

2014 Barrier Reef Congress Open Teams by Richard Wallis

A slight drop in numbers occurred in Townsville for this year's BR Congress Open Teams, but the 32 teams made for a tough 8 matches, with very few easy wins available. Nathan Van Jole and Paul Weir teamed with Malcolm Carter and Tony Hutton to win the teams by almost 15 VPs, after earlier taking out the Pairs title.

Their worst results were a -2 and a +3, and no team really threatened them for the title. Therese Tully and I played with Richard Ward and Lindy Vincent, and we were always close by, even a small loss to the leaders in the seventh round kept us in second place. But a loss in the final round dropped us from second to fourth, but still just in the prize money zone.

The Townsville Convention Centre was cosy, but comfortable for the 32 teams, and the Restricted took place in an adjoining room. The event was played over 8 rounds, each of 14 boards, with the latest WBF VP scale used to convert Imps to VPs. As such, every overtrick counts, but still it was more important to make the contract rather than take a serious risk to make an overtrick.

It is thought that the chances of a draw under the new VP scale, with 2 decimal places will be very low, but when we initially scored up after the last match it looked like we had been pipped for third by just 0.03 of a VP. A scoring error on our part and a subsequent correction increased the margin to a more respectable 2.12 VPs.

M 1	AT43			On board 1 in the first match, 4 th suit forcing worked for us in a strange way. I mainly bid 2C to find out whether Therese had 3 hearts, and if not, I would have bid 3NT myself, but on finding heart support, and therefore a doubleton club at most, I bid the heart game.
Bd 1	AT2			
Dlr N	A954			
Vul Nil	T5			
965		KJ72		Since Therese had not appeared to have shown any club values, and not wanting to lead one of our suits, West chose to lead the 4 th suit as a sort of 'safe' lead, but it was anything but safe, as shown when the CT won the opening lead.
73		KQ8		
K632		JT87		The heart game is cold now, losing just 2 hearts and a spade, but when East led away from the SK after winning a trump, I emerged with 11 tricks, for what seemed like just a 1 Imp gain.
Q743		82		
	Q8			However, nothing is certain, and at the other table South went 1 off in the same contract, so we gained 11 Imps out of nowhere. 4H is a fine contract, basically just requiring split heart honours, or the club suit to come home for no loser, so South was unlucky to fail.
	J9654			
	Q			
	AKJ96			
W	N	E	S	
	/	1D	/	
1H	/	1S	/	
2C!	/	3H	/	
4H	//			

M 1	AJ8762			On board 11 in the first match we were completely fooled by East's bidding style, and allowed a no-play 3NT to get home. Therese's 2S jump response was the modern style of a 6-card suit and 4-7 HCPs, and we both assumed that East's double was take-out, but we should have adjusted our assumption after East bid 3NT over his partner's 3H response. Put off by the double and 3H response, I did not lead the HK, instead leading the SQ, though not with much conviction as Therese will have very little outside the spade suit. When the 4 spades turn up in the dummy, Therese should know that firstly I have a singleton spade, and secondly, her spade suit is dead, so she does best to rise with the SA and lead?? If she leads the suit I opened, back to what occurred at the table, but if she leads a heart, 3NT goes one off, as happened at the other table. So -400 and -50 equated to 10 Imps out.
Bd 11	J98			
Dlr S	93			
Vul Nil	32			
T543		K9		When the 4 spades turn up in the dummy, Therese should know that firstly I have a singleton spade, and secondly, her spade suit is dead, so she does best to rise with the SA and lead??
7432		A5		
J		AKT842		If she leads the suit I opened, back to what occurred at the table, but if she leads a heart, 3NT goes one off, as happened at the other table. So -400 and -50 equated to 10 Imps out.
KT65		A97		
	Q			
	KQT6			
	Q765			
	QJ84			
W	N	E	S	
/	2S!	X	1D	
3H	/	3NT	//	

M 2	A53		The second match was lost on board 18 due to poor bidding by me, but the hand could have been recovered by more competent declarer play, this time I was lazy and did not think it through.	
Bd 18	JT954		When East overcalled 2C, after initially passing as Dealer, I was more intent on showing my 18-19 with a club stopper, than describing my shape.	
Dlr E	75		Instead of 2NT, my correct rebid is X, showing 3-card heart support, and I could then raise the 2H rebid to 4H, which is an easy make with the North hand as declarer.	
Vul NS	J43		West ignored his partner's overcall, and led his own suit which is at least safe, but I took my eye off the ball and did not duck spades until the third round, thus I lost 4 spades and a heart for -1, and -13 Imps.	
QJT42		K86	After winning the 3 rd spade and advancing the HJ, I have the luxury of East not being able to duck a round of hearts and deny me an entry to dummy, so 9 tricks would have ensued.	
763		KQ		
Q63		J94		
98		QT652		
	97			
	A82			
	AKT82			
	AK7			
W	N	E	S	
/	1H	/	1D	
/	3NT	2C	2NT	
		//		

