

2013 ANC Seniors Teams Final by Richard Wallis

This was my first trip to Adelaide for the ANC, and for the first time since 2000, Queensland won the ANC Seniors Teams. I played with Therese Tully, and the rest of our victorious team was Tony Hutton playing with Tony Jackman, and Ian Afflick playing with Paul Collins, captained by David McLeish. This was a good team, and I was quietly confident before arriving in Adelaide of a good showing, although initially somewhat daunted by our small loss to ACT in the first match.

We got back into a small positive against WA in match 2, and were in second position towards the end of the first round-robin after a few good wins. Our lead was such that a big loss to SA in match 7 was not enough to knock us out of second place, and we stayed in second right through the second round-robin, despite a hiccup against SA in the last match. Our lead over NSW was only 15VP, and our small loss against SA enabled NSW to overtake us for the final if they won by 14 or more Imps, but luckily, VIC, who still had a chance to leap over both of us if we lost badly, beat NSW to allow us to stay second and gain a place in the Final.

We started the 60-board Final on Thursday night with two sets of 10 boards, and due to SA's big win in the round-robin, being locked in with 1 match to play, they started the Final with a carry-forward 9 Imp lead. This increased to 19 Imps after the first 10 boards, and increased by a further 8 Imps on the next 10 boards, so we started the last 40 boards 27 Imps in arrears.

We were not to be denied however, and won the first 10 boards on Friday morning by 24 Imps, and the next 10 boards by 2 Imps, to go into the last 20 boards only 1 Imp down! The deficit was eliminated in the fifth set when we won by 5 Imps, to go into the last 10 boards ahead by 4 Imps.

The match went down to the wire, and on board 60 Tony Hutton was in a tight 3NT and since it had made at our table via a squeeze when our bidding enabled us to find the best lead, it was crucial for Tony to make it. In the event, with nothing to guide the opening leader, Tony received his 9th trick on the opening lead, and the same squeeze yielded 10 tricks for a 1 Imp gain, and an overall win to us by 12 Imps. If he had gone off, we would have lost by 1 Imp, but if he had not bid game and made just a part score (150 or 180), we would have won by 1 Imp.

F1	2				On board 1 of the final I made a light overcall of 1H and a few rounds later it was my lead to 3NTX, and I was not sure whether Therese was asking for my suit to be led or dummy's suit?
Bd 1	KJ65				
Dlr N	KT32				
Vul Nil	KQT6				
KQJ94		85			Since Therese had already passed up two chances to support my suit, I selected the S8 as my opening lead, and I was sure it was correct when dummy came down with additional heart strength.
T		A7432			
A874		Q65			Declarer played the ST from dummy, and Therese won with the SJ and returned the SQ, which suggested to me as declarer showed out that her entry was in diamonds (middle of the 3 suits).
J42		983			
	AT763				Declarer was able to cash a heart and 4 clubs before I won the HA and led a diamond for Therese to cash out for 1 down and a hard-fought +100. Since any other lead was likely to allow 3NT to make, this seemed a good start to the final.
	Q98				
	J9				
	A75				
W	N	E	S		
/	1D	1H	1S		
/	1NT	/	2D	At the other table, EW with our cards somehow contrived to play in 2SWX, and Ian and Paul were happy to take this of 2 for +300 and 9 Imps to us.	
/	2NT	/	3NT		
X	//				

F1 AJ94
Bd 3 65
Dir S AKT5
Vul EW KQ6
 T7632
 - KQ8
 Q9843 AKQT8743
 A53 7
 J
 5
 J92
 J62
 T98742
W N E S
 / / / /
 / 1C 4H / /
 // X / 5C

On board 3 of the final I made a routine 4H overcall, and North doubled to show a good hand. South, with virtually nothing except 6-card support, took out the double, and the auction was over.

To my surprise I was able to cash 2 hearts, and Therese had the CA, so the contract went a quiet 1 off for +50. After my known large number of hearts and 3 spades, declarer had no trouble finessing for the DQ,

The good news was that because of the singleton spade and quick entry back to the North hand, 4H was 1 off, so it was a phantom save.

