

2013 National Seniors Teams by Richard Wallis

I was back in Canberra again this year to play with John Brockwell in the National Seniors Teams, teaming up for the second time with Hasmat Ali and Bal Krisham. In spite of missing an easy slam we started out well with a maximum win, but lost our second match 7-23 and then we were always playing catch-up.

We had almost caught up after the 8th match, but an absolute rout in the final match, dropped us way back into the 46-team pack. Not that we were ever going to get a 25 win in the last match to qualify, but the team that thrashed us moved up to 4th or 5th with the big win over us.

The event is conducted in the first week of the bridge fortnight in parallel with the National Womens Teams as well as various restricted categories, and consists of 9 matches each of 20 boards, so it is a good test. In spite of a few set-backs, it was a very enjoyable event and I am looking forward to next year already.

M 1	T7432			On board 1 in the first match I had an attack of conservatism when I could not bring myself to bid the obvious 6D after John opened 3D as East.
Bd 1	J8653			
Dlr N	2			
Vul Nil	A6			Firstly I had to recover my composure after seeing my partner open with a pre-empt in a suit in which I have 6-card support!
AK6		8		I had visions of John holding the D2 instead of the DA, in which case the 5-level is high enough.
-		QT7		
QJT965		AK8743		
KQJ8		973		
	QJ95			I felt very foolish when I put dummy down and John quickly claimed 12 tricks, and posted the board as a loss to us.
	AK942			However, at the other table Hasmat stole the hand in 4H, and in spite of going 1 off, we still gained 9 Imps
	-			
	T542			
W	N	E	S	This illustrates that a board is never a certain loss until the scores have been entered and the differences calculated!
5D!	/	3D	/	
	//			

M 1	QJ965			On board 8 in the first match we had a straight-forward auction to 3NT and North led the HJ.
Bd 8	J6			
Dlr W	Q			Since there had been no opposition bidding, and I did not want a spade switch, I took the first heart as the suit may break 4-4 and thus not be a threat.
Vul Nil	Q9863			Since I thought that North knew less about the distribution than South, I decided to finesse the diamond to North and hope for a non-heart continuation or a 4-4 break.
742		A83		
A3		752		
AT8		KJ7642		
AJ752		K		
	KT			I nearly fell off my chair when North won the DQ and led another heart and it was South who proved to have a 6-card hearts suit! It was even worse when I found out that I had lost to the singleton DQ and I had converted 10 tricks at the beginning to just 7 at the end. The loss was only 6 Imps since EW at the other table played in 3D.
	KQT984			
	953			
	T4			
W	N	E	S	
1NT	/	3NT	//	

M 2	8			On board 1 in the second match John surprized me by opening 4S in second seat when I had a 20-count!
Bd 1	9874			Holding the top spades myself I nearly bid slam straight away, but maybe John had 3 Aces and the grand slam was cold.
Dlr N	J843			
Vul Nil	AT83			
AK5			QJT96432	John confirmed 2 Aces and the trump queen, so I knew that slam was virtually certain, but here is where I could have made certain of 12 tricks under almost any sort of distribution.
K5			A	
KQT75			A	
KQ7			J52	
	7			I bid a mundane 6S, and I was worried when South led the HQ in case NS could take the first 2 tricks in hearts. Everything was okay as John had the HA and since a club was not led John made all 13 tricks and we actually gained 1 Imp.
	QJT632			
	962			
	964			
W	N	E	S	However, since my heart holding is obviously vulnerable to an opening lead attack I should have protecting it by declaring 6NT, then it is completely safe and slam is cold even if John has the minor suit Aces.
4NT	/	4S	/	
6S!	//	5S	/	

M 2	KT9843			On board 7 in the second match I balked at bidding 2H as West to show hearts and a minor, and instead meekly passed over the 1NT opening bid.
Bd 7	J3			John came to my rescue by doubling the 2H transfer bid, but I was not sure if he had a good hand or just hearts. If he had full values for his double I hoped that my freebid of 3H may have been enough for him to raise to game.
Dlr S	T8			
Vul All	965			
76			A2	As soon as dummy was tabled, I knew we were not on the same wavelength and I had blown it!
AT87			KQ964	Since both red suits behaved, I had no trouble making 11 tricks, but as EW at the other table had bid to game, we lost 10 Imps.
AQ654			K93	
J3			QT2	
	QJ5			The key to the hand was on the first round of bidding where I should have bid 2H over 1NT. John would have had no trouble raising to game.
	52			
	J72			
	AK874			
W	N	E	S	
/!	2H!	X	1NT	
3H!	//		2S	

