

2013 Gold Coast Seniors Pairs by Richard Wallis

John Brockwell and I started the first qualifying rounds of the Seniors Pairs at this year's Gold Coast Congress full of enthusiasm and looking for our first win in the event, but once again we were dashed by a combination of bad luck and bad play.

In the first qualifying round we recovered somewhat towards the end of the round to climb up to 50%, and a slightly better 57% in the second round enabled us to limp into the final, but that round was the highlight of the event for us. In the first two rounds of the final, our play was not perfect, but we seemed to be on the wrong end of many of the awkward hands, and dropped down to 27th place in the 28 pair field.

A more even performance in the final round produced a 55% score, but this only put us up to 16th place, well behind Tony Jackman and Ron Clark who finished in 8th place behind the winners, Kathy Boardman and Richard Brightling.

Elsewhere in the room Barbara Travis and Howard Melbourne (now married) won the Open Pairs Final, Ralph Parker and Arran Hodgkinson came second in the Plate, Nathan Van Jole and Paul Gosney came second in Section C, and Jim Wallis and Ziggy Konig won section D.

Q 1	-				On our first board in the competition, John has a promising hand that would lend itself to a 2NT opening for the minors (and many did), but since we were playing that as strong balanced, he elected to open 1D as North rather than 1C, as he could not sensibly show the diamonds otherwise. East bid a Michael's 2D for the majors, and my 4D was Minorwood. From my viewpoint things took a turn for the better when West elected to play at the 4-level in my good 5-card suit, but with such a weak opening bid, John tried to sign off in 5D. We were playing DOPI, and thus a 5D bid could not be correct, so I knew that John was trying to sign off, but slam still looked like a good chance opposite an opening bid. In fact 6D has no chance on a trump lead, due to the bad break in clubs, but East led the S5, and when the SQ held at trick 1 John was in with a chance. Alas he was not playing double-dummy, so finished 1 off for a 17% score.
Bd 1	J8				
Dlr N	AJT85				
Vul Nil	QJT532				
J94			KT752		East bid a Michael's 2D for the majors, and my 4D was Minorwood. From my viewpoint things took a turn for the better when West elected to play at the 4-level in my good 5-card suit, but with such a weak opening bid, John tried to sign off in 5D. We were playing DOPI, and thus a 5D bid could not be correct, so I knew that John was trying to sign off, but slam still looked like a good chance opposite an opening bid. In fact 6D has no chance on a trump lead, due to the bad break in clubs, but East led the S5, and when the SQ held at trick 1 John was in with a chance. Alas he was not playing double-dummy, so finished 1 off for a 17% score.
952			QT764		
42			73		
AK987			4		
	AQ863				
	AK3				
	KQ96				
	6				
W	N	E	S		
4S	1D!	2D	4D!		
//	5D	/	6D		

Q 1	J75				On board 22 in the first qualifying round John's 2H jump overcall showed a 6-card or longer suit, but was weak, so I raised the ante to make things more difficult for EW to find their best fit. West made a dubious take-out double, and East paid the penalty when he had to play 4D on his 5-2 fit. The best option for EW is for East to pass the take-out double as that goes 2 off, for -300. I led the H4, and John played 3 rounds forcing East to ruff, which will promote an extra trump trick for me by virtue of my good trump holding, but East lazily ruffed with the D2, so I made 2 trumps, 2 hearts, and a spade for 2 off and +200, for 97%, one of only a few good scores. East would have been better placed if he had bit 3S instead of 4D (and he did consider it), but who can blame him for preferring his 5-card suit over a known 4-3 fit. Of course the same trump promotion gains me an extra spade trick, and East has to time everything to make 9 tricks.
Bd 22	AKJT82				
Dlr E	75				
Vul EW	94				
KQ32			984		West made a dubious take-out double, and East paid the penalty when he had to play 4D on his 5-2 fit. The best option for EW is for East to pass the take-out double as that goes 2 off, for -300. I led the H4, and John played 3 rounds forcing East to ruff, which will promote an extra trump trick for me by virtue of my good trump holding, but East lazily ruffed with the D2, so I made 2 trumps, 2 hearts, and a spade for 2 off and +200, for 97%, one of only a few good scores. East would have been better placed if he had bit 3S instead of 4D (and he did consider it), but who can blame him for preferring his 5-card suit over a known 4-3 fit. Of course the same trump promotion gains me an extra spade trick, and East has to time everything to make 9 tricks.
765			Q9		
J3			AKT92		
AKJ2			T85		
	AT6				
	43				
	Q864				
	Q763				
W	N	E	S		
1C	2H	/	/		
X	/	/	3H		
		4D	//		

