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Gold Coast 2012

Barry Rigal

Maybe I'm biased, but I believe the Gold Coast tournament in Brisbane, a tournament held during the last week of February every year, may be the best congress in the world. It is certainly my favourite week-long event, since although the emphasis is on bridge, the three-day pair game is followed by a team event where you can relax in the evenings and enjoy Australian wines and foods.

The tournament is superbly stage-managed, runs smoothly, and everyone plays the same deals at the same time. The organizers go out of their way to ensure that you enjoy yourself. That includes the best closing dinner ever; free to everyone who has played the pairs and teams.

The weather this year was surprisingly good (Brisbane can be wet and humid at this time of the year), and the tournament ran as smoothly as ever. One idea that EVERY organizer should consider was the way the Swiss event planned its seating. The event was seeded and every team kept its number and its table-number throughout. So the N/S pair of team 77 stayed at table 77 on every round, while the overhead projector showed them the number of their opponent and they simply sent their E/W pair there. No queuing round the TD tables – what a pleasure!

First the pairs event, though; one day of qualifying puts you in a ranked final depending on your overall finish in the qualifier. Each final is a three-session all play all in groups of 14 tables, with nine three-board rounds.

Deal 1 of the qualifying event, in session one, saw possibilities for declarer and defence. Where I was watching, Michal Kopecky, East, opened a forcing club and was end-played into rebidding 3NT when 3♠ came back to him.

Board 1

♠ 4 2 ♥ Q J 8 2 ♦ K 10 5 3 ♣ J 7 6	♠ Q ♥ 10 9 5 ♦ Q J 9 8 4 ♣ Q 10 9 5 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> Love All Dealer N </div> ♠ K J 10 9 8 7 5 ♥ K 6 4 ♦ 7 6 2 ♣ —	♠ A 6 3 ♥ A 7 3 ♦ A ♣ A K 8 4 3 2	
WEST — Pass Pass	NORTH Pass Pass	EAST 1♣ 3NT	SOUTH 3♠ Pass

Bill Hirst, on lead, toyed with the idea of attacking with a spade, but at pairs that was a big position to take. He settled for the quite reasonable if less successful low

heart. Kopecky after some thought put up the queen at the first trick and Andrew Hirst followed with a discouraging small card. Now if the South hand has ten major-suit cards a bad club break is virtually certain, so Kopecky gave some thought to passing the club six, but he eventually led a low club to his ace. When South pitched an encouraging spade declarer continued the attack on clubs and North won and shifted to spades. That left the defenders a tempo ahead in the race to establish their suit before declarer. East had nine winners but could never reach the ♦K: down one.

The decision not to run the club six was reasonable – in theory. But a look at the matchpoint frequencies suggests that simply coming to nine tricks would have scored very well (if for no other reason than that 5♣ was an enormously popular contract here).

However, let's go back to trick three; declarer can still recover from the bad club break. He wins the ♥A and plays another heart, taking out South's entry. Now South does best to shift to a diamond. Declarer takes this in hand and ducks a club to North, wins the spade return, and plays ♣K and another club. The end-position sees North reduced to ♦QJ94, with dummy having a master heart and ♦K105. North exits with a top diamond, and dummy ducks, end-playing North to lead into the diamond tenace.

At another table Barbara Travis was sitting South (playing with Howard Melbourne) and did lead a spade against 3NT. Naturally she selected the ♠K – hoping that either dummy or her partner had the singleton spade queen. Today was her lucky day – and she got herself +150 and into the bulletin as well.

Board 6
Pairs Final 1

♠ A 5 4 ♥ J 9 4 ♦ J 6 4 ♣ K 9 6 2	♠ Q J 8 7 2 ♥ A 2 ♦ K 8 2 ♣ A 8 7 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> EW Game Dealer E </div> ♠ K 10 9 ♥ K Q 7 6 ♦ A Q 5 ♣ Q 10 5	♠ 6 3 ♥ 10 8 5 3 ♦ 10 9 7 3 ♣ J 4 3	
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Playing against one Ware is bad enough – playing against two of them must be doubly wearing I suppose. On this deal Griff Ware and Michael Ware (who are unrelated – on Griff's card it says Aware and BWare) bid to 6NT on the auction: 1♣ – 1♠ – 1NT (15-17) – 2♦ (GF) – 2♥ – 2♠ – 3♠ – 4♣ – 4♦ – 4NT – 5♠ – 6NT. Against 6NT West naturally resisted the temptation to lead a club, which would have let through 12 tricks without a struggle. Instead West led a spade and Michael won and knocked out the spade ace. He ran the spades and diamonds and reduced to this ending.