Nothing is ever certain however, and here is where close attention to detail is so important. At the other table, 4H was passed out, and Paul led the S5 and got his ruff, but looking at the CA on the table and thinking that Paul could only return a diamond, Ian led back the S4 for the ruff, after all he looked like he may have a club trick.

Paul also thought that a diamond was the obvious return, but the S4 was known to be the lowest spade, thus could have been asking for a club. He thus led back a club and the contract made for -11 Imps.

F1 5
Bd 4 KQJ9732
Dir W J5
Vul All T32
 AT432 Q7
 A 865
 A742 KQT986
 Q84 96
 KJ986
 T4
 3
 AKJ75
W N E S
 1S 3H / 4H
 //

Board 4 of the final was very disappointing after our promising start. I woodenly led Therese's suit to 4H, instead of a trump, which gives declarer no chance, as Therese can put me in with the DK to lead another trump before her SA is forced out.

Instead I led the SQ, and now 4H is cold, BUT Therese had a cunning plan and won the SA and led back the ST which declarer eyed suspiciously before ruffing with the H9. Now we were set up for a trump promotion of my lowly H8.

Therese won the next trick with the D7 while I gave count and led back another spade, this time forcing declarer to ruff high. Declarer led the DJ, on which I played the DK instead of the DQ, as I did not think it would matter when the next spade return promoted my H8 into the setting trick. However, Therese was confused by my play and tried to cash the DA which allowed declarer to ruff low and draw trumps for 10 tricks.

F1 K753
Bd 10 432
Dir E K97
Vul All KT7
 Q984 JT2
 KQJ75 986
 Q63 AJT842
 6 Q
 A6
 AT
 5
 AJ985432
W N E S
 3D /() / 3C
 // 5C!

Board 10 in the final was potentially controversial, but NS took the Director's ruling in good faith and there was no animosity throughout the rest of the final.

After the bidding board was passed back to us North took a long time before passing, and after South leapt to game and dummy went down, I was very surprised at how good his hand was, firstly for not bidding 4C himself, and secondly for not raising 5C to slam.

Therese had already agreed with South on her side of the screen that there was a noticeable hesitation on our side, and having let such a bid go in the qualifying rounds, this time having previously reserved her rights, she called the Director at the end of the hand.

The Director ruled that the contract reverted back to 4C, still making 11 tricks, but only +150 to NS. At the other table Ian and Paul had a bidding misunderstanding and allowed EW to play 5D undoubled, off 4, for +400. If 5C had stood, we would lose 5 Imps, but after the change of contract, we gained 6 Imps.

F2 A863
Bd 14 5
Dlr E KQT
Vul Nil A7532
 QJ974
 AJ
 7654
 Q6

2
 KQT9863
 9832
 K

W	N	E	S
/	1C	/	4H
//			

Board 14 in the final emphasized the importance of not giving declarer any clues by discarding in a potentially vital suit.

After the lead of the SQ to 4H, it is possible to make 11 tricks by dropping both red Jacks off-side, but not blessed with second sight, Therese made the percentage play in hearts of finessing the HT at trick 2, losing to the HJ.

Ruffing the next spade, Therese forced out the HA and ruffed the spade return in hand to draw the trump, and then led a diamond to dummy, East winning the DA and returning the CJ.

Therese cashed a couple of hearts, then took the percentage line of the diamond finesse, but once again this lost when the DJ would have dropped, so we were 1 off for -50.

At the other table, when declarer cashed a few more hearts, West discarded a couple of 'useless' diamonds, and now declarer played for the drop and recorded 10 tricks for -420 and 10 Imps away.

F 3 AJ9642
Bd 2 K7
Dlr E KT985
Vul NS -
 Q5
 AT94
 76
 QT863

87
 J8
 A43
 AK9542

KT3
 Q6532
 QJ2
 J7

W	N	E	S
1H	2S!	3C	3S
5C	5S	X	//

On board 2 in the third round of the final I could have doubled to show the other two suits, or bid 2NT with a less defensive hand, but preferred the jump to 2S as this showed the 6-card suit and about my point range, if not my shape.

