

2009 ANC Senior Teams by Richard Wallis

Tony Jackman and I teamed up with John Gough & Mike Pemberton and Eva & Tony Berger for the ANC Seniors Teams in Canberra this year, and we went to Canberra in eager anticipation of a good result. However we performed hot and cold over the whole event, and while we had very few large losses, never looked like qualifying, as we had very few large wins, and finished in 5th place (out of 7).

We were also 5th after the first round-robin and the second round-robin started well for us with a 20 Imp win over the highly-fancied NSW, but it quickly faltered.

The only bright spot in the ANC Teams as far as Qld was concerned was when the Qld Womens Team won the final in convincing fashion over surprise finalists – Northern Territory. While NT were surprise finalists before the event, they performed consistently well during the qualifying and were always up near the top, and finished a clear second.

In spite of our average results in the round-robin, we all had a great time, enjoyed the event, and got on well together. There is always next year!

M 1	KQ5			Board 10 against WA in the 1 st match was a peculiar way to start the event, and I present the bidding as it occurred at our table.
Bd 10	8643			
Dlr E	J52			When my senses recovered, I looked closely at the bidding again to see if I had missed something, but no, West had bid a natural and non-forcing 1H, and East had raised to the 2-level, but we had the 4-4 fit!
Vul All	653			2S was a very comfortable contract when trumps were 3-2, so I drew trumps and cashed the top diamonds, intending to give up a trick in diamonds to make my 9 th trick with the DT.
643		T8		However, when I cashed the DK, West showed out and East played the DQ! This looked odd, but now I had 10 tricks so I went to the DJ in dummy and both opponents discarded again.
QJ92		K		When I pulled a heart off the table, East played the D9, and on being reminded that a heart was led, put it back in her hand and played the D8! Her heart turned out to be the King, and I cashed my DT and exited with a heart, making 11 tricks with the HT, and the revoke made it up to 12 - +230 against +130 for 3C at the other table.
7		Q9864		
KT842		AQJ97		
	AJ972			
	AT75			
	AKT3			
	-			
W	N	E	S	
		1C	X	
1H	/	2H!	2S	
//				

M 1	Q643			On board 16 against WA in the 1 st match, when West led the S7, expediency and safety won the day.
Bd 16	KT4			
Dlr W	Q64			The diamond suit looked to be vulnerable, so I finessed a club through West as a safety measure, and luckily that was the correct way to tackle clubs for 5 tricks.
Vul EW	AT3			Now I led a spade from dummy to give nothing away, and East won the SA and led a heart to West, who did not count my hand and realize I had already shown up with KJ in both black suits so was unlikely to have the DA.
8752		AT9		Thus the diamond suit still looked like a risky switch to West and a heart came back allowing me 9 tricks for +150.
AJ2		8653		At the other table NS finished too high in 2NT, and all 6 tricks were taken against them for 1 off and 5 Imps to us.
KJ5		AT92		
Q82		97		
	KJ			
	Q97			
	873			
	KJ654			
W	N	E	S	
/	1D	/	1NT	
//				

M 1 QJ53
Bd 17 K5
Dir N AJ
Vul Nil AKJ85
 K4 987
 87642 AJT93
 Q73 K65
 T73 Q9

AT62
 Q
 T9842
 642

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

Board 17 was the make or break hand in the 1st match for me and it was break.

After Tony showed 18 or 19 HCPs with his 2NT rebid, I could have bid 3C looking for a spades fit, but foolishly decided that if he had a major suit it was likely to be hearts, and just raised to 3NT.

I was anxious not to give too much away to EW about Tony's hand pattern, and if he had a heart suit my HQ was going to help, which is why I took the direct route to where I thought that we would end up anyway.

East led the HT and dummy won the first trick, so it looked like everything was going to plan, but Shock! Horror! When West won the SK and returned a heart, EW reeled off the next 5 tricks taking us 1 off.

The revelation that 4S was cold was a bitter pill to swallow, and we lost 11 Imps, losing the match by just 1 Imp.