M 2	AJ		On board 22 in the second match I initially showed 11-13 with my 2D rebid, then no shortage with my 2NT response to the 2H asking bid, and finally, my 3NT rebid after 3C is supposed to show exactly 2 clubs, so without a fit, Therese gave up on slam.	
Bd 22	A9		West led the H3, and slam in clubs or NT looked to be a real chance when dummy went down on the table. I ducked the first heart and after winning the next heart on the table, I cashed the CA, dropping the CK. This meant 6C had no chance and we were luckily well out of it, but good bidding would have got us there.	
Dlr E	KQJ2		Next I cashed the SA and led the SJ, and East obliged by covering, so I could wrap up 12 tricks for +490. Had we missed a slam after all?	
Vul EW	A8743		Maybe we had, as the club play is automatic, and the advantage of playing the spades as I did is that I can cater for the stiff SQ in either hand.	
8432		Q65	EW at the other table bid more efficiently to 6NT, but declarer saw the play of the hand differently and went 1 off for +50 which meant 11 Imps to us.	
J843		Q652		
3		98754		
JT52		K		
	KT97			
	KT7			
	AT6			
	Q96			
W	N	E	S	
/	2C!	/	1C	
/	2H!	/	2D!	
/	3C	/	2NT	
//			3NT	

M 3	QJT5		On board 3 in the third match East and West were not on the same wavelength, and frankly, I am with West! East meant his 3D bid to show a weak hand with long diamonds, but he confused the issue by bidding 1NT first. Of course with his hand he should have bid 4D next, and most certainly would have done so if we had doubled 3NT.	
Bd 3	T954		I led the H2, and anxious to preserve his entry to the long diamonds if by some miracle the DQ was singleton, East won the HA and led the DK from the table, which I won to lead another heart,	
Dlr S	83		Another diamond from East and I could cash 2 hearts as Therese had unblocked, and then a spade was my obvious switch, won on the table with the SA and nowhere for declarer to go.	
Vul EW	A85		Spade leads would have forced us to give up a club trick, but East had something else in mind and led the CA, taken by Therese after some thought, and we could take the rest of the tricks for 6 off! The +600 and the +110 from 2DE at the other table was a welcome break in a losing match and the 12 Imps we gained reduced the loss to just 6 Imps.	
A9863		-		
AJ3		K7		
KT		J976542		
K97		J642		
	K742			
	Q862			
	AQ			
	QT3			
W	N	E	S	
1S	X	1NT	1C	
/	/	3D	2H	
3NT	//		/	

M 3 Bd 14 Dir E Vul Nil	Q8 K7 QJ982 KT75		On board 14 in the third match West overcalled on a poor 4-card suit, and even though he was supported by East at the 3-level, he did not feel inclined to lead it. Instead he surprized everyone by leading the S5! The real surprize was for him, as spades was my only 4-card suit, and he had just set up my 9 th trick.
953 Q842 43 AQJ8		AK42 J653 T65 43	East could have thought West had a real second suit, as he cashed the top spades, but then he must have received a discouraging signal, as he exited with a heart.
	JT76 AT9 AK7 962		Playing in match-pointed pairs, I would have cashed the top diamonds in hand and led a club up, looking for a 10 th trick, and I have the luxury of not being able to guess wrong. However playing teams, that involved some risk, and I did not want to risk what is now a cold contract, so I cashed out for +400.
W 1H //	N 2D	E / 3H	S 1C 3NT
			At the other table Richard and Lindy were also in the auction, and bought the hand in 2H, which went 2 off for -100, but 7 Imps to us.

