

2010 Qld Open Teams by Richard Wallis

The 32 teams for this year's event was a reasonable turnout, and the quality of the field was almost as good as it gets in our home state. A few notable local players were busy interstate or at International events, but most of the 'known' Qld players were present, as well as few up and coming players.

This year I played in the teams with Tony Jackman, along with Richard Ward playing with Bill Hunt. We plugged along with 3 wins before hitting a sight snag with a draw against Robson (Mike Robson, Betty Lee, Charlie Howard, Kerry Wood), but as other matches were also close, still finished the first day with a narrow 1 VP lead.

First up next morning a modest win against Francis (Neville Francis, Nathan Van Jole, Peter Hainsworth, Kamal Sanmugaras) saw us knocked off the top spot, before a big loss to McLeish (David & Paula McLeish, Gary & Jan Malinas) in match 6 put them in the lead and us back in the chasing pack. We needed 2 maximum wins to have a chance and even then, having already lost to the leaders, we needed things to go our way.

The 7th match was the maximum win we needed, but while we started the last match in 2nd place, we were 10 VPs behind the leaders, McLeish, so we were still up against it for the last match.

Luckily for us, McLeish were playing Francis, who were coming a close 3rd, so it was all up for grabs. We got our maximum, and Francis ground out a 19-11 win against McLeish, which was not enough to propel them to second, but enough for us to claim top spot again.

M 1	K4			On board 2 in the first match North got a little carried away with the great support for her partner, and sacrificed at unfavourable vulnerability.
Bd 2	J75			
Dir E	K9764			
Vul NS	JT5			I almost opened 1H with my nice suit, but the singleton Jacks are of no value, so decided it does not hurt to have a good weak two for a change, although Tony may not believe it, or worse still may expect it all of the time!
QT98632		J5		
K		AQ9832		
5		J		
AK42		Q983		However, my suit was not particularly relevant to Tony, as he had a 7-card suit of his own, and expecting his 3S to be at least a 6-card suit, I had no hesitation in supporting with my doubleton.
	A7			
	T64			
	AQT832			
	76			North now could guess she had a possible trump trick, and at most 1 diamond trick, so she sacrificed with 5D without thinking about the vulnerability!
W	N	E	S	
		2H	3D	
3S	4D	4S	/	South had 5 losers at the beginning, with nowhere to park any of them, so ended up 3 down for +800 to us, more than adequate for +420.
/	5D	X	//	

M 1 T7642
Bd 6 A6
Dir E J8743
Vul EW 6
 J8 AK3
 KQJ432 T7
 6 QT92
 QJ32 A987

 Q95
 985
 AK5
 KT54

W N E S
 4H // 1NT /

On board 6 in the first match Tony had 2 choices as to how to get to 4H. He could have bid 2D, forcing me to bid 2H, and then jumped to game, or he could just bid 4H himself. We do not play conventional transfers.

Although at times it can be advantageous for the weaker hand to protect a tenace such as Kx by being declarer, it is generally better for the stronger hand to be declarer, to keep most of the partnership assets under cover.

For some reason Tony decided to be declarer, and this put North on lead to put the C6 on the table; - 1 off? No! It was Tony's lucky day as South won the CK and led the top 2 diamonds, cutting her partner off from a potential club ruff. +620.

At the other table EW finished in 3NT by East, which went 1 off.

Note that if East is declarer, a club lead is not fatal and 4H is cold.

M 1 AKQ74
Bd 7 54
Dir S J3
Vul All AQJ6
 J9532 86
 AKQJ7 T96
 Q75 AKT2
 - T832

 T
 832
 9864
 K9754

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

On board 7 in the first match, Tony took away North's proper opening overcall, and she made a slightly off-beat decision to overcall 1NT. I had nothing to say, and neither did South, so it was back to Tony.

