

2008 Barrier Reef Teams by Richard Wallis

This year it was Townsville's turn to host the BRC, and while I enjoyed it as expected, for me there was something missing, and it was the Swiss Pairs. It is a long way to go and quite expensive too, and for me it is an expensive waste of time to spend 3 nights in Townsville and only play during the day.

This year John Brockwell and I played with Mike Robson and Betty Lee, and while we were always thereabouts, we fell down at the crucial times and finished only 11th. Our first match was against team 24, which looked like a win to us on paper, but at score-up we had lost 10-20, and were off to a bad start from which we did not recover.

However, team 24 (Simon Andrew, Gwen King, John Gill and Kevin Feeney) continued to play well, with a win over team 1 as well, and overtook team 1 (Kim Morrison, Kieren Crowe-Mai, Neville Francis and Magnus Moren) on the last match to win by 5 VPs. Another team to do well was team 15 (Roland Taylor, Terry Wotherspoon, John Morris and Sharon Birrer), and a good win by them on the last match allowed them to overtake their opponents by 1 VP and finish 3rd.

M 1	J972				On board 5 in match 1, John opened the bidding (as would I), and my
Bd 5	-				3H response over the take-out double just showed 4-card support and
Dir N	KJ87632				less than a limit raise.
Vul NS	43				NS must have been playing strict take-out doubles of a major,
QT		865			otherwise North made a curious choice of bid over my 3H, as it would
7432		KQT985			seem natural to bid the 7-card suit first, and then bid 4S if we
T94		AQ			continued on in hearts! Nonetheless it struck gold when South raised
KQT5		76			to game.
	AK43				It looked like we had a small pick-up when John elected to sacrifice in
	AJ6				5HX over 4S, and only went for -500, with 12 tricks easy in 4S.
	5				However, at the other table Mike felt he was not dealt a 7-card suit for
	AJ982				nothing, and opened 3D as North, over which East bid an obvious 3H.
W	N	E	S		Holding a few tricks and no diamonds, Betty could do nothing else
	/	1H	X		sensible but double for penalties, and there it rested.
3H	3S	/	4S		3HX lost the same 5 tricks but that was only +100 and 9 Imps away.
//					

M 1	T974				On board 13 in match 1 our bidding was straight-forward and gave
Bd 13	Q				little away. After the 2C response by John as a passed hand, my 3H
Dir N	K964				was forcing and showed a 6-card suit, so 4H was an easy choice for
Vul All	J765				John.
A62		KQ8			Leading from Jxxx is often not a good lead at any time, but especially
AJ8654		972			when the suit was bid by dummy, nor would the singleton trump stand
J8		T72			out, so North had 2 choices for the opening lead. A relatively safe lead
A4		KQ32			of the ST, or a slightly risky D4. She chose the D4 to put the contract
	J53				in possible jeopardy when NS were able to cash the first 2 tricks in
	KT3				diamonds, and the trump suit had 2 potential losers.
	AQ53				However, I won the club shift in hand and cashed the HA, noting the
	T98				fall of the HQ on my left, so it was a simple matter to go to dummy
W	N	E	S		with a spade and lead a small heart off the table - +620.
	/	/	/		At the other table the lead of the ST was preferred so a diamond went
1H	/	2C	/		away on the 3 rd club and 11 tricks were made for 1 Imp away.
3H	/	4H	//		

M 2 AKQ5
Bd 20 A543
Dlr W Q72
Vul All T3
984 62
QJ97 82
K6 A54
QJ97 AK6542

JT73
KT6
JT983
8

W	N	E	S
	1NT	3C	//

On board 20 in match 2 John's overcall of 3C was natural and weak (albeit a pretty good 'weak' hand), and NS took no further part in the auction. Privately, South was probably glad to be out of 1NT.

We use a 2D overcall of 1NT for single-suited hands, but if it is a minor suit, only use it for good hands, as the rebid must be at the 3-level anyway, so may as well take advantage of the preemptive nature of the weak-jump overcall.

South made the rather odd lead of the HT, but the contract was never in jeopardy and we quickly wrote down +110,

At the other table Betty had almost the perfect hand (4450 would be better) to bid 2C, intending to pass any response with at least a 4-3 or 5-2 known fit. The 2S response was more welcome, but pass was still the next response, and Mike made 9 tricks in 2S for +140 and 7 Imps.

M 2 A843
Bd 26 K6
Dlr E AQ2
Vul All AJ84
KJT2 7
543 JT982
K753 9
KT 976532

Q965
AQ7
JT864
Q

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

On board 26 in match 2 North got a little excited by his partner's exotic opening bid and by the time he came to realize slam was not a good prospect, he was too high.

