

## 2016 Hong Kong Inter-cities Teams by Richard Wallis

Following on from our great adventure in the Yeh Cup Mixed Teams in Kaohsiung, our full team (Simon Hinge, Liz Havas, Therese Tully and myself) travelled to Hong Kong for the annual Inter-cities Teams. There we were joined by another Australian team from Taiwan, Bruce Neill, Avi Kanetkar (replacing Margaret Bourke), Pauline Gumby and Warren Lazer.

There were 41 Open teams battling for 8 quarter-final spots, and 7 Womens teams battling for 4 semi-final spots, so the Director added the 2 fields together to make up 4 groups of 12, which eliminated the Swiss element of qualifying and made it into 11 matches of 12-boards, wholly within each group.

Thus we needed to come in the top 2 to qualify for the quarter-finals, unless a Womens team was in the top 2 in the group, as they would normally pull out and play in their own semi-final. We were always close, but after losing to the eventual top 2 early on, we were never close enough to qualify, and the top 2 teams in our group were virtually assured of their place with 1 match to go. Before the last match we only had a small chance of finishing 3<sup>rd</sup>, and when that team actually won, we finished a good 4<sup>th</sup>, well ahead of 5<sup>th</sup>, but out of the race and into a Swiss event on the next day.

Bruce Neill's team also finished 4<sup>th</sup>, but they were a lot closer to qualifying, as a Womens team finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in their group, thus they only needed to win their last match (against 3<sup>rd</sup>) by 19 Imps. Alas they won by just 14 Imps, so joined us in the Swiss on the Saturday where neither team starred.

We were not the first Australian teams to play in the Hong Kong Inter-cities, and I am sure we will not be the last. While there we made some new friends and caught up with old friends, Danny and Linda Osmund, now living in Macau, who were pleased to see us and both send their regards.

<b>M 1</b>	KQ965			On board 8 in the first match West made what I believe was a tactical mistake when he opted for a 1C opening, rather than a more conventional 3C opening.
<b>Bd 8</b>	KJ95			
<b>Dlr W</b>	J8			
<b>Vul Nil</b>	63			At other tables, the 3C opening was passed out, and made 9 or 10 tricks! West has only 10 HCPs, and maybe only 1 trick in defence, and add to that a distinct shortage in the majors, so open 3C and do not give NS room to investigate.
73		842		
T3		AQ6		
T73		KQ2		
AKQJT5		9872		Obviously we could not double 5C, but we always have 3 tricks, and when West played the diamonds, by leading the DT, we had 4 tricks for +100.
	AJT			
	8742			
	A9654			
	4			It was tempting for Therese to go on to 4S when East bid 4C, but I could have made a game try over 3C by a number of ways, and 3S was just an attempt to play.
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
1C!	1S	2C	2S	
3C	3S	4C	/	At the other table Liz and Simon showed fine judgement in passing out 4SN, which yielded another +100 for 5 Imps.
5C	//			

**M 2** KQJ9  
**Bd 24** QJT73  
**Dir W** J54  
**Vul Nil** T  
 654 A7  
 K96 5  
 97 AQ862  
 KQ754 AJ983  
 T842  
 A842  
 KT3  
 62  
**W N E S**  
 / / 1D /  
 1NT / 2C X  
 3C 3H 4C //

On board 24 in the second match the opening lead was critical, as was having East as declarer.

Therese passed on the first round, but when East showed the minors she could comfortably double to show the majors.

I have a conflict in bidding over 3C, in that if we are going to play the hand I want to bid my longest major, but if EW are going to outbid us I should be bidding my best major as a guide to the opening lead.

In retrospect, it was unlikely EW were going to let me play in 3H, or that Therese was going to raise to game, so I should have bid the suit I wanted to be led.

Therese tried to look at dummy by leading the HA, and while my HQ got the desired spade switch, it was too late and East racked up 11 tricks for -150.

At the other table the bidding was similar, except EW got to 5C, and as at our table the spade lead was not found so +400 and 6 Imps.

**M 3** A9  
**Bd 6** AT63  
**Dir E** 9863  
**Vul EW** KQ4  
 Q875432 KT6  
 Q974 KJ52  
 - KT7  
 53 AJ8  
 J  
 8  
 AQJ542  
 T9762  
**W N E S**  
 3S 4D 1NT 2NT!  
 5S X 4S 5D  
 //

Board 6 in the third match was a clash between distributional hands and we lost the battle to a gutsy West at our table.

