

## 2006 Gold Coast Senior's Pairs

Record numbers attending the GCC this year, which was the last at the split HI/GCI venues at Surfers Paradise. Next year we all move into the Convention Centre at Broadbeach, which will be a whole new ball game in regards to accommodation and eating places. Many took advantage of the free bus to check out the venue and scout out places to stay, and appeared to be impressed.

As in 2005, I played in the Senior's Pairs with John Brockwell, and while we only came 9<sup>th</sup> in the Final, this modest placing was a vast improvement on our 2005 result. We qualified comfortably for the Final while not threatening to win a session, and after a bad start to the Final, where we were near the tail of the field in the early rounds, we recovered ground gradually to give us a chance with one round to go. A good start to the 3<sup>rd</sup> round saw us move up to 4<sup>th</sup>, but a few faltering rounds and a bad penultimate round finished our chances of a place. Rosa Lachman and Bill Hunt were always at or near the lead, but unluckily for them, were 3 points adrift after the final round, finishing a credible 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Q1** KT43  
**Bd 1** 94  
**Dlr N** KJ63  
**Vul Nil** KT6  
 A65  
 KQJ872  
 4  
 874

QJ2  
 653  
 AQ98  
 AJ2

987  
 AT  
 T752  
 Q953

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
	/	1NT	/
2D	/	2H	/
4H	//		

On board 1 in the first qualifying aggressive bidding got us to game, but I was not really put to the test when South led the S9 and North returned the suit.

This gave me the chance to go to dummy with a heart, and take the free diamond finesse as my best chance for 10 tricks. Even if this lost, I could still discard a club and make 9 tricks, but when it won, I had game in the bag.

This is a hard hand to evaluate from West's position, as if I had the CQ instead of the DQ, 10 tricks were easy and there was a finesse for 11, so the transfer and bid game approach is probably as good as any. Especially when the DQ was well placed and 10 tricks rolled in.

If South had attacked with the C3 on the opening lead instead of being passive, it would have been more of a test, with either 8 or 10 tricks depending on the position of the DK. Not knowing where the HA was, the best line is to win the CA and go to dummy with the SA to take the diamond finesse before leading trumps, then contract made.

**Q 1** K53  
**Bd 5** T92  
**Dlr N** 874  
**Vul NS** KQ82  
 T76  
 AQJ6  
 QJ963  
 T

92  
 875  
 52  
 AJ9543

AQJ84  
 K43  
 AKT  
 76

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
/	/	3C	X
	3NT	//	

On board 5 in the first qualifying I found one of my best leads of the Pairs but John could not believe his good luck and the contract still made when he was subsequently end-played.

Since I had no entries and a poor suit, I tried to find some strength in John's hand, and selected my longer major since there was a better chance of usefull breaks. John won my lead of the H7 with the HJ, and only has to return the CT (my suit) and I will next lead the H8, showing the 3-3 break and giving our side the first 5 tricks.

Unfortunately he had it in his mind that I had led a doubleton, and either discounted the possibility of my wanting him to lead a club through, or forgot that I had bid clubs (this was the Senior's), so he exited with the DQ.

After declarer ran his spades (John being pseudo squeezed and discarding a heart), I had a choice of leading a diamond or a heart when I won my CA, and either way John was end-played for the 9<sup>th</sup> trick.

**Q 1** J8  
**Bd 10** 763  
**Dir E** AK3  
**Vul All** AJT94  
 K654 AQT32  
 QT82 J95  
 QJT 862  
 52 Q8

97  
 AK4  
 9754  
 K763

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
/	1C	1S	/
2S	3D	//	2D!

On board 10 in the first qualifying South was a little muddled when it came rebidding after a better-minor opening bid of 1C from her partner.

She explained her non-forcing 2D bid on such a poor suit as being because the 1C opening bid did not promise any more than 3 clubs.

What she has missed is that generally the 1C opening promises club length longer or equal with diamonds, thus if opener has support for a suit such as 9754, her support for clubs must be even better!

Deep Finesse suggests that 4D is makeable, probably by ducking a trump early. South appeared to get such a shock when she saw dummy and realized what a better contract 3C was that she lost the plot and went 1 off, losing 2 spades, a heart, a diamond and a club ruff when she did not play the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of trumps.

