

2016 QLD Open Pairs by Richard Wallis

The Qld Open Pairs Championship was once again held by the QBA at QCBC, and whilst the quality was very high, numbers were again so low as to not require a qualifying on Saturday followed by a final on Sunday. Thus it was a complete Howell, where everyone plays everyone and all score count!

Originally there were 37 pairs entered, which meant a 3-board sit-out, and that is how we started on Saturday morning, but when a Rockhampton pair had not arrived 15 minutes after the start, the Director (Alan Gibson) then made inquiries and found out they were not coming, but had not bothered to advise the QBA!

This is unsatisfactory, to say the least, and to avoid a double sit-out, the second round was delayed by 30 minutes while Therese and I played the pair originally sitting out and Alan changed the movement and reset the Bridgemates, but at least now with only 36 pairs, the sit-out was no longer required.

Therese and I had a horrible Saturday, languishing in last place after 3 matches, and only climbing to 50% by the end of the day, but a more enjoyable Sunday pulled us up to 9th place at the end. There was a ding dong battle in the top half, but at the end Jim Wallis and Liz Zeller held on for a good win, with Richard Ward/ Tony Hutton in second place and Tony Treloar/ Peter Evans third. This is a repeat for Jim, as he won it last year with Nathan Van Jole.

M 1	J5			In the first match we were against the eventual winners, Jim and Liz, and on board 2 we started them on their road to success.
Bd 2	K9752			
Dir E	J9			The 2NT overcall was for the minors, and my 3H was natural and denied 3 spades, which Therese had no trouble raising to game.
Vul NS	AKT8			
K		986		As it is, with my absolutely minimum hand I should have just shown my values with a double, after which Therese could rebid 3S over the likely 3D from Liz and I could raise to game!
JT		Q83		
QT832		AK65		
QJ983		752		4S is cold, even if declarer loses a trump, as a heart loser can be discarded on the CK.
	AQT7432			Liz led the top diamonds and switched to a club, and after the 2NT overcall and Jim following to both hearts, I knew he had at most a singleton spade, so I took the spade finesse and went 1 off!
	A64			
	74			
	4			
W	N	E	S	
		/	1S	
2NT!	3H	4D	4H	This was only 24% score for us, as the dominant contract was spades for NS, not always in game but still scoring better than us.
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M 5	J63			On board 13 in the fifth match I had a very shapely 2-loser hand, so opened with a forcing 2C, and was pleased to get a 2D response from Therese, showing at least one Ace or King.
Bd 13	Q			
Dir N	AQJ64			This response gave North the chance to double for the lead, but that did not trouble me with my void, and actually gave me hope that Therese did not have any wasted diamond values.
Vul All	9872			
-		KQ972		Therese had club values and a void, along with trump support, so she did the practical thing and jumped to slam!
T94		AKJ87532		South duly obliged with a diamond lead, but I was able to ruff 3 spades in dummy, then draw the last trump and give up a spade for 12 tricks and +1430.
KT7532		-		
KQ43		-		
	AT854			
	6			
	98			
	AJT65			
W	N	E	S	Even a trump lead does not stop 12 tricks, as the ruffing finesse works, and declarer just loses a spade at the end, but many other Souths led one of their Aces to the slam, and one doubled, thus making only 12 tricks was only 41% for us.
		2C	/	
2D	X	2H	/	
6H	//			

M 6 A532
Bd 17 QT4
Dir Ni Q3
Vul Nil AT95
 T98 -
 KJ A8732
 K6 AJ98754
 KQ8743 J
 KQJ764
 965
 T2
 62
W N E S
 / / 1D 1S
 1NT 2S 3H 3S
 3S / 4H /
 5D //

On board 17 in the sixth match I had a Michael's 2NT overcall available after North opened 1C, but with 2 Aces and much longer diamonds, I decided to bid out my shape.

Therese showed her club stopper with 1NT, and then tried for a spade stopper with 3S, but my 4H rebid forced her to choose 5D as the final contract

Since I have at least 11 cards in my 2 suits, slam was a possibility from Therese's hand, but there is no sure way to get there with any confidence.

