

## 2009 Gold Coast Seniors Pairs by Richard Wallis

The Gold Coast Congress has come and gone for 2009, with a new flavour this year due to the overseas players that stayed on after the Yeh Bros Cup at nearby Jupiters Casino. None of these players were able to play in the Pairs due to the finish time for their main event, but many stayed on for the teams, and a mixture of USA and European stars won the teams final from a Japanese quartet.

Numbers in the Pairs and Teams were down a little on 2008, around the same as 2007. Since numbers were also down for Canberra, it is a worrying trend.

As usual I played in the Seniors Pairs with John Brockwell, and we had a late start to the pairs qualifying due to our playing in the Consolation Swiss Teams for the Yeh Bros Cup. The one qualifying and three final rounds that we played were average from start to finish, in fact the 55% that we were given in lieu of playing in the first qualifying was our best result, and we never figured in the placings, finishing 10<sup>th</sup> in the final.

Nonetheless among the few failures we did have our successes, and it was a most enjoyable event, and there is always next year to do better.

<b>Q 2</b>	AQT82			Board 10 in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> qualifying round was one of our few good results.
<b>Bd 10</b>	KT6			In spite of not being able to open the bidding, South had no hesitation
<b>Dir E</b>	T			in bidding a natural 3D when John's 1NT (12-14) was passed around
<b>Vul All</b>	8632			to her. I gave thought to doubling, but decided to pass and look for
6543		KJ7		+200 as it was pairs scoring after all, and a top is a top.
AQ43		75		John led the S5, and dummy must have been a disappointment to
Q85		K43		declarer, and in an endeavour to salvage something, declarer called
A9		QJ754		for the SQ from dummy.
	9			On winning with the SK I led the CQ and we wrapped up 2 tricks in
	J982			clubs and exited with a small club for declarer to ruff and John to over-
	AJ9762			ruff, and exit with Ace and another heart.
	KT			Declarer called for the HK, discarded a heart on the SA, and played a
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	trump to John, who cashed the HQ and exited with a spade. My DK
		/	/	meant 3 off and +300. Declarer's comment was priceless: "maybe 3D
1NT	/	/	3D	was not a good idea"
//				

<b>Q 2</b>	T543			Board 18 in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> qualifying round was a triumph for John's policy of
<b>Bd 18</b>	AKQJT74			striving to bid 2C over 1D to take a full level of bidding away from the
<b>Dir E</b>	2			opposition. This was probably more important before the invention of
<b>Vul NS</b>	Q			negative doubles, but was still effective on this hand.
Q		J972		2C was not intended to be lead-directional, just disruptive, but it struck
63		982		a chord with me, and with too many clubs and no points I elected to
AKQJ6		T5		firstly push further with a preemptive jump, and then take the sacrifice
JT876		K542		at favourable vulnerability.
	AK86			North had only hearts, and did not know about the spade fit, so
	5			accepted South's penalty double for want of a better suggestion,
	98743			although the solid heart suit did indicate bidding on.
	A93			North cashed the top hearts and John ruffed the next round and led
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	the CT, covered all around.
		/	1D	On winning the CA South cashed the SA and shifted to the d(), which
2C	2H	4C	/	to my surprise John ran around to the table, and finessed the C8,
/	4H	5C	X	claiming 9 tricks for -300 and a good score
//				

**Q** JT9864  
**Bd 21** K64  
**Dir N** 84  
**Vul NS** A9  
 AKQ7 5  
 J 953  
 AK73 QJ962  
 KT53 QJ42  
  
 32  
 AQT872  
 T5  
 876  
  
**W** **N** **E** **S**  
 / / 2D!  
 2H / 3D  
 5D //

Board 21 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> qualifying round was unusual in that they opened artificially in our suit and our first bid was in their suit.

2D was a Multi, and 2H was shortness, for take-out. I probably would have bid 3D anyway, but was forced into some action when North passed.

We do play Lebensohl over weak twos, but not over the Multi, so I felt I had a little in reserve for a 3D bid, but wanted to leave room to bid clubs in the unlikely event that NS competed in hearts.

John took any opposition bidding out of play by jumping to game, and South led the HA.