**Q 1** 873  
**Bd 11** J953  
**Dir S** T752  
**Vul Nil** T2  
 52 AQT32  
 62 A4  
 K9 AJ643  
 AQJ9865 K74

KJT64  
 KQT87  
 Q7  
 854

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
4C	/	4NT	/
5D	/	5H	/
6D	/	6NT	//

The power of the closed hand is often talked about in bridge literature, and it was clearly evident on board 11 of the first qualifying.

After South opened and John made a spectacular jump to the 4-level (3C was a weak-jump), I could hardly not go slamming. I got a pleasant surprize when John showed his top 2 trumps, and the DK, as we had agreed to show our lowest King after a second RKCB inquiry.

It was obvious after the opening bid that the DQ was with South, so either it had to be doubleton, or South was going to have be squeezed and thrown in for my 12 tricks.

At least with 11 tricks on top the stage was set for a squeeze, but my chances were not good since South was discarding after me. I knew what I had, but NS could only guess, so I ran my clubs looking eagerly at the early discards, before I had to make a crucial discard myself.

To my delight, North threw one of her useless diamonds early on, and South also threw a diamond, so I made all 13 tricks for a good score.

**Q 1** JT84  
**Bd 19** AJ6  
**Dir S** T5  
**Vul EW** A764  
 A652 Q973  
 K87 QT953  
 A84 73  
 J85 93

K  
 42  
 KQJ962  
 KQT2

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
/	1S	/	1D
/	3C	/	2C
//			3NT

On board 19 in the first qualifying it was obvious to lead a heart, and I led the HT, as an interior sequence.

I have come across this situation many times, and found that it will rarely cost for third-in-hand to play the King (or Ace) after the lead of Ten, and sometimes, as here, it will pay off.

Unfortunately, John lapsed into 'lost-cause' mode, when he played low, expecting North to have the top honours, and 3NT now made 11 tricks for a bottom.

If John plays the HK, North should duck, and he should also duck the next heart to my Queen. Now, my next heart is intended to tell partner where my entry (or possible entry) is, and that should be the H9, suggesting a spade honour.

West is able to win the DA on the first round, cash the SA, and put me in with a spade to cash my hearts for 2 down.

<b>Q 1</b>	K9632			
<b>Bd 26</b>	4			
<b>Dlr E</b>	T763			
<b>Vul All</b>	QT9			
J8		AT754		
T85		KQ632		
842		Q5		
A7632		4		
	Q			
	AJ97			
	AKJ9			
	KJ85			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
//		1S	2H!	

The bidding looks odd on Board 26 in the first qualifying because South initially bid 1H, having not seen or not registered my 1S opening.

Having been reminded of his options, South decided to bid 2H, thinking that this would allow North to respond and then the bidding could proceed normally, but North had nothing to say I was delighted to find South playing in my other 5-card suit at the 2-level.

I think South may have been under a misconception here in that while a 2H bid allows North to bid, North must bid on the understanding that South has at least a 5-card suit and around opening points. It is not good enough to make the good bid and ignore any other ramifications.

South managed to sneak a few tricks in this bad contract, but still managed to go 1 off for +100 to us and a far better result if South had noticed my bid and made a normal take-out double, since even 3NT is on for NS.

<b>Q 2</b>	7432			
<b>Bd 5</b>	T86			
<b>Dlr N</b>	T965			
<b>Vul NS</b>	QJ6			
A98		QJ5		
K5		A7432		
AK765		Q3		
K84		A73		
	KT6			
	QT986			
	J942			
	9			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
		1H	/	
2D	/	2H	/	
3C	/	3NT	/	
4H	//			

On board 5 in the second qualifying my spade pips were too good, but not good enough, and I went down in 4H that could be made. The problem was that with the 98 in dummy, after South covered the SQ, I could take the simple finesse for the Ten through North, or throw South in to lead away from the Ten. If I did not have the S8 in dummy, only the throw-in would have been possible, and that works.

I won the D2 opening lead and led the top trumps, getting the bad news, while North signalled for a club. When the SQ was covered I could have made 10 tricks as follows:

Play the CA and then another club towards dummy, on which South must discard. Cash the top diamonds, discarding a club, and ruff a diamond, but when South over-ruffs, he is endplayed, forced to lead a spade for the free finesse.

Alas, the simple finesse failed and I was 1 off. I was puzzled as to why John pulled me out of 3NT with only 2 hearts, especially as he had no ruffing power, and 3NT was an easy make. 2H did not show 6 hearts, only a minimum hand.