South led the SK and I ruffed this and led the CJ, leading to 12 tricks when everything was so friendly. However the friendly hearts meant that 11 tricks were available in a heart contract.

Since +920 or +450 was available, this looked like a loss, but 3 EW pairs played in a part score, and 4 NS pairs escaped for a small loss in a spade contract, we actually got 71 %.

M 7 K4
Bd 20 AK93
Dir W 98
Vul All K9754
 9732 Q6
 T 8764
 AKQJ653 742
 3 AQ86
 AJT85
 QJ52
 T
 JT2
W N E S
 3NT! X 5D 5S
 //

On board 20 in the seventh match NS succumbed to the lure of the pre-empt! Therese's 3NT opening bid shows a solid minor, and in spite of the Vulnerability, I upped the ante by jumping to 5D. Systemically this is correctable, but my club honours clearly show her suit is diamonds, so I knew she would pass.

North was the most culpable in my opinion as he doubled for takeout with a minimum hand and less than ideal shape. South does have a good hand with both majors, but no way of knowing the best suit, so bid the obvious 5S.

Therese led the C3, an obvious singleton when South played low at trick 1, so I won the first 2 clubs and gave her a ruff. The DA was our 4th trick for +200 and a fine 88% score.

Since South does have both majors, a better action over 5D is to double, which gives North the winning option of passing for penalties, as the double will also show defensive tricks.

M 14 KQJ7
Bd 14 A72
Dir E Q5
Vul Nil 9875
 532 T94
 KT9 6543
 T6 J4
 JT642 AKQ3
 A86
 QJ8
 AK98732
 -
W N E S
 / / 1D
 / 1S / 2S
 / 2NT / 3D
 / 3NT //

On board 14 in the fourteenth match Match Point Pairs syndrome took us over and we stopped in 3NT when clearly a diamond contract is safer, and would have been selected at teams scoring.

Therese could have bid an aggressive invitational 3D over my 1S response, but instead chose a conservative 2S raise, which promises at least 3-card support.

My 2NT rebid is game-forcing and the 3D response confirms 5+ diamonds and only 3 spades, therefore a likely shortage somewhere else.

I did not have primary support for diamonds, and I did have a solid heart stop and potential club help, so I opted for 3NT.

East led the top clubs and a 4th club and West cashed out for 1 off and only 24%. There were 8 others going off in 3NT, while 1 North made 10 tricks!

2 pairs played in 4S making 13 tricks, but only 3 pairs bid the diamond slam, and one pair played in just 3D, but got 53%.

M 23	J4		
Bd 13	K4		
Dir N	9842		
Vul All	QJT98		
K62		AT98	
AT7652		83	
KJ7		AT653	
K		A4	
	Q753		
	QJ9		
	Q		
	76532		
W	N	E	S
		1D	/
1H	/	1S	/
2C!	/	2NT	/
3NT	//		

On board 13 in the twenty-third match we had a 4th suit auction after my 1S rebid and Therese had 2 options after I showed a club stop with 2NT.

Firstly show a 6-card heart suit with a forcing 3H rebid, or secondly simply raise to 3NT, as the CK was likely to be a big help in the higher scoring contract.

South led the C7, which I won on the table, perforce, and cashed the DK, getting the good news in that suit, so I turned to another suit for an extra trick.

Two tricks must be lost in hearts to set that suit up, and the clubs will be running for NS before then, so the obvious suit is spades.

A 3-3 spade break will yield the 11th trick, but an extra chance is a doubleton honour in either hand, so I cashed the top spades for 11 tricks and a second top.

Hearts are also easy for 11 tricks, but that is the limit, and is a mere 650, which was only 44%!

M 27	QJ9		
Bd 25	K962		
Dir N	QT93		
Vul EW	Q9		
K63		AT85	
4		A75	
54		KJ7	
KJT5432		A87	
	742		
	QJT83		
	A862		
	6		
W	N	E	S
	/	1NT	2H!
2S!	3H	4C	/
5C	5D	/	/
X	//		

Board 25 in the twenty-seventh match was the end of our resurgence, when I failed the basic bridge logic of counting points!