There was nothing to the play when both followed to the first round of trumps, and with trumps 2-2 any line of play was going to work.

The only dangers were a 4-0 trump break, in which case at least 1 heart ruff and 2 rounds of spades to discard the other heart would be required before drawing trumps, or a club ruff and that was no chance.

**F 1** 7654  
**Bd 2** QJ9432  
**Dir E** 73  
**Vul NS** 9  
 AQ J9  
 75 A6  
 AKQJT4 85  
 J32 AKT8764  
  
 KT832  
 KT8  
 962  
 Q5  
  
**W** **N** **E** **S**  
 / 1C /  
 2D / 3C /  
 6NT //

Board 2 in the first round of the final looked like potentially a below average score, as there were tricks to burn in either minor or Notrumps.

However, in fact we scored 88% for +1020, probably because most people elected to play in their minor suit fit.

The 2D response showed a solid, no-loser suit, and I tried to show a good suit myself with a 3C bid rather than a simple cue-bid of 2H, and John could envisage 12 tricks, but not 13.

I did not know about the 3-card support, otherwise, with 8 tricks of my own, I could have bid 7NT myself.

Since he had already shown the nature of his hand by the 2D response, we thought afterwards that his best rebid was 4C, to show support, rather than simply bash 6NT. Since I knew he had at least 5 diamond tricks, club support gives me 8 tricks and 7NT would have been easy, after first checking up on the SA.

**F 1** 8632  
**Bd 6** J4  
**Dir E** T965  
**Vul EW** K43  
 AT5 J94  
 K53 T86  
 AKQ8 7432  
 Q72 A96  
  
 KQ7  
 AQ972  
 J  
 JT85  
  
**W** **N** **E** **S**  
 / / 1H  
 X 1S / 2S  
 X //

On board 6 in the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the final I put in a dubious 1S response after West made a take-out double (too strong for 1NT overcall?), and soon found myself in 2SX.

East led the S4 and dummy's SK won the first trick and I asked East what the 2<sup>nd</sup> double was and he said take-out!

This looked like a worse contract now, although I wondered what West's take-out double was based on if East converted the 2<sup>nd</sup> double to penalties, suggesting that the spades were not breaking.

I now passed the CJ, and West rightly did not cover, or else I could have finessed the C8, and on winning with the CA East led a heart and the HK won the next trick with West returning a heart to dummy, where I cashed another heart to discard a club and led the DJ.

West won the DQ and cashed the SA (in frustration) and then the top diamonds (while I discarded clubs from dummy) and exited with a diamond, won in hand with the precious DT. To my surprise all followed to the spade, so I had 7 tricks and -100, but a poor score.

**F 1** AJ9853  
**Bd 15** -  
**Dir S** AK982  
**Vul NS** J6  
 - 7  
 Q543 KJ982  
 T4 Q765  
 AK85432 QT7  
 KQT642  
 AT76  
 J3  
 9  
**W N E S**  
 3C 4S 5C 2D  
 // // 5S

You just know that when you have a void in one major and partner opens with a Multi-2D, that he will have your void major, and this is what must have been in North's head on board 15 in the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the final when he bid 4S on his own over John's simple 3C overcall.

I had an easy 5C, and South, with what was almost an opening hand, bid 5S without apparently wondering whether his unannounced 6-card support and an outside Ace was worth a slam, or maybe he assumed that North had guessed his suit?

If South had passed, I am sure that North would have tried 5D, and maybe then the slam-gates would have opened, but with 2 club losers North had no reason the bid again, and John wisely did not rock the boat.

The obvious club lead took our only trick, and I am sure that North got the surprise of his life when a 6-card spade suit went down on the table.

**F 1** QT53  
**Bd17** Q954  
**Dir N** JT2  
**Vul Nil** 63  
 64 KJ9872  
 J3 72  
 7653 AQ8  
 AQJ92 74  
 A  
 AKT86  
 K94  
 KT85  
**W N E S**  
 3C / 2D 2H  
 3H 3S //

On board 17 in the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the final I felt I had a good suit, and a maximum hand with secondary support for John's clubs, so this justified bidding 3S over 3H, which surprisingly closed out the auction.