Therese showed the minors over the 15-17 1NT opening, and West got in the action at adverse vulnerability, in spite of only 4 HCPs!

Since I had a good fit in both minors and 2 Aces, I had no problem in bidding 4D over 3S, and Therese raised to 5D not so much expecting to make, but as insurance against 4SW making.

In spite of my 2 Aces and potentially good lead, I was not confident enough to double, and was very relieved when the CQ took the third trick to assure 1 off and +100.

However, since the diamond finesse was known to be working, 5D was cold for NS, so West had found the vulnerable sacrifice against the non-vulnerable game!

At the other table NS had a mix-up and played in 5CSX, which had no chance, so another +100 was 5 Imps to us after all.

**M 4** 765  
**Bd 21** T9  
**Dir N** JT63  
**Vul NS** KQT4  
 AT2 Q943  
 542 A63  
 A75 9842  
 8532 J7  
 KJ8  
 KQJ87  
 KQ  
 A96  
**W N E S**  
 / / / 1H  
 / 1NT / 3NT  
 //

On board 21 in the fourth match we had a simple auction to a normal contract and East made the normal lead of 4<sup>th</sup> highest of their longest/strongest and I was up the creek with nowhere to go.

When the SJ forced the SA and another spade came back, my only chance was to take the 3<sup>rd</sup> spade and hope that West had all 3 missing Aces, but that was a forlorn hope and I finished 1 off for -100.

At the other table South opened with a strong 2NT in 3<sup>rd</sup> seat, and North raised to 3NT without inquiring about a possible 5-5 spade fit, which gave nothing away to the defence.

This bidding has the effect of right-siding the contract as Deep Finesse suggests that 3NT is cold by South.

Having nothing to guide him, Simon led the H5, which gave South the tempo, and one of the defensive Aces got lost, so declarer finished with 11 tricks for -660 and -13 Imps

**M 5** K87652  
**Bd 2** 6  
**Dir E** A62  
**Vul NS** AK3  
 QJ4 T3  
 KT9542 Q3  
 Q KT8754  
 QJ9 762  
 A9  
 AJ87  
 J93  
 T854  
**W N E S**  
 / 3S / 4S  
 //

On board 2 in the fifth match I had a couple of options in 4<sup>th</sup> seat after East opened 3D, and I chose a conservative 3S, which Therese raised to game in spades, to which East led the HQ.

When dummy tracked, I could see that 3NT was a better contract, and 4S was going to need a bit of luck, so I set about an end-play on East in diamonds that would make use of the DJ in dummy.

Accordingly I ruffed a heart at trick 2 and led out the top spades and a third spade, won by East, who led another heart.

I ruffed the HK and led the top clubs and a third club, and was disappointed by the 3-3 break as this meant 4S was cold, but the stage was now set - ruff the next heart and lead a small diamond towards dummy, end-playing West!

However to my surprize, East did not lead another heart, but the DQ, and I could claim 10 tricks for +620, and realized that my plan would have failed. 3NTSX at the other table made 9 tricks for -750 and 4 Imps away

**M 5** Q9  
**Bd 11** AJT76  
**Dir S** 8  
**Vul Nil** AK965  
 762 T843  
 94 Q53  
 Q543 K976  
 8432 T7  
 AKJ5  
 K82  
 AJT2  
 QJ  
**W N E S**  
 / 1H / 2NT  
 / 3C! / 3D  
 / 3S / 3NT  
 / 6NT //

On board 11 in the fifth match my 3C rebid after 2NT was artificial and forces 3D, following which my 3S showed 5 clubs and slam interest. I could have bid 3D over 2NT and found out the heart support, but then the club suit is lost. However, in the absence of club support, 6NT is a good contract with Therese declarer, so that is what I bid.

West led the S7 and Therese did not find the HQ, so she finished with 12 tricks for +990. If declarer can find the HQ, the grand slam is cold, but this is yet another example that the risk of bidding the grand is not worth the gain, as NS at the other table played in a quiet 4H, also making 12 tricks so we gained 11 Imps.

The Neill team had bad luck on this board when the opposition North overbid to 7H, when South incorrectly showed the HQ in the RKCB responses.

North reasoned that a trump lead after the bidding was clearly indicated, but East led another suit, so North played East for the HQ and wrapped up 13 tricks for 11 Imps out.

