

2014 QLD Open Pairs by Richard Wallis

An encouraging, but still low 49 pairs entered for the Open Pairs this year, which necessitated a 2-session qualifying on the Saturday, followed by a 2-session final on Sunday. All of the fancied pairs made the final, and it was back to square 1 for the 8-tables of the Final, Plate and Consolation on Sunday morning.

Therese Tully and I started off very slowly, being in last place after the first 2 matches out of 15. There was a mild recovery up to match 9, before going into free-fall over the afternoon to drop out of the top half. Our troubles started again in match 10 against Neville Francis and Magnus Moren, and continued in the next match against Nathan Van Jole and Andy Hung.

Francis/Moren and Van Jole/Hung had a close battle all day, clearing out from the field about the halfway mark. Francis/Moren had a modest lead with 1 match to play, but after a below average final match, they thought they had handed the title to Van Jole/Hung. However the final result for Van Jole/Hung was not good enough to overhaul them, so the lead was unchanged, with Tony Hutton and Malcolm Carter in third place.

The additional pairs brought down to Brisbane by the QBA via the Zonal subsidies adds another element of interest to this event, and gives the other zones exposure to a higher standard of Bridge.

M 1	63			On board 2 in the first match we had no place to go for a good score after South made a take-out double based on his good shape.
Bd 2	A965			
Dlr E	7632			Therese could rebid 3D over North's free-bid of 2H, but instead chose to show 3 spades with a support-double, and with no source of tricks after her double I elected to pass over South's raise to 3H.
Vul NS	J93			Dummy was a disappointment to us when Therese led the DK, and declarer had no trouble coming to 10 tricks for -170.
JT42		A85		
K8		Q3		
QT6		AKJ984		
A854		76		
	KQ97			This initially looked like a possible pick-up to us as game had been missed by NS, but in reality, we had missed an easy 3NT,
	JT742			We could not win on the hand, as even if we had got to 3NT, after the heart raise, NS would likely sacrifice in 4H, and that would come home for 10 tricks, possibly even doubled.
	-			
	KQT2			
W	N	E	S	
1S	2H	1D	X	It is highly unlikely that we would have thought to go to 5D over 4H instead of doubling, and since many EW pairs played the hand in 3NT for +400, we were screwed.
//		X	3H	

M 2	KT8752			On board 6 in the second match the Vulnerability was in South's favour and she took full advantage to cramp our bidding which caused us to miss an easy slam.
Bd 6	53			
Dlr E	852			My first thought was to bid 3NT and hope Therese could help with the heart stop, but that would be silly on many layouts, so I bid what was in front of me after all.
Vul EW	Q2			When Therese raised, I gave thought to bidding slam, but wimped out and passed, making an easy 12 tricks for +620, but only 21%.
AJ9		4		
K		Q42		
AT9		KQ743		
KJ9764		AT85		
	Q63			Even 3NT, making 12 tricks would have been a good score, but 6NT would have been too pushy, even though successful.
	AJT9876			
	J6			
	3			
W	N	E	S	
4C	/	1D	3H	Rather than putting all of my eggs in one basket and keep 3NT in play, what I should have done was make a negative double, intending to pass over 3NT by Therese, or else bid 4C over 3S or 4D, and then we may have got to slam.
		5C	//	

M 2 Bd 8 Dlr W Vul Nil	KQT63 87 T842 Q7		Board 8 in the second match was the last of a bad set that sent us to the bottom of the field. Therese showed both of her suits, but when North show her spade values with a 1NT response to South's take-out double, South made a bizarre leap to 4H, although it would seem that spade values by North do not help her cause. I was fairly certain that 4H was not going to make, but wrongly thought that it would still be a good score undoubled, especially if I did not give away the heart position with a double. Holding length in hearts, I should have led the C4, which would have likely led to a 3-trick defeat, but instead unwisely led the S8, which Therese assumed was a singleton, and her spade return allowed South an entry to dummy and a club discard. Declarer did not take advantage of the hearts in dummy and still finished 2 off, for +100, but only 21% to us.
82 QT632 73 J864		AJ975 - AJ5 KT952	
	4 AKJ954 KQ96 A3		
W / //!	N 1NT	E 1S 2C	S X 4H