When Tony rebid 2H and North passed, I was just about to bid a routine 2S, when I paused for thought. North obviously has the spades over Tony, (I did not even contemplate how much over!) so maybe this was the time to play in the Moysian fit.

At least nobody doubled I thought, as North led the DJ and I put down dummy.

Tony soon dispelled any doubts when dummy appeared as he showed his hand, claiming he would draw 5 rounds of trumps and the remaining 3 diamonds for 9 tricks and +140.

He was playing teams, but after scoring up he realized that he could probably draw 2 rounds of trumps and then ruff a spade for 10 tricks if he was in game. At the other table, preference was given to spades, and West did not repeat the hearts (??) and 2S went 1 off +6 Imps.

M 1 AQT754
Bd 13 A8
Dir N A875
Vul All 9
 986 KJ3
 6542 KQJ7
 4 JT962
 KJ764 5

 2
 T93
 KQ3
 AQT832

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

On board 13 in the first match I wimped out of doubling the final contract of 3NT to suggest a spade lead (dummy's first-bid suit), as with only 2 spade tricks I had no guarantee that a spade lead would be best for our side, or that NS could not get home on club tricks. However that is what I wanted to do.

Tony could have led the S9, but he could be reasonably certain that the spades were going to split, so since he was warned off a club lead, he led the H5.

Declarer won the second heart on the table, and took the losing club finesse, allowing Tony to exit with a heart, although since declarer attacked clubs, it appears that a spade switch would have been safe.

I exited with the DJ, and declarer found out about the clubs (while I pitched a diamond) and took the losing spade finesse. Although I could exit with a diamond, declarer threw me in with a diamond to lead a spade into dummy, 2 off and +200 against 4S 1 off at the other table.

M 2 742
Bd 15 AKJ3
Dir S K52
Vul NS 875
A6 KJT5
Q4 982
AQT97 J6
KQ63 AJT2

Q983
T765
843
94

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

On board 15 in the second match my 2NT response showed 8-10 without a 5-card suit, and hoping I had something in hearts, Tony bid the obvious 3NT.

I was off to a good start when South led the S3 giving me 8 tricks, and if the diamond finesse worked, I had heaps of tricks, so I led the DJ at trick 2, which held!

Playing teams, it is normally good policy to take the tricks for the contract whenever they are available, but greed is a hard vice to combat.

Since the singleton SA in dummy represented an easy return if North had won the DK at trick 2, and not suspecting North of deviously holding up, I succumbed to the finesse again and was devastated when North now produced the DK.

Oh well, the obvious spade return would still see me with 11 tricks, but North had other ideas, and NS proceeded to cash out in hearts for 1 off and a flat board.

M 2 AT652
Bd 16 K
Dir W J87
Vul EW 9765
Q7 -
A82 QT97653
AQ9432 K65
K3 QT2

KJ9843
J4
T
AJ84

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

On board 16 in the second match the difference between teams and pairs cost us 3 Imps.

When NS found their spade fit, it seemed likely that Tony would have the 2 hearts I needed to make 5H a good contract, and that is what I would have bid if we were playing MP pairs, as even 13 tricks in diamonds will not be enough to glean any match-points if 11 tricks are available in hearts.

However, we were playing teams, so I bid the game that I knew we had a 6-3 fit in rather than the slightly speculative 5H.

Having supported spades, North chose the rather unusual lead of the C5, but it did not matter, as Tony won with the CK and ruffed a spade, and exited with the CQ.

Now he ruffed a club to hand for another spades ruff, cashed the DK, and led the HT off the table, covered by South for 12 tricks and +620.

M 2 932
Bd 20 AK9764
Dir W T86
Vul All 8
A84 KJT7
53 JT8
QJ975 2
Q62 KJT53

Q65
Q2
AK43
A974

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

On board 20 in the second match I did not suspect that South was being coy in bidding just 2H with a reasonable hand, and gave NS another chance to get to game by balancing with 3C instead of passing.

