

2015 Gold Coast Seniors Pairs by Richard Wallis

I had the pleasure of playing with Sue Picus, from New York, in the GC Congress Pairs again in 2015, and this year we decided to play in the Seniors, rather than the Open. Our practice game on Friday night went very well, and we managed to finish first EW in the qualifying rounds on Saturday afternoon and evening, so we started the Final on Sunday afternoon with eager anticipation. As it happened, our total score in the qualifying rounds was slightly higher than the NS pair, so we had the privilege of the stationary table throughout the 3 rounds of the final.

Alas, my concentration was a little off in both sessions on Sunday, and we struggled with a tad over 53% with just one round to go, in about 7th place. David Hoffman and Richard Brightling got a good jump on the field with 65% in the first round, and another win in the second round with a modest 56%, so they started the final round on Monday afternoon with a healthy lead.

Monday was a better day for us and while we could not overtake David and Richard, we did get to second place about halfway through the session and held on until the end. We even managed to win the session, and vowed to try and do better next year if Sue does make it to the 2016 Congress.

Q 1	KJ64			On board 16 in the first qualifying my 1NT rebid limited my hand to 14 HCPs, and at most 3 spades, and North did not have an attractive lead, but chose the H8.
Bd 16	8762			
Dlr W	84			
Vul EW	853			
Q5				South cleared the hearts, and I advanced the SQ, intending to run it to protect against the 4 th heart, and also the club holding dummy. North made it easy for me by covering, and I won on the table and led back the ST.
QJT	AT982			
KQ95	543			South cashed the 4 th heart, and switched to a diamond, possibly because of South's signal, and South made the mistake of playing the DA, setting up my 8 th trick and +120.
QT74	632 AJ			
	73			If South plays the DT, I have 7 tricks, but my only entry to dummy is clubs, and when the club finesse fails, I am held to just 7 tricks.
	AK9 AJT7 K962			
W	N	E	S	Pairs is a totally different game, as +90 was average, but +120 was 90%.
1C	/	1S	/	
1NT	//			

Q 1	3			Board 21 in the first qualifying round was a testament to a 'no-no' that I have generally used over the years. That is I do not normally lead a singleton unless I have at least 2 trumps, or it is partner's bid suit.
Bd 21	T			
Dlr N	KJ9764			
Vul NS	QT765			
AK954				Leading the singleton with only one trump only works if partner has the Ace of the suit led, and too often, as here, it destroys partner's holding in the suit.
AQ942	T876			
2	KJ876			My 2D was Michaels, and Sue's 4D showed both majors, so at the favourable vulnerability, I could take out insurance by bidding 5H over 5D.
42	T AJ9			
	QJ2			North did lead the S3, and it did destroy his partner's fragile holding in the suit, so I was able to draw trumps, and take the spade finesse again to discard the DT on the 5 th spade and claim 12 tricks.
	53 AQ853 K83			
W	N	E	S	After a diamond lead, I have 2 unavoidable losers, and must double-finesse the spades for 11 tricks. Many went off on 5H or 5S, but 12 tricks was worth 96%.
2D!	/	/	1D	
5H	3D	4D	5D	

Q 1 Bd 23 Dir S Vul All	K32 Q94 K98643 8		On board 23 in the first qualifying I could have opened 5C as West, and most Wests probably did, but I got frisky by opening 2C, an artificial game force!
94 T73 - AKQJT952		QJT75 AKJ2 AT7 7	Sue bid 2D, which showed at least 1 King, or 2 Queens, and I showed my suit, whereupon Sue bid her spade suit and I signed off in 3NT, whereas 5C would have been more prudent.
	A86 865 QJ52 643		Now Sue made a slam try with 4NT, and even if it was RKCB in spades, I could not show my void, so jumped straight to slam, but Sue put me back to 6NT.
W 2C! 3C 3NT 6C	N / / / /	E 2D 3S 4NT 6NT	S / / / //
			I could see no other line but the heart finesse, winning with my HT and from there 13 tricks were easy. Only a spade lead beats 6NT, as the heart finesse is on and the suit breaks 3-3. 7NT would likely be beaten by a spade lead when South makes a Lightener double!