M 4 Bd 20 Dir W Vul All	AKQ62 AQ8 J7 Q93		Board 20 in the fourth match was very straight-forward at our table, East making a weak-jump overcall of 3D, Therese making a take-out double, and then raising my 3S response to game.
843 965 KQ KJ875		97 K3 A9865432 A	I could not bid 3S first time around over 3D as I am far too weak, so there was some doubt in my mind as to whether Therese expected 3-card support. At least I had a diamond singleton as well as the 3 trumps.
	JT5 JT742 T T642		East led the CA followed by the DA and a second diamond, which Therese ruffed on the table and then cashed the SJ. After confirming the spades were cashing, Therese led to the HQ, and East won the HK and led a second heart. Therese could now draw trumps and discard the club losers on the hearts for +620.
W / / /	N 1S X 4S	E 3D! / //	S / 3S
			East did not do enough with her 8-card suit. Lindy at the other table bit a full-throated 5D, doubled by North, but they failed to cash both of their spades, so the contract made for +750 and 16 Imps.

M 4 Bd 24 Dir W Vul Nil	75 8532 Q3 AJT97		On board 24 in the fourth match East had a nice hand, but did a little too much with it.
T4 J976 J75 8542		AJ9863 - AT964 K3	The 2S opening showed spades and a minor, and 3C by West showed preference for either minor, which prompted East to get excited. However, she failed to recognize that West may have had hearts as well as the minors, and 4H could be in trouble.
	KQ2 AKQT4 K82 Q6		To protect my spade holding, I led a trump, and Therese did not want to give up the ability to over-ruff dummy, so she played low at trick 1, and East had that rare moment, winning the first round of trumps with the D5!
W / 3C! / //	N / 3H / /	E 2S 4D 5D	S X 4H X
			The best defence appears to be leading hearts, which will make my D8 into a 5 th trick, but the maximum number of tricks for East is 9, and when East failed to use her entry to lead a club towards her hand, she finished up with only 8 tricks, for +500 anyway.
			At the other table Lindy did not get carried away with her distributional hand, and North played in just 3H, 1 off for +50 and 11 Imps to us.

M 5	K9876			On board 2 in the fifth match East opened 1S with a minimum hand, probably spurred on by his 4-card heart suit, and thus he rebid 2H over my 2C overcall, in spite of his possibly wasted minor suit Queens.
Bd 2	KT62			
Dir E	KT9			
Vul NS	3			
54			AJT32	West gave preference to spades, and there the matter rested, with East poised on the brink of disaster. Double-dummy, NS can make 1S, so East was lucky he was not doubled.
A73			QJ85	
J862			Q7	
KT84			Q7	
	Q			I led the CA and gave Therese a club ruff, and she returned the DT, so I won the DA and returned the H9, declarer ducking to Therese's HK.
	94			
	A543			Therese cashed the DK and exited to the HA in dummy, and declarer took the losing spade finesse, and with no further entry to dummy had to lose 2 more spades for 3 off and +150.
	AJ9652			
W	N	E	S	
/	/	1S	2C	
2S	//	2H	//	At the other table, NS were not unduly fazed by their mis-fit, and finished in 3NTNX, winning only 4 tricks for +1100 and 15 Imps.

M 5	T5			On board 4 in the fifth match West passed as dealer, but put in a nuisance bid of 3D when I opened with a strong 2NT. This cannot have been lead-directional, as most systems would be designed to make sure the strong hand was declarer, so he would be on lead to any contract by NS.
Bd 4	K542			
Dir W	72			
Vul All	KT732			
J2			87643	When Therese doubled to show values, I elected to take the easy way out and passed for penalties. We should be able to beat 3D on power, but 3NT may not be easy on such a poor stopper.
JT98			76	
AJ86543			K	
-			QJ864	
	AKQ9			Therese led the ST and I won with the SQ and led a trump to prevent heart ruffs, although I may make an extra diamond trick if dummy ruffs with the DK.
	AQ3			
	QT9			
	A95			
W	N	E	S	
/	/	/	2NT	Declarer had to ruff a club to hand to lead the DA to prevent Therese making her D7 by over-ruffing spades, and thus he only made 6 diamond tricks for +800, only 5 Imps against 4HN for -620 at the other table. Of course 4H goes off on club ruffs, but it is not easy to find.
2D	X	//		

M 5	A83			I got off to an unfortunate lead of the CT on board 9 in the fifth match, and declarer got a cheap trick.
Bd 9	7			
Dir N	JT5			Looking at the dummy slam is pretty good now, cash the top hearts and the SK and then small trumps to hand ensure the entry to cash the hearts and clubs and avoid the diamond finesse!
Vul EW	Q87543			However our declarer did not lead any hearts before tackling trumps, and was forced to overtake the HJ and take the diamond finesse after all! That led to -1430 when the diamond finesse worked.
KQ752			JT6	When asked why, he stated that he was afraid the hearts were 6-1 and we would get a heart ruff!
KJ			AQ54	Of course the 6-1 heart break is much smaller odds than the 50% chance of the diamond finesse, but who can argue with success?
AQ8642			97	At the other table Richard was declarer in 6S and received the lead of the H7, so he was forewarned about the possible bad heart break, but was left with little alternative since he was not gifted with a club trick on the opening lead, and 1 down was 17 Imps away.
-			AKJ2	
	94			
	T98632			
	K3			
	T96			
W	N	E	S	
	/	1NT	/	
2H!	/	2S	/	
3D	/	3NT	/	
6D	/	6S	//	