However, if I had thought about it more, I have 9 points, and Tony will generally have less than 11 for his pass as dealer, so NS have at least 21 HCPs and we are out-gunned. Luckily South did not suddenly spring to life and bid game and I made a simple 9 tricks for +110.

At the other table, Bill did bid game (3NTS), and while I do not know what the opening lead was, I suspect it may have been the DQ, which he won in hand and led another diamond, setting up the DT for his 10th trick. +630 was 12 Imps.

Note on our auction, If South does bid 3NT over my 3C, she must trust in the hearts and win the first club, otherwise the SJ switch takes 3NT 1 off whether she covers or not.

M 2 T98
Bd 22 T5
Dir E J95
Vul EW KJT96
 KQ643 J52
 A42 K9876
 K Q43
 A842 Q7

 A7
 QJ3
 AT8762
 53

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

On board 22 in the second match I thought that I had the luxury of being a passed hand when I bid 2H instead of supporting spades, but this was in fact a disadvantage, as therefore 2H was not forcing.

As a non-passed hand, 2H would be forcing, and I could afford to show where my strength lies before I supported spades, but here it was folly, and I was lucky Tony did not pass with short hearts.

I was not interested in game in hearts, but if I had now shown my true colours and bid 3S, it is likely that Tony would have raised to game, which should make 10 tricks.

In 3H everything was friendly and I lost a trick in every suit for +140 and a potential loss on the board.

However, while 4S requires careful play to make 10 tricks, 9 tricks looks easy, but West contrived to allow Bill to make 2 trump tricks as South, and promote the setting trick for Richard's holding. 1 off was thus worth +6 Imps instead of the loss I though may have come.

M 3 J76
Bd 2 AQJ52
Dir E KT6
Vul NS Q6
 KT93 8542
 864 T7
 3 AQ52
 K9742 JT3

 AQ
 K93
 J9874
 A85

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

On board 2 in the third match NS used check-back to find out about the 3-card heart support, but this was the wrong day for playing in the major suit game instead of 3NT.

I led the S5 (as far as I knew the unbid suit), but I could have just as easily and with a similar result led the CJ if South had alerted me to the 2C check-back, and Tony won the SK and led back his singleton diamond.

When Tony ruffed the third diamond to take the contract 1 off he was endplayed, but no matter, as declarer now has pitches on the diamonds after drawing trumps.

If declarer had risen with the SA and drawn trumps, I have to switch to the CJ when I win the first diamond, which may not be so obvious. If I routinely continue spades, Tony is endplayed again, but this time there was no diamond ruff to compensate.

At the other table Bill and Richard did not care about their 5-3 heart fit, and made an easy 9 tricks in 3NT for +100 and 12 Imps.

M 3 J82
Bd 3 J75
Dir S A95
Vul EW AQ94
 A754 KQ9
 AK9 QT84
 K73 JT862
 765 K

 T63
 632
 Q4
 JT832

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

On board 3 in the third match we had a routine auction to 3NT that placed North on lead.

Predictably, North led a club, but not being psychic, he led the C4, and Tony won the first trick on the table with my singleton King!

His prospects for 9 tricks did not look very good, as even if the DQ was well placed, he had 4 club losers and the DA, so firstly he tested the spades, and when that suit broke his tally went up to 8.

Next he cashed the top hearts, finishing on the table, and his luck was in as that suit broke 3-3 as well, so he could then lead the DJ to see if 9 could become 10, but +600 it was.

At the other table West opened 1C and East responded 1H, but then bid 3NT after West rebid 1S.

Wily Bill Hunt was on lead as South, and he was not put off by the 1C opening, leading a club to take the contract 2 off for +13 Imps.

M 3 QT43
Bd 10 J76532
Dir E 43
Vul All 7
 J962 AK85
 AKQ 98
 K7 T985
 T985 AK6

7
 T4
 AQJ62
 QJ432

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

Two suited overcalls can be a very valuable defensive weapon, but as North found out on board 10 in the third match, they can also be very expensive when there is a misfit.

