

## 2015 National Seniors Teams by Richard Wallis

Continuing on from last year, David McLeish and I again teamed up with Tony Hutton and Malcolm Carter for the National Seniors Teams in Canberra at the beginning of the Summer Teams. We started well, easily winning our first match, but then it got harder and we struggled for a while, losing 4 out of the next 5, before closing out with 3 wins to pull up to around our seed number.

The final was between Brown (Terry Brown, Avi Kanetkar, Ron Klinger, Peter Buchen, Henry Christie and Queensland's Bill Haughie) and Neill (Bruce Neill, Arjuna De Livera, Simon Hinge, Kim Morrison, Zolly Nagy and David Lilley), and was not decided until the last board, when an unusual decision landed Neill in a no-play 4S on a 4-2 fit, instead of the cold 5D. The resulting 12 Imp loss to Neill was enough to allow Brown to overtake Neill, Brown having already recovered from a significant deficit in the last few boards to get close with 1 board to play.

<b>M 1</b>	KJ862			On board 3 in the first match we missed our best fit, but loose defence enabled David to get 4H home.
<b>Bd 3</b>	K9			After 2D by David, I thought that my hand was too weak, and my suit too short, to rebid my spades, so I gave David preference to hearts, and he raised to game.
<b>Dlr S</b>	9764			A spade lead beats 4H out of hand, and a club will also give declarer little hope, but West gave David some leeway by leading a trump, and when East won the third round he switched to a diamond, and now David was home, just losing 2 spades and a heart.
<b>Vul EW</b>	9862			Instead of bidding 4H, David could have investigated further by bidding 2S over 2H to show the club shortage, and I could have raised to 3S, since I did not have primary heart support.
43		AQ9		4S is an easier contract, but still requires careful play, as club forces make life difficult. At the other table South also got to 4H, and better defence restricted this contract to 9 tricks for a 10 Imp gain.
J84		QT7		
953		862		
AQ752		KJ98		
	T75			
	A6532			
	AKQ74			
	-			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
/	1S	/	1H	
/	2H	/	2D	
//			4H	

<b>M 1</b>	AKQT62			On board 13 in the first match David (played upside down) must have wondered what was going on when EW bid to 3NT after his 1S opening with a near-solid 6-card suit, and he undoubtedly placed me with a Yarborough!
<b>Bd 13</b>	82			Obviously EW got their wires crossed, and David found this out when he cashed the top spades and found he could cash 6 tricks.
<b>Dlr N</b>	7			West could have made 6 tricks by careful discarding and a club guess, but he was a bit rattled, and miss-guessed the clubs and finished up with only 5 tricks for 4 off and +400 to us.
<b>Vul All</b>	Q653			Interestingly, with clubs well placed for us, we are cold for 4S on the same club guess, so they had actually sacrificed! David had thought about doubling, but if the bidding is to be believed, 3NT is cold.
J54		73		At the other table NS also missed their spade game, but neither Tony nor Malcolm thought they had a spade stop, so they stopped in 3D, making 9 tricks for +100 and 11 Imps.
J3		AQ976		
KJ982		AQ43		
JT2		K7		
	98			
	KT54			
	T65			
	A984			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
2NT	1S	2H	/	
	/	3NT	//	

<b>M 2</b> <b>Bd 2</b> <b>Dir E</b> <b>Vul NS</b>	2 AQ976432 43 JT			On board 2 in the second match in spite of the adverse vulnerability, David bid 4H over the opening bid of 1S by West (Paul Lavings), but the Vulnerability was favourable for East, and he bid 4S without a flicker.
KJ954 - K976 AQ87		QT863 K QT5 K943		I was tempted to go on to 5H, as it must be cheap but the Vulnerability was a bit daunting, and I had some defence, so I decided to hope we had enough between us to beat 4S and passed.
	A7 JT85 AJ82 652			When David led the HA and dummy tracked, with declarer ruffing, it was clear that 4S was cold, and 5H had 3 losers at most, but it was too late.
<b>W</b> 1S	<b>N</b> 4H	<b>E</b> 4S	<b>S</b> //	Declarer did some investigating by running the clubs, which gave him an inferential count on David's hand, so he played diamonds for 1 loser and scored up 11 tricks for -450 to us.  At the other table the bidding continued on to 5S, and declarer did not get the diamonds right, so that was -50 and 11 Imps away.