M 3 -
Bd 4 KJ73
Dir W 7
Vul All AKJ96432
 QJ73 AK98
 AQT4 9
 AQ82 KT65
 T A875

T6542
 8652
 J943
 -

W	N	E	S
1D	5C	X	//

The bidding on board 4 in the 3rd match against Tasmania was short and sweet, and was duplicated at quite a few tables, but not in our match.

Daunted by the 5-level when vulnerable, North at the other table only bid 4C, and Tony and Eva were not sure of the profitability of doubling this, so played in 4S as EW, coming in with 10 tricks in spite of the 5-0 trump break, but losing 10 Imps.

There was nothing that Tony could get out of my hand, except the 4 hearts, and he could not play those to any advantage, so only made his 7 trump tricks for -1100.

When he saw dummy he lamented not playing in our 4-4 heart fit, but 5HX was played at another table and the resulting carnage was down 6 (-1700)!

M 3 AT73
Bd 5 AQT532
Dir N T
Vul NS A3
 KJ854 62
 K876 J9
 32 9865
 Q2 T9875

Q9
 4
 AKQJ74
 KJ64

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

On board 5 in the 3rd match against Tasmania the problem was we were not high enough!

My 3D response was natural and asking for support and Aces, and Tony's 3H showed the HA but no support, so I signed off in 3NT. He could have bid 4NT to show 2 Aces, but we have no bid for 3 Aces, so he improvised with 4C over my sign-off.

Thinking his 4C was natural, I raised to game, but when he next rebid 5D, I knew he was inviting slam, but alas I only bid 6D, not 7D.

In 7D I needed the heart finesse to work and not worse than a 4-2 break, so that is what I would have to play for, but in just 6D I could afford a loser, so of the many lines available (virtually all others would have been successful) I chose to finesse the HT at trick 2, and could not recover. When in desperation I lost to the doubleton CQ at the end, I finished 2 off for -200.

The best line for 12 tricks is to find 1 of the heart honours doubleton, so ruff a heart, and if an honour falls, return to dummy and make a loser-on-loser play in hearts to set the suit up.

M 3 A62
Bd 9 T96
Dlr N JT98
Vul EW 642
 K85 T9
 7532 AKQJ
 - Q72
 KJ9873 AKT5
 QJ743
 84
 AK6543
 -
W N E S
 / / 1C 1D
 X / 3NT 4S
 / 5D X //

Holding such a powerful distributional hand on board 9 in the 3rd match against Tasmania, I was going to take a lot of silencing at favourable vulnerability, so I had no hesitation in showing my spade suit over East's jump to 3NT.

I assumed that West's double was negative, so I do not know why East made the risky bid of 3NT when 4H was bound to play well even if on a 4-3 fit.

Tony gave preference to diamonds, although 4S was a possible make on the expected club lead, and East made the obvious penalty double, still failing to mention hearts.

Luckily my pips were not big enough to worry about playing for no spade losers, so after ruffing the first club and cashing the DA to confirm the break I went to dummy with the SA to take the trump finesse, clearing the trumps, and then exited with the SQ expecting to lose 2 more heart tricks for 1 off and -100.

Since 4H was cold (12 tricks at the other table), this was worth 11 Imps, but the heart did not come so +550 for 14 Imps.

M 3 A
Bd 11 KQT75
Dlr S AQ6
Vul Nil AKJ8
 J43 8765
 J6 A9
 97432 JT8
 T95 Q432
 HQT92
 8432
 K5
 76
W N E S
 / / / /
 / 1C / 1S
 / 2H / 4H
 / 6H //

Board 11 in the 3rd match against Tasmania looked to be one of the all-time flat boards, but not so as it was not bid at the other table so the slam was worth 11 Imps.

I thought about bidding a more encouraging 3H instead of jumping to game, but I have only a minimum with no Aces, and most of my points are in my suit, so I left it up to Tony.

He could have looked for the grand with 4NT, and almost certainly would have over a 3H rebid by me, but was likely put off the 13-trick contract because of his shortage in my long suit.

East led the DJ and it was immediately obvious, that while slam was a good bet, it was not cold, and the singleton SA made entries to dummy more difficult.

Winning the opening lead in dummy and leading a trump did nothing to dispel any misgivings, but after unblocking the SA, cashing 3 diamonds to pitch a club and ruffing the 2nd club to enter dummy for the last time (pitching the last club) the appearance of the HJ on the next round of trumps made for a quick claim.