South's 2NT was clearly for the minors, and Tony's double was for penalties, so his pass of 3D was forcing. It looks like we can make a game, but the 2NT bid signalled bad breaks were likely, so I settled for what was available in 3D by doubling.

North thought long and hard about pulling 3DX to his 6-card suit, but South may even be void in hearts, so settled for the known 5-2 fit instead. He was clearly disappointed when dummy went down.

When you have more points than the opponents you have to cut down on ruffs, so I led the DT, and North put up a futile DQ in dummy for Tony to win and return the D7. North led a third trump and exited with a heart, and Tony switched to the S2, so I was able to draw another trump.

Dummy was endplayed and forced to lead away from the clubs so North finished 4 down for +1100. Because of the bad breaks, 3NT was little chance and finished 2 down at the other table for 16 Imps.

M 3 KT94
Bd 14 JT985
Dir E A95
Vul Nil K
 8 AQ7
 AQ2 64
 KT8643 QJ7
 AT2 Q9764

J6532
 K73
 2
 J853

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

On board 14 in the third match Tony's 2D response was forcing for 1 round, and since it denied a major suit, my 2S rebid only showed a stopper and also denied a heart stopper.

North led the HJ, and Tony could see 9 tricks at once, so had a very easy time. He won the first trick, and immediately forced out the DA, upon which North lead another heart.

Tony now cashed his diamond tricks, followed by the SA, and then the CA for his 9th trick, and with the appearance of the CK he then had 10 tricks for +430.

With both major suit finesses working (only the heart finesse was important) and the stiff CK, 6D is cold, but this is one slam we did not mind missing.

At the other table EW came to a premature stop in 2C, making just 9 tricks for -110 and 8 Imps.

M 4 T8743
Bd 16 A6
Dir W 7642
Vul EW J7
 K52 Q9
 Q954 JT873
 K A93
 Q8653 AK9

AJ6
 K2
 QJT85
 T42

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

On board 16 in the fourth match I had a difficult decision after Tony made a limit raised as a passed hand. Probably I should have passed since he could not dredge up 11 points to open.

However, I had good controls albeit a poor suit, so I hoped he could plug a few gaps and bid game anyway. At MPs I would have passed, but the premium for bidding vulnerable games is worth the risk.

It was obvious I had made the right decision when dummy went down after South led the DQ, so I won on the table and led a trump, South winning and leading another diamond.

When North won the HA NS still had a spade trick to come, but he led a club, and I could pitch both of my spades on dummy's clubs for 11 tricks and +650.

At the other table the limit raise was not looked at with such rosy views, and declarer made 10 tricks for -170, but 10 Imps to us.

M 4 K2
Bd 24 762
Dir W A743
Vul Nil 9843
 QT875 J9643
 KQ3 A98
 J82 K5
 T5 QJ7

 A
 JT54
 QT96
 AK62

W **N** **E** **S**
 / / 1S /
 3S //

On board 24 in the fourth match I had another limit raise from Tony as a passed hand, but this time there was not the slightest temptation to bid on to game, as not only was I minimum, but we were not vulnerable.

South led the CK and in due course NS cashed their 5 tricks for -50, which I did not consider to be a problem, as some pairs would even bid 4S with the West hand when holding 5-card support.

NS can make 8 tricks in either minor, but it is hard to see NS competing too high, even if my hand passes on the first round, and then EW are likely to balance into their spade fit.

So -50 looked like it would be at least a wash at worst.

I was somewhat surprised at the score-up to find that EW at the other table had eschewed their 5-5 fit and played in the unusual contract of 1NT, making just 7 tricks for -90 and 4 Imps away!

