

2013 ANC Seniors Trials by Richard Wallis

The trials for the Seniors Teams at the ANC in Adelaide from July 8 to July 12 were held at QCBC in April, and a pleasing 19 pairs fronted up for Stage 1, played over the first weekend, to qualify the top 10 pairs for Stage 2, which took a further 3 days and 9 matches.

A number of participants in both the Womens and Seniors questioned the need for a two Stage process with only 19 pairs, and after due consideration, the Tournament Committee decided that for 2014, the Seniors and Womens Trials will be conducted as a single Stage Howell for a maximum entry of 24 pairs, after which it will revert to Stage 1 over 2 days to qualify 12 pairs for Stage 2 over 4 days.

I played this year with Therese Tully, and after many years of playing 4-card Acol, we have changed to a 5-card major system, 2 over 1 game forcing. Since there are many new and often artificial concepts for both of us, we have experienced a few teething problems, but are slowly coming to grips with the new system and slot in a practice session whenever time permits.

By the end of Stage 2 we were getting on top of it, and were in the happy position with only match to go of being locked into the team for Adelaide, as were the other 2 pairs, so the final match was only played to determine the reserve pair! The Seniors team for Adelaide is: Ian Afflick / Paul Collins, Tony Jackman / Tony Hutton, and Therese Tully / Richard Wallis, with David McLeish as non-playing captain. Welcome to Tony Hutton, now living in Queensland, and a first-timer with the Queensland team at the ANC.

M 1	AQ2			On board 9 in the first match I got lazy, as I could not remember with any certainty the part of the system that could uncover a potential club fit for slam, so I checked for a heart fit and signed off in 3NT after the no major, 2D response.
Bd 9	972			
Dlr N	Q54			
Vul EW	AKQ4			
KT864			975	Since the spade finesse worked, 6C was cold, so I feared that we may have lost a few Imps as someone always seems to find these just under 50% slams!
86			JT54	
JT7			K9832	East led the D2, which Therese ran around to the DQ, and now the successful spade finesse meant 12 tricks for +490.
JT6			5	
	J3			Since none of the 5 NS pairs got to slam, this should have been a flat board, but one NS pair must have had an 'oops' moment as they stopped in 3C, making 12 tricks for +170, losing 8 Imps themselves, and the other NS pairs all gained 2 Imps.
	AKQ3			
	A6			Unlucky for our opponents to lose 2 Imps in this way.
	98732			
W	N	E	S	
/	1NT	/	2C	
//	2D!	/	3NT	

M 1	873			On board 11 in the first match (we sat EW for boards 11-20) both Therese and I were alerted by North's negative double, announcing a 4-card heart suit. I chose to rebid my reasonable 6-card spade suit rather than introduce a motley 4-card heart suit with the announced length in hearts on my left, and Therese, with her heart honours seemingly well-placed, invited game in spades, which I quickly accepted.
Bd 11	9864			
Dlr S	A962			
Vul Nil	63			
AJT652			Q4	North led the C6, and since I knew North to have heart length, I did not want to enter dummy with the HQ in case South was void.
K752			AQT3	
K4			QT73	I won trick 1 with the CA and hoped to create an entry to dummy by leading the DK, but expected South to hold the DA and duck to deny the entry. When North won the DA and returned the C3, it was almost certain that the spade finesse was right, so I trumped the club and led to the DQ for a successful spade finesse.
A			T54	
	K9			After drawing trumps I could test the hearts by cashing the HQ first, but when the HJ fell from South, 12 tricks were easy for +480. A loss maybe, but no! Another EW pair played in a spade part-score for 10 tricks, and 2 EW pairs only made 11 tricks, so we gained 2.25 Imps.
	J			
	J85			
	KQJ9872			
W	N	E	S	
1S	X	/	1C	
2S	/	3S	2C	
4S	//		/	