<b>M 3</b> <b>Bd 18</b> <b>Dir E</b> <b>Vul NS</b>	KQJT96 QT6 - AJ75			Board 18 in the third match seemed straight forward, and so it was at our table.
- 97 A965432 9862		8543 AKJ82 87 QT		East led the top hearts and found that West could not ruff the third round, so David drew 3 rounds of trumps ending in dummy and advanced the DK, intending to pass it, and making 10 tricks wherever the DA was placed.
	A72 543 KQJT K43			It does not help West to duck, as he only need 2 discards, and in practice West played the DA at once, so David had an easy 11 tricks for +650.
<b>W</b> /	<b>N</b> 4S	<b>E</b> 1H //	<b>S</b> X	The action was at the other table, where Tony introduced his 7-card diamond suit and South though he had enough for a penalty double of 2D! If South was on lead to lead a diamond, 2D will fail, but with the diamond void in the North hand, and the spade void in Tony's hand, he could not be prevented from ruffing a club in dummy for the 8 <sup>th</sup> trick and that was +180 and 13 Imps.

<b>M 4</b> <b>Bd 20</b> <b>Dir W</b> <b>Vul All</b>	- AKJ54 K7642 AKT			Board 20 in the fourth match was a minefield for NS, and we fell into it after West opened with a Multi-2D bid in first seat.
Q653 Q98632 - QJ5		AK97 T7 QJ83 962		The bidding was wild and woolly, with nobody sure of what was going on, but when I bid 5D over David's 4H bid, he thought we could make 12 tricks on a cross-ruff.
	JT842 - AT95 8743			West got off to a good start for our side by leading the CQ, but the 4-0 trump break proved too difficult to handle, and the contract finished 1 off for -100. Deep Finesse suggests that 6D can make by South, but being able to see all of the hands is a big advantage.
<b>W</b> 2D! / /	<b>N</b> X 4H 6D	<b>E</b> 2H / //	<b>S</b> 2S 5D	I do not know what the bidding was at the other table, but it stopped with South declarer in 3NT, which I find puzzling, and there is a good diamond fit.  Unluckily for our side, 3NT made exactly 9 tricks for -600, and that was 12 Imps away.

<b>M 5</b> <b>Bd 1</b> <b>Dir N</b> <b>Vul Nil</b>	A6 AQT64 Q76 A98		On board 1 in the fifth match David opened 1NT instead of his 5-card heart suit to more clearly define his strength, and I transferred to diamonds via 2NT.  His 3D response was a super-accept, and I carried on to game. Not many would object to the opening lead of the C4 chosen by East, and David won the CT on the table, which enabled him to lead the D2, and the spotlight fell on West!  As East does not know to lead a spade, West can rise with the DK and lead a spade himself, but he routinely played low!  At least East did not duck the DA, but he had one last chance to find the spade switch and he failed, so David had 11 tricks for +460.
KT9752 J97 K8 72		Q83 853 A3 QJ643	
	J4 K2 JT9542 KT5		
<b>W</b> / //	<b>N</b> 1NT 3D	<b>E</b> / /	<b>S</b> 2NT! 3NT
			If David had opened 1H, I would have responded 1NT, and now the spade lead is certain, so it was a lucky position for us.  At the other table a spade was led to 3NT, but Tony had to find 2 discards, and made sure of defeating 3NT for +50 and 11 Imps.

<b>M 5</b> <b>Bd 6</b> <b>Dir E</b> <b>Vul EW</b>	A832 AKJT82 3 73		On board 6 in the fifth match neither side knew who was making, and David took out insurance by going one more!  It all depends on our fit, and we may even be cold for slam, but unlikely, and if our fit is good, 5D may even make!
765 74 QJT965 64		- Q953 AK82 AKJ98	The double by East was not for penalties, just showing a good hand, and I think West bid 5D out of fright, but how right he was, as 5D is cold!
	KQJT94 6 74 QT52		In 5SX, West led the DQ, and I had no chance, losing the first 3 tricks for -100.  At the other table the bidding was the same up to the double over 4S, but the Vulnerability deterred Tony from bidding 5D, preferring to take his chance in 4SX.
<b>W</b> / 5D	<b>N</b> 4S 5S	<b>E</b> 1C X X	<b>S</b> 2S / //
			However there was no chance at all and the score was -590, so we lost 12 Imps. At least that was better than the loss of 15 Imps if David had passed.