<b>Q 2</b>	83			
<b>Bd 6</b>	A98542			
<b>Dlr E</b>	KT86			
<b>Vul EW</b>	Q6			
K765		AT2		
K		J863		
5432		AQ9		
A984		KJ3		
	QJ94			
	QT7			
	J7			
	T752			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
		1H	/	
1S	/	1NT	/	
3NT	//			

Board 6 in the second qualifying may have been easier to defend after the 1H opening bid if my hand (East) was on the table, but my 1NT rebid (15-18) made me declarer, and South led the C2.

The opening lead picked up the club suit for no loser when I finessed the C9 at trick 3, and when North discarded a diamond, I had 9 tricks but could not see them. At this stage if I finesse the DQ and give up a diamond, the D5 becomes my 9<sup>th</sup> trick.

However, not expecting North to discard from length in dummy, I played for a 3-3 spade break by ducking a spade to South, who after some thought led a heart to North's Ace.

North was expecting a heart return and the actual diamond return on which the DQ won the trick irked him considerably as I cashed the diamonds and threw him in on the last spade to make my 9<sup>th</sup> trick with the HJ.

He was expecting that a heart return defeats the contract, but after winning the HT he cannot cash the HQ without giving me my 9<sup>th</sup> trick so exits with a spade. I win the spade on the table, take the diamond finesse and lead a small heart to set up my HJ after all.

**Q 2** T3  
**Bd 8** AK982  
**Dir W** AQ6  
**Vul Nil** A96  
 Q72 J9864  
 JT6 5  
 T43 KJ92  
 8754 Q32  
 AK5  
 Q743  
 875  
 KJT

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
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Board 8 in the second qualifying gave the chance for both defenders and declarers to shine, but the defenders should win the battle.

At our table, declarer banked everything on the diamond finesse, and after drawing trumps and eliminating the spades, if that had held, she would have exited with the 3<sup>rd</sup> diamond forcing us to open the club suit and ensuring 12 tricks.

Fortunately, having avoided the fatal club lead at trick 1, I knew from our count signals when I won the DK that declarer only had 3 clubs so I could exit with a club and wait for my second diamond trick for 1 off.

At other tables, declarer either got a club lead or divined the club position, and then a true endplay can be engineered when declarer eliminates clubs and spades finishing on the table and leads a diamond towards hand.

If West plays low, the D6 endplays East and 12 tricks are assured, but if West makes the cost-nothing play of the DT, the endplay does not work and the slam is defeated. I believe that more made their slam in this fashion than went off, so many Wests were asleep.

**Q 2** KJT86  
**Bd 22** AJ654  
**Dir E** -  
**Vul EW** 982  
 973 AQ542  
 8 KQ9  
 A754 J632  
 QT763 4  
 -  
 T732  
 KQT98  
 AKJ5

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
2S	3H	1S	X
//	/	/	4H

Length in the suit opened on your right is not normally an asset if your side becomes declarer in a suit contract, but on board 22 in the second qualifying the pips should have led to a making heart game.

When North made a free bid over John's 2S, response to the take-out double South had no hesitation in going to game, no doubt expecting that his partner's points were in his suits.

However, North did not take advantage of either my opening bid, or her good spade pips and tried to cross-ruff the hand without success. She lost 2 trump tricks and 2 spades at the end for 1 off and +50.

I led a club and declarer led the DK at trick 2, ruffing John's DA. I am now counted for the remainder of the points, and declarer can lead the SK for another ruffing finesse, come to hand with the HA for another ruffing finesse with the SJ, and then she is high, all I make are the two trumps.

**F 1** J  
**Bd 5** AQJ3  
**Dir N** A92  
**Vul NS** K9732  
 A87432 -  
 42 98765  
 QT75 KJ863  
 Q A65  
 KQT965  
 KT  
 4  
 JT84

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
/	1C	2NT	3S
4D	3NT	/	/
//	/	/	4S

Board 5 in the first round of the final was a disappointment to any South who finished in game. Some scores that I saw had West doubling 3S (making), but the West I played against did not even double 4S. Maybe he needs a 7-card suit to double, or maybe he was wary of us getting to a making 5C.

The 2NT overcall showed precisely the red suits, so I knew that it was unlikely that spades would break, but 6-0?? After my 3S bid, the pass by John over 4D should have been forcing, but maybe a double denying any sort of spade fit would have been better.

It is difficult to get to 5C after this bidding barrage, so the best option is to double 4D and lead trumps at every opportunity, leading to a 2 trick defeat and +300. Even + 50 was better than -200.