Q 1	A			On board 26 I did not go looking for 3-card spade support after John's 1NT rebid showed 15-18, and when East led the D7, John must have thought that he could lose the first 5 diamond tricks, but hoped for a 4-3 break. Either way 3NT looked doomed.
Bd 26	AQT9			
Dir E	JT5			
Vul All	AT953			
K8732		T9		However, to his surprize after West won the DK at trick 1 he switched to the H7, setting up our heart suit. It is not often that a worse break than you envisaged is good for you!
763		J842		
K		AQ8742		Coming to hand with the HA John carefully led the CT from hand and ducked this to West, who now led a spade, but nothing defeats 3NT now.
QJ87	QJ654	2		Winning with the SA he went to the CK in dummy and took the marked club finesse for 4 clubs, 4 hearts and a spade.
W	N	E	S	After West was left on lead with the DK there was nothing he could do to defeat 3NT as a spade switch instead of the fatal heart sets up the SQ for the 9 th trick. +600 was worth 98%
/	1C	/	1S	
//	1NT	/	3NT	

Q 2	AQ3			On board 2 in the second qualifying East's 1H opening looks a little light, but EW were playing a special form of Precision where an opening bid other than 1C showed 9-13 HCPs, and a 1C opening showed 14+.
Bd 2	A82			
Dir E	T6			
Vul NS	A6543			
964		J75		It must have been systemic due to the limited opening bid, but West appeared to give no thought to raising hearts, with what subsequently turned out to be such good support.
KQ9		J7653		John made a simple overcall, and then took a good view to bid 3NT when I showed club support.
QJ54		AK87		EW can cash the first 4 tricks on a diamond lead, but then we have the rest, but surprisingly East did not lead her best suit, nor did she lead her longest suit, instead leading the S5!
T82	KT82	J		John has an easy 10 tricks on a non-diamond lead, made simple by the SJ popping in front of dummy on the 3 rd round of spades. Left to our own devices, with EW silent, John's 1NT opening is likely to be passed out for a mundane +150 or slightly better +180.
	T4			
	932			
	KQ97			
W	N	E	S	
/	2C	1H	/	
/	3NT	//	3C	

Q 2	T853			On board 15 in the second qualifying NS can make 1NT, so we should have been able to defeat 1NT by East, but the defense is not easy.
Bd 15	KJ98			
Dir S	A64			
Vul NS	52			
Q94		AJ6		Obviously if I hit on the H6 as an opening lead East has no chance and will do well to get 5 tricks.
QT75		A42		Not blessed with second sight, I led the C6, and East won on the table to lead the S4 to my SK. Now East gave us a chance when he ducked the CK, which allowed me to signal my possible entry by exiting with the C3, suggesting a diamond entry.
K72		JT83		Unfortunately for us, since declarer led a spade at trick 2, it is too hard for John to abandon spades, and obviously he cannot discard a heart, so he discarded the D4.
JT4	K72	A97		Declarer now led the DJ, which John won with the DA to return a diamond, but when he was subsequently end-played in hearts, he could only cash a spade before giving the 7 th trick to declarer, whereas declarer could not deny me an entry if he had kept the D4.
	63			
	Q95			
	KQ863			
W	N	E	S	
		1NT	//	

Q 2 Bd 19 Dlr S Vul EW	87653 AKQ A7 T95			On board 19 in the second qualifying if John opened 1S, he had no good rebid since he could hardly rebid 2S, so he solved the problem by opening 1NT, 12-14. East led the H2, and when the SQ held trick 2 and the spades broke, he knew that 4S was cold, so took the eye off the ball when East exited with the DT after winning the SK. I did not check the full results for this board, but John's view was that it probably did not matter what he did as most pairs would be making 10 tricks in 4S, so we were getting a bottom. However, if he ducked the DT, he could have made 10 tricks in 1NT, which would have at least beaten all of the pairs playing in a spade part-score, and may have improved our 7% score. No matter how bad the result looks at first, carry on there may be a better score around the corner.
T4 J93 KQJ64 642		KJ2 T652 T2 AQ87		
	AQ9 874 9853 KJ3			
W	N 1NT	E //	S	