M 4 QJ873
Bd 26 QT62
Dir E 75
Vul All 62
 A42 965
 K9 J53
 A62 QT43
 KQJ85 A94

 KT
 A874
 KJ98
 T73

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

On board 26 in the fourth match Tony was given a choice of passing or bidding 1 more when I invited game with 2NT, but mindful of the fact that I was a passed hand with less than 8HCPs, he passed, never mind the bonus for vulnerable games.

How right he was! After the lead of the S7 he could never make more than 8 tricks, and even then it took some care to make that number.

It was obvious that something good had to happen to make 8 tricks, and the most likely good thing was the HA on side, so he ducked the first spade and won the third round.

Now 3 rounds of clubs finishing on the table enabled him to lead a heart off the board, and the HK won the trick as South played low.

That was the contract now with 5 clubs and a trick in each other suit, so he cashed out for +120.

At the other table EW did push on to game, and also scored the inevitable 8 tricks for another +100 and 6 Imps.

M 5 T43
Bd 2 K3
Dir E AJ87
Vul NS 8632
 K8 Q
 AJ62 Q98754
 Q95 T62
 K754 QJT

 AJ97652
 T
 K43
 A9

W **N** **E** **S**
 2NT 4S / 2H 2S
 5H / / X
 //

On board 2 in the fifth match NS out bid us, and with everything wrong, our sacrifice was not a success.

South had no hesitation in bidding over my natural weak two, and then there was no stopping North, even though Tony made game noises with 2NT!

3S would be automatic with the North hand, but jumping to game was either a lucky guess, or good judgement, or maybe a rarity, a vulnerable sacrifice against a non-vulnerable game?

Since the diamond finesse works and the suit breaks 3-3, not even a club lead stops 11 tricks, so Tony was at least right to sacrifice, but the same features allowed NS to take 6 tricks in 5HX for -800.

This would not have been a major loss against 650 for 5S, but at the other table East opened with a multi, South passed to see what the suit was, and West bid 4H – convertible. Now South was not inclined to risk 4S knowing that there was spade tolerance on his left, and 3 off only gained us +150 for 12 Imps out.

M 5 T853
Bd 5 9854
Dir N JT93
Vul NS 4
 AJ94 K762
 A62 J3
 A8762 Q4
 K QT987

 Q
 KQT7
 K5
 AJ6532

W N E S
 X / / 1C
 2S! // 1S 2C

On board 5 in the fifth match we missed our chance that we never realistically had.

I gave some thought to passing 1CX, but instead decided to take the sensible action of bidding my major suit, but I was prepared to double 2C if South's rebid came around to me.

Of course Tony is not going to pass 2C with 4-card support for me and 3 Aces (discount the CK, except as a singleton), so 2S was automatic.

Since I was forced to bid something I could have a Yarborough, and also may only have a 3-card suit with say, 3,2,3,5 distribution, so another option Tony had was to double again to show a good hand. The one thing he should not do is to bid 3S, as 2S also shows a good hand, and he has only just got that.

Warned by the bidding, I played carefully for 8 tricks and +110, which was worth 4 Imps when EW at the other table went too high and were 1 off in 3S.

M 5 8
Bd 10 K4
Dir E A96
Vul All KQ96432
 K4 AJ92
 AJ7532 T9
 T32 QJ87
 J7 A85

 QT7653
 Q86
 K54
 T

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

On board 10 in the fifth match I got carried away and was lucky not to be carried out, although if I had been doubled in 3NT I would have pulled it to 4H, which could be only 1 off but should be 2 off.

With my minimum hand I had no trouble passing over North's 3C bid, but when Tony bid a non-forcing 3H, I had sudden visions of a making game.

If Tony had been given the J9 in clubs, my silly bid would have picked up the jackpot, but alas, he only had the J7, and when NS could not place me with such a weak hand I gained an extra trick to only go 4 off for -400!

I won the CA at trick 2 and led a diamond to dummy and the DT held! The next diamond from the table was taken by South who exited with a spade instead of a heart.