I got a heart lead, which gave me the tempo, and I believe that if I had won in hand and immediately led the CJ, I may have made 4S, or at least 9 tricks.

**F 1** 987  
**Bd 13** J92  
**Dlr N** T65  
**Vul All** 7432  
 K6542 QJ  
 AK8654 73  
 - Q873  
 85 AJT96  
  
 AT3  
 QT  
 AKJ942  
 KQ  
  
**W N E S**  
 / / / 1D  
 2D / 2H /  
 4H //

On board 13 in the first round of the final John's 2D showed both majors, and I elected to bid my weakest major with equal length, and was quickly raised to game.

When dummy went down it appeared to be a good decision to play in hearts, as I may be able to overcome a 4-2 spade break, so I ruffed the DA and led a spade, won by South with the SA who now led the CK.

This was a good development, so I switched tack and led 3 rounds of trumps, expecting a club return from whoever won the 3<sup>rd</sup> trump.

Maybe this was not such a good idea as if a spade return had come instead, I would no longer have been able to cope with a 4-2 break, but the club return duly came and I made 10 tricks.

Disappointingly, when I saw the hand records, the spades were 3-3 all along, but not every pair bid to game.

**F 1** KQJ8652  
**Bd 19** AKQ  
**Dlr S** 2  
**Vul EW** K6  
 - T73  
 T9532 J86  
 A75 KQT94  
 JT983 Q4  
  
 A94  
 74  
 J863  
 A752  
  
**W N E S**  
 / / / /  
 / 2C / 2NT  
 / 3S / 4C  
 / 4H / 4S  
 / 5C / 5S  
 / 6S //

Our systemic agreements suited board 19 in the first round of the final perfectly and we were able to bid confidently to the cold spade slam.

My positive response of 2NT showed no 5-card suit and at least an Ace and a King, or 2 KQs, or 4 Kings.

Thus when I cuebid 4C over John's natural rebid of 3S, John knew that I had to have either the DK or SA to justify my 2NT bid, and therefore had a choice of calls to determine that slam was a good bet.

Obviously 4NT would find out immediately that I had 2 Aces, but when I did not show 2<sup>nd</sup> round control of diamonds over his 5C cuebid, I must have the SA.

East had an easy lead and John quickly racked up 12 tricks for +980.

**F 1** T5  
**Bd 23** QT953  
**Dlr S** JT92  
**Vul All** QT  
 J9642 Q7  
 J4 A72  
 7653 Q  
 84 AJ97532  
  
 AK83  
 K86  
 AK84  
 K6  
  
**W N E S**  
 / 1H 2C 1D  
 / 3D / 3H  
 //

Board 23 in the first round of the final was a test for our system and it failed the test. I should have upgraded my sharp 20-count and opened with 2NT, as many others would be doing, and then we would get to game.

East appeared frightened by the vulnerability and did not put us to a severe test with his safe bid of 2C, over which I bid 2NT intending this as the bid I would have made without the overcall, and John retreated to the know 4-4 fit.

Now I felt I was on safer ground when I showed my 3-card heart support, as it would be too risky to do this with a minimum hand, but John read it as trying to improve the match-point score and passed.

He made 11 tricks, but I suspect not many match-points, as most pairs I spoke to got to game.

The real test in 4H on the lead of the CA is to dump the CK and win in hand with the CQ to lead a small trump to dummy. If the CK is won on the table and a small heart is played to the HQ, a third club promotes the HJ into a trick.

**F 2** AK964  
**Bd 1** 73  
**Dir N** AJ842  
**Vul Nil** 2  
 853 J72  
 AQJ842 5  
 Q6 T75  
 65 AKQ743  
 QT  
 KT96  
 K93  
 JT98  
**W** **N** **E** **S**  
 / 1S 3C /  
 // 3D / 3NT

Simple overcalls are often made purely as lead directional bids, and as such almost always require partner to lead that suit. Weak jump over calls on the other hand, are often not good suits, and there is no similar suggestion regarding the lead.

Board 1 in the second round of the final was a hand that would have been better suited to a simple overcall rather than a weak jump, as the suit is good enough to almost demand the lead from partner.

I was expecting a re-opening double from John after I passed 3C, which I probably would have converted to penalties, but when John bid his other suit I decided to have a crack at 3NT since most of my points were in working suits.

