

2008 BBC Graded Teams by Richard Wallis

Since the number of congresses has exploded, there is often more than one to attract players most weekends in the south-east corner, and July 19 was no exception, when both Caloundra and BBC ran a 1-day teams event. The net result is a reduction of entries for both events, so BBC was relatively happy with the roll-up of 28 teams.

Our usual Director was busy on other business, but Chris Snook filled in for him admirably. Tony Jackman and I played with Mike Robson and Betty Lee, and thanks to a bit of luck in one match and results falling our way in others we managed to come out on top.

Our first crucial match was in round 3 against Francis (N Francis, K Steffensen, C Miller and R Moraweicki), and when Tony mis-read my 1C opening as 1S we lost 13 Imps in an otherwise even match. This put Francis well in front at lunch, but straight after lunch they were well beaten, and after a few more close results for Francis we were in the lead.

The other crucial match was straight after lunch against Parker (R & S Parker, J Mills & C Green), and at our table Ralph & John bid to 2 slams going down and Tony and I bid a making slam to gain a maximum win. One of the slams hinged on the opening lead and I hit gold with the S2 from K32. If their slams make and our goes down it would have been a maximum win to them. Parker recovered well for the remaining matches to finish in 3rd place, just behind Francis in 2nd.

M 1	97				The value of overcalling to show a suit worth leading rather than just being a nuisance (like Jxxxx) should not be discounted.
Bd 2	63				
Dlr E	K72				At our table on board 2 in match 1 North had no realistic chance to bid clubs, as Tony made a limit raise in Hearts, thus North would have had to bid at the 4-level, which is too rich even for my blood.
Vul NS	AKT742				
KJ83		AQ			
A942		KQT75			We open 2D to show 4 spades and at least 4 hearts, thus my 1H opening bid had already denied 4 spades, so Tony did not need to mention the suit, nor should he bother when we have a 5-4 heart fit.
Q4		J965			
Q95		63			
	T6542				
	J8				South could still have led a club looking for a ruff, but instead chose to lead the unbid major, and 4H was now cold. If I had been prepared to risk a 6-1 spade break, I could have cashed the SQ before drawing the last trump, but the lead of the S4 when I have the top 4 honours made it too much of a risk, thus I led a 3 rd heart to dummy after unblocking the SQ and only made 10 tricks.
	AT83				
	J8				
W	N	E	S		
		1H	/		
3H	/	4H	//		At the other table Betty was able to bid 2C over the 1S response, and after a club lead 4H had no chance.

M 1 76
Bd 6 9764
Dlr E 632
Vul EW K862
 AKQ4 T9832
 T2 AKQJ853
 AKQJ7 4
 T3 -

 J5
 -
 T985
 AQJ9754

W N E S
 6H // 4H /

Board 6 in match 1 was a flat board, but it contrasted the various bidding styles around the room.

Superficially I have a 7-5 distribution, with both majors, and many people opened 1H to keep the 5-card spade suit in the picture, but the hearts are good enough to play opposite a void in partner's hand, so the spades should be discounted unless partner bids spades strongly himself, and even then I would take some convincing not to play in hearts.

At our table the bidding was direct, although Tony was worried about 2 club losers, so took a little longer to bid slam.

The trouble as I see it with opening 1H with only 10 HCPs is that almost certainly NS have a share of the points and may be able to make life difficult by preempting in clubs, and that is what happened at some tables where the slam was missed.

At the other table, East did open 1H and Mike bid 4C, but EW persisted on to 6H anyway.

M 2 AKQT2
Bd 11 K874
Dlr S A4
Vul Nil 94
 9543 J86
 AJ32 Q986
 Q952 T3
 T J873

 7
 T
 KJ876
 AKQ652

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

Board 11 in match 2 was lucky for us at both tables. At our table South's bidding showed a distributional 65, with only minimum HCPs. North should perhaps have been warned by the misfit, but decided to try 6NT to protect the HK, with the hope that the 2 long suits would come in.

A black suit lead was precluded by the bidding, and it looks like a diamond is also risky for the defense, which leaves a heart.

However, Tony was sure I had 4 diamonds, so came out swinging with the DT, covered by the DJ and won by declarer.

Even when the clubs failed to break it must have looked like 12 tricks were in the bag by way of the 'marked' finesse of Tony's hand for the D9, but declarer was in for a rude shock when she finally led towards dummy for the finesse, and was lucky to only finish 1 off when I had the HA.

At the other table Mike finished in 6C and West, not being a Harold Hiley disciple, led a diamond instead of cashing the HA, so 6C made for +14 Imps.

M 2 T75
Bd 14 A9872
Dlr E 743
Vul Nil J5
 642 AK3
 654 T
 KQ85 AJT92
 K62 AT87

 QJ98
 KQJ3
 6
 Q943

W N E S
 X 4H / 1C 1H
 X // / /

On board 14 in match 2 we were barraged in the bidding after South showed both majors over Tony's 1C opening, so I decided to take any penalty that was on offer.