♠ —	♠ 7	♠ —
♥ J 9 4	♥ A 2	♥ 10 8 5 3
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —
♣ K 9 6	♣ A 8 7	♣ J 4

♠ —	♠ —
♥ K Q 7 6	♥ —
♦ —	♦ —
♣ Q 10	♣ —

The last spade squeezed East, who knew from the auction that declarer had four hearts, into letting go a club. Ware pitched a heart from hand, cashed the three top hearts and decided that his LHO's earlier passive defence coupled with the discarding had indicated that West had the ♣K. So he led out the ♣Q to pin the jack and emerged with a stone-cold top for his troubles. Only repeated heart leads hold 6NT to 11 tricks, by removing the critical heart entry to the South hand.

On our next deal Julian Foster played 6♠ after the auction: 1♦ - 1♠ - 1NT (15-17) - 2♦ (GF) - 2♥ - 2♠ - 2NT - 3♠ - 4♣ - 4NT - 5♥ - 6♠ - Pass.

Board 12

♠ Q 8 2	♠ A 10	♠ 6 3
♥ 10 8 7	♥ K 5 4 2	♥ Q 9 6 3
♦ 8 5 4	♦ K Q 7 3	♦ 10 9 2
♣ K 7 5 2	♣ A J 8	♣ Q 6 4 3

♠ K J 9 7 5 4	NS Game Dealer W
♥ A J	
♦ A J 6	
♣ 10 9	

6♠ is obviously the best spot here, but when West meanly fishes out the ♣7 as his opening lead you have to make a decision early. Where will you go for your 12th trick?

Let's say you win the ♣A; the spade finesse is a 50% line, but you can do better. If you cash the ♠AK and play on diamonds you come home when spades split 3-2 and the hand with the long trumps has three or more diamonds. However, if trumps are 4-1 you need to take the heart finesse instead. How should you best combine your odds?

At the table Julian won the club lead, cashed the top spades, then led a low diamond to dummy and decided from the opponents' signals that diamonds were not breaking. So he took the heart finesse and when it held he could cash the ♥A, go to a diamond honour, and play off the ♥K to pitch a club.

Of course, the fact that both East and West had lied about their diamond length suggests that trusting your opponents to give count in mid-hand is something of a broken reed. Better instead is to win the club and play a diamond to the jack at trick two. If both opponents can work out they need to give false count so early, they deserve to beat you! If you now believe diamonds are 4-2 you cash the spade king and ace in that order, then

take the heart finesse if nothing good has happened. In practice, though, once declarer had not taken the spade finesse he could not go down.

When Griff Ware and Michael Ware took on Tom Hanlon and Hugh McGann in round four of the final session both pairs were still in contention. This board did the Irish no good at all.

Board 11 Pairs Final 3

♠ K 9 5 4	♠ —	♠ Q 10 3
♥ 9 8	♥ —	♥ A Q J 5 2
♦ J 9 7 6 3 2	♦ —	♦ A K
♣ 7	♣ —	♣ K 5 2

♠ J 7 2	Love All Dealer S	♠ —
♥ K 10 6 4		♥ —
♦ Q 8 5		♦ —
♣ 10 8 6		♣ —

♠ A 8 6	♠ —
♥ 7 3	♥ —
♦ 10 4	♦ —
♣ A Q J 9 4 3	♣ —

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
—	—	—	2♣
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
2♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

A very nice rebid by Griff Ware don't you think? When Michael Ware raised to 3NT McGann naturally led the ♣A and ♣Q, and on the sight of dummy might have wondered why he hadn't risked a double. Developments were swift and depressing, as declarer tabled his hand for +400 and a complete top.

Board 18 Pairs Final 3

♠ J 5 2	♠ —	♠ K 10 9 7 3
♥ K 10 9 6 3 2	♥ —	♥ Q J 5
♦ K	♦ —	♦ 9
♣ K Q J	♣ —	♣ 10 5 4 3

♠ A Q 6 4	NS Game Dealer E	♠ —
♥ A 8 7		♥ —
♦ A 10 7 5 3		♦ —
♣ 8		♣ —

♠ 8	♠ —
♥ 4	♥ —
♦ Q J 8 6 4 2	♦ —
♣ A 9 7 6 2	♣ —

When Ashley Bach and Nabil Edgtton, the ultimate winners of the Open Pairs Championship, defended 4♠ on an unopposed auction (2♠ - Pass - 4♠ - All Pass) Bach led his singleton heart. Declarer naturally finessed, and Edgtton returned his smallest heart for the ruff. Ignoring his partner's suit-preference play Bach returned a low diamond and declarer put up the ace, on which the king appeared. Now declarer drew a round of trumps - which was fatal. When North won the first club he simply played a second trump, and dummy had only two spades left to ruff three clubs.