I could not afford North to play the SQ and force out my only entry to hand, so I won on the table and led another diamond, North cashing out. At the other table a sedate 3H made 9 tricks for 11 Imps out.

M 5 Q
Bd 12 KQT943
Dir W KT52
Vul NS A4
 642 AK975
 AJ7 652
 J843 AQ
 KQT 963

 JT83
 8
 976
 J8752

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

I got bad vibes at the table during the bidding of board 12 in the fifth match, and stayed out of game in spite of having a good hand with Tony opening the bidding.

I thought that Tony's heart strength may not be pulling its full weight, and North was doing too much bidding for kind breaks, so I did not even invite game with 3S, not that Tony would have accepted.

South led a predictable H8, and Tony's hand could have been worse, KJx in hearts for instance, but I was glad I was only in 2S.

I won the HA and took the diamond finesse, cashed my top tricks, and led to the CK in dummy, and North was endplayed when he won the CA.

North could cash 2 heart tricks, but then could lead into the Club tenace, try to cash the DK, or give me a ruff-sluff.

At the other table 4S was 2 off so we gained 5 Imps.

M 5 Q43
Bd 13 5432
Dlr N HJ2
Vul All AK9
 A96 JT8752
 QJ76 KT8
 943 7
 Q32 J54

 K
 A9
 AQT865
 T876

W **N** **E** **S**
 / 1NT X XX
 // / 2S 5D

At our table board 13 in the fifth match was a routine 3NT, and after I led the SJ we let a trick slip during the play and declarer finished up with 11 tricks for -660.

The real action was at the other table, where the bidding was as shown. EW were playing penalty doubles against the 12-14 1NT openings, but East forgot and doubled to show a single-suiter.

Of course Richard redoubled to show that game was on, and West must have thought that it was unlikely that there were enough points left for East to have a penalty double, but he could do nothing.

When the redouble came around to East, he bid his 6-card suit and Richard decided that enough was enough and bid 5D, although you would have thought that 3S asking for a stopper could have led to 3NT.

5D made 11 tricks, although Deep Finesse suggests that it can be held to 10, but 1NTX would make 10 tricks on the expected spade lead, and that is +780.

M 6 KJ
Bd 23 A8642
Dlr S Q9
Vul All K873
 T96 Q42
 Q J753
 KT875 6432
 JT52 94

 A8753
 KT9
 AJ
 AQ6

W **N** **E** **S**
 / 2H / 1S
 / 4H / 3H
 // // 6H

The auction on board 23 in the sixth match was short and sweet, and NS finished in a reasonable slam.

I did not find the difficult lead of the D4, and North was able to come home with 12 tricks when the spades broke 3-3, losing just a heart.

At some tables slam was skittled on a diamond lead, but that does not have to happen if North reads the cards correctly.

On a diamond lead, North can rise Ace, and lead a heart to hand, noting the fall of the HQ, and then lead to dummy and take the finesse (restricted choice again). When that holds, cash the top heart and ruff the spades good.

A club to dummy and North can throw the diamond loser while East ruffs with the beast trump, and the other club entry is available to discard the losing club.

I suspect however, that if I had found the diamond lead, declarer would have take the 50% play of finessing and gone 1 off, so we would have gained 13 instead of losing 13 Imps.

M 6 T52
Bd 24 5
Dlr W AQJT32
Vul Nil 832
 J73 AK96
 AK62 T93
 74 5
 AKJT Q9654

 Q84
 QJ874
 K986
 7

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

You have to pick the right time to play in a Moysian fit, and also the right 4-3 fit.

Tony knew I had 5-4 in the black suits and a positive response, so 4S was a reasonable chance, as he could control the 3rd round of diamonds if I could not, but he fell back on the known 5-4 fit and bid 5C, which failed by 1 trick after the opening lead of the H5, but could be made by endplaying South in spades if NS slip.