M 5 T
Bd 5 Q9763
Dlr N K98543
Vul NS T
 AKQJ9 8762
 T4 AK85
 QJ AT
 KJ97 AQ3
 543
 J2
 762
 86542
W N E S
 / / 1C /
 1S / 2S /
 3NT! / 4C /
 4S / 5D /
 5S / 6S /
 7S //

It has been said that in a teams match if the possibility of a grand slam comes up, count carefully to 13 before even considering the grand, and then bid only six!

This could have been true for board 5 in the 5th match against ACT, as at the other table they were only in 3NT, so we were going to pick up 10 Imps anyway and the grand slam only increased that by 4 Imps, but would have been 11 away if it had gone down.

Tony's response to my 2S trump-asking bid showed a solid suit, and then he showed 2nd round club control, but when he did not have 2nd round diamond control I gave away any thoughts of the grand and settled for 6S.

However, Tony had a great deal more than he might have had for the bidding thus far, so he went on to the grand.

The grand is not quite 100%, but has many possibilities, and I would not have been surprised if +1510 was flat! For EW at the other table to stay out of slam was a direct result of our NS being in the auction.

A trump was led, and with trumps 3-1 there was no need for the diamond finesse, but that would have worked if required.

M 5 QJ62
Bd 7 A
Dlr S QJT97
Vul All 764
 43 AK
 K97543 J86
 - 6432
 KJT98 AQ32

T9875
 QT2
 AK85
 5

W	N	E	S
/	1D	/	/
X	/	4C	1S
/	4S	/	/
5C	X	//	

Board 5 in the 5th match against ACT was a case of almost, but not quite!

Tony's 2nd round double showed both the other suits, but with a limited hand since he had already passed.

North has a 3rd-hand opening bid, so did not want South to get too excited by supporting him the first time around, but for some reason had no qualms about bidding 4S over my part-score on the next round.

I thought that we had a chance to beat 4S, but was not confident enough to double it, but having passed the round before, Tony should have passed again instead of taking the push.

In 5CX I was in danger of defeat after the lead of the DA reduced dummy's trump holding, and the 3-1 break was revealed, but I got to hand with a trump and led a heart to dummy, and the moment of truth was at hand.

After the lead of the DA it looked like the HA was with North and I very nearly ducked, which could have let me make 5CX, but I wilted and played the HK. South claimed 2 more tricks in hearts for 1 off and I quickly claimed before he realized that diamond leads would lead to 3 off. He was just getting there as we wrote down -200.

M 5 AQJ32
Bd 10 J86
Dlr E J873
Vul All K
 - K9875
 Q9432 AT75
 KQ4 62
 JT753 A2

T64
 K
 AT95
 Q9864

W	N	E	S
	/	1S	/
1NT!	/	2H	/
4H	//		

On board 10 in the 5th match against ACT I was seeing traps that were not there and went down in a cold game.

1NT was forcing, and Tony made an aggressive jump to game when I showed one of his 5-card suits, although I do not think that a void in my longest suit is necessarily a great asset.

South led the C6 and although I was not psychic enough to duck in dummy, it looked plain sailing to set up my long suit, so I led the HA to prevent any adverse ruffs, but was stopped in my tracks by the appearance of the singleton HK.

The plan was still sound, so I next led the C2, and after a lot of thought South played the C8! If he had won his CQ I could not have gone wrong, but now I wanted to preserve my club winner in dummy, forgetting that I had not lost a club trick yet, so I ducked also.

If I had covered North ruffs this with their natural trump trick but is end-played, and even a diamond to South for another club ruff does not defeat 4H.

M 5 J
Bd 12 82
Dlr W 843
Vul NS AKJ9643
 93 AK65
 AJ9654 K
 KJ QT975
 872 QT5

QT8742
 QT73
 A62
 -

W	N	E	S
2H	3C	3H	3S
/	4C	/	4S
//			

On board 12 in the 5th match against ACT I was all too conservative when I failed to double the final contract of 4S! I did not even have the excuse that I was worried about a possible 5C contract, as I could have doubled that in comfort as well.