M 5 Bd 18 Dlr E Vul NS	AQJ 76 A AKT7642		On board 18 in the fifth match I had great cause to be worried when Therese rebid her clubs over East's 2D, a contract that I was fairly confident of defeating. West was even more unhappy with the double of 3C than I was, and gave much thought to bidding 3D instead of passing the double, but eventually passed in hope, and was temporarily relieved when dummy tracked. East led the top 2 hearts and switched to the D5, which Therese won in hand to cash out the top trumps, and concede a trump and a spade for 9 tricks and +670. 2D by East was an awful bid, and deserved anything that came its way, but maybe East thought he was jammed into a corner. Having got away with the bad bid when Therese rebid 3C, he dug a big hole for himself by coming again with a double, and West had nowhere to go but down!
K9543 T42 J9 QJ5		T2 AKQ8 K8753 83	
	876 J953 QT642 9		
W 1S /	N 2C 3C	E 1D 2D X	S / / //

M 7 Bd 25 Dlr N Vul EW	J6 A83 KJT6 J862		On board 25 in match 7 West made a fatal mistake by balancing back into the auction when we had not found a fit and stopped in 1NT. We only play a 1NT response to a major suit opening bid as almost forcing, and definitely not forcing by a passed hand, so West was putting their neck on the block by balancing with 2D after the 1NT response got passed back to her. West's spade holding would suggest keeping out of it as by bidding 1NT, Therese would have 2 spades at most, and maybe none. As it turns out, with almost every card right for NS, 3NT is cold, but that is only +400, so to get above average, 2D would have to be only 1 off for +200 for NS. However, the very card positions that made 3NT easy for NS, worked against West in 2DX, and she finished 3 off for +800 to us. This was only worth 71% to us, so must have been duplicated a few times at other tables.
AQ93 954 AQ983 7		72 QT76 52 K9543	
	KT854 KJ2 74 AQT		
W / 2D	N / 1NT! X	E / / //	S 1S

M 8 Bd 30 Dlr E Vul Nil	AJ9 K985 AJ72 Q2		On board 30 in the eighth match the difficulty of pairs was never so evident after I led the S6 to the 6H contract. South's 2D response denied a 5-card major, and North's 2S rebid showed a 4-card heart suit, which allowed South to bid 3H, and North was away to slam when South showed 2 Key Cards and the HQ.
6 76 QT9 JT97654		K8743 T42 8643 K	I led the H6 and South was in the Pairs quandary! If he rose with the SA and drew trumps, he could guarantee 6H, but if the SK was in my hand, he had given up on 13 tricks and may well have a poor score in a making contract.
	QT52 AQJ3 K5 A83		On the other hand, if the SK was on his right, there was a real danger that the lead was a singleton, and a spade return would lead to a ruff and 1 off!
W / / / /	N 2C 2S 4NT 6H	E / / / //	S 1NT 2D 3H 5S Of course for there to be any story, South did finesse, and Therese led back a spade for me to ruff and defeat the slam. This was not a top, probably because of the Pairs aspect tempting others to finesse at trick 1, and we only scored 79%.

M 11 Bd 12 Dlr W Vul NS	JT2 AKQJ75 3 AK9		On board 12 in match 11 we could tell it was not going to be our day. NS had a transfer auction to a very good slam, making if the spades broke or the finesse worked, but going off because the Qxx was in the West hand.
Q84 T863 AQT52 Q		3 942 K97 T86432	At least that is the chances for 6H, but because of the transfer auction, North became declarer in 6S, after South had shown 6 spades and 4 diamonds and 8+ HCPs.
	AK9765 - J864 J75		While I thought about leading a diamond, which gives the contract no chance, it was not attractive to lead from K97 through South's announced 4-card suit, so I led the H4, MUD. Now North won the HJ, discarding the D4 from dummy, then led 2 rounds of trumps, finding the 3-1 break. He then returned to hand with the CA to discard the remaining 3 diamonds while Therese followed suit each time, after which declarer claimed 12 tricks for -1430, and an absolute bottom for us!
W / / / /	N 1C 1S 4NT 6S	E / / / //	S 1H 2D 5H

