1S, since I had both majors, but considered I was too weak, and was gratified to have West open 1S in the pass-out seat.
Bd 5	T982				
Dlr N	J5				
Vul NS	K2				
KJ876			42		Alison has a choice of leads to 1NT, and the opening lead of the H3 at the other table enabled Tim to get a 6 th trick in 1NT for -50, but she looked at the bidding, and concluded that I had at least 4 spades, and very probably 5.
AQ5			J6		
98			KT432		East did not support, so 2 spades at the most, and West did not rebid 2S hence likely only a 5-card suit, thus I was most likely to have a 5-card suit myself and Alison got off to the good lead of the S5.
QJ8			A653		
	5				I won the first trick cheaply and routinely led back the DJ, but when declarer played the DK this end-played Alison, and her D6 exit was won on the table with the D9 and declarer led the CQ, covered by the CK. The contract still went 2 off for a 2 Imp gain, but if I had made it easier for Alison by leading back the D5, it may have been 3 off.
	K743				
	AQ76				
	T974				
W	N	E	S		
1S	/	/	/		
	/	1NT	//		

M 2 Bd 15 Dir S Vul NS	QJ86 6 76 KQ9872		Board 5 in match 2 decided a tight match in our opponents favour, but it could so very easily come down on our side. This was the crucial match against the number 2 seeds, and put us behind until the final match.
AKT AK74 KQ952 J		53 8532 A83 AT43	I bid 2C over the opening 1D bid on minimal values to crowd the opponents bidding (a practiced Chinese pair), and East made a negative double, no doubt intending to bid notrumps if West bid spades, but he got the bid he wanted and raised to the heart game.
	9742 QJT9 JT4 65		I lead the SQ, but since the diamonds were friendly, there was nothing in the play of 4H, and only 11 tricks were made when the trumps did not break.
W 1D 2H	N 2C /	E X 4H	S / / //
			At the other table the stakes were higher and Craig and Tim reached 6H, which is not a bad contract, basically requiring a little more than a 3-2 heart break, as some 4-1 diamond breaks could be overcome. This was not the day and we lost 11 Imps (11-19 loss) instead of gaining the same number, which would have given us an 18-12 win.

M 3 Bd 19 Dir S Vul EW	7 Q97642 J643 A3		On board 19 in the third match I missed an opportunity to win us the match when the spot cards eluded me. I used to remember all of the spot cards, but as I eased more comfortably into the Seniors card-play technique, I forget them more and more, and on some occasions, even forget to look at the opponents cards as they are played.
JT863 AT53 KQT J		K542 J8 975 T852	Craig had no good bid to describe the potential of his hand, so expecting a spade lead, he tried 2NT in spite of his singleton heart. Since I expected at least 2 hearts, and had a 6-card suit, I tried for game.
	AQ9 K A82 KQ9764		4H has no chance on a diamond lead, but East led the S2 and I was in with a chance when the SQ held trick 1. The singleton HK on the table took my focus off the cards, and I did not notice East playing the friendly J8 of trumps, so thought I had 2 trump losers, but I was still okay if West follows to 2 clubs.
W X /	N / 4H	E 1S //	S 1C 2NT
			When West ruffed the second club with the H5, I realized I could have drawn the trumps and made 10 tricks to gain 10 Imps instead of a flat board.

M 4 Bd 7 Dir S Vul All	K9862 Q865 Q83 J		Board 7 in the fourth match was difficult for me to evaluate as North when Craig opened with 1NT (15-17), so I decided to see if we had a fit before I decided on a course of action.
753 KJT32 A7 Q98		J 94 JT92 AT6542	If Craig had rebid 2D, denying a major, I would have bid 2S and left any further action up to him, and if Craig had rebid 2H, I would have invited with 3H.
	AQT4 A7 K654 K73		However when Craig showed our 5-4 fit by rebidding 2S, I leapt straight to game, hoping our honours were well placed.
W / /	N 2C! 4S	E / //	S 1NT 2S
			West played safe by leading the S3, and with the favourable location of the opponent's honour cards, 10 tricks were easy and we scored up +620. At the other table NS stayed in a part score for -170, and 10 Imps to us. While the well placed honours helped with making 10 tricks, the known fit made the decision to bid game obvious, rather than transfer to spades and either rebid 3H or 2NT as an invitation.

M 5 Bd 9 Dlr N Vul EW	74 K7643 AT52 KJ		Board 9 in the fifth match demonstrated that it is a bidder's game, when West decided to pass over Tim's 2H response to my opening bid, rather than take a risk by overcalling 2S. Note that with a known 5-3 heart fit and a minimum hand Tim did not introduce his motley spade suit, showing his strength and support immediately with 2H. If Tim had chosen to respond 1S instead (unwise in my view on such a limited, balanced hand) it would be even harder for West to play in spades. East made the unusual lead (maybe intended as deceptive?) of the H9, which persuaded West to play the HA at trick 1, making my contract much more secure.
AQT853 AJ J Q973		K T95 Q9874 A842	
	J962 Q82 K63 T65		
W //	N 1H	E /	S 2H
			West led the DJ at some time, and when East led away from the DQ later in the play I ran it to my DT to get 8 tricks for +110. At the other table Craig did overcall spades, and emerged with 9 tricks in spite of the 4-2 break, for +140 and 6 Imps to us.

M 5 Bd 16 Dlr W Vul EW	T2 Q84 8 QJ98642		Board 16 in the fifth match was peculiar in that Tim had the best hand but did not offer a bid, preferring to keep quiet since I was marked with a weak hand. I could not bid a 'normal' 3C over the opening bid as in the system agreed, that showed the other 2 suits, so I bided my time until the next round of bidding. West's double of 3C showed some spade support, and when East confirmed a 5-card suit, West passed as East had limited his hand by passing over my 3C bid. Tim led the CA and declarer ruffed on the table to lead a diamond to Tim's DA and he exited with the CK, again ruffed on the table to lead a diamond which I ruffed.
J53 AKJT3 KJT93 -		A9876 62 Q42 T53	
	KQ4 975 A765 AK7		
W 1H 2D X	N / 3C! /	E 1S / 3S	S / / //
			Now 9 tricks still look easy but declarer lost his way and finished 1 off for +100. At the other table clubs were never mentioned and West played in 2H for +140 and 6 Imps.

M 6 Bd 23 Dlr S Vul All	953 J742 QJ4 765		We lost the second match due to a slam that went off due to a 4-1 trump break, and this was evened out on board 23 in the sixth match when EW at our table bid to the good slam that had to go down when the trumps broke 4-1. East's bidding was sound and they were just unlucky with the trump break, but that was our lucky break this time. I led the DQ and was disappointed when the spades allowed a diamond discard, especially since if a club finesse was required it was well placed. However, Tim's CA was unassailable and +100 was worth 13 Imps against the +650 from the other table for the heart game.
QJ KQ9853 T8 KT3		AKT4 A6 A976 QJ8	
	8762 T K532 A942		
W 1H 2H 5D	N / / /	E 1S 4NT! 6H	S / / //
			The 13 Imps, instead of a flat board, was only worth 1 VP, but that was just enough for us to tie for first overall.