My 3H bid was a tactical bid that completely fooled Tony. When he led the HA and I played my HK, he took that as suit-preference, and promptly switched to the DK.

When this held (seemingly justifying his reading of the HK at trick 1) he continued with the DJ on which I played the DQ, but a better play may have been to duck this also, hoping for another heart. However, the SJ in dummy will then come into play in a meaningful way and would have to be negated by my cashing the SK.

We eventually made 2 tricks in spades, diamonds and hearts for +300, but this was poor compensation for the possible 1100 in 4SX to balance out the same score in 5CX at the other table,

M 5 K732
Bd 14 932
Dlr E 9742
Vul Nil J9
 T5 AQ86
 AKJT Q84
 T AQ83
 AK5432 Q7

J94
 765
 KJ65
 T86

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

A slam swing went to the ACT on board 14 in the 5th match when I misinterpreted Tony's 4NT rebid after I defined my hand as a minimum 1C opening with my 3NT rebid.

Expecting only around a 2 point range for the 3NT rebid, he was asking for Aces, but I incorrectly took it as quantitative, and I could hardly be more minimum, so I passed.

When the S4 was lead and dummy went down I could see only one hope for my pass, and that was a bad break in clubs, but the one time you are hoping for bad breaks everything is friendly, so 13 tricks rolled home.

The grand slam is cold because the spade finesse works, but it would be a dilemma if you somehow managed to get to 7NT, as 13 tricks are there if either finesse works, but which one to take?

I suppose a slight improvement on 50% could be obtained by cashing the longest suit (spades) in case the King was singleton, and taking the other finesse, but that fails.

M 7 AK94
Bd 3 J74
Dlr S T4
Vul EW 9854
 QT853 6
 A5 KQT9863
 65 872
 KQJ6 T7

J72
 2
 AKQJ93
 A32

W	N	E	S
		/!	1D
1S	1NT		3NT

Sometimes it pays to keep quiet with a long suit, but I must confess that if I had the East hand on board 3 in the 7th match against VIC I would have made a bid, even if only at the 2-level. There are 5 certain tricks if hearts are trumps, but likely no tricks if any other suit is trumps.

I did not upgrade my powerful trick-taking hand to a 1C opening, although I might have done, but when Tony showed a spade stop over the overcall, I had no hesitation in bidding 3NT with my 7 tricks.

Now was the time for East to spring his surprise, when he led not a spade, but the HK, overtaken by West who returned a heart and East cashed out for 3 down and -150. Just another flat board as the same auction and play was repeated at the other table.

Of course if East had bid his hearts, we would have been warned and may have sailed into the cold 5D.

M 7 T762
Bd 11 J65
Dlr S 82
Vul Nil J952
 K4 A85
 K987 42
 AQ53 KJT964
 AKQ 83

QJ93
 AQT3
 7
 T764

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

Minor suit slams are often difficult to bid when the long suit is responding to a very strong hand, and on board 11 in the 7th match against VIC, EW did not even get close to a slam, checking for a possible 5-3 spade fit before subsiding in 3NT, with diamonds not even being mentioned naturally.

However, the East hand has the potential for a slam when partner opens with a strong 2NT, good suit and good controls, but could not now bid 4D naturally, as presumably that showed both majors after West showed at least one 4-card major.

It would be better if a transfer sequence could make West declarer, but in the absence of that mechanism East should have bid a natural 4D instead of looking for a 5-3 spade fit as he knows he has at least a 6-2 diamond fit.

At the other table Mike and John had no trouble sailing into 6D by West to pick up 10 Imps.

M 7 AK9
Bd 19 -
Dlr S JT9532
Vul EW AKQ6
 J42 T863
 KJT9 AQ8653
 AQ76 8
 43 52

Q75
 742
 K4
 JT987

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

The best laid plans of mice and men went astray on board 19 in the 7th match against VIC when Tony bid a tactical 3D over 2H, expecting more bidding when he would then bid clubs, but there was none! He might have been right if the vulnerability had been reversed.

My 2C response to his strong club opening showed at least a 5-card suit and 5-8 HCPs, and the EW bidding suggested that most or all of my points were likely to be in his suits, so a game in clubs was a good bet.