M 1 Bd 19 Dir S Vul EW	JT98 AT4 Q KT964		On board 11 in the first match I had a minimum hand to act over the pre-empt, but I did have 4 spades, so I bit the bullet and doubled for take-out.
KQ76 - AJ8643 Q87		A52 K65 K972 J53	Things took a potential turn for the worse when North raised to game, and Therese doubled, to show cards, but likely denying 4 spades.
	43 QJ98732 T5 A2		At the vulnerability I did not think it was the right time to introduce my modest 6-card diamond suit, so decided to take my chances on 4 tricks in defence rather than 11 in offence, and passed.
W X	N 4H	E X	We took our 2 spades, 1 diamond and 1 heart for a lucky +100, but that was enough for 3.75 Imp gain.
			One NS pair played in 3H for +140, one EW pair got to 4S going 1 off for +100 to NS, and 2 other NS pairs played in 4H undoubled, for -50. It is hard to predict a result in such a small field.
			S 3H //

M 2 Bd 6 Dir E Vul EW	AQJ JT32 A654 73		On board 6 in the second match I had a hand with great potential, especially after Therese showed a good hand with support by bidding just 3H instead of game, as her first 2 bids were virtually forced by our system (playing Kokish 2H rebid).
K8742 5 KQT872 4		T93 94 J93 QT986	My concern was 2 spade losers as I thought that Therese was likely to be short in clubs, and thus I jumped to 5D over 3H expecting that this was Exclusion Key Card Blackwood!
	65 AKQ876 - AKJ52		West doubled this for the lead (she was going to be on lead!) and Therese passed the double to show 1 Key Card (R0P1), thus I was in relatively safe waters when I bid 6H.
W / / / / //	N 2D 2S! 3H! /!	E / / / /	The grand slam seemed like too much to ask for, but it looked good when I saw dummy after West led the DK.
			Keeping my options open, I ruffed the opening lead, drew trumps, and led the top clubs expecting to be able to ruff my clubs good and discard my spade on the DA later. Since the clubs did not break, I discarded one on the DA and took the spade finesse for the overtrick and a modest 0.25 Imp.
			S 2C 2H 3C 5D! 6H

M 2 Bd 19 Dir S Vul EW	AJ9742 JT52 KJ Q		On board 19 in the second match I opened a shade light for our normal minimum opening of 11 HCPs, since I had a 5-card major suit and 2 Aces.
T8 K3 AT864 J542		K65 Q7 Q52 KT873	Therese had a reasonable hand with a good spade suit, but showed her support first by bidding a Jacoby 2NT, as this would find out more about my hand. My 3C rebid showed a minimum, so game was her only aspiration, and she signed off in the known 5-4 fit, to which West led the ST.
	Q3 A9864 973 A96		The lead may have been singleton, and the diamond suit looked particularly vulnerable, so I rose with the SA and led out 2 rounds of trumps hoping that it was East who won the HK.
W / /	N 2NT! 4H	E / //	I do not know if I would have guessed right if West had led a low diamond after winning the HK, as West cashed the DA and took away any guess for me. This was not good defence, especially playing teams scoring, and we gained 4 Imps since 1 pair did not get to game and one declarer went off in 4H.
			S 1H 3C!

M 2 Bd 20 Dlr W Vul All	AJ65 AKJT3 AQ 64		On board 20 in the second match I made a bad decision to bid over East's 1D response, as I have a poor hand, and Therese may not even have 4 hearts, but I got lucky, twice!
K3 42 J42 AK9873		QT94 75 KT7653 Q	4H has no real chance against good defence, and South as declarer should be held to just 8 tricks by an early diamond switch, but I got lucky the first time when West led out the top clubs before switching to a diamond!
	872 Q986 98 JT52		A winning diamond finesse would assure 10 tricks, but that did not seem likely, so since I now had a place to park my DQ, I rose in dummy, drew 2 rounds of trumps finishing in hand, and discarded the DQ and a small spade on the top clubs.
W 1C /	N X 4H	E 1D //	S 1H! Now I ruffed a diamond and played the SA and another, end-playing West to give me a ruff-sluff for the 10 th trick. West should of course have played the SK under the SA to avoid the end-play, and I should have made it harder by cashing the SA before drawing the 2 nd trump.