West decided to lead his own suit rather than partner's jump bid, and when I saw dummy I could see a number of options that would yield at least 9 tricks, but the roof was likely to cave in as soon as I lost the lead.

I firstly decided to try the spades suit to see if the SJ dropped, falling back on the diamonds for 5 tricks if spades were fruitless. Even if the spades behaved, which they did, I still needed 3 diamond tricks for game, but running the spades was bound to bring discomfort to at least 1 defender and give me a clue. Since diamonds and spades were both well placed, I made 11 tricks for a good score.

Note that on a club lead and the obvious heart switch, the defenders take the first 5 tricks.

**F 2** AKQ92  
**Bd 2** AKQT  
**Dir E** QJ85  
**Vul NS** -  
 T4 J875  
 J42 9875  
 73 A4  
 AT9543 KQ6  
 63  
 63  
 KT962  
 J872  
**W** **N** **E** **S**  
 / /  
 / 2C / 2D  
 / 2S / 3D  
 / 6D //

On board 2 in the second round of the final I made a negative reply to John's 2C opening on the first round, which denied an Ace and a King, or some other similar combinations.

When John showed his spade suit it seemed obvious with a reasonable suit and some values to show my diamonds, and I was somewhat taken aback when John's next bid was 6D, to which West led the CA.

As John laid the diamond support on the table, it was obvious that he was going to turn up with a void club.

6D was an easy make, only requiring 1 more club ruff, which was forced on me by East when they took the DA and returned another club.

**F 2** Q863  
**Bd 15** JT3  
**Dir S** Q986  
**Vul NS** 92  
 75 A2  
 986 KQ2  
 52 JT74  
 AQ7643 JT85  
 KJT94  
 A754  
 AK3  
 K

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
3C	3S	/	1S
/	/	5C	4S
//			5S

On board 15 in the second round of the final I was very quick to make sure of our 3<sup>rd</sup> trick to defeat 5S when NS unwisely bid again over our failing 5C.

I did not bid over 3S as I was not certain that NS were going to game, but it seemed clear-cut to sacrifice when South did raise to game. With at 3 likely tricks, South made a big mistake when they did not take what was on offer in 5CX, so I was glad to get a positive.

John led the CA on which I played the CJ (we were playing low encouraging) as a McKenny for a heart switch. The heart switch did come and when I won the SA I cashed the winning trick for +100.

However, in 4S, if the first 2 tricks are the same, I can sit back and wait for declarer to lead hearts again and 4S goes 1 down, so maybe I was premature in cashing out.

If West continues clubs at trick 2, East can be endplayed in hearts after ruffing out the diamonds and 4S will make.

**F 2** K42  
**Bd 18** T  
**Dir E** AJT962  
**Vul NS** KT5  
 AJT98 65  
 AK965 73  
 - KQ8754  
 J76 Q32  
 Q73  
 QJ842  
 3  
 A984

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
		3D	//

On board 18 in the second round of the final I was very disappointed when dummy went down and it was obvious that whichever side became declarer was going to suffer. At least I was not doubled, so I had to minimize the loss.

The opening lead was the HQ and I saw my only hope for some chance was to ruff a few times with my small trumps, but disappointment number 2 was North ruffing the second round of hearts.

However, North was loath to lead trumps, so he exited with a club and South won the CA and returned one, so I made a club trick before winning the spade on the table to ruff a heart low.

After exiting with my losing spade, ruffed by North, the extreme distribution was revealed, but I had managed 6 tricks for only -100.

At other tables, my hand passed as dealer and North became declarer in a diamond contract, sometimes doubled.

**F 2** QT83  
**Bd 19** K83  
**Dir S** J72  
**Vul EW** 653  
 KJ4 9  
 JT A9764  
 KT53 A96  
 AT84 KQ72  
 A7652  
 Q52  
 Q84  
 J9

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
1NT	/	2D	/
2H	/	3C	/
3NT	//		

Board 19 in the second round of the final was a cruel one for those Norths who led the S3 to the final contract of 3NTW. Although this finds partner's 5-card suit, it is now blocked! Lucky for those leading 3rds and 5ths.

Against John's 3NTW, North, either by accident or design, led the S8, won by South who returned the S5. The likely winning line here could be to go up with the SK and give North another chance to block the suit, but perhaps lulled by the lead, John finessed the SJ, and was pained to see it losing to the SQ.

But then North inexplicably switched to a club, and John was able to finesse the hearts twice to set up a final tally of 10 tricks for +630.