I could not dredge up another bid on my minimum points, poor suit, and only 2-card support, and EW picked a good time to go quietly, possibly influenced by the adverse vulnerability and the strong opening bid.

The 3D contract was even in danger of going down when the finesse lost and the suit broke 4-1, but Tony managed 9 tricks for +110 and 7 lmps away as NS got to 5C at the other table.

M 8 K4
Bd 8 Q983
Dlr W QT7654
Vul Nil Q
 JT63 A85
 KJ764 A2
 AK J3
 53 AJT742

Q972
 T5
 982
 K986

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

On board 8 in the 8 match against NSW we saw Paul Lavings in full flow in the poor contract of 4S.

I believe that his 2S was just stopper showing, looking for a diamond stop from partner, but the 3S response left him little room to manoeuvre, and after his partner rejected 4H, he was in 4S on the poor 4-2 fit.

I led the D9, won on the table and a club led at trick 2, Tony playing the CQ. Paul now led a spade to dummy, won by Tony who led another diamond to dummy.

Now was the make or break time for the contract, as Paul pulled a club off the table, and Tony, not knowing that I had the top club, took the opportunity to ruff this with his small trump, and now he was endplayed. Paul ruffed the diamond return in hand, ruffed my CK and returned to hand with the HA to lead good clubs through me. I was able to pitch my HT but eventually Paul made the SJ en passant for his 10th trick.

If Tony knew about my club trick and ducked the club, I could win and lead another club, destroying the hand.

M 8 QJ6
Bd 12 Q9
Dlr W AK96
Vul NS J932
 AT8 K9754
 AKJ5 7632
 J543 T72
 54 T

32
 T84
 Q8
 AKQ876

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

The opponents do not always do what you expect, but then neither does partner, and board 12 in the 8th match against NSW was another such example on both counts.

After the weak 1NT opening and transfer to spades, my 3C was natural, so Tony chanced his arm with a plucky 3NT bid, probably intending to pull to 4C if doubled. However, East did not lead a spade, but a heart, and West cashed the top 2 hearts (dropping the HQ), followed by the SA and another spade!

Who can blame East for not leading any more hearts? Has not West denied the HJ by not cashing it before leading the 2nd spade? After all he alone was in a position to know the exact heart layout as North would not throw away a winning trick!

Tony could not believe his luck when a diamond was led after East won the spade, examining it very carefully, and quickly claimed 9 tricks before they changed their mind.

M 8 A987
Bd 17 KJ84
Dlr N QT
Vul Nil Q92
 32 QJ54
 - A7532
 A9865432 KJ
 AT4 J3

 KT6
 QT96
 7
 K8765

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

On board 17 in the 8th match against NSW we came across another player who did not bid a long suit. This time it was an 8-card suit headed by the Ace, and he had another Ace outside!

Tony's 1D was the nebulous Precision diamond opening (maybe this is what put him off), and over the 1H overcall by East I bid a normal 1NT, passed out.

West blocked his suit by leading the DA, and East could not afford to unblock, but this is where the outside Ace was important as West regained the lead with the CA at trick 3 and cashed his winners.

Since East had neglected to cash his HA that was only 3 off, for -150, and another flat board as Mike and John made 11 tricks in 4D at the other table for +150.

5D is defeated by a diamond lead, and another diamond when in with the SA on the first round of spades, then although West can discard a spade loser, he loses 2 club tricks if South covers the CJ.

M 8 J63
Bd 20 QJ7
Dlr W KQJ
Vul All AJ84
 8 AKQT
 AT62 K853
 AT983 764
 KQ2 T5

 97542
 94
 52
 9763

W N E S
 / 1D X XX 1S
 / / X //

Board 20 in the 8th match against NSW was both lucky and unlucky for me. Firstly I had a Yarborough and we were in trouble, but at least I had a 5-card suit, which is often worth a couple of tricks, though this time only 1.

The other lucky thing about the hand from my point of view is that Tony elected to double for take-out with his flat 15-count, instead of overcalling 1NT as occurred at a few other tables, so I got to play in 1SX instead of 2SX.