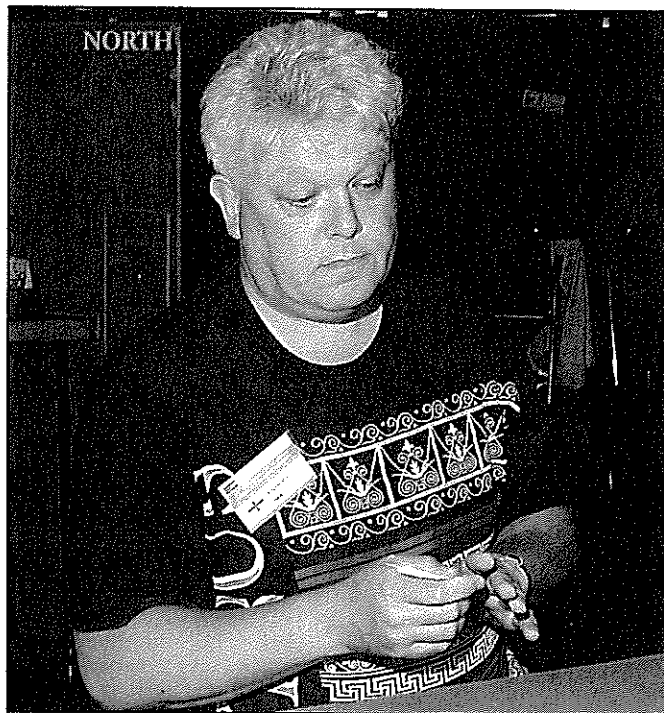
Had East trusted his opponents (as he should have) he would have known that when South played a diamond not a club at trick three he had no trumps left. Let's take it from there; duck a club to North who returns a heart - as good as anything. You win in dummy and ruff a diamond as North pitches a club, ruff a club low, ruff a

diamond, ruff a club high, and ruff another diamond. At this point you have played three clubs, three hearts, and four diamonds and are down to a high and low trump in each hand with a losing club in your own hand and a diamond in dummy. You ruff a club high in dummy, on which North must under-ruff. But you are now in dummy with the ♠K10 poised over the jack and can take the last two tricks.

In some variations here if you play to ruff diamonds at once you may need to take the first round trump finesse. But assuming that you trust your opponents, it is the indicated line.

The format of the teams is simple. Four matches a day for three days reduces the field of 240 teams down to six. The top two get a bye, the next four play head-to-head to reduce to two, and from there on you have two semi-finals and a final.

Brian Callaghan of London is a regular visitor to this tournament, playing with his partner Christine Duckworth, and this year with their Dutch friends Niels van der Gaast and Agnes Wesseling. In the second teams qualifier match Callaghan found himself in a delicate game, and took his best chance:



Brian Callaghan

Board 24
Teams Qual 2

♠ Q ♥ J 10 6 ♦ A K Q 9 7 6 4 3 ♣ 10	♠ 8 6 2 ♥ 8 3 ♦ J 10 8 ♣ A K 4 3 2	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> Love All Dealer W </div>	♠ K J 9 5 ♥ 9 7 4 ♦ 5 ♣ Q J 8 6 5
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♠ A 10 7 4 3 ♥ A K Q 5 2 ♦ 2 ♣ 9 7			
---	--	--	--

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
3♠*	Pass	4♣*	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

3♠ Minor preempt
 4♣ Pass or correct

Callaghan admitted that doubling 4♣ for take-out might have been a better bid but then he would not have been able to test himself in 4♥, would he? The defenders led two top diamonds and East could see no reason to ruff in – yes, maybe West should have led a lower diamond to get the trump promotion. East pitched a painful club instead, so Callaghan ruffed at trick two, drew trumps in three rounds, and ducked a spade. This was the ending:

♠ — ♥ — ♦ Q 9 7 6 4 3 ♣ 10	♠ 8 6 ♥ — ♦ J ♣ A K 4 3	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ K J 9 ♥ — ♦ — ♣ Q J 8 6
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♠ A 10 7 4 ♥ 2 ♦ — ♣ 9 7			
-----------------------------------	--	--	--

West should simply have led a top diamond now but he was worried that this would squeeze his partner. Instead he played a club, and Callaghan won in dummy, then led a spade. East could split his honours, but Callaghan ducked. He could win the next club in dummy and take the spade finesse for the rest of the tricks.

Note that if West plays back a top diamond in the diagrammed ending declarer ruffs, goes to dummy with a club, and leads a spade from dummy, which East must duck – not easy! That gives declarer one extra spade trick but not two.

By contrast to some of the earlier matches, the opportunity to exchange large numbers of IMPs in the 14 boards of the fifth round came thick and fast. This was an especially volatile deal.

