

## 2012 Gold Coast Seniors Pairs by Richard Wallis

John Brockwell and I continued our annual tilt at the GCC Seniors Pairs, and as usual it was a very enjoyable event. I had a family wedding on the Saturday evening, during which John Craig was going to substitute for me, so it seemed important to get us off to a good start in the first qualifying on Saturday afternoon.

Alas JB and I had a terrible afternoon, a lowly 46% to pushing us down into the bottom third, so on arrival back at the venue at 10:30pm it seemed like we were destined for the bottom consolation when John's response to my question "how did you go?" was: "terrible, worse than this afternoon".

I next met JC, and his response was: "we had some bidding hiccups, but generally fell on our feet, and should get about 55%". Luckily JC was right and our final place was 24<sup>th</sup>, enough to pull us up into the Plate. Thus it was a new start on Sunday afternoon.

We got our act together in the 'B' final, and were rarely out of the lead after the first 20 boards were played and hung on to win comfortably, with a 60% average score. There was the odd disaster, but the generosity of many of our opponents, and our occasional good play, made up for them.

R1	93		N	E	S	W
Bd 2	7					
Dlr E	KQ7652					
NS Vul	K976					
KQ74		AJ8652		1S	3H	4NT
AJ63		8	/	5H	/	6S
AT		3	//			
853		AQJT4				
	T					
	KQT9542					
	J984					
	2					

On board 2 in the first round of the final I had a shapely hand, albeit with a minimum point-count, but South took away a lot of our investigative options with a jump overcall of 3H. The vulnerability and John's holding suggested that I would be short in hearts, so he launched into Keycard, and bid the slam expecting me to take care of the clubs or have enough diamond tricks to discard losing clubs. There was nothing in the play, especially when South led the C2 and North played the CK, and +1010 was worth 81%.

R1	AT		N	E	S	W
Bd 9	K52					
Dlr N	KQJT73					
EW Vul	K3					
9872		QJ543	1D	/	/	2C
A4		Q983	3D	//		
A		52				
QJ9842		A6				
	K6					
	JT76					
	9864					
	T75					

I like to refrain from leading an unsupported Ace, but will often lead the Ace of partner's suit, especially if they overcalled, in the hope of getting a ruff. Board 9 in the first round of the final was such a case. However, West did not overcall, they only balanced, and East's trumps are too small! East did lead the CA, and that presented me with my 9<sup>th</sup> trick, and the size of East's trumps came home to roost when I could have ruffed the 3<sup>rd</sup> club with 5 of my 6 trumps and East could not over-ruff. A tint +110 was worth all of the matchpoints.

R1	AT		N	E	S	W
Bd 12	K542					
Dlr W	KQ73					
EW Vul	AJ8					
Q82		63				/
T87		Q963	1D	/	1S	/
854		T92	1NT	/	3S	/
K752		Q643	4S	/	4NT	/
	KJ9754		5H	/	6S	//
	AJ					
	AJ6					
	T9					

On board 12 in the first round of the final many pairs got to slam, but the challenge was to either play in 6NT (not good on a club lead) or try to find the SQ and make 13 tricks. In 6S on a club lead, it would be very unusual to make 13 tricks, as the correct play is to take the top spades, and then either take the heart finesse or the top diamonds to get rid of the club loser, losing only to the SQ, and both lines work. John got a heart lead, and now with 12 tricks assured, he kicked himself for not getting the spades right and making 13 tricks, and +980 was only 50%. I think his line of playing the SA first was correct, as it will enable him to pick up Q8632 in the East hand for 1 loser.

R1	QT752		N	E	S	W
Bd 25	KT					
Dlr N	KQ4					
EW Vul	K84					
64	A	1S	X	4S	4NT	
QJ852	A964	/	6D	/	6H	
8	AJ963	//				
QJ762	AT3					
	KJ983					
	73					
	T752					
	95					

On board 25 in the first round of the final South's jump bid enabled John to describe his hand better and propelled us into slam. I thought that if he had 2 suits and wanted to play at the 5-level at adverse vulnerability, his hand must be bolstered by my 4 Aces, and any missing honours were likely to be well placed. Since I had the red suits I could confidently bid 6D in the knowledge that John could revert to 6H if diamonds was not one of his suits. Since both finesses worked and John could ruff a diamond to get to hand, he made all 13 tricks for +1460 and 100%.

R2	AJ952		N	E	S	W
Bd 3	QT75					
Dlr S	T5					
Vul EW	96					
QT3	K876			1H	3C	
J9	A2	3H	/	4H	//	
4	97632					
AKQT843	52					
	4					
	K8643					
	AKQJ8					
	J7					

Sometimes you make a play to avoid a later end-play, and it turns out to be the right play for an entirely different reason, and board 3 in the second round of the final was a case in point. John's overcall did not stop NS getting to game and he led the CK at trick 1 to get count, cashed a second club and exited with the D4, won by declarer on the table to lead the H5. I was conscious of having singleton HA and being thrown in with it to lead into the spade in dummy, or give a ruff-sluff in diamonds, so I rose with the HA, prepared to sit back and wait for my spade trick. Instead of exiting with a trump as was my first instinct, I exited with the D3, and was surprised to see John ruff this for the setting trick. This was worth 85%, so most NS pairs must have stayed out of game, or did not suffer the ruff.