West got off to the good lead of the S8, but with the trebleton SJ on the table it did not really matter, and East drew 4 rounds of trumps.

Dummy's scattered honours were not to be denied, and I eventually emerged with 5 tricks for -500, to go with the +620 when Mike and John played in 4H at the other table for a modest 3 Imps.

M 10 K742
Bd 5 2
Dlr N 954
Vul NS AKQ95
 A5 J
 AQJ984 KT7653
 Q KJ76
 8643 J2

 QT9863
 -
 AT832
 T7

W N E S
 3H 2C / 2S
 / 4S 5H 5S
 / / 6H X

Board 5 in the 10th match against SA was often a case of who could bluff most, and it seems that the 5-level and 6-level belongs to anyone who ventures there.

After Tony opened with a natural and limited 2C, my 2S was natural and invitational, and West joined in the fun with 3H.

I had the bit between my teeth when Tony accepted my invitation as my hand increased greatly with good support opposite, so I had no hesitation in bidding 5S.

I was a bit surprised when East bid to 6H over my 5S, since the initial bid of 2S was known to be only invitational, but he was probably only working the vulnerability, and his 6-card support in hearts indicated we had at most 1 loser there.

6S was never a real possibility for us, but West said that he would have gone on to 7H if we had bid slam, as a cheap insurance.

M 10 A754
Bd 10 -
Dir E A932
Vul All J7654
 KQJT986 2
 AJ96 KT752
 65 QT874
 - A9

 3
 Q843
 KJ
 KQT832

W N E S
 4S // 2D //

The bidding swamped us on board 10 in the 10th match against SA, when East opened a nebulous 2D, showing a weak unspecified 2-suiter, West jumped to 4S eschewing their likely heart fit, and at the vulnerability, neither of us felt it safe to move.

I had probably the easiest bid of 3C over the 2D opening, but my 4-card heart suit did not look like an asset, and Tony was a bit weak to trot out 4NT for take-out over the 4S bid, especially when it was known that East had 5-5 in 2 of his suits.

6C is a good contract for NS, only needing the diamond finesse, which was marked by the bidding, but we did not even bid.

To make matters worse, Tony did not find the double-dummy lead of the D9 (suggesting a heart return) that would have led to a 3 trick defeat and picked us up 3 Imps.

Instead, on a club lead, declarer pitched a diamond on the CA and eventually lost 3 tricks for -620. At the other table the heart fit was found, but was doubled for 1 off and 13 Imps out.

M 10 A7
Bd 12 A9
Dir W AKJ8742
Vul NS A3
 T4 KJ8632
 JT8752 63
 - T96
 KJ986 72

 Q95
 KQ4
 Q53
 QT54

W N E S
 2D! 3NT //

On board 12 in the 10th match against SA the dreaded 2D bid struck again, this time West had a hearts and clubs, and Tony did not want to give East a chance to learn anything, so jumped to 3NT.

This is a practical bid, with a reasonable chance of success, the only trouble is I knew nothing as well, and I did not think my balanced 11-count was enough for slam.

I gave a passing thought to inviting slam with 4NT, but it passed pretty quickly as Tony needs too much for this to work since I had no idea what type of hand he had.

I think a better call was to double on the first round, and then I have an easy 2NT bid even if East bids 2S, now Tony knows we are in the slam zone.

At the other table NS did get to 6D for -1370, so 12 Imps out.

M 10 A8542
Bd 16 5
Dir W KQJ942
Vul EW 6
 T7 J9
 AT96 KQ8
 A5 T76
 AKT97 QJ532

 KQ63
 J7432
 83
 84

W N E S
 1C 1D 3C /
 3NT //

On board 16 in the 10th match against SA Tony was a little reserved in the bidding because he felt that his good suit and outside Ace may have been enough to defeat 3NT, and he did not want to make a phantom sacrifice!

The trouble is that it needed a spade lead to defeat 3NT, and because of my spade holding, 4S is cold and EW may have succumbed to a double for +590.

It is an interesting hand to bid, but put me down for the occasional phantom sacrifice, as I am for bidding on with a 65 distribution, especially with the safety of the good diamond suit.