North won the opening HJ lead in hand and led the SA and another trump, ducking in dummy when John showed out, but consigning himself to the loss of 3 trump tricks and 1 off.

He won the next heart in dummy, pitched the D2 on the 3rd heart, and successfully took the diamond finesse, probably at this point regretting the discard of the D2 instead of the C4.

Even now it is not obvious how he lost 4 tricks, but at the end of the hand he was 2 down and +200 to us.

He then turned to me and asked why, holding such good trumps, I did not double, and I told him that if he was forewarned about a bad trump break (what else could a double herald?) he could have avoided 3 losers. Of course Deep Finesse confirmed that 11 tricks can be made.

At the other table Betty and Mike, playing Precision, were not about to get overboard and played in 4S for +620 and 13 Imps.

M 3 J654
Bd 8 Q9762
Dlr W QJ86
Vul Nil -
AKT 9
AKT43 J8
K94 AT752
96 QT842

Q8732
5
3
AKJ753

W	N	E	S
1H	/	2D	X
XX	2S	/	/
2NT	/	3NT	//

On board 8 in match 3 we picked up a surprising 10 Imps for 3NT making at our table, but going off at the other table. This was a surprise to me when I saw the total layout, as everything appears to be friendly for Declarer.

The double by South showed the black suits, and my redouble was intended to show a good hand. However, when it seemed to be that NS were going to lead spades and not clubs, I rebid 2NT, which John was happy to raise to game.

Holding the red suits, North was obviously going to be in trouble, and led the SJ(?), which gave me control over that suit.

I could make 3 tricks in hearts, but since it looked like I had 3 club losers, I could not afford to lose a heart and a diamond, so I led the D9 at trick 2 and North covered and I ducked. The spade return gave me 9 tricks by way of the show-up finesse in diamonds, and 5 tricks in the majors for +400.

M 3 KQT865
Bd 14 754
Dlr E AT52
Vul Nil -
 J97 A2
 T63 J98
 KJ973 Q4
 QT 976542

43
 AKQ2
 86
 AKJ83

W	N	E	S
/	/	/	1C
/	1S	/	2C
/	3S	/	4NT
/	5S	/	6S
//			

On board 14 in match 3 John made the attacking lead of the D4 against the slam contract, and should have been rewarded by the sight of my DK at trick 1 setting up 2 tricks for the defense.

However, I did not believe that the bidding was such that John would underlead an Ace against a slam, so made a discovery play at trick 1 of the DJ! When this was taken by the DA, I knew we had a diamond trick, but John did not!

When John won the SA I recognized that the error of my trick 1 ploy was that John did not know that his DQ was cashing. Understandably, since my DJ had denied the DT, John knew that North had the diamonds sewn up and switched to a club, giving declarer a chance that luckily for us he did not take.

If declarer had taken the spade finesse now, the lucky position of the clubs and the 3-3 break in hearts would have enabled him to throw all of his diamonds away for -980, but he saw that possible scenario a little too late and finished 1 off for 11 fortunate imps to us instead of them.

M 4 AKQ73
Bd 18 J72
Dlr E 4
Vul NS T652
 9 J82
 AKT93 8
 QJ82 AKT953
 873 KQJ

T654
 Q654
 76
 A94

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

On board 18 in match 4 I had a good suit and good diamond support, so after John made a non-forcing 2D rebid I invited game with a 3H rebid, but John was not privy to my reasons for inviting, so raised to game in hearts, which was a hopeless contract.

We both could have done better.

I could have invited game in diamonds with 4D, and then if John was accepting he could have bid 4H on the way with some sort of support.

Holding such a robust diamond suit as a source of tricks, John could have bid 3S looking for a stop for 3NT, and then my 4D rebid would have set him on the path to 5D.

4H had no chance as the spade leads shortened my trumps from the start, and I went 2 off for -100. At the other table EW stayed in 4D, making 11 tricks, but -150 was enough for 6 imps out.

M 4 732
Bd 22 A985
Dlr E 2
Vul EW JT984
 Q654 JT98
 - QJT64
 AKT64 J97
 KQ73 A

AK
 K732
 Q853
 652

W	N	E	S
/	/	/	1D
1S	/	1H	/
	/	4S	//

On board 22 in match 4 my aspirations for the hand were somewhat limited when John passed as dealer, and South opened 1D, which was my best suit.

When John came to life with a 1H overcall, I was even less enthused, and bid 1S rather than 2NT as my void in hearts could make 3NT difficult.

I was amazed when John's passed hand raised my 1S bid to game, and a little nervous, but the sight of dummy soothed those nerves.