Board 3
Teams Qual 5

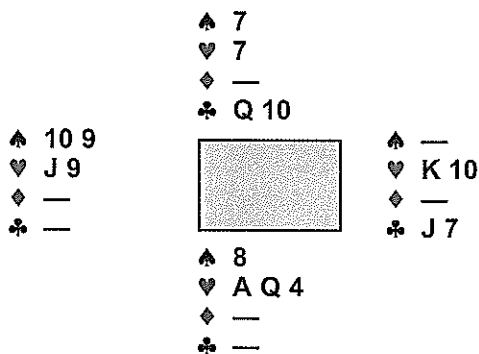
♠ J 10 9 4 3 ♥ J 9 3 ♦ 10 9 6 ♣ 4 3	♠ K 7 2 ♥ 7 5 ♦ K J 5 4 ♣ K Q 10 9	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> EW Game Dealer S </div>	♠ Q 5 ♥ K 10 8 6 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ J 7 5 2
--	---	--	---

♠ A 8 6 ♥ A Q 4 2 ♦ A Q 2 ♣ A 8 6			
--	--	--	--

A gadget that would get you to the right spot here is to use a 4♠ response to the 2NT opening bid as 4-4 in the minors and a slam-try. South can signoff in 4NT now, but North can make one more try. I suggest in this auction – if you REALLY trust your partner and he trusts you – that 5NT is ‘pick-a-slam’ and 5♠ is ‘bid 5NT if in the bottom 15% of possible responses – otherwise bid the right slam’.

Naturally I didn't see anyone bid the hand this way. 6NT was the popular spot – though 6♦ might have some extra chances on a dummy reversal perhaps by ruffing two hearts in the North hand? 6NT needs two suits to behave but the cards offered declarer a chance.

Bob Scott and Paul Gosney both declared 6NT from the South seat on the lead of ♠J. Scott won in dummy and cashed four diamonds pitching a club as East discarded a heart. Then he ducked a heart to East. Back came a spade (yes a heart entangles the entries a little) and Scott won that, and cashed the top clubs. Because West controlled the spades, a double-squeeze had materialized. In this ending:



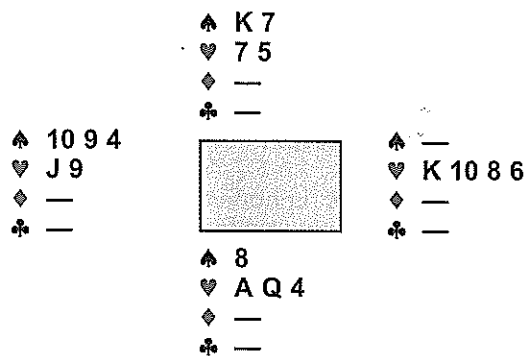
Scott could pitch a spade painlessly enough on the last top club, but this card would have forced West to come



Paul Gosney

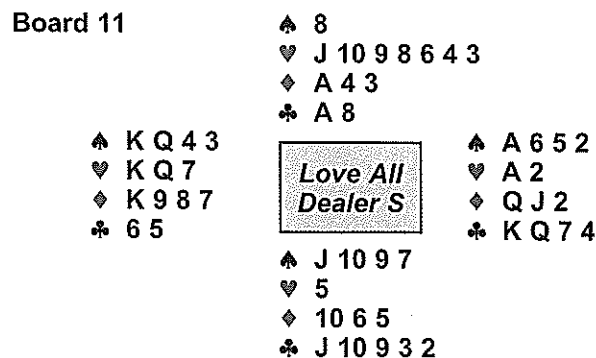
down to two hearts only had she begun with an original four-card suit. As it was, when declarer finessed the ♥Q and cashed the ♥A the ♥4 was sure to win trick 13.

Gosney received the ♠J lead to the queen from East. When he cashed four diamonds East and West both pitched spades, reinforcing the original 5-2 break. Now Gosney took a completely different approach. He passed the ♣10, and when it held he ran the clubs, reducing everyone down to four cards – with West to discard in this ending:



If West reduced to two spades and two hearts, as he did, Gosney could play king and another spade and claim on the return into his ace-queen. If West kept three spades and one heart to avoid the endplay Gosney would duck a heart completely. He would then be able to win the spade return and finesse the heart in complete confidence. Which was the better line? You be the judge!

Board 11 was a deal where Mrs Guggenheim would wrap up her 420 and ask what the problem was, while all the experts were going one down in their game and blaming their bad luck. We strive to be an equal opportunity insulter and will let you decide on who is more to blame – those who made their game or those who went down.



Everyone reached game on almost the same sequence (1♦ – (3♥) – Double – (Pass) – 3♠ – (Pass) – 4♠ – All Pass). On a top heart lead the declarers won in dummy and played ♠A and a spade to the queen finding the bad news. When Hugh McGann was declarer he played a diamond now. Howard Melbourne pounced with his ♦A and returned the ♥3, got in with ♣A and gave his partner a second ruff for down one.