F 1 Bd 1 Dlr N Vul Nil	KJT98743 2 J85 Q			On the first board of the Final, North must have missed his pips in the spade suit when he was raised to game by South and dummy went down after the lead of the H4. North ruffed the second heart and tried an insulting SJ, attempting to force an entry to dummy, but when I ducked, he led the CQ and overtook in dummy to discard a diamond, before leading another trump. Ruffing the next heart, he then ran some trumps before eventually leading a diamond towards dummy for the crucial guess. John played low smoothly and declarer played the DT to go 1 down for +50 and 88% to us. If declarer had looked more closely at the pips in the spades suit, after ruffing the heart he could have cashed the CQ, and led the S4 towards dummy, and either the S6 would win, or it would set up the SQ as an entry and at the same time protect the DK from attack.
A2 AT96 Q72 T873		5 KJ74 A9643 J64		
	Q6 Q853 KT AK952			
W //	N 3S	E /	S 4S	

F 1 Bd 6 Dlr E Vul EW	JT87 9832 82 972			On board 6 in the first final I upgraded my hand after John rebid 3C, expecting to have a double diamond stopper with my QJT3, and I rebid 3NT to which North led the D8. Obviously I have 9 tricks in 3NT, but equally obviously, with the spades wide open, NS have 6 tricks before I can take my 9, so some subterfuge is required! I called for the D7 from the table, in spite of John jokingly suggesting that I cover, and when South ducked, I won with the DT and led the HQ. South continued with the DA and I played the DJ, keeping up the pretense of only having QJT bare, and South then cashed the DK, setting up my 9 th trick. South exited with a diamond, and on the run of the clubs both North and South held onto the hearts, so I made my S6 at the end for +630 and all of the match points.
A654 Q QJT3 JT54		2 K7654 97 AKQ83		
	KQ93 AJT AK654 6			
W X 3NT	N / //	E 1H 3C	S 2D /	

F 1 Bd 17 Dlr N Vul Nil	JT K643 Q3 AQJ53		On board 17 in the first final, and holding the boss suit, I decided to be conservative at the vulnerability and only bid 3S over the natural 1D from South.
AK76432 982 K8 7		Q5 75 J7654 KT82	Holding an absolute minimum North passed, but South was not to be denied with her 11 points, and doubled, which North passed for penalties, or maybe he thought that the double was for penalties.
	98 AQJT AT92 964		Glad that I had not followed my first instinct to bid 4S, I awaited dummy with trepidation as to how bad it was likely to be, but was very pleasantly surprised when John laid it down after the lead of the DQ.
W 3S //	N 1C /	E / /	South ducked the DQ and after winning the DK I led a club up, North rising with the CA to lead the D3, won by South with the D9.
			Fully expecting a diamond back now for a trump promotion, I was going to accept 1 down by ruffing high and drawing 2 trumps finishing on the table to discard a heart loser on the CK, but South led a trump!
			When the trumps broke I had 9 tricks for +530, and this was available even on a diamond return.

F 1 Bd 25 Dlr N Vul EW	764 QJ76 K7 A972		Never was the lucky side of bridge more evident than on board 25 in the first final. Our bidding was reasonably normal for a MP Pairs auction, although playing in 5D or 4S would have been more sensible at Imps.
8 AKT Q86543 653		AKQT32 843 AJ9 T	North had three reasonable leads, the C2, HQ or the H6, and if he had chosen a club there would have only been a story of woe.
	J95 952 T2 KQJ84		Even playing Pairs I wanted to be in 5D or 4S when I saw dummy, but winning the HT at trick 2 and not wanting to rely on the spades behaving, I took the diamond finesse at trick 2 hoping for a heart return if it lost.
W 2D 3NT!	N / / //	E 1S 3S	When it won my chances improved, as I only needed an even break in either of the long suits for a good result, and when both suits behaved I had 13 tricks for +720 and a top.
			Slam was cold in either of 2 suits, and yet we still got a top for playing in 3NT.