North led the D2 and duly received his diamond ruff, but that was 10 tricks and +620.

At the other table I did not get the auction from Mike or Betty, but either East or West must have got too excited about the hand and went slamming, as they subsided in 5NTW, and this silly contract went 3 off for +300 and 14 imps.

M 5 A83
Bd 4 KQ76
Dir W Q8
Vul All J962
 KQT4 J76
 - T432
 KJ95 642
 A8743 KQ5

 952
 AJ985
 AT73
 T
W N E S
 1C 1H 2C 4H
 5C X //

In match 5 we were against Magnus and Neville and I thought that I was a little unlucky.

Magnus's 1H overcall was described as a natural and a single-suiter, but after Magnus had doubled 5C, Neville added the rider that the only other possible 4-card suit was clubs (the opening bid suit).

This would not have affected my bidding, as I was expecting 4-card support from John and 5C seemed to be close. However, with the sight of the limited values in dummy it did give me renewed hope that with the now likely 4-1 break in clubs, 4H would be cold.

It was not to be as the spades broke 3-3, giving us 4 tricks if John shifted to a spade after the club shortage appeared in dummy, and the 4-1 break in clubs put me 2 off for -500.

At the other table Mike and Betty came to rest in 2D after East bid 1H over Mike's take-out double, and although this unusual contract made for +90, it was still 9 Imps out.

M 5 A5
Bd 12 AQT3
Dir W T
Vul NS AKT862
 QJ9763 T82
 65 87
 K8 AJ962
 Q43 975

 K4
 KJ942
 Q7543
 J
W N E S
 2D X / 4H
 / 6H //

Sometimes artificial systems work for you and sometimes not. On board 12 in match 5 against Magnus and Neville our system worked against us when John did not know what my major suit was when Magnus doubled my opening 2D (Multi). He was able to guess that I was not the strong hand type.

With no intervening bid Neville was able to jump to 4H at his first turn to bid, and with such good controls, good support, and a source of tricks, Magnus had no hesitation in jumping to the cold slam. The slam was so good that Neville claimed 12 tricks as soon as dummy was tabled.

At the other table Kim opened 2S, also doubled by Mike, but now Kieren was able to exert more pressure by bidding 3S.

Betty still bid the obvious 4H, but now it was not a jump to game, and Mike could not be sure that 12 tricks were a good bet, so the slam was missed.

M 6 K95
Bd 15 QT9654
Dir S J72
Vul NS 5
 QJ642 A
 832 KJ7
 AK3 54
 AJ KQT9832

 T873
 A
 QT986
 764
W N E S
 1S / 2C /
 2NT / 3C /
 3D / 6C //

On board 15 in match 6 we had a simple auction to the top spot and gained 10 Imps when EW at the other table played in 3NT.

My 2NT rebid was forcing to game after the 2over1 response, and 3C asked for my range, with 3D just showing 15-17.

John knew I had at least 2 clubs for my 2NT rebid, and could have bid a forcing 4C, but simply bid what he thought he could make, and at the same time, protect the HK from attack.

John won the opening trump lead on the table and unblocked the SA before going back to the table with a trump to ruff a spade high and draw the last trump.

Returning to the table with a diamond he next led the SQ, possibly just for effect, but the sight of the SK was very reassuring to him and he was able to garner 12 easy tricks.

NS discarded badly to allow him a surprising overtrick, but +940 was still the same number of Imps against -490.

M 6 9732
Bd 26 JT42
Dlr E Q5
Vul All 974
 Q6 AK4
 KQ965 3
 AJ92 KT87
 32 AQT85

JT85
 A87
 643
 KJ6

W	N	E	S
		1C	/
1H	/	2D	/
2S	/	3NT	/
4D	/	5C	/
6NT	//		

On board 26 in match 6 our infrequent partnerships caught up with us when we landed in the hopeless 6NT instead of the makeable 6D.

My 2S was 4th suit forcing to game, but John's jump to 3NT to show a minimum reverse took away some valuable room. When I then bid 4D to confirm the suit, I did not believe that John had neither of the major suit Aces, so thought that he had manufactured a reverse on a 3-card suit with his 2D rebid, and was bidding 5C to clarify his best suit.

Maybe I should have bid 6C, but I thought it not wise to put all of our eggs in the club basket, as if clubs provided 6 tricks they would still be valuable in 6NT.

In 6NT John tried valiantly after the SJ opening lead, but needing entries to set up the clubs if they were favourable, he needed South to have the DQ, so lost that card as well and finished 3 off for -300.

At the other table EW stopped in 5D, and were untroubled to make 12 tricks when a failure by South to over-ruff the D7 pin-pointed the DQ, so -620 and 14 Imps.