<b>M 5</b> <b>Bd 19</b> <b>Dir S</b> <b>Vul EW</b>	JT 872 9875 AQJ4		On board 19 in the fifth match East missed his golden opportunity to right-side the contract and paid a severe penalty.  East was right to consider slam with his strong hand, and maybe had visions of a grand slam, but no Aces put paid to that.
832 QJT943 2 K92		AKQ7 A6 AKQJ T53	Normally it is right for the strong hand to be declarer, but this East hand has no tenaces to protect, so he should have passed over the double to allow West to bid hearts for the first time and become declarer, especially with his poor club holding.
	9654 K5 T643 876		The double gave him this chance, but without it, a club may not be led. I dutifully led a club and we took the first 2 tricks and then sat back to wait for our trump trick for 1 down and +100.
<b>W</b> 2D! 3C! 5C	<b>N</b> / / X	<b>E</b> 2NT 4NT 5H!	<b>S</b> / / //
			At the other table Malcolm did not have such high aspirations, and more importantly Tony bid hearts first, so the right hand was declarer.  North did not cash the CA (why should he?) and the clubs all went on the diamonds for 12 tricks and +680. Thus we gained 13 Imps.

<b>M 6</b>	KQ74			On board 1 in the sixth match our system let us down when the final contract of 3NT was wrong-sided.
<b>Bd 1</b>	T9			If we were playing a weak 1NT opening bid, David would have opened 1D, and I could have bid 2NT or 3NT, depending on whether East bid his motley heart suit.
<b>Dlr N</b>	AKT3			Playing from the South hand protects the heart tenace from attack, and at least 10 tricks can be made, and even 12 tricks double-dummy.
<b>Vul Nil</b>	KQ7			However with David's hand as declarer, East led the H5, and not being clairvoyant, he finessed the HQ and lost 7 tricks as soon as he led a club, thus finished an inglorious 3 off for -150.
T62		985		Of course, again double-dummy, if he rises with the HA the suit is blocked and the contract is cold.
K6		J875432		
QJ865		-		
642		A98		
	AJ3			
	AQ			
	9742			
	JT53			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
/	1NT	/	3C	At the other table, the same contract and the same lead and play of the HQ led to only 2 off when declarer cashed his tricks, so we lost 2 Imps.
//	3D	/	3NT	

<b>M 7</b>	AQT532			On board 2 in the seventh match David was silenced by the 1S overcall on his right, but was delighted to pass when I came back in with a take-out double.
<b>Bd 2</b>	K87			David led his D4 and I gave him a ruff with the D6, asking for a club return, and he returned the C8, which declarer won on the table to lead the DJ, pitching a heart.
<b>Dlr E</b>	4			Now, after ruffing the DJ, David put me in with the CK and I was able to lead a trump to prevent any club ruffs in dummy, and declarer made just 4 tricks, CA, CQ, and 2 trumps, for 3 off and +500.
<b>Vul NS</b>	T85			Having 1 trump when making a take-out double is often an advantage if partner converts to a penalty double, as it is normally right to lead a trump, especially here, when it is through declarer.
KJ864		9		I did not get the auction at the other table, but it is possible that Tony did not overcall 1S as West, as the final contract was 2S by North, this time making 8 tricks for -110, but 9 Imps to us.
J5		QT93		
KQ		J98532		
Q963		A4		
	7			
	A642			
	AT76			
	KJ72			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
1S	/	/	1D	
//	/	/	X	

