

March 11, 2017
 Courier-Mail Bridge Column by Tony Jackman

Most of our bridge players would believe that the recently concluded Gold Coast Bridge Congress is Australia's largest. And in a normal sense it is. But perhaps in total entry, it is surpassed by the annual Grand National Open Teams (GNOT). The GNOT starts early in the year with knockout play at hundreds of clubs across the nation, coming down to regional finals and eventually the leading 64 surviving teams across the country are brought to Tweed Heads for 3 days of knockout finals in November. One of these club level GNOT rounds in Queensland was played last Sunday at Queensland Contract Bridge Club.

There were a number of surprises in the results, with the top seeded teams performing poorly. In the event, the round was won by A Gibson, L Heron, A Dawson, E Zeller, followed by G Gosney, A Gosney, V Holbrook, I Barfoot with third position taken by P Schoen, P Hale, L Moses, J Gough.

For those players unable to attend the Gold Coast Congress, an excellent way to catch up is to access the Daily Bulletins available on the web. These were edited by a top 3 man team: David Stern of Sydney and Barry Rigal and Brent Manley of the US. Today's hand is an example, written by Barry Rigal from the Open Pairs' Final.

N Dealer Nil Vul

	North		
	♠AJ103		
	♥532		
	♦632		
	♣1098		
West		East	
♠KQ976		♠85	
♥9		♥AQJ107	
♦AQ54		♦KJ10	
♣K64		♣AJ3	
	South		
	♠42		
	♥K864		
	♦987		
	♣Q752		
West	North	East	South
	PASS	1NT	PASS
2H	PASS	2S	PASS
3D	PASS	3NT	ALL PASS

East won the club lead with CJ. Some conceded a heart and came quickly to 11 tricks (3C, 4D, 4H) where opponents failed to cash SA immediately. Declarer, Vainikonis (later a teams' finalist), won CJ and had 11 tricks by conceding a heart at once. However he tried for an extra by leading a spade to dummy at trick 2. Had it held, he might now go after hearts, hoping the defenders would not cash out. This would result in 12 tricks (3C, 4D, 1S, 4H). Sadly this time North took the SA immediately and later declarer had to lose HK and settle for 11 tricks, like much of the field. This weekend, we are back to state events: the Qld Mixed Teams will be played at Noosa, attracting quite a strong field.