My first double showed either 5-8 or stronger, with no 5-card suit to bid, and my second double was to show a positive response. Tony looked to have at least 4 tricks, so passed it out.

NS have 5 losers in a heart contract, and none of them got away so we collected +300. The icing was on the case when it was obvious that even on a non-heart lead we could only take 8 tricks in 3NT before NS found their heart suit.

An alternative contract was 5D, but that would only make if NS were careless with the clubs, which did not happen at the other table so Betty and Mike collected +50 from 5D, for a total gain of 8 Imps.

M 3 AQ83
Bd 18 AK9763
Dir E 4
Vul NS 63
K72 654
J54 Q82
KQJ9 832
A94 QT87

JT9
T
AT765
KJ52

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

Board 18 in match 3 proved too difficult for most pairs, and probably rightly so, because although 11 tricks were there in either major (actually 12 could be made in spades), the hearts were 3-3, and the club and spade honours were well placed for NS, so even 3H was in jeopardy.

North's double after my 1NT opening showed a single-suiter, and I feel sure that South's suspicions were confirmed when North rebid 2H.

South made another try with 3C for a 'safer' contract, but North was not inclined to try 3NT or show her spade suit opposite a passed hand, and 3H closed out the auction, as South could hardly bid any more on the apparent misfit.

There was nothing in the play, and when declarer made the right guess in clubs, guided by my opening bid, she made 11 tricks.

At the other table Mike and Betty found their 4-3 spade fit, and played at a safe level for +200 and a flat board.

M 3 9865
Bd 22 K7
Dir E 932
Vul EW A863
KT3 A74
A52 J83
AKJ85 QT4
K2 QJT9

QJ2
QT964
76
754

W	N	E	S
		/	/
1C	/	2S	/
3S	/	4S	//

Board 22 in match 3 was a complete disaster, and was the major loss in the match. The bidding looks very strange, but is a result of failing eyesight and light pencils.

After my 1C opening Tony's 2S bid showed 8-10 (as a passed hand) and 4441, the singleton being clubs.

3NT does not look a good bet opposite a singleton club, and we reached 4S with Tony declarer.

The first I knew something was wrong was when Tony did a second-take when dummy went down, but he might have expected 4-card support. The second was when he won the diamond on the table and led the CK.

When he won the 3rd trick with the CQ, I realized that we were in trouble, and he did well in the end to only go 1 off for -100. At the other table EW had no trouble getting to 3NT for -630 and 12 Imps out.

The reason for the odd bidding was that Tony read my bid as 1S, and was merely accepting my game try bid of 3S.

M 4 KJ952
Bd 2 Q9
Dir E Q64
Vul NS Q96
Q74 AT8
KJT872 A543
K53 AT
A K732

63
6
J9872
JT854

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

On board 2 in match 4 I could have bid 2D over Tony's 1NT, forcing a 2H response, and then 3H (or any other 3-level suit) by me would have been a slam try. However, I thought that I was a little light to look for slam opposite a 13-15 opening, so instead I just bid 3H, offering either 3NT or 4H.

Tony looked at his 3 Aces and 4-card support and thought that it would cost nothing to make a cue-bid on the way to 4H with 3S.

Once I cued clubs and Tony diamonds, I thought that I had enough to make 12 tricks somehow, so just bid slam, expecting Tony to have the HA because of his initial cue-bid.

North led the S2, which gives me 13 tricks, but this was teams, and there was a very slight chance that the lead was a singleton (South did not double the spade cue-bid), so I took my 12 tricks.

At the other table slam was not bid, so we gained 11 Imps.

M 4 Q874
Bd 4 K5
Dir W -
Vul All AKJT942
KT3 AJ65
87642 JT
T7 KQ98632
Q65 -

92
AQ93
AJ54
873

W	N	E	S
/	1C	1D	1H
/	1S	2D	X
/	4C	/	6C
//			

On board 4 in match 4 we were lucky when declarer had a memory failure in the end game and failed to take his 12th trick. South doubled 2D for penalties, but thought that slam was a chance when North showed a good suit.

Slam would have had no chance against the late Harold Hiley, as no matter that North had bid spades, he would have led his Ace to the slam and EW would take the first 2 tricks.

Tony led a reasonable DK, and declarer discarded a spade and led a trump, finding out about the bad break, so he had to get back to dummy for the marked finesse.

Declarer unblocked the hearts and discarded another spade on the HQ, but did not notice that the heart honours were originally short and that now the H9 on the table was good, so he took the club finesse and lost 2 spades at the end.

At the other table Mike and Betty had a bidding misunderstanding and played in just 3C for +150, which looked to be 11 Imps out, but was 6 Imps in. Making the slam would have cost us 17 Imps.

M 4 T84
Bd 7 K8
Dir S A9852
Vul All K93
K32 QJ7
T754 J932
T743 Q6
J6 8752

A965
AQ6
KJ
AQT4

W	N	E	S
/	4C	/	2NT
/	6NT	//	4NT

On board 7 in match 4 NS bid confidently to 6NT without giving anything away except that South had 3 Aces.