We were a victim of our system than forced Tony to open 1C as if my hand was declarer, 5C can always be made by endplaying South in spades, as the lead of the HQ gives up a trick directly, and any other lead allows the endplay to work.

In 4S, with the spades 3-3 there are many lines that work, and hardly any logical lines that fail.

At the other table EW picked the wrong 4-3 fit to play in, and 4H failed by 4 tricks for +200, and 4 Imps.

M 7	J972			
Bd 3	J6			
Dir S	Q732			
Vul EW	T76			
-				AKQ653
KT92				74
96				KJT4
A985432				K
	T84			
	AQ853			
	A85			
	QJ			
W	N	E	S	
/	/	X	1H	
3C	/	3S	/	
3NT	//			

On board 3 in the seventh match I had a very good hand in the balancing position, but both the 3C and 3NT bids by Tony indicated he did not have fitting cards, so with some reluctance I passed.

Looking at all 4 hands it seems like 4S has its chances, but in 3NT I was banking on giving Tony 6 running tricks in spades, not thinking he had a void.

North led the HJ, and Tony ducked the first round, which risked someone switching to a club to take out the entry, and that happened at trick 3 after South won the HA at trick 2. But South made a deceptive exit with the CJ, and this fooled her partner in the end game.

Thrown in with the 4th spade, North exited with the D2, and when the DT forced the DA and South exited with the CQ, Tony was able to cash his heart and club winners throwing diamonds, and enter dummy with the DK to take the remainder for +600.

At the other table EW finished in 5C, which has 3 unavoidable losers, so we gained 12 Imps.

M 7	K652			
Bd 7	652			
Dir S	T85			
Vul All	865			
873				QJT4
T74				QJ98
KQ432				9
Q9				KJ72
	A9			
	AK3			
	AJ76			
	AT43			
W	N	E	S	
/	3C	/	2NT	
//			3NT	

Should NS be in 3NT on board 7 in the seventh match? The generally accepted minimum number of points for 2 balanced hands to try 3NT is 24 or maybe 25, but that is only with the points about even in each hand, and even then intermediates are very important.

If the points are very much in one hand, then a greater total than 25 is often required, unless a long suit can be utilized for additional length tricks.

When South opens 2NT with the South hand, and you have the flat 3-count as North had on this hand, I think it is a clear-cut pass, with a valiant hope that partner can make 8 tricks.

However, both tables finished in 3NT by South, going 2 down at our table, and 1 down at the other table for 3 Imps to us.

I think that for every time you gain 10 Imps by getting to game with the North cards, you will lose 6 Imps on at least 4 other hands.

M 7	J8			
Bd 8	83			
Dir W	AKJ8743			
Vul Nil	J9			
AT643				Q975
J				AKQ765
T				-
KQ7643				AT2
	K2			
	T942			
	Q9652			
	985			
W	N	E	S	
2C	3D	4D	5D	
5S	/	6S	//	

Strictly speaking Tony's hand on board 8 in the seventh match has less than 11 HCPs, but his distribution more than makes up for being a little light.

Over North's 3D pre-empt, having primary club support, I could afford to look for a spade fit (a heart fit would have been too much to hope for), so I forced with 4D, intending to bid hearts next time if necessary to find out more.

Tony's free bid of 5S was an absolute bonus, so with controls in all outside suits, I bid the slam.

When dummy went down Tony could see that with his HJ, both 7C and 7H were cold, but how was he going to tackle 6S? Taking a legitimate line for 13 tricks by leading the SQ, he was pleased to see it covered and claimed 12 tricks for a flat board.

Neville Francis in another match was in 7S, and also took this legitimate line for 13 tricks, but South was not going to help declarer by covering, so when Neville ran the SQ, 13 tricks!