M 3	AJ9			On board 2 in the third match, after Tony and South both passed, I thought that the time was right for a weak opening bid.
Bd 2	AK95			Holding both majors I was well placed to pass any major suit bid from Tony, and even 2C will be safe enough to pass.
Dlr E	A62			
Vul NS	K72			
T852			Q643	North made a take-out double, so Tony decided not to bid his weak spade suit, and thus our best fit was missed. However, North was probably planning to bid 1NT after the double to show around 19 points, but changed his mind when Tony bid 1NT first.
QJT8			76	South led the D5, and struggle as he might, Tony could not even come close to 7 tricks, finishing 4 light for -200.
73			QJT	Nothing was said about my light opening bid (even for Precision), but I sensed that we were unlikely to get more than 4 tricks in 3NT even with the advantage of the opening lead, and this was verified by the +630 from the other table that gained us 10 Imps.
AJ5			Q943	
	K7			
	432			
	K9854			
	T86			
W	N	E	S	
1D	X	1NT	//	

M 3 Bd 16 Dlr W Vul EW	875 JT62 QT65 J9		On board 16 in the third match I sought the safety of my good 5-card suit when I was doubled in 1NT, although Deep Finesse suggests that 1NT can be made.
94 943 AK942 AK7		AJT2 Q87 J83 843	South doubled again and North converted to penalties, so I was glad of a good suit to limit the damage. Dummy was a blessing, providing me with J83 in trumps and an Ace.
	KQ63 AK5 7 QT652		North led the CJ and when I cashed the DA and everyone followed I knew I was only 1 off, assuming North had the DQ, so I led the D2 towards dummy and the DJ won, South discarding a club.
W 1NT 2D //	N / / //	E / / //	S X X X
			It looked like I was onto something, so I drew another trump, led to the SA in dummy and pulled the H8 from dummy. When South flew with the HA I had 8 tricks for +180, and 9 Imps as 2DWX was defeated at the other table.

M 4 Bd 10 Dlr E Vul All	72 AKJ AKQ92 KQ2		On board 10 in the fourth match I had given the hand away by my opening bid, but only to a declarer who examines the bidding.
J85 653 T6 T9754		KQT43 Q98 87 A83	There are only 12 points missing, and my opening bid showed at least 11, and the other point turned up as the SJ in John's hand, so I had all of the missing points and could be squeezed if declarer watched the discards.
	A96 T742 J543 J6		John led the S5 (my 1S opening could be a 4-card suit) and declarer ducked the SA until the third hand, and I was already deciding how I was going to throw a heart on the diamonds early and hope that enticed declarer into taking the losing heart finesse, when to my absolute delight, declarer discarded the HJ on the 3 rd spade.
W / / /	N X 2S 3NT	E 1S / / //	S / 2D 2NT
			If declarer discards the C2 instead and runs the diamonds, I have no good discard on the 5 th diamond, and either have to unguard the hearts, or discard a spade. I was sure that declarer could read the hand because of my opening bid. At the other table Bal played in 4H for +620 and 12 Imps.

M 4 Bd 20 Dlr W Vul All	K97432 - A9764 AT		On board 20 in the fourth match after overcalling in my good suit I doubled the 2S rebid to show a good hand, intending to bid 3D if John bid 3C and was happy to pass 3NT as the SJ may have provided a second stopper.
AQ5 QJ6 832 9653		J8 AKT932 KQJ5 J	North unleashed his secret weapon by leading a diamond, and must have been very disappointed when dummy appeared especially when John led a diamond straight back at him.
	T6 8754 T KQ8742		Thanks to the club blockage there is no danger to 3NT now and John wrapped up 9 tricks for +600.
W / / 3NT	N 1S 2S //	E 2H X //	S / / /
			3NT can be defeated, by the unlikely play of leading clubs from the top, with South overtaking the CT to cash the CQ before leading a spade to set up the 5 th trick for the defence. At the other table EW played in 4HE, but a diamond lead and a couple of ruffs soon put paid to that contract, finishing 2 off for +200 and 13 Imps to us.