McGann was worried that if he drew a third trump and played on the minors he would need a diamond break or the ♣A right. I think he was unduly pessimistic. For the defenders to beat you it would require you not to

be able to read the ending when North had started life with one spade and seven hearts, and I think the odds favour you getting a count on one suit or the other.

Board 6
Teams Qual 7

♠ 9 6 3	♠ J 8	♠ K Q 5 2
♥ A 10 7 6	♥ 5 4	♥ J 8 3
♦ 7 3	♦ J 9 8 5	♦ K 10 6 4
♣ 10 7 3 2	♣ K J 9 8 6	♣ 5 4

EW Game Dealer E

♠ A 10 7 4
♥ K Q 9 2
♦ A Q 2
♣ A Q

If you are anything like me, you are used to your opening leads costing a trick or more. I'm fairly sure that at most tables on board 6 of round seven the defence went in broadly similar fashion. More in hope than expectation West led a low heart against 3NT, since facing a passed partner that was the best hope to beat the game. Declarer won the ♥K at trick one and advanced the ♦Q. The defenders took it to play a second heart and declarer emerged with nine top tricks (five clubs two diamonds and one trick in each major). It's very hard, but East must work out to duck the ♦K. After all, who has the ♦A – not partner or he'd surely have won it. Declarer is trying to build a club entry – don't help him out.

This ducking manoeuvre appears to leave declarer desperately short of tricks; he can recover at double-dummy, though, if he can take advantage of an unusual intra-finesse. He leads a spade to the eight and queen. Back comes the ♥8 covered all round, forcing West to exit with a passive club. Declarer wins the ace, overtakes the ♣Q with the ♣K, then leads the ♠J in this ending:

♠ 9 6	♠ J	♠ K 5 2
♥ 10 7	♥ —	♥ 3
♦ 7	♦ J 9 8	♦ K 10 6
♣ 10 7	♣ J 9 8	♣ —

Love All Dealer N

♠ A 10 7
♥ 9 2
♦ A 2
♣ —

The spade jack gives East a problem. If he covers, then declarer cashes his three spade winners and the ♦A then gets off play with a heart, and West must concede trick 13 to dummy. If East ducks the ♠J declarer must still resist the temptation to cash the ♣J. Instead he leads the ♦J, covered all round, cashes the ♠A to strip West of everything but his two hearts and two clubs. Then as the final refinement he leads the ♥9 to force West to cash his hearts and lead into dummy's club tenace at trick 12. Beware! If South leads the low heart instead in the four-card ending West hops up with the ten to return the seven, and lock declarer in hand to lose the last two tricks to East.

Board 13
Teams Qual 7

♠ K Q 10 6 2	♠ 9	♠ 8
♥ A 9 5	♥ 6 4	♥ K 10 8 2
♦ Q 7	♦ A J 10 6 5 4	♦ K 9 8 2
♣ Q 9 5	♣ A 10 8 2	♣ K J 7 3

Game All Dealer N

♠ A J 7 5 4 3
♥ Q J 7 3
♦ 3
♣ 6 4

Terry Brown and Avi Kanetkar's team achieved something relatively unusual in their 25-0 win in round 13. They gained IMPs on every board – not an easy feat to do. Here after a 3♦ pre-empt Avi balanced with 3♠ and Terry bid 3NT. On a diamond lead to the ten and king Terry knocked out the ♣A and the defenders cashed their two diamond winners. Now North played a heart in this ending:

♠ K Q 10 6	♠ 9	♠ 8
♥ A 9 5	♥ 6 4	♥ K 10 8 2
♦ —	♦ 6 5 4	♦ 9
♣ 9 5	♣ 10 8 2	♣ K J 7

Love All Dealer N

♠ A J 7 5 4
♥ Q J 7 3
♦ —
♣ —

When the heart came back, Brown made no mistake. He won his ♥K and cashed the ♦9, (South pitching a heart) then the ♣KJ, and on the last one South was forced to release a second spade. Now Brown pitched a heart from dummy and led a spade to the ten, and could claim when it held the trick.

Board 1
Teams Qual 9

♠ K Q 10 7 5 2	♠ —	♠ 9 8
♥ 4 2	♥ A J 6 5	♥ 10 9 8 3
♦ 6	♦ J 10 8	♦ Q 5 4 3 2
♣ A 7 5 4	♣ K Q 10 9 3 2	♣ 8 6

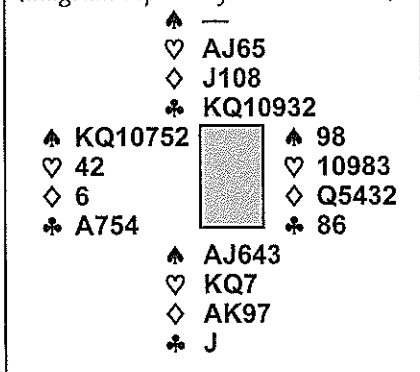
Love All Dealer N

♠ A J 6 4 3
♥ K Q 7
♦ A K 9 7
♣ J

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
—	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	4NT
Double	?		