Q 2 Bd 15 Dir S Vul NS	K943 T9862 86 52		On board 15 in the second qualifying we got one of our few bottoms, when Sue got too optimistic, and probably forgot that I was a passed hand. As my regular partners will tell you, any hand that I pass with 2 Aces (shown by the RKC response of 5H) does not have much else!
AT2 AJ753 T92 96		7 KQ4 AK743 AKT7	I focused on the wrong suit after Sue's game-forcing rebid of 3C, instead of repeating my 5-card heart suit, I should have shown my 3-card support for diamonds, which is likely to be at least a 5-card suit.
	QJ965 - QJ5 QJ843		As it turns out, 6D is cold, even by West on a heart lead, as South ruffs with a natural trump trick. Otherwise East wins the opening lead and draws 2 rounds of trumps, before running the hearts, discarding 1 club on the 4 th heart and ruffing the other one in dummy while South takes a diamond trick sometime in the play.
W / 1H 3H 5H	N / / / /	E 1D 3C 4NT 7H	S / / / //
			North could not believe his luck when we stopped on 7H and he was clutching a certain trump trick, but he did not double as he did not know if 7NT could make instead. Anyway, playing Match-Point Pairs, 3 off in a grand slam was likely to be a top, even undoubled!

F 1 Bd 10 Dir E Vul All	KT73 T763 JT62 2		On board 10 in the first final I think West decided slam was on as soon as East opened the bidding, but did not take into account a possible miss-fit.
96 AQ854 9 AKQJ4		AQJ52 K9 K8754 9	East had an easy rebid of 3D after the 4 th suit forcing bid by West, but he was probably swayed by his honour-doubleton heart support, and chose to show it.
	84 J2 AQ3 T87653		I think West inferred 3-card support, and therefore a singleton club, and went for the top prize by bidding the grand slam when he thought they had all of the Key Cards.
W 1H 3C! 4NT 7H	N / / / //	E 1S 2D 3H 5D	S / / / /
			I had a possible trump trick, which accounts for my not leading a trump, and instead led the C2, won by West who immediately took the spade finesse!
			Now the grand slam looked possible for West, but he came back to earth when I had a sure trump trick. He repeated the spade finesse and got rid of his losing diamond, but Sue took the second trick for the defence with the C8, and we scored up +200. Surprisingly, this was only 85%.

F 1 Bd 14 Dlr E Vul Nil	K8742 T98 A75 85			On board 14 in the first final EW got over the first obstacle when they right-side 3NT, but East thought that the 3NT rebid was Ace asking, and responded accordingly, with West signing off in 4NT. I was not psychic enough to lead a diamond, but at least I rejected a spade lead, instead playing safe by leading the HT, which Sue encouraged with the H3, but I still placed West with the HK after the jump to 3NT. West has 9 top tricks, and having rejected the heart finesse at trick 1, the only prospect for a 10 th trick was the spade finesse, but with limited entries to dummy, he was not able to subject us to discard agony by running the clubs first, so he led the top 2 clubs and entered dummy with the C9 to take the spade finesse.
AQ A4 T4 AKQJ632		J65 Q762 Q96 974		
	T93 KJ53 KJ832 T			
W	N	E	S	
2C	/	/	/	
3NT	/	2D	/	This was not successful, but we did have some discarding problems, and only took a total of 5 tricks for +200, but any more would have been superfluous, as it was still a top.
4NT	//	4C	/	