M 12 Bd 15 Dlr S Vul NS	43 K76532 7543 7		On board 15 in the twelfth match the result would likely have been so much different if my hand had been dealer instead of South. I had no good bid over South's weak 2S opening, and chose a simple 3H as my only sensible alternative, but my worst fears were realized when Therese responded 4D, my void suit.
AQ98 AQT84 - QJ84		6 - KQJT92 AKT953	Since I had a reasonable 5-card suit and good spades, I decided to rebid my hearts instead of going to the 5-level with 5C, as I did not think 4NT would be treated as natural.
	KJT752 J9 A86 62		When Therese bid 5C herself, 6C looked a real possibility, but my void in her first-bid suit persuaded me to pass, and we scored only 29%. The void in my suit, was probably what stopped Therese from bidding 6C over my 4H, as she has great slam potential, but could easily have 2 Aces off the top! The ruffing finesse in diamonds gave us 13 tricks, and a feeling of loss later confirmed by the score!
W 3H 4H	N / /	E 4D 5C	S 2S //

M 16 Bd 13 Dir N Vul Nil	J3 AJ3 J9742 AJ4		On board 17 in the thirteenth match I had a good looking hand after Therese opened 1D, but it had a lot of holes, especially when East announced some strength via a take-out double. Luckily we play system on after a take-out double in second seat, so I was able to bid a forcing 2D over the double, and find out the range of Therese's opening bid. West came to life with a free bid of 3C, so the pass by Therese showed 11-13, along with the 4-card minimum diamond suit. I had already denied a 4-card major, so my 3S showed my stopper, and Therese bid 3NT with stoppers in both of the other suits, or at least in clubs. West spoiled things by coming again with 4C, and Therese confirmed her minimum hand by passing. I would have liked to bid 4NT to play, and should at the very least have bid 5D to take the pressure off Therese, but I only bid 4D, and had a few anxious moments as Therese gave some thought to passing before raising to game. It was still only 36% for +400.
Q75 T85 3 KT8765		KT642 KQ74 T 932	
	A98 962 AKQ865 Q		
W	N	E	S
3C / 4C /	1D / 3NT / 5D	X / / //	2D! 3S / 4D

M 14 Bd 21 Dir N Vul NS	854 J5 KQ983 JT3		On board 21 in the fourteenth match the bidding was short and sweet, the vulnerability working in our favour. North led the HJ, his partner's suit, to my 2S contract, and after covering in dummy I ruffed the next round and won the second round of trumps in the dummy to lead the C2 off the table. "Second hand low" is often quoted by Bridge teachers, and it is often right, as on this hand. I was hoping to win the CQ and then duck a club, gaining a trick if South has Ax in clubs, which would give me 9 tricks. As the cards lie, this plan would fail. However, South rose with the CA in second position, and gave me not just two clubs, but three when the suit broke 3-3. I now made 10 tricks for +170 and a complete top.
AKJT93 9 765 Q75		Q6 Q874 AT4 K862	
	72 AKT632 J2 A94		
W	N	E	S
2S	//		1H

M 15 Bd 25 Dir N Vul EW	A7 T5432 T83 T87		On board 25 in the fifteenth and final match, EW found their way to 6NT with East as declarer and I was on lead! Except for the initial 2C and 2D bids, all other suit bids were natural, although I do not know why West did not bid 3NT over East's natural 3S, possibly because he was not sure it was natural. East's final bid of 5NT was of the "pick a slam" variety, and West chose 6NT, making East declarer. Since East had shown at least 5 diamonds and 4 spades, I was at a loss to find a good lead, and mindful of an earlier hand where I had failed to lead from K97 in a second suit of dummy's, I led the S6! Therese won the SA, and after moments pause for thought, returned the S7 and the slam was beaten at trick 2! EW have plenty of tricks on a non-spade lead, so the opening lead is crucial, made easier if West is declarer and North is on lead. It seems likely that most tables in the Final would be in slam, so the 88% score we gained for taking the slam 1 off must have meant a spade lead was not usual.
QJ A976 KQ AKQJ3		T532 KQ AJ954 62	
	K9864 J8 762 954		
W	N	E	S
2C 3C 3H 4C 6NT	/ / / / //	/ 2D 3D 3S 5NT	/ / / / /