M 5	987543			<p>On board 5 in the fifth match North was not inclined to open with a weak 2S, and my 1H opening appeared to quell any bidding desires from South, so we had an uninterrupted auction to a safe part score.</p> <p>However, when Dummy went down it looked like we may have missed a game in spades. EW at the other table did reach 4S, but were sunk by the 6-0 trump break and finished 1 off.</p> <p>In just 3C, South started off proceedings with the DA, which clarified that suit for me and thus did not require me to lead spades early on, so I led a club to dummy and played the CT, which held.</p> <p>Now I was in complete control and could draw trumps for 11 tricks and +150, which amounted to 5 Imps.</p> <p>When it became time to cash my spade tricks I was very relieved to notice the 6-0 break, and it was thus likely that 4S would fail, and so it proved at the other table.</p>
Bd 5	T5			
Dlr N	J84			
Vul NS	73			
AKT62			QJ	
J			A8762	
Q92			K7	
QT86			K542	
	-			
	KQ943			
	AT653			
	AJ9			
W	N	E	S	
	/	1H	/	
1S	/	2C	/	
3C	//			

M 5	Q53			<p>On board 8 in the fifth match John opened 1S as we were playing 4-card Acol, and rebid a game forcing 2NT over my 2H response.</p> <p>Since I only had 11 HCPs and a void in John's opening bid suit, I had no slam ambitions and simply bid game in the known minimum 6-2 heart fit.</p> <p>South made it easy for me by leading the H5, which did not seem like a good lead on the bidding holding J75, so I played for the drop in trumps and was rewarded with 12 tricks for +480.</p> <p>Left to my own devices if I had cashed the HK first, I almost certainly would have finessed on the next round, using the rule of restricted choice, so I was happy at not being in slam, although judging by the datum for the board, some EW pairs must have bid to slam.</p> <p>I need not have worried about missing slam, as EW at the other table did not even get to game, so we gained 6 Imps!</p>
Bd 8	QJ			
Dlr W	6543			
Vul Nil	J932			
AJ72			-	
AT9			K76432	
J82			KQ7	
AQ7			KT85	
	KT9864			
	85			
	AT9			
	64			
W	N	E	S	
1S	/	2H	/	
2NT	/	4H	//	

M 5	KJT7632			<p>On board 9 in the fifth match South was silent throughout even though they held a moderate hand, but the DQ is of dubious value.</p> <p>I bid a risky 2D over the opening 1S by North, and after South passed, John bid 2H, and North repeated his spades.</p> <p>When I rebid 2NT, South must have thought that there were an awful lot of points in this pack, and kept silent again, although a 3S bid may have been warranted.</p> <p>John went back to hearts, which was passed around to give South another turn to bid, but 3H became the final contract.</p> <p>North's spades were good enough to bid twice, but not to lead, and he led the CJ, on which South played the CA, which eliminated any other club losers, and South continued clubs.</p> <p>The spade finesse looks pretty safe, and even if it loses, the diamond loser can be thrown later, so John took a successful spades finesse and then led trumps, losing just 3 tricks for +170, to go with +110 from 2SN making at the other table, for 7 Imps.</p>
Bd 9	KT			
Dlr N	KJ			
Vul EW	J8			
8			AQ9	
A98742			63	
52			AT743	
QT43			K65	
	54			
	QJ5			
	Q986			
	A972			
W	N	E	S	
	1S	2D	/	
2H	2S	2NT	/	
3H	//			

