

June 02, 2018
 Courier-Mail Bridge Column by Tony Jackman

The last Queensland team to be finalised for this year's Nationals -in Hobart next month – was our Youth. They are Jack Luke-Paredi, Ben Leung, Darren Brake, Jasmin Skeate and Ellen Visschner. Their captain will be Paul Brake who will join Richard Wallis (Open), Neville Francis (Senior) and Therese Tully (Women) as a strong captaincy group with plenty of experience to assist each other. Historically the National Teams Championships have been played, in each category, as a double (sometimes triple) round-robin with the leading two teams at the end, going into a daylong final.

The format has been changed this time. The top three teams will survive, with initially second playing third in a knockout, then the winner going into a grand-final against the top qualifier. I believe this will suit our teams who have too often finished a close third and tend to be hitting their straps - just too late. Last Saturday the state body organised a formal teams practice day at the QCBC. Our young international Andy Hung was drafted in, and gave valuable advice during the session.

W Dealer, Nil Vul

	NORTH		
	a AQ64		
	© K5		
	.. -		
	§ AQJ10943		
WEST		EAST	
a KJ7		a 108532	
© A10		© 72	
.. K9753		.. AJ62	
§ K65		§ 82	
	SOUTH		
	a 9		
	© QJ98643		
	.. Q1084		
	§ 7		
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1D	Dbl	1S	2H
Pass	3C	Pass	3H
Pass	4H	All Pass	

Most of the field from a recent pairs found today's hand heavy –going in more ways than one. Most Norths persisted with their strong club bid but found dummy useless and nine tricks was their limit. Others did better when their E/W opponents persisted too far in spades. The auction shown is good with North realising that South knew his partner was strong, but he (South) also hated clubs and had at least six hearts – so North bid 4H. D5 was led.

Our declarer concluded that the DA and DK were split (West would have led one if holding both, but needed one for his opening). He threw off on East's DA at trick one and that hand switched to H2, West winning HA and playing H10another. Declarer, needing entries to dummy, dropped HK on HA. Now there was a way if West, as likely, had CK. He won HJ, C7 to CQ (it held), CA and a club ruff. SA gave entry back for the club winners – 11 tricks for a great top.