I had nothing to guide me except aversions.

I did not consider leading the CJ from a doubleton, and leading from Txxx had nothing to recommend it, and could quite easily give away a vital trick, so that left spades.

A spade lead may cost the first trick, but it is unlikely to be fatal for the defence, so I led the S2. It looked promising when declarer ducked Tony's SJ and when declarer won the next trick with the SA, I knew that if I had a discard problem I could jettison the SK.

After some thought declarer led a heart to dummy and took the diamond finesse, but even though the finesse won he could not overcome the 4-2 break, and finished 1 off for +100.

At the other table, on a non-spade lead, 12 tricks in 3NT was worth 13 Imps.

M 5 76543
Bd 10 -
Dir E AKQJ54
Vul All A5
J982 Q
JT8 AQ7654
9 T72
KT842 J96

AKT
K932
863
Q73

W	N	E	S
4H	X	2H	/
		//	

On board 10 in match 5 fortune favoured the brave.

South could not bid over Tony's weak 2H opening, and since I had 3 hearts myself and a weak hand, it looked like something was on for NS, so at equal vulnerability I took an advance sacrifice of 4H. Maybe neither side could double!

However, North was not to be denied and doubled for take-out, and all South could reasonably do was convert to penalties.

South led the SA and switched to a diamond and dummy was forced to ruff a diamond at trick 3. Tony now passed the HJ to South who took the trick and a diamond return set up another trump trick and -500.

At the other table Mike and Betty were able to play in 3NT and had 10 top tricks after a heart lead for +630 and 4 Imps.

M 6 AQJ8542
Bd 17 Q
Dir N QT7
Vul Nil T7
T K97
J987632 K5
AKJ6 53
4 986532

63
AT4
9842
AKQJ

W	N	E	S
	1S	/	2C
4H	4S	//	

On board 17 in match 6 I was regretting overcalling on such a poor suit when North became declarer in 4S. I was looking to play in 4HX (it may make), and if South was declarer I had easy lead of the DA.

On a diamond lead and subsequent ruff 4S has no chance, but predictably Tony led a heart, and at least I was glad to see the HK squash North's HQ and not give away a trick.

North took the spade finesse, not a good bet after my preemptive bid, and Tony needed no guiding to switch to a diamond so we got the diamond ruff after all for +50.

Because of the singleton trump in my hand, North could have made an overtrick after the heart lead by the simple action of cashing the SA and then discarding 2 diamonds on the clubs before leading another trump, losing just a trump and a diamond.

At the other table that is what must have happened, as Mike and Betty came back with +450 for 11 Imps.

M 7 JT965
Bd 27 T7
Dir S A8643
Vul Nil 2
KQ 8743
J432 K
T5 J
K7543 AQJT986

A2
AQ9865
KQ972
-

W	N	E	S
/	1S	2C	1H
4C	5D	/	2D
//		7C	6D
			X

On board 27 in match 7 Tony took things very carefully early in the bidding, and had to finally make a tough decision (luckily he got it right) and pay a penalty of 2 Imps. Maybe an initial 4C (or 5C) bid could have left NS with less ambition.

I am generally not in favour of lying doggo, and I gave thought to bidding 5C myself, and when NS got to slam, I wished that I had!

Over my 4C, North was able to jump to 5D, which improved South's hand enormously, with 2 good suits and a club void, so he bid the slam.

If North had just bid 5D over my 5C bid, South would likely not have a reason to get too excited.

Once they had bid to slam, Tony made the good decision to sacrifice, and made 10 tricks for -500.

At the other table the EW bidding was more of a barrage, and Mike and Betty played in 5D for +420, so we lost 2 Imps, but would have lost 11 Imps without the sacrifice.

M 7 84
Bd 32 Q982
Dir W AQ52
Vul EW KT8
AT93 KQ765
A764 KJ53
J74 986
53 A

J2
T
KT3
QJ97642

W	N	E	S
/	1NT	2C	3NT!
4H	/	/	/
X	//		

On board 32 in match 7 I took advantage of the vulnerability and teams scoring to leave the last guess with NS. South looked like someone who was not going to let us play in game when he bid 3NT, so I bid 4H expecting him to show his true colours and I was not disappointed.

Tony's 2C showed both majors, and with my 2 Aces I did not believe that South was serious with his 3NT, so did not waste my time in doubling him, and by the speed with which he bid 5C, I think I was right about his 3NT bid - he was happy as long as they were only 50s.

We cashed the first 2 spade tricks and when Tony won the CA he led a heart, so our reward was +300.

Luckily we had 4 unavoidable losers in either major game, and at the other table Mike and Betty did not sacrifice in 5C, and with +100 from 4S 1 off, we gained 9 Imps.

This 3NT bid looks like another version of the bluff 1NT overcall.