R2	AQ52	N	E	S	W
Bd 4	QJT82				
Dlr W	97				
All Vul	62				
K	JT9763	1C	1H	1S	/
AK63	94	1NT	/	4S	//
AT4	K82				
J8543	AK				
	84				
	75				
	QJ653				
	QT97				

On board 4 in the second round of the final I had an easy 4S bid when John showed his heart stopper and 15-18 strength, hoping that the heart lead through his holding was not going to be too damaging. On many hands it may have worked out better if West opened with a strong 1NT (some will open 1NT with a stiff King), so that the heart holding is protected, but luckily his honours were solid. I won trick 1 with the HA and advanced the SK, which North, perhaps unwisely, took. I now won the club return to advance the SJ, and North won and returned another club. Drawing trumps, I went to dummy with a heart and ruffed a club to clarify the position and then led my last trump, effecting a double squeeze if North also had diamond control. 11 tricks were worth all of the matchpoints.

R2	AQJ764	N	E	S	W
Bd 16	QT5				
Dlr W	964				
EW Vul	6				
T82	9				/
A743	KJ9862	2S	/	4S	//
JT3	K5				
K52	JT43				
	K53				
	-				
	AQ872				
	AQ987				

I opened with a good weak-two in spades and found myself in 4S with a very satisfactory dummy, wishing that I was a little higher. I ruffed a club at trick 2, ruffed a heart, and ruffed another club, bring down the King. I ruffed a second heart, and now decided to draw the trumps by overtaking the SK. Now I miscounted the clubs, and did not realize that the CJ was coming down, so mistakenly led a diamond and finessed the DQ, winning the trick! When the clubs proved to be good, I realized I had 12 tricks all along and the diamond finesse had risked turning that back into 11, but now I had 13, for a handy 69%.

R2	K93		N	E	S	W
Bd 21	Q6432					
Dlr N	J					
NS Vul	KJ76					
Q84		T75	/	1D	2C	2D
KJ8		97	2H	3D	4H	5D
Q9543		AK8762	/	/	X	//
52		A3				
	AJ62					
	AT5					
	T					
	QT984					

Many would double 1D with the South hand, but John likes to disrupt the easy bidding for the opponents when 1D is opened on his left by bidding 2C with a modest club holding. Since I had good club support and a near-maximum pass, I had an easy 2H bid and John raised to game. The opponents took no chances, and sacrificed in 5D over this potential game, and after the club lead we scored up +300. Thanks to the lucky lie of the hearts, 4H is cold, so theoretically they had done better than letting us play in hearts, as I could not have gone wrong, but we still scored 71% for +300.

R3	AK762		N	E	S	W
Bd 7	K					
Dlr S	JT85					
All Vul	653					
T853		QJ4			/	/
AT985		742	1S	1NT	X	2H
7		A62	/	/	X	//
987		AKQ2				
	9					
	QJ63					
	KQ943					
	JT4					

The location of your honours is often paramount when considering a penalty double, and this was very much the case on board 7 in the third round of the final. North opened light but with a reasonable suit and I overcalled with a strong 1NT, pounced on by South with shortage on partner's suit, but a good suit of his own. On a spade lead I may be able to prevail in 1NTX, but of course John took it out to his 5-ard suit, and South doubled again, probably with his partner's opening bid in mind, hoping it will bolster his fragile trump holding. South got his spades ruff and returned the DK, but, no doubt concerned about his heart holding, rose with the HJ on a trump lead from dummy and crashed his partner's stiff King. West is known to have 5 or more hearts, thus North has at most 1 and South has to hope it is the HA and play low hoping declarer guesses wrong. Playing the HJ gave declarer no chance to guess wrong, and +870 was a top for us.

R3	T	N	E	S	W
Bd 8	KQ984				
Dlr W	K74				
Nil Vul	K865				
Q863	AK97				1NT
AJ75	32	2C!	X!	/	/
AJT	Q982	2H	X	//	
Q3	J93				
	J542				
	T6				
	653				
	AT74				

On board 8 in the third round of the final North's 2C was single suited (maybe better to bid 2H to show a 2-suiter, but 1 level higher in minor), and my double was points, and the second double was for take-out, converted to penalties by John. Little did NS know that clubs was their best suit! I led the SK to get a count card from John and shifted to diamonds, and John led back a spade, ruffed by declarer, who subsequently lost control and finished 2 off for -300 and most of the matchpoints for us.

R3	Q5	N	E	S	W
Bd 16	AKQJT				
Dlr W	KT75				
EW Vul	J8				
JT4	AK98632				/
742	65	1H	4S	X	//
643	9				
7642	K53				
	7				
	983				
	AQJ82				
	AQT9				

On board 16 in the third round of the final we were blasted by a fearless woman who bid the East hand to 4S at adverse vulnerability, and then got the perfect cards from partner, enough to hold her losses to 6 tricks, but not enough to beat slam for NS. Since slam is cold our way for +980, and most pairs seem to have bid it, we got a poor score.

R3	Q53		N	E	S	W
Bd 19	AJ					
Dlr S	T864					
EW Vul	J973					
KJ876	A94	/	/	2H	3H!	
7	K985	4H	5C	/	5D	
Q97532	J	5S	//			
A	KQT84					
	T2					
	QT6432					
	AK					
	652					

It seems a good rule to follow that only one side should be sacrificing, but on board 19 in the third round of the final, West seemed hell-bent on sacrificing at adverse vulnerability when John opened with a weak two in hearts. Maybe he just like his distribution, or maybe he did not notice the red dots were on his side of the board! East also got into the sacrificial mode when he bid clubs at the 5-level rather than 4S, and was forced to return to spades at the 5-level. 4S can make by ruffing a second diamond with the SA, and playing the spades from the top in dummy to smother the ST in John's hand, but in an endeavour to make 11 tricks, East took the normal spades finesse and finished up down 2 for a top score to NS.