M 7 A8653
Bd 2 JT92
Dlr E 543
Vul NS J
 J72 Q
 75 AK8
 J8 AK8
 KQT932 A765

KT94
 Q643
 AT2
 84

W	N	E	S
		1D	/
1NT	/	2NT	//

On board 2 in match 7 the rot really set in when my thinking processes went out the window.

I had a marginal bid of 1NT, justified by my good club suit, but when John decided to bid 2NT to show his points rather than a virtually forcing 2C, I had an easy opportunity to show my good club suit.

My only reaction was that I had nothing more than I promised so did not accept the invitation to 3NT.

When North led the obvious S5, 2NT was still too high and I finished 1 off for -50.

A 3C bid by me may have surprised John momentarily, but I am sure when he recovered he would have raised to game without bothering about any more invitations.

At the other table EW had no trouble bidding to 5C and we lost 10 Imps.

M 7 KT2
Bd 4 J72
Dlr W AT5
Vul All A974
 5 A94
 AKQ86 53
 943 KQ62
 KJT3 Q652

QJ8763
 T94
 J87
 8

W	N	E	S
1H	/	2C	/
3S!	/	3NT	//

On board 4 in match 7 John could see that we had missed the best spot for the second time in the match and seemed resigned to going off as he won the opening lead of the S7 at trick 1!

North won his CA at the first opportunity and NS ran 5 more spades tricks and then the DA for 3 off and -300.

I do not know if he was certain that my 3S was a splinter agreeing clubs when he bid 3NT, but I certainly expected that he would have a double-stop when he bid 3NT.

5C loses just the obvious 2 tricks, and should be the final contract, but more than one declarer I spoke to, including East at the other table, was also resigned to going off in 3NT when the spade was led, but routinely held up the SA until the 3rd round, just in case, and was rewarded when it was South who had a 6-card suit, and North who had the 2 Aces!

M 7 K43
Bd 12 AK
Dir W QJT97
Vul NS K98
 AJ96 Q8
 QJ652 987
 K52 A4
 4 AQ6532
 T752
 T43
 863
 JT7
W N E S
 1H 1NT X 2C
 / / X XX
 //

The slumber continued for me on board 12 in match 7 when I twice failed to find the optimum defense to a silly contract of 2CXX.

John's double of the 1NT overcall was for penalties, and South decided to bid 2C as an escape and play there undoubled, or redouble to ask North for another suit. However, a North confused passed.

My first mistake was not leading a trump, whereby John clears trumps and South makes just 3 tricks for +2800. Instead I led the HQ to try and trap North's honour, but that was futile when I saw dummy.

When John won the DA at trick 2 and led another heart, I thought he must have a doubleton heart so when I won the DK, which gave me another chance to lead the trump for +2800, I led the HJ to let John over-ruff dummy, which he duly did and we took it 3 off for +1600.

However, I noticed before our cards were quitted that he still had a heart (neither he nor the opponents had picked up on a revoke), and we had to transfer 2 tricks back, so +2800 to +1600 to +400.

M 8 KQ85
Bd 15 KJ93
Dir S KT5
Vul NS J3
 6 AJ743
 AQ8764 T52
 9764 A3
 KT 652
 T92
 -
 QJ82
 AQ9874
W N E S
 2D / 2H /
 3H X // 3C

On board 15 in match 8 I had a feeling of dread after unwisely bidding 3H over 3C and seeing North make a penalty double which was passed out.

My 2D was the Multi, and it is generally wisest to accept any advantage the preemptive nature of the bid gives and not bid again without knowledge of e fit.

On such bidding, a trump lead is often best, but South led the ST, won by John to lead a club up, and South won and led a 2nd club to the table.

Now a spade ruff followed by 2 rounds of diamonds set the stage for a trump endplay as John was able to ruff spades and diamonds for 7 tricks with North powerless. Then leading a trump towards dummy and ducking ensured 2 more trump tricks as North only had trumps left and had to lead into the tenace.

At the other table Betty played in a safe 3C for +130 and 12 Imps.

M 8 JT92
Bd 18 T873
Dir E 97
Vul NS A86
 K98763 -
 5 AKJ642
 QT6 842
 T54 KJ97
 AQ4
 Q9
 AKJ53
 Q32
W N E S
 2S / / X
 / 3H / 3NT
 / / X //

On board 18 in match 8 the bidding is shown as it happened at the table. South had placed the bidding slips over the board such that the dealer (East) was obscured, and then opened 1D out of turn and nobody noticed it until after the board was over.