M 6 Bd 19 Dlr S Vul EW	QJT9 AQ3 T AT972		On board 19 in the sixth match West overcalled my weak 2D opening with 2NT and all passed. Holding the majority of the points for our side, Therese made the safe lead of the SQ, and followed it up with the S9 when she held the first trick to define her suit strength.
AK82 JT85 AJ3 KJ		763 K972 865 865	West won the S9 and led a heart up and Therese rises with the HA and led another spade to declarer. Declarer is desperate for tricks, so he exited with a spade to Therese and hoped something good would happen.
	54 64 KQ9742 Q43		Therese exited with the DT, and declarer ducked my DQ, so I led the C3 and declarer had a guess, with a lot riding on the outcome.
W 2NT	N //	E	S 2D Declarer guessed wrong and we made a total of 9 tricks for 4 off and +400. At the other table Richard and Lindy were more ambitious and climbed to 3NT, but the defence was more generous and he finished with 8 tricks for -100, but 7 lmps to us.

M 6 Bd 20 Dlr W Vul All	QJ93 T92 KQ8 A65		On board 20 in the sixth match we had a straight-forward auction to 4S, and West led the CQ. It is normally good policy to duck when the opponent on lead can do you no harm, to deny an entry to the danger hand, and West next led the CJ which I won on the table and passed the SQ.
K62 K8653 - QJT82		8 J74 JT9432 K93	4S was going to be easy when this held the trick, but when I played the next spade off the table, West proved to be foxing, as East showed out.
	AT754 AQ A765 74		Now I just need to eliminate the minors and West will be end-played by a trump into leading a heart, so I led a diamond to dummy and West discarded. Ruffing a club I got the heart lead for 11 tricks and +650.
W / / //	N 1C 2S	E / /	S 1S 4S At the other table North was declarer, and West ruffed the opening diamond lead and returned the CQ, declarer rising with the CA to take the spade finesse, but now West could get to East with the CK for another diamond ruff, and the club exit allowed a heart trick as well for +200 and 13 lmps.

M 6 Bd 25 Dlr N Vul W	AJ6 KQ753 K95 J3		On board 25 in the sixth match my 2S cue-bid showed at least a limit raise in support of hearts, and only 3-card support, and Therese optimistically bid game. As it turns out, 3NT is an easier game, with 9 top tricks, but if a club is led, only because the clubs are 4-4.
T93 84 JT74 KQT7		KQ542 J62 2 A952	Therese won the opening lead of the D2 with the DK and drew trumps finishing in hand, then led the D9 and ducked in dummy. This gave her 5 hearts, 4 diamonds and the SA, for 10 tricks and +420.
	87 AT9 AQ863 864		4S is slightly harder on a spade lead, but still cold. Declarer ducks the SK and eventually ruffs a spade in dummy for the 10 th trick.
W /	N 1H 4H	E 1S //	S 2S At the other table North opened with a weak 1NT, concealing his 5-card heart suit, Lindy kept quiet with the East cards, and South had no reason to raise to game. On the opening lead of the S4, that was 10 tricks, but only -180, so 6 lmps to us.

M 7 Bd 7 Dlr S Vul All	K32 T54 QJ643 A6			On board 7 in the seventh match East was able to raise to game after East bid 1NT because the 1NT rebid on this auction shows 18-19 points as well as a diamond stop. Since the range is so defined, there is no point in inviting, just bid 3NT or pass!
QJT AQJ AK QT832		8654 K2 T852 K97		Following the rule: "A suit worth bidding is a suit worth leading", Therese led the D4, and after winning the DK, West is already at the defining point in the hand.
	A97 98763 97 J54			It is very likely that Therese has the CA, but either of us could have the crucial CJ!
W	N	E	S	Such a small value card could be in either hand, so it is a complete guess, and West guessed wrong when he led towards dummy and played the C9, allowing me to win and set up the diamonds for 2 off.
1C 1NT	1D /	/ 3NT	/ //	It should have been 3 off, but playing low encouraging, I wanted to be certain Therese knew I was encouraging spades by playing low high. This was therefore a flat board, but we could have won 3 Imps to draw the match, but we still would have finished 4 th .