South led the HA and then cashed the SA before leading the HK, and I ruffed!

Obviously spades were bad, so I finessed the CQ and led a trump, playing the S9 and confirming that the spades were bad, finessed clubs again and cashed the CA hoping for a 3-3 break, but no luck there. North could not ruff without giving up a trump trick so discarded a heart, and I discarded a diamond.

That is when I found the H7 hidden in my hand!

I was now able to ruff the club, cash the DA, and exit with a diamond and claim 2 more tricks with my KJ poised over North's QT for 9 tricks, but the revoke meant 2 off and -100, but still almost 70% since hearts will make at least 9 tricks for -140.

**F 1** 962  
**Bd 21** Q8543  
**Dir N** A9  
**Vul NS** KJ7  
 AJT3 KQ8  
 KT J2  
 K74 QT82  
 AQ95 T842  
 754  
 A976  
 J653  
 63  
**W N E S**  
 1C / / /  
 3NT !/ 1NT /

I must have been out of the room during the bidding on board 21 in the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the final, as that is the only explanation I can think of for not overcalling 1H on the 2<sup>nd</sup> round, having already passed.

Before John led, West offered an explanation of the 1NT response as 8-10 and no 4-card major or diamond suit. I thought at the time that that was an unusual treatment, and denying 4 cards in diamonds is not what I would have expected.

John's normal lead is the H6, as it is not often productive to lead away from a suit as poor as J653, but the explanation that East did not have 4 diamonds either, persuaded him to lead the D3, and I was beguiled into continuing the suit.

Thus 3NT made exactly 9 tricks for -400 and our only complete bottom of the tournament.

On a heart lead, we have at least 5 tricks, more if declarer mis-guesses hearts at trick 1, or if he takes the club finesse.

**F 2** K3  
**Bd 2** JT9853  
**Dir E** 95  
**Vul NS** KQ3  
 AQ4 J952  
 K42 Q7  
 QT8 A642  
 T862 AJ4  
  
 T876  
 A6  
 KJ73  
 975  
  
**W** **N** **E** **S**  
 2C 2H 1NT /  
 2NT // /

On board 2 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the final I jumped into a potential furnace by bidding 2H in front of the opening bidder, and escaped unscathed, or so I thought at the time.

East refused the invitation to game, and John led the HA and another heart, won on the table. West finessed to my SK and I set up the hearts, with the club entry to cash them, as long as West could not garner 8 tricks first.

Since the spades and diamonds did not break, declarer had no chance of 8 tricks, and when they threw me in with a club (I had played the CQ when declarer led towards dummy) in a vain hope of 8 tricks, I cashed out for 2 off and +100.

However, this was below average, as those North's allowed to play in 2H were able to take at least 8 tricks for +110.

If we had doubled 2NT, it is likely that West would have taken the 7 top tricks (2 spades, 2 hearts, 2 diamonds and 1 club) so only +100.

**F 2** K2  
**Bd 4** AQJ6  
**Dir W** KJT9  
**Vul All** KT9  
 75 AJ63  
 K7 53  
 A542 Q863  
 A6543 QJ7  
  
 QT984  
 T9842  
 7  
 82  
  
**W** **N** **E** **S**  
 1C 1NT X 2S!  
 //

On board 4 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the final my 1NT overcall was of the strong variety, and East's double was for penalty.

John could bid 2H now, to show both majors (at least 4-4), but decided that since both were 5-card suits, he would bid spades first and then bid hearts on the next round. While we play redouble to show a single suit and other bids to show the lower of 2 suits, 2S has no other meaning, and can be used as a single suit as well.

But there was no next round, not even a double! West led a trump, which simplified the trumps for John, but there were still 2 losers in trumps and 2 Aces to lose, so +140 was the best score we could achieve in a spade contract.

This was below average, as 10 tricks are easy in hearts, since only the 3 Aces have to be lost, and the club suit has no real play option. A diamond can be given up to provided a safe return to hand for the trump and club finesses.