Having already shown a 6-card spade suit, I intended to bid diamonds next if the bidding was not too high, but that was not necessary when Therese supported spades.

Bidding 5S over 5C at adverse vulnerability is very unusual on such few points, but my extreme shape suggested that this may be the time for an adverse save.

In actual fact with the spades 2-2, Therese had enough to give 5C no chance, and she even had enough to make 5S cold! East was optimistic to think I had 2 club losers, but with the DA he could hope his partner had a trick.

The bidding was duplicated at the other table so there was no swing.

F 3 KQJ742
Bd 8 AJ8
Dlr W A86
Vul Nil A
 T9863
 Q2
 Q52
 T92

-
 T9764
 JT97
 A876

A5
 K53
 K43
 KJ543

W	N	E	S
/	1S	/	2C!
/	3S!	/	4C
/	4NT	/	5D
	6S!	//	

Board 8 in the third round of the final gave me great satisfaction, even though making 12 tricks turned out to be easy. My 3S rebid set trumps and asked for cue-bids (1st or 2nd) but should have had a slightly better suit, so 4C showed the CK.

When Therese admitted to the SA, I settled for a little slam, which was premature, since Therese could have had a good source of tricks if I told her I had all of the Key Cards by asking for Kings.

When dummy tracked, I could see that the grand slam was not cast-iron, but had chances, and was fearful of losing Imps. This fear was quickly allayed when East showed out on the spade to dummy, and now 12 tricks were in jeopardy.

I decided to draw 4 rounds of trumps and adopt an elopement line by cashing the top clubs and ruffing a club, then cash my red suit tricks finishing on the table, and lead a club to ruff or not, depending on what East did. This line worked fine, but when the HQ dropped under the HK at trick 11, it was not necessary.

At the other table NS got to the grand slam, but 7NT (7S has more chances) had to lose 2 tricks, so finished 2 off for 14 lucky Imps to us.

F 5	63		
Bd 7	Q864		
Dlr S	QT3		
Vul All	T654		
AJT9854		KQ2	
AJ9		K32	
4		AK65	
AK		Q73	
	7		
	T75		
	J9872		
	J982		
W	N	E	S
	/	/	/
1S	/	2C!	/
2S	/	3S!	/
4NT	/	5S	/
5NT	/	6C!	/
6S!	/	7S!	//

After the near debacle on board 8 in the third set when we missed a good grand slam that only failed by a 5-0 trump break, we had agreed that whenever the 4NT bidder knew we had all of the Key Cards, they must ask for Kings, even if they intend to sign off in 6, just in case responder has extras or a source of tricks.

On board 7 in the fifth set, we had such a situation when Therese signed off in 6S after a noticeable hesitation from the other side of the screen, and firstly I had extras, and secondly I thought that I had shown the CK or the other two, (I should have responded 6D), thus if the CK was not enough, the other 2 Kings must be, so I bid the grand slam.

South, who had been the one to have an adjusted score following his partner's hesitation on board 10 of the first set, politely called for the Director.

The Director came and heard him out but did not stay long and we played the hand out to the obvious conclusion for a flat board.

The Director came back after play finished and said that he could not consider whether any infraction had occurred because NS did not follow screen protocol. When the hesitation occurred, my screen partner should have asked for my acknowledgement, and then he calls the Director after play is finished if he is not satisfied. The defender on the other side, who can obviously see who is hesitating, is not allowed to call the Director and complain.

F 6	AKT72		
Bd 11	K75		
Dlr S	J32		
Vul Nil	A4		
643		98	
J		T9863	
AQ9765		8	
K93		QT752	
	QJ5		
	AQ42		
	KT4		
	J86		
W	N	E	S
			1C
2D	2S	/	3S
/	4S	//	

On board 11, the first board of the final set, when we had a narrow lead, I had an easy bid over the weak jump overcall, and we got to the normal game, but it is 1 off via the diamond ruff!