M 6	AKQ98			On board 2 in the sixth match we were playing 4-card suits, so John could not confidently raise immediately when North used the Michael's cue-bid, nor could he double to show 3-card support.
Bd 2	-			South was likely daunted by the vulnerability and only bid 2S in spite of having 5-card support, but the down-side to her reticence was that I was able to describe my hand at a low level and get preference from John for hearts.
Dlr E	Q65			I knew that 4H must be close, but John may have had only 2 hearts, so I went carefully at first, but with a 3-loser hand I was happy to bid game when North pushed a little harder, but thought I had maybe done the wrong thing when South doubled.
Vul NS	J9762			The sight of dummy gave me cause for optimism as I ruffed the SK at trick 1, until I cashed a top heart at trick 2 and found out about the 5-0 break. I played the CA and a diamond to dummy to lead a club off the table, then counted North's likely distribution.
-	AKQ64		J53	I guessed a 5035 distribution, and thus finessed the DJ on the second round of diamonds to keep ahead of South and made 10 tricks for +590. In fact I should have made 11 tricks by discarding a spade on the CQ. EW at the other table bid to 4S and went 1 down doubled, so we gained 9 Imps.
	J843		852	
	AKQ8		AK972	
			T4	
	T7642			
	JT973			
	T			
	53			
W	N	E	S	
1H	2H!	/	2S	
3C	/	3H	/	
/	3S	/	/	
4H	/	/	X	
//				

M 6	AT43			On board 3 in the sixth match we were the victim of South's misplaced heart. They opened 2D to show a weak two in a major, and when John bid 4H to play, who can blame for North for thinking that if he has 6 hearts, South must have 6 spades!
Bd 3	92			John also assumed that South had 6 spades, so he bid his hearts again, but realized something was wrong when South doubled, so pulled the double to 6D, which unfortunately had 2 unavoidable losers.
Dlr S	82			If NS did not cash their 2 Aces, it is possible to draw trumps and set the hearts up to discard all 4 clubs, but this did not seem likely as South was supposed to have 6 hearts. However, South had miscounted their hearts and opened 2D by mistake.
Vul EW	QJ982			Of course if John had showed his diamond support instead of bidding hearts again, 5D was certain, and we would have got +600, but an even greater bonus would have been gained if he had decided to take what was available in 4SX, as then South would have paid for their mistake. At the other table 4HE was 1 off so a flat board.
QJ5			K97	
-			AQJT73	
AJT953			K76	
K543			7	
	862			
	K8654			
	Q4			
	AT6			
W	N	E	S	
3D	/	4H	2D!	
/	4S	5H	/	
/	/	6D	X	
			//	

M 7	7			Board 4 in the seventh match was not a major gain for our team, but it was memorable for an unusual incident during the early play of the hand.
Bd 4	53			After showing a weak hand with at least 6 hearts by the jump over call, South led the CJ to 3NT, and John won on the table and led the D3. North played the D2, and John played the D4, winning the trick as South showed out!
Dlr W	QJ982			Next was the SJ by John, covered by South, and ducked in dummy. John finessed the ST next and led a diamond. This time North played the DJ, but back to the CQ, cash the ST, and then lead another diamond for 10 tricks.
Vul All	98432			Once the ST won in dummy, Ace and another spade would have set up 11 tricks, but 10 tricks and +630 was still worth 1 Imp to us.
AT8632			J4	
J			AQT	
763			AKT54	
AQ5			KT7	
	KQ95			
	K987642			
	-			
	J6			
W	N	E	S	
1S	/	2D	3H	
3S	/	3NT	//	

M 7 Bd 20 Dir W Vul All	JT6 AK62 A84 Q94		On board 20 in the seventh match North forgot a very important maxim: "finesse into the safe hand whenever possible" John dutifully led the H4 after I opened with a weak 2H, and North played safe by ducking the first round. Now I need 2 entries to be able to cash my heart tricks!
73 QJT975 6 AJ52		Q542 43 KT532 86	There are many possibilities for 9 tricks, but many require a finesse into my hand, which may prove disastrous.
	AK98 8 QJ97 KT73		However, many of the finesses actually work, but declarer took one of the few that didn't by leading to the CT in dummy at trick 3! I won the CJ, set up my hearts, and sat back and waited for the CA to cash out for 2 off and +200.
W 2H / //	N / 2NT	E / /	S X 3NT
			At the other table, Bal sitting North did not lose to the CJ, so hearts were never cashable, and he finished with 10 tricks for +630 and 13 Imps.