**M 6** AT87  
**Bd 24** A942  
**Dir W** T874  
**Vul Nil** 4  
 KJ963 Q4  
 QJT 87653  
 93 KJ5  
 K85 QT6  
 52  
 K  
 AQ62  
 AJ9732  
**W N E S**  
 / / / 1C  
 1S X / 2C  
 / 2NT / 3NT  
 //

On board 24 in the sixth match Therese had 2 options after my negative double, and chose to rebid her 6-card suit instead of her diamond suit, which made me optimistically think of a possible game, and since I likely had a double-stopper, I rebid 2NT, which Therese raised to game.

East dutifully led the SQ and my options did not look good when dummy tracked, but the club suit looked like the best prospect, so I led to the C9 on the table and it held!

This duck was a good idea by West, as it made me think the clubs were bad and there was no future there, so I exited with a spade to set up my second spade trick, and West duly obliged.

Now the diamond finesse worked, the suit was 3-2, and East won the 3<sup>rd</sup> diamond, so I had 2 spades, 2 hearts, 3 diamonds and 2 clubs for 9 in all and +400.

At the other table South rebid 2D, and the final contract was 3D, making 10 tricks for -130, but 7 Imps to us.

<b>M 7</b>	97			On board 3 in the seventh match the value of patience was demonstrated when West bid to a very good 4S, in spite of the fact that I had 18 HCPs.
<b>Bd 3</b>	K52			
<b>Dir S</b>	AQ62			
<b>Vul EW</b>	AKQ9			I led the top clubs and West ruffed the second, drew trumps, and finessed a heart to my HK, and it was my time to think and add up.
AT542		KJ63		
AQJ6		98		I knew 1 diamond could be discarded on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> heart, and that West certainly had the DK, so I had to play Therese for heart length and control of the 4 <sup>th</sup> heart if she only had 4 of them, so I led back a heart and waited for my 2 diamond tricks.
K72		JT4		
6		JT83		
	Q8			Therese had the vital hearts, so with nowhere else to go Declarer took the diamond finesse and went 1 off for +100.
	T743			
	987			
	7542			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	4SE is off immediately by a diamond lead from South, but West can make 4S by passing the H9 at trick 5.
			/	
1S	X	3S	/	At the other table I do not have the play, but Simon made 4S as West, so we gained 12 Imps.
4S	//			

<b>M 7</b>	AKQ8			On board 5 in the seventh match, after I opened 1NT (15-17) it was very difficult for Therese to be sure of where we should be going, but an initial transfer to diamonds seemed like a good start.
<b>Bd 5</b>	AT64			
<b>Dir N</b>	A73			
<b>Vul NS</b>	94			A clearer plan occurred when I rebid 3D, which was a super-accept, so she forgot about her spade suit and bid the obvious 5D, with EW silent throughout.
T53		64		
KQ873		J952		East did not have a look at dummy with the CA as the opening lead, but instead led the S6, which allowed me an easy 12 tricks for +620.
2		QT		Of course we could make at least 11 tricks spades, so that was a potential loss, but at least it was a game.
K765		AQ832		At the other table I do not have the bidding, but Simon and Liz stole the hand in 3H, which made exactly 9 tricks for another +140 and 13 Imps to us.
	J972			
	-			
	KJ98654			
	JT			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
	1NT	/	2NT	
/	3D	/	5D	
//				

<b>M 8</b>	AJT9			On board 18 in the eighth match both Therese and I were put off by our void in each other's suit.
<b>Bd 18</b>	Q86543			
<b>Dir E</b>	-			Even though the South hand is minimum on points, I think it is worth a 2S bid over East's 2C as that implies a minimum of a 5-card diamond suit anyway.
<b>Vul NS</b>	T65			When Therese came again with 3S over West's 3C, I did not place her with a 5-card suit, and while I thought about raising, my diamond void and 4-4 fit warned of caution.
82		54		
AKT2		J97		West led the HA and Therese was able to ruff in hand, cash the DA to discard a club, and then a couple of diamond ruffs established the diamond suit for 11 tricks and +200.
J732		K84		
K72		AQJ94		
	KQ763			
	-			
	AQT965			
	83			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	At the other table NS and EW had a bidding battle, with South the victor, finally winning the contract in 5S. However, after EW cashed the top clubs, declarer lost their way completely and finished 2 off for +200, and 9 Imps to us!
			1D	
X	1H	2C	2D	
3C	/	/	3S	
//				

**M 9** J8  
**Bd 10** A4  
**Dir E** A54  
**Vul All** AJT752  
AQ76 T953  
K76 953  
Q6 J8732  
KQ64 8

K42  
QJT82  
KT9  
93

**W N E S**  
/ /

1NT //

On board 10 in the ninth match I could have bid a natural 3C over the 1NT opening, but this is risky with nearly half the HCPs on my right, so instead I decided to take my chances on beating 1NT with my good suit and 2 Aces.