East led the D8 and my diamond pips were too low for West to read this as anything but a singleton if I played low under the DQ (implying the DJ, so I made the only ploy that was available, by dropping the DJ, hoping he would read the lead as top of nothing!

To my delight it worked, and West switched to the HJ, which was surprising looking at dummy, but I quickly accepted the reprieve and drew trumps before leading another diamond to set up the 10th trick.

Of course at the other table if they opened with a weak 1NT, it would not be possible for West to beat 4S, but at least we had equalled it.

As it turned out 4S was also reached by North at the other table after a similar auction, and Tony got his diamond ruff, but a signaling mix-up allowed 4S to make anyway for a flat board.

F 6	A		
Bd 12	AT954		
Dlr W	KJ643		
Vul NS	A9		
QJT86		53	
J2		KQ87	
T2		AQ8	
KT75		8432	
	K9742		
	63		
	975		
	QJ6		
W	N	E	S
2S	X	3C!	/
/	X	//	

On board 12 in the final set we were backed into a corner by EW's aggressive bidding and took the easy way out, although 3D would have been safer, albeit unsuccessful.

The 2S opening was weak, and when not Vul, showed 5 spades and at least a 4-card minor, and 3C was correctable. Having the red suits, I doubled again, and Therese decided to take our chances, which was just as well considering the layout, as East almost certainly would have doubled.

Luckily we had 5 unassailable tricks, and scored up +100, when due to the poor fit, we had nothing on. The limit of the hand is 2C for EW and 2D for NS.

At the other table I am not sure of the bidding, but NS climbed all the way to 3NT, and we had another +200 to gain 7 Imps, although if the full extent of NS's woes were detected, it could have been more.

F 6 64
Bd 17 KJ76
Dlr N KT8543
Vul Nil T
 T9752 KQ83
 QT42 -
 - AJ972
 KJ84 9752
 AJ
 A9853
 Q6
 AQ63
W N E S
 2D! / 2NT
 / 3D / 3NT
 //

Another lucky gain came on board 17 in the final set when I got a bit frisky and opened with a weak 2D also holding a 4-card major. I was not sure what 3D conveyed, but I could not show my heart suit, and Therese did not consider looking for a fit.

In stead of leading 4th highest of his longest suit, and hope the heart and club honours would give him entries, West tried the lead of the C4, and the CT won on the table. Double-dummy, the hand is now cold, but Therese did not know the heart position at this stage.

Therese led the D3 off the table forcing East to duck or give 2 diamond tricks, and then led the HA, establishing the favourable position, and West was forced to cover the H9.

Therese led the S4 off the table and East rose with the SQ and she cleared the hearts and led another spade off the table, allowing EW to cash out, but 4 discards were too much for East and he exited with a club for Therese to cash out for 9 tricks and +400.

4H went 2 off at the other table for another +100 and 11 Imps.

F 6 KT32
Bd 20 T6
Dlr W T8762
Vul All 85
 65 AQ9
 QJ74 A83
 A4 KJ9
 J9732 QT64
 J874
 K952
 Q53
 AK
W N E S
 / / 1C X
 1H 1S 1NT /
 3NT //

On the board 20, the last hand of the final, EW bid to a pushy 3NT, but we were in the bidding action and Therese got off to the best lead of a spade.

Declarer ducked the first spade lead and then led the CQ, which Therese won to lead the SJ, setting up for me to win the next spade, and declarer won this and led the CT.

I won the next spade and led the H6, but Therese's double indicated to a listening declarer that this finesse was not going to work, so he flew up with the HA, setting the stage for Vienna Coup.

On the run of the clubs Therese had to let go a diamond, and declarer read the position correctly to drop the DQ and claim 9 tricks for +600.

At the other table Tony Hutton opened 1NT, and Tony Jackman invited game based on his major and 5-card club suit, and South, with nothing to guide him led the H2, giving Tony his 9th trick via the clubs and the spade finesse, and the same squeeze gave him 10 tricks for 1 Imp to us.