M 8 Bd 10 Dir E Vul All	7653 T JT932 A52		On board 10 in the eighth match we had a straight-forward auction to 3NT, which seemed to be flat, although when I saw dummy I thought that a heart lead may have been a problem, no matter how they were distributed.
AKQT 764 AQ5 T64		4 K852 K84 KJ983	I was off to a good start when North led the DJ, so I finessed a club into South to protect the hearts, and South returned a diamond, which I won in hand to preserve the entry to dummy.
	J982 AQJ93 76 Q7		North persisted with diamonds when he won the CA, and now I had 9 tricks without a worry. South had to find 3 discards on the clubs, and his discards convinced me that he was protecting the spades, but I was not about to risk the contract by finessing, so I settled for the 9 tricks I could see.
W 1S 2NT	N / /	E / 2C 3NT	S / / //
			At the other table West did make 10 tricks, but the contract was only 2NT, so we gained 9 Imps.

M 8 Bd 11 Dir S Vul Nil	AJ64 J4 KQ7 QJ86		Board 11 in the eighth match was a pretty nondescript hand without any dramas at our table except . I had a pretty good hand for an opening 3H, and at favourable vulnerability may have considered opening 4H instead.
KT7 KQT7532 63 4		9 A8 JT9842 KT62	North made the best lead of a trump, but thereafter NS lost their way and I finished with 9 tricks for +140. I won the heart lead on the table and ran the S9 to North, who returned another trump. I won in hand and led the D6 to dummy and both North and South ducked!
	Q8532 96 A5 A973		At the other table West did open 4H, and played there doubled, with much better defense than I got at my table. The final result was 4 off for +800 and 14 Imps. This proves that there are very few nondescript hands.
W 3H	N //	E	S /

M 9 Bd 1 Dlr N Vul Nil	JT762 K9 T92 Q75		I had nothing much to go on when selecting a lead to 4S on board 1 in the ninth match, except that John had not supported my diamonds. Thus I led the DA and followed up with the D4, suggesting a club return.
Q T76 AJ8754 KT4		853 J42 6 AJ9632	To my surprize John ruffed the D4, and did lead a club, but to my horror it was the CA, and declarer ruffed the next club and drew trumps for 10 tricks and -420.
	AK94 AQ853 KQ3 8		There was no need to cash the CA after ruffing the diamond, as we were playing teams, and if a small club was won by declarer, it is only an overtrick.
W 2D /	N / 4S	E / / //	S 1H 2S At the other table the contract was only 3S for 9 tricks, so we lost 7 Imps instead of picking up 6.

M 9 Bd 14 Dlr E Vul Nil	QJ6 Q5 KQ876 Q53		On board 14 in the ninth match South was light for his opening 1H bid, but was relying on his 2 Aces and 6-card major.
K2 T2 AT5432 KT4		A984 K87 J J9762	I made a normal weak jump overcall, and in spite of his minimum hand, South doubled for take-out in the pass-out seat, and North was happy to pass for penalties.
	T753 AJ9643 9 A8		North led the HQ and I ducked, and North continued for South to win and play another top heart on which I discarded the C4, and North discarded the C3.
W 3D //	N / /	E / / /	S 1H X Ace and another club followed, and I played the top spades and ruffed a spade to exit with the D3, ducked by North! Now I could lead a black card from the table, and ruff, but when North over-ruffed, he was end played, and I ducked his next play of the DK and won the last 2 tricks for 2 off and -300. At the other table South did not open, and West played in 4D for 4 off, but undoubled, so we lost 3 Imps.

M 9 Bd 16 Dlr W Vul EW	KJ73 AQT62 T T72		On board 16 in the ninth match I had a pretty easy pass of the 2D overcall by South, as game looked unlikely with such a minimum hand. It was not certain that 2D would go down, but no other contract looked palatable, so I decided to take my chances.
965 54 K9653 A98		AQ82 KJ97 7 KQJ5	The H5 was a good start for us, and John won with the HJ and led the CK, and we cashed 3 clubs before I exited with the S9, allowing John to win the SQ and exit with a diamond.
	T4 83 AQJ842 643		Winning with the DK I was able to lead a second spade and another diamond winner led to 3 off and +500. It was a pity South did not go all the way and bid 3D (as I would have).
W / /	N / /	E 1C X	S 2D // It looked like a black suit exit by John after winning the SA would promote an extra trump trick for me, but I was easily end-played. At the other table EW got to 3NT and with everything well placed, they made 9 tricks for -600, so we lost 3 Imps.