M 3 Bd 7 Dlr S Vul All	QT94 AK 965 Q864		On board 7 in the third match we had a simple auction to what looked like a normal game, and after scoring 10 tricks with a lucky placement of the opposing high cards, it still looked like a flat board.
J8 J865 T7432 KJ		K76 9742 QJ8 A95	However, 1 pair played in 3NT going 2 off, and another declarer went 1 off in 4S, so we gained a surprising 6.25 Imps.
	A532 QT3 AK T732		Therese's 2NT was a game try with only 4 spades, and my 3S confirmed 4-card support and showed a minimum hand, although I probably have bid 4S since I have sharp cards and was better than minimum.
W / / /	N 1S 2NT! 4S	E / / //	S 1C 2S 3S! Therese took herself to game, and East led the H7. Since the spades were friendly, as were the clubs, 10 tricks were there for the taking, so we scored up +620. Double-dummy East can underlead the CA and give West a club ruff, and hope to get a trump trick. However also double-dummy, declarer can lead the SQ after the ruff and pin the SJ in the West hand, so 10 tricks after all.

M 4 Bd 16 Dlr W Vul EW	A9532 3 9652 AQ3		Match 4 was the match from hell where we made every wrong choice that was available and board 16 was a typical example.
QT76 AJ5 JT7 KT4		K8 KQ964 AK4 985	When Therese bid 2H over the 1S overcall promising at least a 5-card suit, my first instinct with my minimum hand was to bid 2NT, as my spade holding could easily be worth 2 tricks, and placing my longest suit on the table to be subject to the opening lead was not likely to a good idea.
	J4 T872 Q83 J762		Instead I woodenly bid 3H, and Therese raised to game, to which South led the SJ.
W 1C 3H!	N 1S /	E 2H 4H	S / // Sure enough, with the diamond and club honours well placed for NS, 4H had no chance and finished 2 off, whereas with Therese's spade holding I would have had a triple stop! Two off was an 8 Imp loss, as one EW pair were allowed to make 4H, and another played in 3NT making 9 tricks.

M 5	6			<p>On board 5 in the fifth match North was in a benevolent mood, not doubling my freely bid slam when they held 3 Aces!</p> <p>They showed more benevolence when they cashed the 2 red Aces and continued with a diamond, hoping to give their partner a ruff, so my clubs went away and I only went 1 off to match the 2 pairs who bothered to check for Aces first and signed off in 5S!</p> <p>Therese had shown 11-14 by her 1NT rebid, and my 2D was an artificial game force, but it never occurred to me that she would have zero Aces. However only one Ace is a normal expectation, so I should have checked for Aces via 4NT before plunging into the hopeless slam.</p> <p>After the 5C response (0 or 3) I would sign off in 5S and Therese would go on with 3!</p> <p>We lost 6.5 Imps, but this was distorted a little by on NS pair playing in 5HX for -1400. The one pair that had a bidding stuff-up and stopped in 4S was also affected by this as they only gained 4 Imps.</p>
Bd 5	A653			
Dir N	AQ9875			
Vul NS	93			
AKQJ8542			T9	
4			KQ7	
6			KJT2	
KT2			QJ76	
	73			
	JT982			
	43			
	A854			
W	N	E	S	
	/	1D	/	
1S	/	1NT	/	
2D!	/	3C	/	
6S!	//			

M 5	QJT875			<p>Board 6 in the fifth match was particularly frustrating as I was in a conservative contract, albeit one level higher than I tried to play in, but I got both two-way finesses wrong and went 1 off for 3.75 Imps out.</p> <p>Therese had shown her 3-card heart support via the support double, and South had lots of diamonds. North dutifully led the D6, and South cashed 2 rounds (showing almost certainly a 7-card suit) and exited with the S9, which I won in hand with the SK.</p> <p>Since I can cater for Qxxx in the South hand, I wrongly elected to lead the HA and finesse through South. This was likely to be wrong, as when South showed a 7-card diamond suit, the odds heavily favoured that they would be short in hearts. Their actual 7222 distribution is against the odds.</p> <p>Having got the hearts wrong I then had the clubs to contend with and felt the wrong 'vibes' at the table, and played South for the CQ, singleton or doubleton, thus I went off. Galling to make only 8 tricks when there were 10 available with correct guesses, and guesses that were not too hard to come by.</p>
Bd 6	Q65			
Dir E	64			
Vul EW	Q5			
K6			A42	
KJ974			AT2	
Q9			85	
J763			KT942	
	93			
	83			
	AKJT732			
	A8			
W	N	E	S	
		1C	1D	
1H	1S	X	2D	
2H	/	/	3D	
3H	//			

