

2016 Qld Seniors Pairs by Richard Wallis

The Gold Coast Bridge Club hosted the Seniors Pairs again this year and 36 pairs turned up for the event, comprising 11 matches of 5 boards scored as match-points but with an upper cut-off of 78% and a lower cut-off of 11%. This cut-off caused many questions and some complaints, but is in accordance with current QBA/ABF/WBF Regulations.

After winning the prize money last year with Therese Tully, Fred Whitaker played with me this year as Therese was out of town, and we were not up to the task! The day started badly on the first board when our opponents bid to slam with only 25 HCPs between them, after Fred opened with a weak 1NT, and they took a successful punt, not even checking up on Aces.

We were never in the hunt all day, even some matches that seemed good turning out below average when the results were published, and our highest position was 6th after match 9, but we finished in 8th place after our worst result for the day in match10.

At the end of the day Alison Dawson and Maureen Jakes finished on top, which was some justice for missing out on the title in 2015 on a count-back. Second were Mike Pemberton and John Gough, with David and Paula McLeish in third place.

| | | | | |
|---------------|----------|----------|----------|---|
| M 1 | A52 | | | Board 2 was the first board we played and it was a complete bottom when North took a flyer and got lucky. |
| Bd 2 | T7654 | | | |
| Dir E | AJ72 | | | The 1NT opening by Fred showed 12-14, and the 2NT overcall showed any 2 suits with a 'good' hand, and the 3H response was alerted as correctable, and thus was not showing the 5-card heart suit. |
| Vul NS | T | | | When South showed her longest suit, North bit the bullet and jumped to slam! |
| 64 | | JT | | I made the unfortunate lead of the H9, and South obviously covered in dummy and drew trumps. She next played the DQ, considering the finesse before rising with the DA and leading the CT. |
| 9 | | KJ3 | | Fred rose with the CA and led another to the CK, but after more thought declarer ruffed in dummy and finessed the H8 for 12 tricks and -1430. |
| T9864 | | K53 | | Even on a trump lead declarer can lead the HT and make 12 tricks, but it is not the best line, so unlikely to be found. |
| Q9532 | | AJ874 | | |
| | KQ9873 | | | |
| | AQ82 | | | |
| | Q | | | |
| | K6 | | | |
| W | N | E | S | |
| / | / | 1NT | 2NT | |
| / | 3H | / | 3S | |
| / | 6S | // | | |
| M 5 | J87 | | | On board 25 in the fifth match I had a potentially good hand that was deflated by Fred's pass of my 1H opening bid. |
| Bd 25 | AKQT94 | | | West balanced with a mere 2D, whereas 2NT would be a better description of her hand, and I tempered my enthusiasm by just rebidding 2H, as I did not want to stir up an EW hornet's nest. |
| Dir N | K | | | East supported diamonds, and now Fred showed his support, but still West was not fully motivated and just rebid 4D, which ended the auction! |
| Vul EW | Q95 | | | I led the HA, and when this was ruffed by West I knew Fred had very little, as with 4-card support he would have strained to respond. |
| K4 | | AT62 | | After ruffing the heart West picked the clubs by finessing the CJ, but then took the losing diamond finesse, which was our only trick. |
| - | | 865 | | -170 looked like a top score, but when we saw the results it was only 71%, as 2 NS pairs were allowed to play in hearts, 1 East only made a club part-score, another went down in 6C, and 2 others made -170. |
| AQJ965 | | 842 | | |
| AT862 | | KJ4 | | |
| | Q953 | | | |
| | J732 | | | |
| | T73 | | | |
| | 73 | | | |
| W | N | E | S | |
| | 1H | / | / | |
| 2D | 2H | 3D | 3H | |
| 4D | // | | | |

M 7 QJ3
Bd 1 A832
Dir N J87
Vul Nil T84
 982
 9
 KQT96543
 2

K
 KQ754
 A
 AKQJ97

AT7654
 JT6
 2
 653

| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| W | N | E | S |
| | / | 2C | / |
| 3D | / | 3S | / |
| 4D | / | 4NT | / |
| 5D | // | | |

On board 1 in the seventh match Fred opened with an artificial 2C, and South got into the action with 2S, over which I could bid a natural 3D. South's interpose was quite handy for me, as if he passes I have to bid 2D as a waiting bid.

The overcall was a problem for Fred, but 3NT was a viable contract if I have a stopper, so he forced with 3S. I denied a stopper when I rebid my diamonds, and at the very least denied another suit.

Fred then asked for Key Cards with 4NT, intending to pass 5C (none), or raise 5H (two) to slam but my actual response of 5D (one) was the most difficult for him so he reluctantly passed, as slam was likely to be off 2 Aces. I could have the SA instead of the DK, but unlikely.

North led the SQ to 5D, and South won the SA and led a trump to stop a spade ruff, but I could discard my heart and 2 spades on the top clubs, and even though North could ruff, that was 11 tricks for +400.

It looked like the HA first will not beat 5D as there are additional discards, but cashing both Aces followed by another spade to force a ruff with the DA, sets up the DJ for North as the third trick.