**F 2** AQT8753  
**Bd 13** QT3  
**Dir N** T8  
**Vul All** 9  
 J92 -  
 K52 986  
 K62 AQJ943  
 K854 AQ63  
  
 K64  
 AJ74  
 75  
 JT72  
  
**W** **N** **E** **S**  
 3S 4D //

On board 13 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the final I wimped out at the vulnerability and only opened 3S, over which East had no hesitation in bidding 4D, passed out.

John's reluctance to bid with such a seemingly good hand was no doubt due to the doubt he had about 5D, since it was likely we had 1 trick in spades at the most.

It is not easy to see from the layout how 11 tricks can be made in diamonds, but this is so according to Deep Finesse, and it is rarely (never?) wrong, and indeed, declarer made only 10 tricks for 130 to EW and a very poor score to us.

Maybe if I had opened 4S East may have passed, but although I doubt it, we will never know.

<b>F 2</b>	KQ84			
<b>Bd 27</b>	JT72			
<b>Dlr S</b>	-			
<b>Vul Nil</b>	65432			
T5		A973		
K943		Q865		
KJT82		Q74		
A8		KT		
	J62			
	A			
	A9653			
	QJ97			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
/	1H	/	1D	
/	3C	//	2C	

On board 27 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the final we were both in danger of getting carried away, but luckily suppressed the desire to bid further. The key to the hand is keeping EW out of the bidding, and they can make 8 tricks in notrumps or the red suits, but why would they bid either or 'our' suits?.

I had no thoughts of bidding notrumps with my good spade stoppers, since my void in John's minimum of 5-card diamond suit is not an asset unless we have a trump suit. Since we play a new suit by opener is virtually forcing, my 3C response is not strong.

John must have been also tempted to bid on, but again, his spade holding looks suspect and he has absolute minimum in the way of high cards, so he passed.

West got his side off to a good start with the CA and another, which held us to only 9 tricks with carefull defense thereafter, but +110 was worth 81%.

<b>F 3</b>	J98			
<b>Bd 7</b>	J74			
<b>Dlr S</b>	AKJ973			
<b>Vul All</b>	5			
QT73		54		
832		KQT9		
T2		Q8		
T962		AKQ83		
	AK62			
	A65			
	654			
	J74			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
/	/	1NT	/	
/	3D	//	/	

On board 7 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of the final I missed my chance to shine by carelessly ruffing the club continuation with the D3! During 40 years of playing bridge I have seen numerous examples of using the lowest trump too early and this was another one.

I could have bid 2D over 1NT and rebid 3D over the 2H relay, to show a single-suiter, but since this forces to the 3-level with a minor suit, we reserve this sequence for stronger hands. Thus my 3D was natural and not strong, which explains why John took no action.

I ruffed the CK at trick 2 with the D3, and thereafter I could only make 9 tricks.

The handy position of the major honours enables me to set up 3 tricks in spades, but I have no entry to get to the 3 tricks. If I had ruffed with the D7, I could have drawn trumps, and taken advantage of the 2-2 break by using the D3 to enter dummy for a low spade lead away from the Ace. I can then win the heart return, spade to my SJ, and back to dummy for a heart discard and 10 tricks.

<b>F 3</b>	4			
<b>Bd 22</b>	T642			
<b>Dlr E</b>	532			
<b>Vul EW</b>	J9754			
AJT3		Q862		
J875		K9		
AQ984		KJ7		
-		K832		
	K975			
	AQ3			
	T6			
	AQT6			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
2C	/	1NT	/	
4S	/	2S	/	
//	/	/	X	

Board 22 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of the final was a tricky hand to play due to the 4-1 trump break. It may have been even trickier if South had not advertized the bad break and then led a very friendly S5!

After winning the trump lead cheaply, I ran the SQ which confirmed the bad break announced by the double, then I repeated the trump finesse and with nothing else to do I drew trumps while I formulated my plan for the 10<sup>th</sup> trick.

As it turns out I would probably have been better off winning the ST on the table at trick 2 and leading a heart. If I play the HK, I can finesse in spades again is South continues with the trump attack, and return to hand to lead another heart, which is okay as long as South has both the top honours in hearts.

As it was I took 2 diamonds finishing on the table, and led to my H9. When this was won by the HQ, I was in charge, as my CK was protected, so all South could do was cash his 3 tricks for +790 to us.