While I was intrigued by the club switch it would not have been prudent to ask the reason behind it.

**F 2** KQ5  
**Bd 26** T9753  
**Dlr E** 98  
**Vul All** T93  
4 T8732  
Q842 AJ6  
JT5 AQ43  
J8652 A

AJ96  
K  
K762  
KQ74

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
/	2H	1S	X
/	3NT	//	2NT

At many tables, East opened 1S on board 26 in the second round of the final and played there for one off or just making.

At our table, our South fell in love with their hand and doubled, presumably for take-out, on the first round.

North duly took it out to a predictable 2H, and now South bid 2NT.

Apparently North was not in on the secret, because they believed that they had a good hand for the bidding and raised to 3NT, to which John led the S4.

South won on the table and led a small club, and on winning the CA and not expecting John to have much, I led a small diamond, hoping for the DJ in his hand. Declarer ducked the diamond but won the return of the DT to cash a club and that is when his aspirations ended.

The final result was down 2 for +200 to us.

**F 2** A87  
**Bd 27** AKQT7  
**Dlr S** AQ2  
**Vul Nil** J7  
KQ96 JT53  
43 982  
K8653 -  
K8 Q65432

42  
J65  
JT974  
AT9

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
/	1C	/	/
3C	4H	2C	X
		//	

On board 27 in the second round of the final North opened a Precision 1C and my 2C overcall was weak and natural. North lost interest in anything beyond game when John raised to 3C and simply by what he thought that he could make!

This seemed like a perfect opportunity to make an unusual lead to suggest a void outside the trump suit, so I led the C2.

North had not read the same books as I have, and did not recognize the C2 as having any significance, so with limited entries, won the CA on the table to take the diamond finesse at trick 2!

He was somewhat startled when I ruffed this and put John in with the CK for another diamond ruff. The spade trick meant 1 off and a top for us.

4H is still cold on the club lead and diamond ruff as long as North drops the CJ under the King so that he can finesse the CT for a spade discard after winning the SA and drawing trumps.

**F 3** QJ73  
**Bd 2** A9  
**Dlr E** A32  
**Vul NS** AK75  
A84 KT52  
4 Q652  
KQT985 J6  
J43 Q92

96  
KJT873  
74  
T86

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
/	2NT	/	2D
/	4H	//	3H

Board 2 in the third round of the final got us off to a good start when a friendly defense allowed me to produce a trump coup for 10 tricks in 4H.

The opening lead was the DK, which I won on the table to play the HA and the H9, overtaking with the HJ and finding about the 4-1 break.

Next a spade up and West hops up with his SA, cashes the DQ, and exits with a spade. Now it is East's turn to help as he did not want to broach the club suit, so returned a spade and now I had the entries to complete the coup.

A club was discarded on the SJ and a spade was ruffed, followed by a club to dummy for a diamond ruff. Now I have the same trump length as East, and a club to dummy enabled me to take the last 2 tricks.

A club back instead of the spade and I am an entry short. Still you have to take your luck when it comes.



**F 3** J764  
**Bd 6** AQ52  
**Dlr E** J4  
**Vul EW** Q96  
 QT932 85  
 4 J873  
 Q7 A965  
 85432 AJ7

AK  
 KT96  
 KT832  
 KT

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
/	1H	/	1D
/	4H	//	3H

On board 6 in the third round of the final John made a cunning play from the dummy that gained a vital extra trick.

East led the H3, which led John to believe that everything else in East's hand was unattractive. Thus when he won on the table with the H9, he pulled a small diamond towards his closed hand, and not surprizingly, West ducked.

When the DJ forced the DA, he won the diamond return with the DK, felling the DQ, ruffed a diamond and drew trumps.

Now the CK set up the 2<sup>nd</sup> and last trick for the defense and we scored up +450.

This is a cunning ploy that looks good when it works, but could easily have backfired if East had both diamond honours. It just proves that you have to pick your time for brilliant plays to avoid getting egg over your face.

**F 3** 97  
**Bd 13** 6532  
**Dlr N** Q4  
**Vul All** QJT86  
 8642 AJT53  
 AJ8 QT9  
 AKT5 J6  
 A4 K97

KQ  
 K74  
 98732  
 532

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
2NT	/	1S	/
	/	4S	//

On board 13 in the third round of the final our luck started to run out and our brief challenge faded.