This is one of those rare hands where vulnerable EW have to sacrifice in 5C over the non-vulnerable 4S by NS, but not many are likely to do it, and it did not happen at the other table, where another -420 went with our -630 for 15 Imps out.

M 10 98
Bd 20 A8543
Dlr W 954
Vul All 843
 4 A53
 KQT J972
 AT6 873
 AKJT96 Q72
 KQJT762
 6
 KQJ2
 5
W N E S
 1C / 1H 4S
 X //

It was more exciting action on board 20 in match 10 against SA, but this time it was our hand.

The bidding was straight-forward, and West led the CA, and I ruffed the 2nd round and led a trump to East, who gave me some cause for concern by leading back the D8, and I ruffed the next club.

As a heart lead had not come yet, I decided that if the diamonds were not breaking (as I suspected from the return of the D8) maybe I could exert some pseudo pressure by running a few trumps.

Nothing special happened, so with 1 trump left I cashed the DQ in case the DT dropped, and when that did not happen, I continued with the last trump.

It was all unnecessary, as the diamonds broke 3-3 anyway, so I scored up +790. As I expected, another one of our flat boards.

M 13 AKT42
Bd 12 64
Dlr W J93
Vul NS AJ6
 9 QJ76
 AJT97532 Q
 Q642 AKT
 - KT943
 853
 K8
 875
 Q8752
W N E S
 4H 1NT 4S X //

Board 12 in the 13 match against WA was started too early by North opening a weak 1NT out of rotation. Of course I did not accept the bid out of rotation, so the bidding reverted to Tony, who opened 4H.

North was able to bid what he liked, but South was barred, and also South would be subject to a lead penalty if she gained the lead at any time, so maybe this is what prompted North to bid 4S over 4H, vulnerable against not with just a 13-count!

He picked the wrong time to do this of course, and doubling 4S at the vulnerability was heaps better than anything else I could think of.

I led the HQ covered by declarer, and Tony cashed 2 heart tricks, on the 2nd of which I discarded the DT suggesting a club switch. When I diamond came after all I diagnosed the club void and gave Tony his ruff, but all he could do was cash a diamond and then give a ruff-sluff, so we only got it 5 off for +1400.

I was surprised at the score-up that after a 4H opening at the other table our North had also succumbed to a 4S overcall, but they only went down 4 so we picked up 7 Imps.

M 13 AKT64
Bd 15 AJ8
Dlr S QJ3
Vul NS 76
 J7 Q95
 Q95 K64
 T9542 AK
 AK3 QT854
 832
 T732
 876
 J92
W N E S
 / 1S 1NT /
 3NT //

On board 15 in match 13 against WA, to overcall 1NT I upgraded my 14 count for the 5-card club suit, although my spade stopper was vulnerable, and Tony raised me to game.

Game prospects looked bleak when dummy went down and I resigned myself to going down, as surely when North set up his spades, he was indicating possession of the HA.

I played 2 rounds of clubs to confirm the even split, and then I played for 1 off by pulling a heart, and that is what I got.

However, I should not have given up, as the power of the closed hand would probably have saved me.

If I run my clubs discarding a heart and another diamond from the table, North has to find 3 discards, and does not know that he can give up the diamond control, so will be forced to throw a spade winner.

Then I could have given up a heart for my 9th trick!

M 13 872
Bd 16 Q74
Dlr W 6
Vul EW AJ9764
 JT9 AKQ543
 AKJ8 T32
 T72 K
 KT8 Q32
 6
 965
 AQJ98543
 5

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

On board 16 in the 13th match against WA I was lucky when NS did not play their assets to their best advantage.

North failed to make a weak-jump overcall with his 6-card club suit, and South made a non-committal preempt of only 4D with her 8-card suit.

From my point of view even 3S could be too high against Tony's Precision 1D opening, but I decided to go for broke with a game bid and was pleased to see my wasted DK did not affect my chances of 10 tricks.

South led the DA and upon seeing my DK, switched to the C5, obviously a singleton or doubleton. Since South appeared to have 8 diamonds, it was more likely that it was a singleton, but luckily North put in the C9 and I could win the CK and draw trumps for 10 tricks by taking the heart finesse. At the other table the contract was a more reasonable 5D, which only went 1 off so we gained 11 Imps.