At one table Brian Callaghan and Christine Duckworth had the chance to score an unusual number, since the bidding started as shown above.

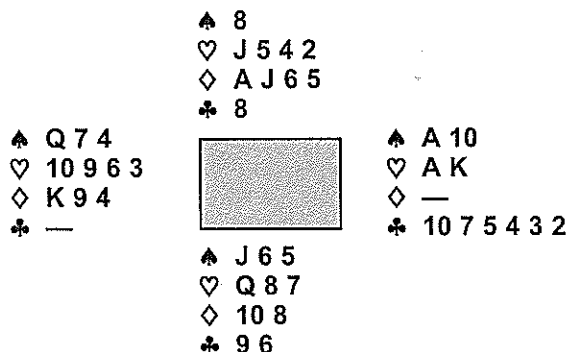
(diagram repeated for convenience)



Had Christine risked passing 4NT, which Brian no doubt would have redoubled, they would have taken 10 tricks. But quite reasonably she bid 5♣ (in fact if you believe your opponents have good spades maybe 6♣ is right at this point). That ended the auction.

been a very good hand to respond 1♥ with, as West. On the actual auction Bach led a fourth-highest heart and declarer won in dummy as Del'Monte encouraged. Declarer crossed to a spade to lead a club, covered by the queen and king. South ducked, won the next club, and returned a low heart, then took the third club to cash the ♥Q and play a diamond through for down one.

The play on an initial diamond lead has considerably more interest. Declarer wins in dummy and must cross to hand with a spade to run the club jack, covered all round, and won by South, who plays a second diamond. This is the position:



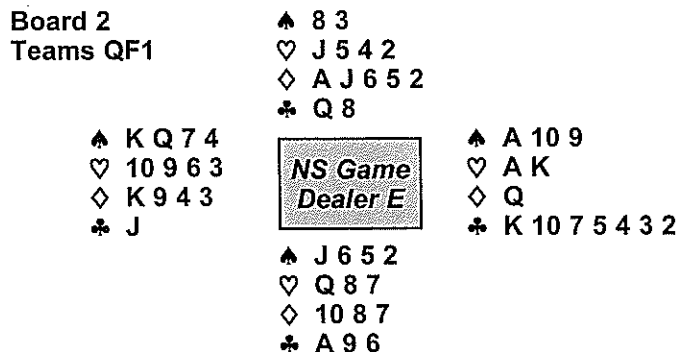
Nabil Edgton and Andy Hung got it absolutely right – with a very sophisticated sequence:

WEST	NORTH <i>Hung</i>	EAST	SOUTH <i>N Edgton</i>
—	1♣	Pass	1♥*
1♠	2♣	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♠	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

- 1♥ Transfer to spades
- 2♦ Artificial game-force

Of particular note is South's delayed support (when he could have bid 3♣ over 2♥). This strongly suggested a singleton honour, so North's co-operation in a slam venture with 4♥ indicated he could fill in the gaps. The two byes went to Ware (including Fiona Brown and Hanlon-McGann) while the winners were Milne – a home team composed entirely of juniors or near-juniors augmented by Alex Smirnov of Germany, who makes his home in Australia for six months a year.

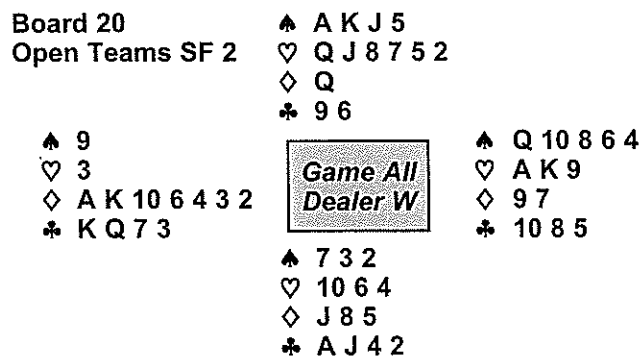
The semi-finals saw last year's winners Noble, eliminated by Hinge, while Yule from New Zealand took out a local Queensland team, Moren.



Noble-Bilski played a quiet 2♣ when Noble as East opted for the restrained 2♣ rebid (I'm sure Bridge World would agree, but I doubt whether many of us would be so restrained). By contrast, Morrison opted for a 3♣ rebid over Hinge's 1♦ response and Hinge bid 3NT. Not that one hand proves anything, but this would have

When South plays the ♦10 through, West covers; what is North to do? If he wins and exits passively declarer clears the clubs and ducks South's continuation of ♦8. If North ducks the ♦K, the defenders are now in position to cash out three diamonds and two clubs....but West has a resource. After winning his ♦K he returns the suit, and North must take his diamonds or lose them forever. Unless he cashes them declarer sets up the clubs with impunity; when he takes his winners, South gets squeezed in the black suits, sooner or later.