F 2 Bd 4 Dlr W Vul All	94 T82 Q43 J8654		John does not like to open 1NT (12-14) with bad 12 counts, but looking at the hand later I was surprised that he did not open the East hand on board 4 in the second final.
KQT8 J96 - QT9732		J52 743 KJT75 AK	If he did open 1NT, South may double, and possibly finish in 2D, and that would have turned out better for us I am sure. South opened 1D, I now overcalled 2C and received the worst news when John responded 2NT, which South doubled for penalty.
	A763 AKQ5 A9862 -		I retreated to 3C and North was happy to double for penalty and led the S9, won by South with the SA to cash 3 hearts followed by the DA, which I ruffed.
W / 2C 3C	N / / X	E ! 2NT //	A club to dummy showed me that the contract was in danger of blowout, so I cashed the DK discarding the SK and led the DJ to take stock.
			North was likely to be 2 3 3 5 shape, so I ruffed bringing down the DQ and enter dummy with the SJ, cashed the top club, and led the DT to discard the spade winner, but North had to lead into my club tenace for only 1 down and -200.

F 2	T43		On board 19 in the second final West's 2H showed a single suiter, and East, fearing that it was hearts, passed hoping their good suit was a better alternative.	
Bd 19	T42		We had not discussed it, but I meant my double for take-out, and West could sit back and await developments. 2D can be held to 7 tricks, as without an entry to dummy to cash the HA, trump leads will give East 3 club losers as well as 2 spades and a trump.	
Dlr S	JT98		John elected to bid however, but not knowing which major West had, chose to bid 3C, doubled by East for penalties.	
Vul EW	A96		Now the uncertainty that had started with the opening 2D bid came back to haunt West, as he thought that East was asking for his long suit, and took the double out to 3H.	
852		KJ6	A spade lead got us off to a good start, and knowing that diamonds could provide a discard, I led 3 rounds of spades, ensuring a 2-trick defeat when declarer had to lose a club and 3 trumps.	
AJ9865		-	+200 was a much better score than we were looking at in 3CX.	
54		AKQ63		
J7		KT854		
	AQ97			
	KQ73			
	72			
	Q32			
W	N	E	S	
2D!	/	//!	1NT	
/	3C	X	X	
3H	//		/	

F 2	AKQJ54		On board 24 in the second final North introduced his second suit too early in the auction, and paid the penalty by being one level higher when the auction was over.	
Bd 24	KJ85		His spade suit was good enough to bid again and play opposite a void, and if he was so inclined, he could then have bid 4H over my 4C, although if South has not reacted by then the risk is too great.	
Dlr W	9		South at least then knows he is facing a 6-card suit and either way, the contract will be 4HX, or 4SX.	
Vul Nil	52		In 5HX John cashed the top clubs and led the DJ, getting the contract 1 off before we had even started.	
T63		98	North could force 1 entry to dummy by ruffing a spade to lead a heart, but when I rose with the HA he still had to lose to the HQ later for 3 off and +500 to us.	
AQ7		62	Since there is only a part score available in clubs for EW it is likely that even +300 in 4HX would have been a good score for us.	
K84		AJT7		
Q973		AKT64		
	72			
	T943			
	Q6532			
	J8			
W	N	E	S	
/	1S	2C	/	
3C	3H	/	/	
4C	4S	X	5H	
X	//			

F 3	64		Board 9 in the third final had unspectacular bidding on the first round, although I had a choice of bidding 1NT rather than 2S, since John only showed a 4-card spade suit.	
Bd 9	732		South bided her time, although a 1NT overcall first time would have got her hand off her chest, but she felt compelled to do something when 2S was passed back to her, and her hand was not suited to a take-out double.	
Dlr N	KT975		Many scribes have espoused the theory that if the opponents have a fit, so do you, and this must have been what prompted South to bid 3C in the pass-out seat!	
Vul EW	642		We have got a fit, but only 4-3, and so do NS, and 3CX was impossible for South to control, in spite of receiving a spade lead, and she finished a disastrous 3 off for -500 and one of our rare top boards.	
T52		Q983	Should South balance? I would not think of it with that spade holding, but I would probably overcall 1NT on the first round.	
AT95		K84		
643		AQJ		
Q83		AT9		
	AKJ7			
	QJ6			
	82			
	KJ75			
W	N	E	S	
2S	/	1S	/	
X	//	/	3C	