I led the CJ, and it was obvious from dummy that Therese had 8-10 HCPs, so it was unlikely that 1NT was going to make unless West had good diamonds.

Declarer place the SA and S6, and I won the SJ and cashed out the clubs, noting the fall of the C9, setting up my club suit.

Therese won the next spade and led the DT in response to my signal, and declarer made 4 tricks for 3 off and +300. Ignoring my signal and leading the HQ would have given West no more tricks and 4 off, but much the same result.

At the other table North bid clubs, and made 10 tricks for -130, but 5 Imps to us.

**M 10** AQ98  
**Bd 26** 9  
**Dir E** T873  
**Vul All** Q653  
K7 T4  
J83 AK642  
5 Q9642  
AJT9742 K

J6532  
QT75  
AKJ  
8

**W N E S**  
1H 1S  
3C! 4H /  
/ 4S /  
5C / 5H X  
//

On board 26 in the tenth match East got very adventurous on a minimum hand and paid a severe penalty.

West's 3C was alerted and explained as a limit raise in hearts, which is what she had, but I suspect that 5C was for real, and if West had Kx she would have passed.

Therese had some thought of doubling 4H, so she had no troubling in doubling 5H, and the opening lead was the DK, asking for reverse count.

I won the spade switch, cashed another spade and led the H9, which declarer won, cashed the CK and ruffed a diamond in dummy to cash the CA, pitching a diamond.

Therese ruffed the club and returned the HQ to squash the HJ in dummy and prevent any more ruffs. Declarer lost an extra trick in the wash and finished 5 off for +1400.

At the other table Liz was more circumspect, and passed out 4S, and got a bonus when declarer went 1 off to another +100 and 17 Imps!

**M 10** -  
**Bd 27** AQ8765  
**Dir S** 65  
**Vul Nil** QT654  
KJT98743 AQ62  
T2 J93  
Q A842  
32 K9

5  
K4  
KJT973  
AJ87

**W N E S**  
1D  
3S 4H 4S X  
/ 5C 5S //

On board 27 in the tenth match the hand was very distributional and we finished on the wrong side of it.

West made it easier for me initially by only bidding 3S over 1D, and I was able to bid 4H, but East has an easy 4S bid over this.

Therese doubled for penalties, but with my distributional hand I could not stand this, so I showed my second suit with 5C.

West now made a good decision to bid again, and to my surprise, Therese passed this time, and thinking it may be forcing I gave serious thought to bidding 6C, but meekly passed.

This contract went 2 off, undoubled for +100, but when the contract at the other table was 5SX, we lost 5 Imps.

6C or 6H would probably have made, as East has no reason to find the winning defence of laying down the DA and giving West a ruff.

The only cold slam is 6D, as after a spade is ruffed on the table at trick 1, the only diamond layout that will give 12 tricks is the actual one!

**M 11** AKT  
**Bd 3** AK9  
**Dir S** 8653  
**Vul EW** K53  
 QJ65  
 Q632  
 AK  
 872

86  
 JT  
 QJT72  
 QJT6

9432  
 8754  
 94  
 A94

**W**      **N**      **E**      **S**

1NT    X      2C    /  
 2D    /      /      X  
 //

On board 3 in the eleventh match West opened a weak 1NT when I had a strong 1NT, so I doubled for penalties, although I did not have a strong or long suit to lead!

East's 2C was a runout with a single suit, (although it looks like 2 suits to me) and the pass of 2D confirms that it is diamonds.

There's now made a negative double, and I decided to pass this for penalties and lead a trump!

It took me a while, but eventually I found where There's meagre values were, and we cashed our 6 tricks for 1 off and +200. When declarer turned up the the DA and DK early on, and There's had nothing in the majors, (indicating declarer had both major suit Queens), she was marked with the CA since West had thus far 11 HCPs, so there was no room for an Ace.

At the other table South managed to eke out 8 tricks in 2H for -110, so we gained a meagre 3 Imps.