East's 1NT was strong, and Therese's 2H overcall showed hearts and a minor, which made my hand look pretty good for a sacrifice if EW finished in game.

North bid 2S as a transfer to clubs over 2H and this could be just to play, or forward going, but when South showed a liking for clubs, North raised to game.

Having already shown preference for hearts, I thought, for some reason known only to my inner self, that it would be useful to show my second suit, but Therese preferred the 4-4 fit and passed 5DX.

East led the CA, then switched to the SA and EW played 3 rounds of spades, won by my SJ, and now was the time to think and count points!

I was blinded by West's double, and played the DA and another, leading to 4 off and a near bottom, instead of a near top for 3 off. Since East opened 1NT, they are odds on to hold the DK.

M 32	97		
Bd 13	953		
Dir N	T75		
Vul ALL	QJT93		
T864		AKJ53	
T87642		A	
9		A832	
52		AK4	
	Q2		
	KQJ		
	KQJ64		
	876		
W	N	E	S
	/	2C	2D
/	/	2S	/
4D	/	4NT	/
5C	/	5D	/
5H	/	6S	//

Board 13 in the thirty-second match was a great hand to bid and play, made all the more interesting by South's bid over my near game-forcing 2C opening.

Therese's pass of the 2D overcall showed nothing of interest, but her jump to 4D was a splinter in support of spades, which interested me in a slam, and possibly a grand slam if Therese had the SQ.

If South leads the DK I have sufficient entries to ruff 3 diamonds and 1 club and return to hand to lead the top spades for 13 tricks.

However South had a surprize for me and led the HK, which took away and entry too early. I was still able to ruff a diamond, then a club followed by 2 more diamonds, but I could not get back to hand without allowing South to over-ruff the heart return to my hand, so I only made 12 tricks, but +1430 and a top score.

In discussion after the match a trump lead was suggested to be the killing lead, but that gives the SJ to declarer and while only 3 ruffs are now available, that is still 12 tricks with South winning the last trick with a diamond.

M 34 -
Bd 21 AQJT8763
Dir N QJ92
Vul NS K
 AKQT653 742
 K2 -
 6 AK743
 QJ9 86543

 J98
 954
 T85
 AT72

W N E S
 4H 4NT /
 5C! //

Board 21 in the thirty-fourth match was very distributional, and I started the ball rolling by opening 4H as North, even though we were Vulnerable and EW were not!

East got into the action with a distributional hand but very little strength, possibly with a view to a later sacrifice, and West made a very puzzling decision to play in their 5-3 club fit, rather than bid his very good 7-card spade suit.

I led the HA, which was ruffed in dummy, but did not really help declarer except to prevent a force, and declarer set about drawing trumps by leading the C4 from the table, ducked to my CK.

Declarer could not avoid the loss of 3 club tricks, so finished 1 down for +50 to us, and surprizingly a complete top.

Of course everyone else played in spades, or hearts, with one intrepid West bidding and making 6S!

M 35 Q32
Bd 24 A6
Dir W AQJ95
Vul Nil A64
 AK87 T94
 QJT42 97
 T83 K64
 3 QJ952

 J65
 K853
 72
 KT87

W N E S
 / 1D / 1H
 / 2NT / 3NT
 //

On board 24 in the thirty-fifth match I upgraded my hand to 18 points because of the good 5-card diamond suit and rebid 2NT over Therese's 1H response, raised to game by Therese.

East could obviously lead a black suit, either the ST or CQ are standard, although a case could be made for leading a heart, as West is likely to have at least 4 hearts,

Unfortunately for East he chose to lead the CQ, and by winning in hand with the CA, dummy's club holding gave me 4 club tricks.

I finessed the next club in dummy and took the diamond finesse, and after winning the DK East responded to West's signal on the second club by leading a heart, but with diamonds 3-3 I had 11 tricks for +460 and 94%

After an initial lead of the H9, declarer has no real chance of 9 tricks, but the CQ was a standard type of lead that was wrong on the day. While it is a standard lead, the combination in dummy is common.