M 7 Bd 8 Dlr W Vul Nil	Q98732 2 K532 52			On board 8 in the seventh match I was getting all set to raise 2S to game when East offered an alternative contract in by overcalling 5C.
AT54 Q953 A964 7		6 64 T7 AQJT9843		At equal vulnerability doubling 5C was a safer alternative to bidding a risky 5S, and bidding my own heart suit never figured in the bidding scenarios.
	KJ AKJT87 QJ8 K6			I led the HK (getting count at a high-level contract), and the sight of dummy was both good and bad news. On the one hand, our chances of making even 4S was greatly diminished, but on the other hand, maybe 5C is cold!
W	N	E	S	I won the first trick without knowing whether Therese had 1 or 2 hearts, and switched to the DQ, Therese encouraging with the D2 when declarer rose in dummy.
/ //	2S	5C	X	So we had 4 tricks for +300, and East had made a phantom save because his partner was too good. At the other table South stopped in just 3H, which went 2 off for +100 and 9 Imps to us.

M 8 Bd 15 Dlr S Vul NS	KT65 T6 AT72 AQ5			On board 15 in the eighth match I finally came across a hand where a lead from Jxx got a good result. It is a lead I normally avoid, as I have noticed that most of the time when the lead is made against me it gives away at least 1 trick.
QJ 9742 KQ63 JT9		987 QJ53 J95 K86		After I rebid 2S, 2NT from Therese was an artificial game force, and my 4S was meant to show a minimum with 4-card support.
	A432 AK8 84 7432			East appears to have a normal lead of the HQ, or a slightly risky lead of the C6, but instead he chose the lead of the D5!
W	N	E	S	Therese ducked the DQ from West and he next played the CJ, enticing Therese to finesse the CQ, losing to the CK. A club came back and Therese won the CA over the C9 and played 2 rounds of diamonds, ruffing in dummy.
/ / //	1S 2NT!	/ /	1C 2S 4S	The SA and SK set the spades up for no loser, but there was still a diamond to lose, and the choices are to play West for an original diamond holding of KJ95, or play for a 3-3 club break. Alas, West had the DK, and not East, so he was able to ruff with the S9 in front of dummy, for 1 down and -12 Imps, whereas the clubs did break 3-3.

M 8 Bd 20 Dlr W Vul All	T4 Q7 K8642 AK73			On board 20 in the eighth match EW were focused on their 6-2 heart fit and never found their 6-3 spade fit. The 2D opening was likely to be a weak major, and from his spade holding and our silence, East knew it had to be hearts. Since he had a limited hand, his spade suit was never mentioned. Therese's 2NT was obviously for the minors, and I bid my club suit, over which East went again with 3H. I cashed two clubs and led the SJ, which declarer won in hand to play HA and H3, which I ducked. After winning the HQ Therese exited with the ST, and declarer could do no better than to take the diamond finesse, and when it lost, he was 1 off.
A32 JT9654 AT 98		KQ9875 A3 QJ9 42		
	J6 K82 753 QJT65			
W 2D / / /	N / 2NT / /	E 2H / 3H	S / 3C //	Notice that if declarer wins the SA on the table and runs the HJ, he will be taking the diamond finesse later for an overtrick, rather than going 1 off. At the other table the spade fit was found, and the losing diamond finesse meant 4S was 1 off, for a flat board.

M 8 Bd 23 Dlr S Vul All	72 K974 T9874 KQ			On board 23 in the eighth match EW appeared to be in a miss-fit and thus tread cautiously. However, they were too cautious, and missed a game. and to make matters worse they went down in their part score. My 2S was fairly standard for a weak two, and West was not strong enough to overcall on the first round. East balanced with 3D, and West had a difficult decision when this came around to him. I think the two Aces and double spade stop should overcome the singleton diamond and prompt West to try 3NT, but he bid 3H instead, probably hoping that East was strong enough to make a 3S probe. However, East had nothing to spare, and was mindful of West's failure to act directly, so he passed.
AJT AT852 J T942		93 Q6 KQ6532 AJ6		
	KQ8654 J3 A 8753			
W / 3H	N / //	E 3D	S 2S /	Therese led the S7, won on the table by declarer, who led the DJ. I won the DA, perforce, and cashed the SK and led another spade for Therese to ruff with the H7, declarer finishing 2 off for +200 At the other table 3NT was the contract, for +600 and 13 Imps.