M 9 AKJ75
Bd 14 KQJT3
Dir E 96
Vul Nil 2
 92
 9652
 K852
 J75

843
 A874
 Q3
 Q963

QT6
 -
 AJT74
 AKT84

| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| W | N | E | S |
| / | 1S | / | 1D |
| / | 2H! | / | 2C |
| // | | | 4S |

On board 14 in the ninth match I was a little distracted by my the lack of fit and did not analyse Fred's jump to 4S over my 4th suit 2H.

This jump has to be 3-card support for spades and therefore Fred has at most a singleton heart, making 6S a reasonable contract if there are not 2 Aces missing.

If I had got excited, the 5S response to RKCB (2KCs + SQ) would have made 6S a good contract, cold with either minor suit King in Fred's hand.

Thus when the HA was led and Fred tabled his hand, it looked like a bad score as a grand slam was cold.

However, only one NS pair bid the slam, not all declarers made the 13 tricks in spades, and some NS pairs actually played in Notrumps (?), so surprizingly we gained above average after all!

M 10 KQ7642
Bd 17 J953
Dir N -
Vul Nil AT4
 T
 K762
 8752
 KQ82

J85
 Q4
 AKQJ963
 5

A93
 AT8
 T4
 J9763

| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| W | N | E | S |
| | / | 1D | , |
| 1H | 1S | 2D | 2S |
| / | 3S | 3D | / |
| / | 4S | 5D | X |
| // | | | |

On board 10 in the tenth match I was tempted to open with the North hand but elected to pass as I was considering 2S, but rejected this bid since I had 4 hearts. However, in retrospect I could have opened 1S with 10 HCPs and an easy rebid (either 2H or 2S would be okay).

I had no hesitation in bidding 1S over West's 1H response, and after Fred supported spades, I tried to buy the hand cheaply in spades, but East would not go away. It looked like 4D would make, but I hoped that either East would double 4S which should not be too expensive, or a bad diamond break would doom 5D, so I went again over 4D.

East was not finished, and Fred doubled 5D and there was no way for East to avoid the 3 Aces we held, so that was 1 off for +100.

This did not appear to be a good result for us as it was obvious from East's heart holding that 5S was cold, so East was actually saving against our game!

However, only 6 tables played in a making spade contract NS, and only one other pair doubled 5D, so +100 was 62%.

| | | | |
|---------------|----------|----------|----------|
| M 10 | 9 | | |
| Bd 19 | AT975 | | |
| Dir S | 542 | | |
| Vul EW | KT72 | | |
| AKT76 | | Q42 | |
| 42 | | QJ6 | |
| T96 | | KQJ73 | |
| 983 | | Q6 | |
| | J853 | | |
| | K83 | | |
| | A8 | | |
| | AJ54 | | |
| W | N | E | S |
| / | 2D! | X | 1NT |
| 2S | 3H | 3S | 2H |
| / | 4H | X | // |

On board 19 in the tenth match I knew that Fred had support when he freely bid 2H over the double of the transfer bid.

I did not expect East's double to be purely take-out, expecting it to be mainly showing diamonds and asking for the lead, especially when West made a free-bid of 2S, but it transpired later that West interpreted it as purely take-out.

Thus I went again over 3S by East, hoping it was not going to be expensive since I had spade shortage, or that I would not push EW into a making game.

East doubled 4H (the reason does not look obvious unless he was expecting West to take a couple of tricks), and West led the SA and switched to the DT, which held! Fred won the next diamond and ruffed a spade in dummy and ruffed a diamond.

Fred picked the CQ correctly, and thus lost a diamond, spade and heart for 10 tricks and +590. This was a top, as only one other pair played in 4H and they were not doubled.

| | | | |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|
| M 11 | J82 | | |
| Bd 24 | - | | |
| Dir W | T75 | | |
| Vul Nil | QJT9732 | | |
| AKQ96 | | 753 | |
| AJ3 | | Q7654 | |
| J64 | | AKQ8 | |
| AK | | 8 | |
| | T4 | | |
| | KT962 | | |
| | 932 | | |
| | 654 | | |
| W | N | E | S |
| 2C | / | 2D | / |
| 2NT | / | 3C | / |
| 3S | / | 4NT | / |
| 5D | / | 5H | / |
| 6C! | / | 7S | // |

On board 24 in the eleventh and last match the unlucky bottom we scored on the first board of the day was negated by a lucky top on nearly the last board of the day.

I upgraded my hand since I had a good 5-card suit, and opened 2C and rebid 2NT, showing 23-24!

Fred has a great hand and was thinking of slam when I opened 2C, but must initially respond 2D. When I define my hand he has a number of alternatives to investigate before settling on a slam.

After first considering transferring to hearts via 3D, he decided to check first if I had a 5-card spade suit, and hit home with my 3S response.

Now RKCB showed 4 Key Cards, and 5H showed the SQ along with the CK. So he went for the maximum with 7S.

North did not lead a trump (has that gone out of fashion?) which was a bit of a worry, but spades broke and thus it was all on the heart finesse, which won, so +1510 and a top.

Six pairs played in 6H instead of the superior 6S, and they were skittled by the 5-0 split!