In the semi-finals Ware defeated Yule comfortably while Milne justified their seeding by taking out Hinge. The final deal of the second set of the semi-final cemented the Ware team's advantage. It was also one of the nicest plays of the event.



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>McGann</i>	<i>Neill</i>	<i>Hanlon</i>	<i>Jedrychowski</i>
1♦	1♥	1♠	2♥
3♦	3♥	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

In one room Brown/Ware played 3♥ when both their opponents took a somewhat cautious route in the

bidding. This went down two when Brown lost a ruff to the small singleton trump. But Hanlon/McGann were more ambitious.

The (MUD) ♠6 lead went to the jack and king. McGann won and played a diamond to the king and queen and decided the suit was 3-1. How to get back to hand to tackle the diamond suit now? He elected to play a spade; North won and realizing the heart and spade position, shifted to the ♣9. This was covered with the ten, jack and queen. Here is the ending:

♠ — ♥ — ♦ K 10 6 4 3 2 ♣ K 7 3	♠ A J 5 ♥ Q 8 7 5 2 ♦ — ♣ 6	♠ Q 10 8 6 ♥ A 9 ♦ 9 ♣ 8 5	♠ 3 2 ♥ 10 4 ♦ J 5 ♣ A 4 2
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Hanlon now made a thoughtful play when he advanced the ♣7 from dummy. His foresight was rewarded when the ♣6 popped up on his right as he could overtake and force South to win the ♣A. Back came a third club, and Hanlon won in hand with the five and took the diamond finesse to emerge with an impressive 660 and 10 IMPs. Well done! Hanlon was guarding against North having the doubleton club 92, where had he led a low club from dummy instead, the club blockage would have prevented him from getting to hand for the diamond finesse – and he would have ended with seven tricks instead.

It would not have helped North to cash the second top spade, since dummy can spare a club or diamond; even a low club by North would not have given declarer any additional losing options. It is curious that if North had held the doubleton ♣94, the defenders win out, assuming declarer leads a spade at trick three. The club nine is covered by the ten, jack and queen, and now South prevents declarer from reaching hand by locking declarer in dummy with his club two at a strategic moment. But declarer can still survive if he plays a top club from dummy at trick three – the play is highly complex.

In the finals Milne pulled away early with pick-ups such as this one.

Board 9

♠ A 10 ♥ Q J 8 4 ♦ K J 10 5 2 ♣ 8 5	♠ 7 3 ♥ K 6 2 ♦ Q 9 7 ♣ K Q J 6 4	♠ K Q J 5 ♥ A 5 3 ♦ A 3 ♣ 10 7 3 2	♠ 9 8 6 4 2 ♥ 10 9 7 ♦ 8 6 4 ♣ A 9
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WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
McGann	Smirnov	Hanlon	Griffiths
—	1♣	Double	1♦
Double	2♣	Pass	Pass
3♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

This one was over quickly after Griffiths started with the ♣A. The defenders took the first five tricks for plus 100. The youngsters at the other table won both in the bidding and did equally well in the play.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
N Edgton	Tislevoll	Hung	Sveindal
—	1♣	Double	1♠
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♣	Double	Pass	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Tislevoll started with the ♣K, taken by Sveindal with the ace to return the suit. After winning the ♣Q, Tislevoll exited with a spade to Edgton's 10. The ♥Q was covered by the king and ace, and a heart went back to the jack. Now Edgton swung the ♦J through North and when it held, played a second diamond to the ace in dummy. On the heart play, South won the 10 and returned a diamond to Edgton's king, dropping the queen. Plus 620 was good for 12 IMPs to Milne.

Had North played a third club at trick three declarer must over-ruff South's nine, and then to make game needs to duck a heart, then pin the ten in South – far from obvious.

Ware closed the gap somewhat here when Tom Hanlon found an ingenious line in his 3NT contract.

Board 21

Teams Final 2

♠ 10 8 6 3 ♥ A K 7 ♦ A Q 5 3 2 ♣ 9	♠ A J 9 7 5 ♥ Q 10 ♦ 9 ♣ A J 10 8 5	♠ K 4 ♥ 9 5 4 3 ♦ 8 6 ♣ 7 6 4 3 2	♠ Q 2 ♥ J 8 6 2 ♦ K J 10 7 4 ♣ K Q
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NS Game
Dealer N

Both tables tried the no-trump game from South but Hanlon/McGann had an informative sequence where dummy had shown the black-suits, while Edgton had shown his diamonds as South, Both tables led three rounds of hearts. Edgton won and took a spade finesse and Brown won and shifted to diamonds; down one. McGann won the third heart and led a low diamond from hand, banking on the fact that if East won the trick no return would hurt. West could have flown with the ♦Q and shifted to spades of course, but when he ducked declarer won the ♦9 (yes Liam Milne sounds an appropriate name to be a victim of the curse of Scotland) and came to the clubs to cash the heart. That was nine tricks and 12 IMPs back.