F 2 Bd 2 Dlr E Vul NS	Q9 JT92 KT983 QJ			On board 2 in the second final West's 3D rebid showed a shortage, and denied 4-card spade support, and with my scattered values, I took to opportunity to suggest a lead. Sue dutifully led the D4, and East won the DA and led the CA, getting the CQ from me, which caused him to sit and think for a while, before finally running the CT, losing to my CJ. I now set up my diamonds, after declarer ducked once. Having miss-guessed the clubs, declarer was now in trouble if he lost the lead to me, so he cashed his 9 tricks and gave up the rest for 9 tricks and -400, but almost a top for us. Declarer thought that he was in a Restricted Choice situation, but he did not examine the pips out against him. If Sue had J864, as declarer played for, having played the C4 on the CA, she was certain to get a club trick by covering the CT when it was led.
AT2 Q853 Q K9532		K874 A7 AJ62 AT7		
	J653 K64 754 864			
W	N	E	S	
2C	/	1NT	/	
3D	X	2S	/	
		3NT	//	

F 2 Bd 9 Dlr N Vul EW	K 532 T72 K87643			On board 9 in the second final I took advantage of the favourable vulnerability by opening with 3C, which put East under a little pressure, and they succumbed to the pressure by bidding 3S, whereas a double, while light, at least kept the heart suit in play. Sue continued the pressure by jumping to 5C, and who could blame West for bidding 6S, certainly not me? Sue led the DA and then a club, East winning over my CK, and considered the best chance for 12 tricks. Only 2 layouts give 12 tricks, a singleton SK in Sue's hand, or a singleton SJ in my hand. Declarer tried for the second option by leading the SQ and running it when Sue played low.
AT62 AKJ64 J65 Q		Q9753 Q987 K AT2		
	J84 T AQ9843 J95			
W	N	E	S	
6S	3C!	3S	5C	I do not know which is the more likely after my 3C opening bid, but it is probably the line declarer took. On the actual layout, there is no play for 12 tricks, and we got a top.
	//			

F 3	KT864			<p>On board 6 in the third final, EW got their system wrong big time, and finished ingloriously in a 4-0 fit at the three-level.</p> <p>West's 2S opening was a weak 2-suiter, and with stoppers in every suit, I chanced my arm with a 2NT overcall. Looking at all 4 hands, our best fit is diamonds, in which 9 tricks are possible.</p> <p>East bid 3D over my 2NT, intending it as correctible, but not read that way by West. Sue wisely remained silent.</p> <p>Sue was very optimistic about the final contract, as my 2NT would normally have at least 2, so EW cannot have a diamond fit, and she led the HK. The sight of dummy made her even more optimistic, even though East could now have 6 diamonds.</p>
Bd 6	AJ2			
Dlr E	K975			
Vul NS	A			
A9753			J	<p>We did in fact make 9 tricks in diamonds as defenders, and scored up +500 for 5 off, which should be a top any way you look at it since we have very little on our way.</p>
T83			976	
-			AJT6	
T8742			KJ653	
	Q2			
	KQ54			
	Q8432			
	Q9			
W	N	E	S	
2S!	2NT	/	/	
		3D!	//	

F 3	QT87			<p>On board 7 in the third final, West tried to take advantage of the favourable vulnerability by showing both his majors with a 2H overcall over Sue's strong 1NT opening.</p> <p>My double was for penalties, and with by far the balance of high cards, and because East showed heart preference, I led a trump.</p> <p>Declarer won the HA and led the C8, which I had to win, and now I led a diamond, and Sue was able to lead back the HT, killing dummy's H9 and setting up the H8 for me as well.</p> <p>Knowing that the clubs were dead, I exited with a spade, won by Sue with a very encouraging SK, to return a diamond, and declarer's goose was cooked.</p>
Bd 7	Q853			
Dlr S	K965			
Vul All	A			
J9543			2	<p>We lost a trick in the run-down to the end, but still ended up with 4 down for +800 and a very good score. A few +1100s were in evidence on the recap sheets, so it was not a top.</p>
AJ764			92	
Q2			T73	
8			KQT9753	
	AK6			
	KT			
	AJ84			
	J642			
W	N	E	S	
2H!	X	//	1NT	