M 7 T432
Bd 9 K852
Dir N 9832
Vul EW 6
 KJ6 A87
 QJ743 AT
 AK J74
 KJT A7542

Q95
 96
 QT65
 Q983

W	N	E	S
	/	1NT	/
3H	/	3NT	//

On board 9 in the seventh match we did not have a fit so did not go looking for slam, but at the other table they soared into 6NT by East.

Against a pedestrian 3NT South chose to lead the C3 (I probably would have picked the D5 as it needs less help from partner, but it is a guess), and this picked up the suit for me for 5 tricks.

After winning in dummy I took the heart finesse, not caring now whether it won or lost, but when it won, I repeated the club finesse, cashed the CK, and led a heart to hand.

Since it was teams, and 13 tricks from some sort of squeeze was unlikely, I went to dummy with the DK and gave up a heart for 12 tricks and +690.

How did 6NT go at the other table? Different contract, and a different lead, this time the D5, and when declarer played the CJ to South, and a few more things went wrong, he went 3 off for +300 and 14 Imps.

M 8 98652
Bd 15 AK952
Dir S J7
Vul NS 6
 KT QJ7
 QJT86 743
 864 T532
 JT7 852

A43
 -
 AKQ9
 AKQ943

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

Some suits are not worth getting excited about, but not every system can find out about suit quality. This was a very unlucky hand for NS at our table, as they got to the worst slam.

The auction was completely artificial with even 1NT showing the majors and South doing the asking, and after 5H, South knew that North was 5-5 in the majors, with an Ace and a King, but not in which suit, hence the no-play slam in spades.

In our version of Precision club, if the North hand responded 1S, which is most likely, a 2S asking bid by South would immediately show the spade suit for what it is, and 6S would no longer be an option.

At our table, North's last chance went when Tony and I did not crash our spade honours, and 6S finished 1 off for +100.

At the other table I do not know what happened to the spade fit, but Richard finished in a much more sensible 6C, and when the suit broke 3-3 he had 13 tricks for +1390 and 16 Imps.

M 8 AQT9
Bd 23 K
Dir S K632
Vul All T983
 J2 K8754
 AJ953 762
 A754 JT9
 62 K5

63
 QT84
 Q8
 AQJ74

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

Board 23 in the eighth match was not an opening bid in the system that Bill and Richard had agreed to play, so it was passed in at their table.

At our table NS were playing Precision, so the South hand just qualifies for a 2C opening, and when South shows a heart suit, North bids 3NT.

If South is declarer in 3NT a lead in either red suit does not set the contract, as South will retain a second stop in whichever suit is led and has time to set up the spade tricks.

However, with North as declarer, and his apparent interest in a spade fit diverting me from my normal lead, my now automatic lead of the DJ gives declarer no chance at all as he must take the spade finesse, and then a heart lead from me puts Tony in to cash the last diamond for 1 off.

So +100 was worth 3 Imps.

M 8
Bd 28
Dlr W
Vul NS
7
K3
AQ8
AKQ9543

Q432
J6
K64
JT92

AJT5
AT98742
32
-

K986
Q5
JT975
76

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

On board 28 in the eighth match I had some interest in slam after Tony showed a strong hand, but when he bid in my void suit for the 2nd time I gave up on slam and settled for just game.

I did not mention spades since I only wanted to play in spades if Tony bid the suit first.

When I bid 4H, Tony realized that his singleton spades and HK was very useful, so he took over and bid the slam.

The diamond lead was awkward, as it took away my later entry to dummy, so my line of play had to involve ruffing at least 1 spade before drawing trumps.

I won the DA, discarded a diamond on the CA, and ruffed a spade in dummy with the H3 then cashed the HK before pitching my other spades on the top clubs, and it did not matter if someone ruffed as then there would only be 1 trump left and my HA would drop it.

However, South forgot to ruff the CQ, so when I ruffed a diamond to hand to draw the last trump, they both dropped and I had 13 tricks for 1 Imp. Since hearts were 2-2, ruffing a club at trick 2 and drawing trumps finishing in dummy takes all of the tricks.