F 3 Bd 12 Dlr W Vul NS	A75 KQ97 K862 A8		Board 12 in the third final brought back memories of my impetuous youth, and I succumbed to opening 3S at favourable vulnerability. I was not the only one to do it, but we were in the minority, and anyone who did open spades received a good score on this particular hand.
J986432 T643 - Q9		KQT A5 AQ973 K43	North was in a dilemma, with nowhere good to go, but felt they had too many points to pass, and the single spade stopper made 3NT risky, so since they had 4 hearts, they doubled for take-out.
	- J82 JT54 JT7652		Of course that is the last thing South wanted to hear, but at least she had a 6-card suit to bid. Now John came forth with 4S, and who can blame North for doubling again, this time for penalty, but South pulled the double back to 5C, and John doubled.
W 3S! / / /	N X / X /	E / 4S / /	S 4C / 5C //
			Other NS pairs found their diamond fit and played in 5DX, but that was worse, and South escaped for -500 when we clashed our club honours. Still, that was 85%.

F 3 Bd 15 Dlr S Vul NS	AJT985 AK3 AJ AT		On board 15 in the third final we got very lucky when I pushed my luck and North, looking only at their hand, did not take into account their partner's hand or his bid.
3 QJT964 Q9765 9		KQ42 752 K432 75	At the vulnerability I wanted to be involved with such a shapely hand, but the adage: "never pre-empt over a pre-empt" came to mind so I passed the natural 4C opening bid.
	76 8 T8 KQJ86432		When North came to the party with a strong bid, I came back in with 4NT to show the red suits, and North doubled this, probably intending to double 5H, but bidding spades again over John's 5D bid.
W / 4NT /	N 4S X 5S	E / 5D X	S 4C! / / //
			I think that John's double of 5S was very risky, in that even if I do have an outside trick to take the contract off, having been warned by the double, North may retreat to 6C, which is cold! Luckily for us North either did not treat John's double seriously, or did not appreciate how good a club fit they had for South's vulnerable 4C opening, and passed the double, conceding a diamond and 2 spades for +200 and an undeserved top.

F 3 Bd 20 Dlr W Vul All	QJ4 J72 KJ9652 6		On board 20 in the third final I was very interested in slam when John overcalled 2D, so I jumped to 4D, which we had agreed was Minorwood. Missing 1 Key Card was not a surprise considering the opening bid on my left, but slam was still a good bet if John had the DQ, hence 4NT.
K2 AQT8653 Q Q92		8763 K4 874 J753	I was shocked when he passed 4NT, and even more so when he did not have a heart stopper either, but was heartened by the lead of the DQ from West!
	AT95 9 AT3 AKT84		9 top tricks are there, but with very little prospects of a 10 th , as the spade finesses is likely to fail since West indicated he had a top heart honour missing (likely the HK) by not leading hearts, in spite of me informing him before he led that 4NT was for the DQ.
W 1H / //	N 2D! 4S	E / /	S 4D! 4NT!
			Still funnier things have happened on the run of a long suit, so I ran the diamonds and West discarded 4 hearts! When the SQ lost and West cashed the HA, I had 11 tricks for a top.

F 3	Q5			<p>Board 26 in the third final illustrated the advantage of right-siding a contract, but more importantly the advantage of overcalling where possible to suggest a lead to partner if they are on lead at any time.</p> <p>Our auction was straight-forward to a normal contract, (but we open in 4-card suits including spades) with EW silent throughout, and no clues from the bidding, West led the DJ.</p> <p>The difference between ours and other bidding sequences, is that after 1C - 1H, East is able to overcall 1S and now North must be declarer to allow 9 tricks to make in 3NT. If South rebids 1NT over a 1S overcall, the spade lead holds them to 7 tricks.</p> <p>In 3NT without a spade lead, I won in hand and took the club finesse to protect the SQ, and upon winning the CA East led another diamond. I cleared the clubs and now East led a spade, run around to dummy, and I ran my tricks. East was squeezed, but at the end instead of discarding a heart and letting West take care of that suit, they discarded a 3rd spade, so my 11th trick was the S6.</p>
Bd 26	K876			
Dlr E	76			
Vul All	KJ952			
J9		KT873		
J92		QT5		
JT9832		54		
Q7		AT8		
	A642			
	A43			
	AKQ			
	643			
W	N	E	S	
/	2C	/	1S	
/	3NT	//	2NT	