

March 17, 2018
 Courier-Mail Bridge Column by Tony Jackman

Last weekend this year's Queensland Mixed Teams Championship was hosted, on behalf of the state body, by the excellent Noosa Bridge Club. All feedback reports excellent hospitality and smooth running – to be expected with Peter Busch at the directing helm. The open saw a great win to third seeds Eileen Li/ Pele Rankin with Charlie Lu/ Chuan Qin. They led all the way except for one small slip to second mid-way. Top seeds Tony Hutton/ Neville Francis with Terry Strong/ Jill Magee started slowly then challenged – but that challenge was blunted when they met Li late, were soundly beaten, and had to settle for third. Paul Collins/ Sue O'Brien were always near the top and held on for a good second. The B division went to E. Mander/ J. Jenkins and R. Clark/R. Fox. This was a fine effort as they placed fourth overall. Second place in B went to the Anderson team while Bourke took third.

This weekend trials will get underway, at the QCBC, to select our Open team for this year's Nationals to be played in Hobart.

W Dealer, N/S Vul	NORTH a Q1083 © A754 .. J § A1082	EAST a AJ62 © 8 .. AK743 § Q75	SOUTH a K974 © KQJ6 .. - § KJ964
WEST a 5 © 10932 .. Q1098652 § 3	NORTH Pass 5D	EAST 1D	SOUTH Dbl
	NORTH ???		

This hand, from a recent club event, is fascinating. Analytical program 'Deep Finesse' tells us that game (even 11 tricks) can be made in all four suits – in diamonds by E/W and in clubs, hearts and spades by N/S. The old maxim – 'The five level belongs to the opponents' certainly is not valid here. Well, maybe it is. 6D is a great save. It makes 11 tricks easily for one down – excellent non-vul against opponent's vulnerable game IF making. 5C is easy enough but 5H and 5S need good declarer skills given the 4:1 breaks in both. Most N/S sold out to 5D, always making. No one played in 5S but two tried 5H.

The results couldn't have been more different, Against the DA lead one got home (+650) – and one went five down (-500). How? Declarer ruffed DA and, I suspect, drew H KQJ – perhaps not noticing East only followed once – then exited S4 to SQ. East won SA and played DK Declarer ruffed with his sides last trump and played another spade. West could ruff and found his remaining five diamonds were all good. Declarer can get home if only two trumps are drawn and he places SJ and CQ with East – likely enough after West's big pre-empt.