My 2S was weak and North apparently gave some mild thought to passing for penalties, before bidding 3H.

When South bid 3NT and John doubled, this was for a heart lead, not a spade, and I led the H5 with some trepidation, but was reassured when John won the top 3 hearts (dropping the HQ from South) and led the H2 to establish his suit, indicating a club entry.

South still had to lose the lead twice, and could only take 7 tricks before letting me in again so we could cash out for +500 and +11 Imps.

Of course if John had been given his rightful due as dealer, he would have opened 1H, and it would have been a dull part-score.

M 9 Q94
Bd 6 983
Dir E 98764
Vul EW 87
 JT A7532
 A76 542
 A32 KT5
 KQJ52 43

 K86
 KQJT
 QJ
 AT96

W N E S
 3C / / 2D
 // / / 3NT

On board 6 in match 9 the basic rule of counting the number of cards you have before you look at the hand was never more evident.

Looking the bidding South seems to be getting a lot of value out of a modest 16 count, and I was a little surprised when continued on to 3NT when I had a good suit and 2 outside Aces.

I led the CK and continued the suit when South ducked. I won my HA and set up the clubs and waited to get in again with the DA to set the contract by 1 trick, unless South could cash 4 spade tricks.

South ran his hearts and then led the S6 towards dummy and to my pleasant surprise, John won the SA, but South was even more surprised as he exclaimed "I also have the SA"

The Director was called and it was quickly established that South's SA was a rogue, with a different colour back, and he had 14 cards.

The new rules state that if any player is found to have more than 13 cards at any stage of the play, the offending card, if unplayed, is removed, and play continues with no further penalty. Declarer thus lost 8 tricks for 4 off and +200 against 2CW making at the other table.

M 9 K
Bd 12 -
Dir W Q864
Vul NS T9876543
 J7532 T4
 AQ962 J7
 AK2 JT753
 - AQJ2

 AQ986
 KT8543
 9
 K
W N E S
 1S / 2D 2H
 / 3C X 3H
 X //

A 2-suited hand often has great playing potential, but loses some of it appeal if one of the suits is opened by either opponent.

This did not daunt South on board 12 in match 9 as not only did he overcall 2H on his first turn to bid, but he pulled the penalty double of his partner's club bid to 3H, which I was happy to double.

The defense was not all that hard, and we duly collected 7 tricks for +800, and possibly a more cautious South in the future.

Many North's could not resist the urge to bid clubs at a high level over the 1S opening bid, but these were not always dealt with in an appropriate manner when EW let them off the hook.

At the other table Mike was one of the club overcallers, although only at the 3-level, following which East bid 3D and West bid 3H. East gave preference to spades and West raised to game. Betty, somewhat cautiously, knew that 4S would fail, but was not sure about 5D, so did not double, but 4 off was +200 and 14 Imps.

M 10 -
Bd 17 T98764
Dir N 73
Vul Nil Q6532
 AJT3 Q98764
 Q3 KJ2
 AK94 852
 T98 7

 K52
 A5
 QJT6
 AKJ4

W N E S
 4H! 5H / 2D 2NT
 //

On board 17 in match 10 we were too much in the dark about our defensive tricks to double North's bold attempt at a sacrifice. I thought that I had 3 tricks, but when dummy went down I knew my spade trick had disappeared, so a pass had seemed like the correct response, but to my surprise we had 2 trump tricks.

John's 2D was the Multi, and my 4H was correctible, and I expected to play in 4H. However, North correctly deduced that with South's minimum of 2 hearts for the 2NT overcall and her 6-card suit, our fit had to be in spades.

There was nothing to the play and North had to lose 4 tricks for a measly +100.

At the other table EW were not so generous, and they doubled 5H for -300 and 5 Imps away.

M 10
Bd 26
Dir E
Vul All
J7
A732
KQ97
A52

T5
K9865
632
T63

Q84
T
AJT854
J97

AK9632
QJ4
-

KQ84

W

N

E

S

5D

//

3D

4S

Board 26 in match 10 looked like the dreaded Phantom save when we saw that I could lead the HA and give John a heart ruff and get in again with the CA to give him another ruff for 1 off. However, that is an unlikely defense, so -620 should be expected.

South failed to lead a 3rd round of spades so John was able to pitch a club on the SQ and made 10 tricks for 1 off and -100,

Actually there are always 10 tricks there even on a spade continuation as trumps can be drawn and hearts eliminated in the South hand before exiting with e club to the C9 and the club return (or a ruff-sluff) gives the 10th trick.

At the other table Betty played in 4H, which eliminated the threat of a heart ruff, and she emerged with 10 tricks for +610 and 11 Imps.