M 13 962
Bd 18 98
Dlr E QJ983
Vul NS Q65
 KQ53 JT87
 J74 AKT632
 AK 7
 KT32 A9
 A4
 Q5
 T6542
 J874

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

On board 18 in match 13 against WA I did not give the full system response to Tony's trump asking bid of 2C. I showed only a 5-card suit with 2 of the top 3 honours.

Tony's next bid was a control ask in clubs, and I showed the Ace, so I was very surprised when I gave him the best result possible and yet he signed off.

I thought about going on myself, which I am entitled to with a good hand as his bid showed slam interest, but I did not have a great hand, so let it slide.

When dummy went down it was obvious that slam depended only on not losing a trump trick so I played for the drop, hoping for the HQ doubleton offside, which may be a possible salvation for us if the opposing EW got to slam. When the HQ did drop offside, I hoped that the East in the other table would finesse in situations like this.

The question was academic as the contract and result was the same at both tables.

M 14 T632
Bd 1 -
Dlr N Q32
Vul Nil KJT932
 AJ987 KQ5
 KT953 Q864
 JT8 9765
 - 54
 4
 AJ72
 AK4
 AQ876

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

The bidding on board 1 in the 14th match against Tasmania got off the rails with me when I could not let the opponents clarify, nor could I agree trumps in a forcing situation.

The 1D overcall of my 1C opening was an unspecified 2-suiter, and 3D was meant to be pass or correct. I could not afford to pass for clarification from West in case that was the end of the auction, and I had no way of agreeing clubs and showing my controls.

My actual 3H bid was ill-advised given my great club support for Tony and thus far I had not shown my liking for clubs.

I was given a second chance when he rebid clubs, but by then the rot had set in and I inexplicably passed.

With the unspecified interference we were never going to match the other table and get to slam, which is a bit fluke, but we should have got to game. Mike and John took the sacrifice over the making slam, losing 800, so the loss was 12 Imps.

M 14 AT
Bd 5 AQJ972
Dir N 752
Vul NS 98
 - Q876542
 K6543 -
 J96 AKQT8
 KJT62 A
 KJ93
 T8
 43
 Q7543
W N E S
 1H X //

Board 5 in the 14th match against Tasmania was odd firstly that East would make a take-out double with a 7051 distribution, and secondly that West would choose to pass the double with poor trumps and a good 5-card outside suit.

In such auctions the recommended lead is a trump, but East was void, so they fell back on the stock-standard lead of a winner!

If East had started off by leading the other standard lead, namely 4th highest of their longest suit, they may have succeeded, as now West can get 2 spade ruffs, EW can cash 4 tricks in the minors, and West still gets a heart trick, but this did not happen, although East still had a chance when he saw the 4 spades on the table to switch to a low spade for a ruff and club return.

At the other table more spirited bidding got EW to 3D making 10 tricks for another +130 to go with our +160 and 7 Imps.

M 14 65
Bd 6 KJT964
Dir E KT6
Vul EW 87
 A T943
 AQ832 7
 A9 QJ8732
 AJT96 53
 KQJ872
 5
 54
 KQ42
W N E S
 2S / / 1S
 3S / 3C! /
 5C // 4C /

Holding a powerful 2-suiter it is easy to get carried away with the moment and credit partner with more support than he has shown, which is what West did on board 6 in match 14 against Tasmania.

2S was standard Michaels and 3S reinforced that West had a strong hand, but she did not take into account that East had not chosen clubs, he just preferred either minor to hearts.

I thought that we could defeat 5C, but as Tony had not shown any values it was not worth revealing my club strength with a double.

I led the SK and East cashed both major suit Aces and ruffed a low heart with the C3, allowing me to over-ruff with the C4.

I next led a diamond, and East finessed, losing to Tony's DK, and another heart came back. This time East discarded so I was able to ruff with the C2. East won the next diamond on the table and played the top trumps, so I was in again with the CK for our 4th trick, and the SQ forced East to ruff on the table so that Tony took the last 2 tricks in hearts for 4 off and +400.

At the other table Mike and John played in their 6-2 diamond fit for 2 off, but -100 was worth 7 Imps.