After the Jacoby response to my 1S opening, my 4S rebid showed a minimum opening and John subsided.

The opening lead was the D9, and I decided the best shot for 12 tricks was the double spade finesse and a heart finesse, but I was glad I was not in slam.

Accordingly I won on the table with the DA and finessed the SJ, West winning with the SK and returning another diamond won again on the table and dropping the DQ. West was a lady I did not know, but I got the strong feeling when she won with the SK that she had the SQ as well, but stuck with my original plan and finessed again, much to her delight.

She was so happy at winning the SQ (and fooling me) that she exited with the D3 and the D5 won on the table, giving me 2 discards and not needing the heart finesse. Alas, the finesse would have won anyway.

**F 3** 6  
**Bd 17** T54  
**Dlr N** AQ2  
**Vul Nil** KQ8653  
 K JT98753  
 AJ876 Q9  
 JT5 873  
 AJT7 4

AQ42  
 K32  
 K964  
 92

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
2H	1C	/	1S
/	/	/	X
//	3C	/	3NT

It is marvelous how many times the traditional 4<sup>th</sup> highest of your longest and strongest is the best lead, and board 17 in the third round of the final was another example.

After a small heart lead from West 3NT has no chance, and West can even afford to duck the first club. Our West made the 'safe' lead of the DJ to avoid giving me an easy trick, and 9 tricks rolled home in an unexpected way.

I won the DK in hand since I wanted to lead a club up to dummy, and when that won, I led a spade to my Ace as a certain entry. I knew where the SK was, and I could afford to lose this trick if I won 5 club tricks, but it was a surprize when I dropped the SK offside.

Expecting an easy time now, I cashed the SQ (discarding a heart) and led another club, but the suit was 4-1, and the game was hopeless. Luckily, West still refused to donate a heart trick to me, and led another diamond, so now I had 9 tricks without getting a heart trick at all as West exited with her last diamond and I had to lead hearts off the table.

**F 3** 852  
**Bd 22** A2  
**Dlr E** K985  
**Vul EW** QJ65  
 Q94 KJT7  
 KT76 J53  
 T43 2  
 K73 T9842  
  
 A63  
 Q984  
 AQJ76  
 A  
  

W	N	E	S
/	2C	/	1D
/	3D	/	2H
/	4D	/	3S
//			5D

Board 22 in the third round of the final was a chance for what has been named by Chagas as an 'intrafinesse', but unfortunately I miss-guessed the heart position at the end and went 1 off.

Our bidding was a straight-forward reversing auction, and while I explored for slam, John had a poor suit and nothing to spare so did not show any interest.

I won the trump lead, unblocked my CA and led another trump to dummy to lead the CQ, discarding a spade. Another trump came back and I discarded my other spade loser on the CJ and played 2 rounds of hearts, inserting the H9 when East played low, based on another well-know phrase, "if they do not play it, they do not have it."

When I won the spade return in hand, I had to guess whether West had Kx in hearts, whereby leading the HQ to pin East's HJ works, or K alone, whereby a simple ruff brings it down and makes my HQ good.

I guessed wrong and went 1 off, so a potential good score was lost.

**F 3** A8753  
**Bd 26** QJ942  
**Dlr E** -  
**Vul All** T73  
 KQT J962  
 3 K  
 AT832 KJ74  
 Q985 KJ64  
  
 4  
 AT8765  
 Q965  
 A2  
  

W	N	E	S
		1D	1H
3H	4H	/	/
5D	/	/	5H
X	//		

Board 26 in the third round of the final was actually the last board that we played in the event, and I made a bad decision to open 1D on the East cards, and who could thereafter blame John for doubling 5H.

NS were a little hesitant in their bidding and struggled to 5H, so the dummy was a surprize to everyone except East.

Equally surprizingly, while conceding -1050 in 5HX with an overtrick was not a top, it was not a bad score, as there was much doubling of hearts contracts around the room, sometimes at the 4-level, and most other pairs made all 13 tricks by setting up the spades for the club discard.

At our table, declarer won the spade on the table and led a club to the Ace in hand to ruff a diamond, and then led another club, giving up a second overtrick! She probably thought that 12 tricks in a doubled contract would be a top.

The result reminded me of another pairs event some years ago where our final contract was 3NTXX, and partner could have made 10 tricks by taking a finesse, but this risked the contract so she wisely settled for a sure 9 tricks. When we looked at the score card, 3NTXX making was below average, as other pairs had taken the finesse.