<b>M 8</b>	765			On board 18 in the eighth match David was probing for the best contract after I doubled for take-out, firstly showing equal length in the majors with 2D, and then asking for a diamond stop with 3D.
<b>Bd 18</b>	K32			When I denied a diamond stop he went back to my first major, as if they are unequal length, hearts will be longer. I could not bid any more the first time as I am minimum for the double, and the cue-bid is only forcing to the same level.
<b>Dlr E</b>	752			West led the D3 and I ruffed the second diamond and had to make a plan for 10 tricks.
<b>Vul NS</b>	AKQT			Obviously as the opening bidder East will have the HA, so I can play for it to be doubleton, or for West to have precisely JT, but either way I lead the first heart from dummy, so using a club entry I then led the H2 and East played the HT.
QT4		J83		So the first option is my only chance and luckily when I ducked a heart East played the HA and I had 10 tricks. 2D making at the other table gave us a total of +710 and 12 Imps.
J76		AT		
T83		AQJ964		
8632		J4		
	AK92			
	Q9854			
	K			
	975			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
/	2D	1D	X	
/	3D	/	2H	
/	4H	//	3S	

<b>M 8</b>	Q65		On board 20 in the eight match East had a very difficult problem with his good hand, but knowing West had 5/5 in clubs and hearts, he did not investigate a spade or diamond fit, and did not even mention his good 6-card spade suit.	
<b>Bd 20</b>	A87532			
<b>Dlr W</b>	53			
<b>Vul All</b>	74			
-		AKT743		I do not like 3NT on a misfit, and East was probably better off bidding naturally, to try and discover a fit before committing to 3NT. The problem with the diamond fit is that after 2H-2S-3C, 3D would look more like fourth-suit forcing, so the diamond fit may not be recognized, unless East rebids 4D over 3H by West.
QJT94		-		
T76		AQ982		I led the S2 to 3NT and East could not negotiate his way to 9 tricks, even though Deep Finesse has East making 3NT, eventually finishing 3 down for +300.
AQ952		KT		
	J982			At the other table Tony and Malcolm did not find their diamond fit, and finished in 5C, which went 1 down, but we still gained 5 Imps.
	K6			
	KJ4			
	J863			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
2H!	/	2NT	/	
3C	/	3NT	//	

<b>M 9</b>	JT8		On board 11 in the ninth match I had my fingers crossed when I bid 1NT with such a fragile heart stopper, but it seemed alright when West could not support hearts immediately.	
<b>Bd 11</b>	A			
<b>Dlr S</b>	A94			
<b>Vul Nil</b>	KJT953			
K9642		Q53		West denied heart support and showed at least 4 spades via his double of 1NT, and East showed his 6 <sup>th</sup> heart with 2H over David's 2C rebid.
K9		QT8753		
QT65		K2		I had an easy 3C raise over 2H, and they left David to play 3C unmolested, which was probably just as well.
86		A7		
	A7			East led the H7 to 3C and David had no trouble garnishing 9 tricks when the clubs broke 2-2, so we quickly scored up +110.
	J642			
	J873			At the other table I do not have the bidding, but NS sold out to 2H, which Malcolm made on the nose for another +110 and 6 Imps.
	Q42			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
/	1C	1H	/	These delicate part-score battles are often where the match is won or lost.
X	2C	2H	1NT	
//			3C	

<b>M 9</b>	J32		On board 19 in the ninth and final match we had a fairly straightforward auction to 5DX, after EW tried to pre-empt us out of the bidding.	
<b>Bd 19</b>	K73			
<b>Dlr S</b>	AT6543			
<b>Vul EW</b>	3			
5		KT64		East led the CK and switched to the HA and gave his partner a heart ruff, but that was the last trick for the defence as a diamond to dummy marked the trump finesse, and then after drawing trumps and cashing the HK, the successful spade finesse and spade pitch on the HQ allowed 10 tricks and -100.
8		AJT96		
Q987		-		Double dummy this could have been 2 off, as an initial lead of the HA followed by a heart ruff would allow another entry via the CK for a second heart ruff, but that is a double-dummy defence.
AQT9652		K874		
	AQ987			All of the action was at the other table, where Tony and Malcolm climbed all the way to 6C, and who could blame either North or South from doubling this? 12 tricks were duly made for a score of +1540, and a massive 15 Imps.
	Q542			
	KJ2			
	J			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
3C	/	5C	1S	
/	5D	X	X	
			//	