M 5	AKQ2			<p>On board 12 in the fifth match NS missed their spade fit due to Therese's timely overcall, and stretched their minimum values to a reasonable but unsuccessful 3NT contract.</p> <p>I led the D6 (DT would be better to unblock), and Therese won the DA and returned the D9, covered by South. I won the DK and returned the DT, which South made the mistake of winning.</p> <p>Declarer now led 4 rounds of spades and took the club finesse, and after winning the CK I could lead a heart to Therese so she could cash the established diamond tricks for 2 off and 5.5 Imps.</p> <p>If declarer ducks completely at trick 2, I have blocked the suit and we cannot get our 6th trick. However declarer cannot make 9 tricks as we then have 3 diamonds, and a club and the HA.</p> <p>If I lead the DT and declarer covers the D9 at trick 2, I can win the DK and exit with the D6, allowing Therese to overtake and set up her suit.</p>
Bd 12	Q652			
Dir W	4			
Vul NS	J532			
865			J4	
J9843			A7	
KT6			A9872	
K8			T974	
	T973			
	KT			
	QJ53			
	AQ6			
W	N	E	S	
/	1C	1D	2NT	
/	3NT	//		

M 5 Bd 20 Dir W Vul All	63 T4 K953 AKQJT		On board 20 in the fifth match NS uncovered their diamond fit via a negative double, but then South over-stretched by bidding game when they had nothing more than the double had promised considering North was going to be forced to respond at the 4-level.
AK J8732 Q62 852		QT97542 K6 J8 93	The 3S overall was obviously weak, if a little frisky, but it is a bidder's game, and North missed his best chance for a positive score by not passing the double. Spades was only played once and made only 7 tricks, so +500 was available for a significant gain.
	J8 AQ95 AT74 764		Of course on a non spade lead North is able to draw two rounds of trumps and then play 4 rounds of clubs while I have to follow to 3 rounds and then ruff the 4 th round with my winning trump. Then the winning heart finesse would garner 11 tricks.
W / / //	N 1C 4D	E 3S /	S X 5D
			In the real world, Therese led her ST, and we cashed the first 2 tricks and sat back and waited for the setting trick in trumps for +100 and 5 Imps.

M 6 Bd 2 Dir E Vul NS	T865 J5 96 JT986		On board 2 in the sixth match I did not really believe South had a strong notrump, in spite of his 1NT overcall, as there appeared to be too many points in the pack!
KJ 8 AQT7543 K72		Q972 KT96432 K8 -	Little did I know that he had his bid, and it was Therese who had opened on a shapely hand. The 4-card spade suit put her off opening with a heart pre-empt.
	A43 AQ7 J2 AQ543		Expecting South to pull it, I did not want to waste time with a fruitless double, so I bid a forcing 3D, and then 3NT over Therese's heart rebid, but her hand must play in a suit so she bid the obvious 4H.
W 3D 3NT	N / /	E 1H 3H 4H	S 1NT! / /
			South led the DJ and Therese won with the DQ and ran the H8 to South, who cashed the SA and tried to cash the CA with the HA to come, but Therese ruffed the club and led the HK to pin the HJ in the North hand and came to 10 tricks for +420 and 4.5 Imps. Two Souths played in Notrumps, making only 5 tricks each time, but the surprising thing is that neither was in 1NT, and one was in game.

M 6 Bd 13 Dir N Vul All	9863 T6 963 QJ73		On board 13 in the sixth match EW used impeccable judgement to avoid getting to a doomed 3NT or 4H in spite of their combined 24 count. 3NT would have been a bad contract after I opened 1S, but 4H only went down due to the mirror distribution.
KT KQ85 AKT5 982		Q4 9742 QJ82 A65	I believe that our pre-emptive bidding helped them make up their minds, but they did appear to locate a likely 4-4 heart fit, and yet West chose to take what was available in 3SX.
	AJ752 AJ3 74 KT4		There was not much available, in fact swap the CA and CK around, and I would have 9 tricks, but on the actual layout I could only make 8 tricks and scored up -200.
W X	N / 3S!	E / X	S 1S //
			This was the top score for EW, as 3 others failed (2 were in 4H for 1 off) and 1 was in 3NT for 2 off), and one EW pair climbed all the way up to 2H, just making! This was 6.5 Imps away in a low-scoring loss.