Milne led by 29 going into the final 12 deals. A slam accident (11 out instead of 11 in by Smirnov-Griffiths) helped closed the match margin. It went down to 4 IMPs

half-way through the final set with the help of this pick-up for Ware:

Board 18	♠ A J 10 4	
Teams Final	♥ K 6 4	
	♦ A 7	
	♣ 8 7 6 2	
		♠ 9 2
♠ K Q 8 6		♥ Q 9 7 3 2
♥ J 10 8 5	NS Game	♦ J 9 8 3
♦ K 10 5 2	Dealer E	♣ 10 3
♣ 4		
	♠ 7 5 3	
	♥ A	
	♦ Q 6 4	
	♣ A K Q J 9 5	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Sveindal</i>	<i>Smirnov</i>	<i>Tislevoll</i>	<i>Griffiths</i>
—	—	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Milne</i>	<i>McGann</i>	<i>Whibley</i>	<i>Hanlon</i>
—	—	2♦	3NT
4♥	5NT	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

You could argue that South owed his partner a heart cue-bid in the Open Room; Smirnov thought one slam try was enough – and he was absolutely right, since slam on a diamond lead is only 50% and on any other lead needs a spade honour right plus a little more from that suit. Today was Hanlon's lucky day; nothing could defeat the

slam and the match margin was 4 IMPs.

After both E/W pairs had bid and made an excellent minor-suit slam in the face of their opponents' pre-emption Sveindal/Tislevoll combined to miss a vulnerable game.

Board 20	♠ J 9 8 7 6	
Teams Final 4	♥ A Q J 10	
	♦ 10	
	♣ K J 10	
		♠ 5 2
♠ A K Q		♥ K 9
♥ 8 7 5 4 3	Game All	♦ A K Q J 9 3
♦ 8 6	Dealer W	♣ A 8 3
♣ 9 6 4		
	♠ 10 4 3	
	♥ 6 2	
	♦ 7 5 4 2	
	♣ Q 7 5 2	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♠	2♦	Pass
Pass	Double	3♦	All Pass

Tislevoll's simple overcall with a 7.5 playing trick hand including six solid diamonds, looks pessimistic but surely after doing that he could have redoubled? Mind you, Sveindal never bid at all when his partner showed a two-level overcall then extras, despite holding ♠AKQ. In the other room Milne as West advanced with 2NT at his first opportunity and was raised to 3NT...what's the problem?

The rest of the set was all Milne, and they finished up worthy winners by 29 IMPs. Alex Smirnov and Nye Griffiths are in their thirties, but Liam Milne, Michael Whibley, Andy Hung and Nabil Edgton still have quite a few years left as juniors and rate to give Australia a good chance at a world medal very soon.

World-class Disasters on BBO VuGraph

Roland Wald reveals that even top-class players can occasionally go off the rails.

In 1970, Monty Python's Flying Circus aired the sketch the 'Ministry of Silly Walks.' Forty-two years on BRIDGE Magazine has created the 'Ministry of Silly Bids and Contracts' (MOSBAC). I am the self-appointed minister, deservedly so I think, as I, with great confidence, have managed to bid to Seven Hearts when the ace of hearts was offside, i.e. with the opponents.

It is an extremely busy ministry, but fortunately I have got many competent civil servants, experts from all corners of the world, players who at some point in their careers all made silly bids and ended up in well, silly contracts. Am I going to name them you may wonder? Of course I am, because you can't protect the guilty when it has been public to everyone on the Internet, the Mecca of Bridge: BBO VuGraph.

I mean, you are not going to say that 'someone' was sent off and 'another one' scored an own goal when

Manchester United lost 0-4 at Huddersfield, are you? (In the interests of historical accuracy a score line that never featured in the 45 games played between those two teams. Editor) Besides, the average bridge-club player and even beginners and intermediates will be relieved to see that some of those experts who are supposed to know what they are doing made a muck of simplicity.

Then there must still be hope for everyone.

As the coordinator of our VuGraph presentations for eleven years I have come across dozens of disasters. It would obviously be too much to write about all of them, so I have just compiled ten examples of silliness. Nine of them saw the light of day and darkness of night within the past eighteen months or so, whereas the last one celebrated its tenth anniversary not so long ago.

One thing is certain. BBO VuGraph is the perfect platform if you have a desire to expose your silly