

2017 QBA Graded MP Pairs by Richard Wallis

QCBC hosted the QBA Graded Pairs on Saturday 2 September, held on Saturday to leave Father's Day (3 September) free for fathers to enjoy. There was a good entry for this event, with Master Points used to divide the entries into 11 tables in A grade, 12 tables in B grade and 8 tables in C grade.

Scoring for this event was by Match Points, a rarity these days, and the scores were converted to VPs to even out the lop-sided matches. Nine 6-board rounds were played, 5 before lunch and 4 after lunch.

Ivy and John Luck were always near the front of the pack and a win against Tim Runting and I in the last match consolidated the lead they already enjoyed. Murray Perrin and Neville Francis finished with 3 good wins to get up to second, and Jill Magee and Terry Strong finished with 4 wins to get into third place.

In B section Anne Barry and Jenny Hay finished first, from Wendy Gibson and Amanda Harburg with Dov and Sandra Berns in third place. In C section Annette Scott and Judy Hefferman finished first, from Nanette Hinsch and Peter Burke with Jennifer Vickers and Kim Robson in third place.

QCBC were great hosts, with fruit and sandwiches for the health conscious, and other sweeter goodies for the rest of us. Since we were playing on a Saturday instead of the more normal Sunday, the Saturday afternoon Duplicate was relegated to the annex.

M 1 KQJ
Bd 1 8
Dlr N J8752
Vul Nil AQ64
 T8743 96
 962 AKQ7543
 T3 Q4
 K73 T5

A52
 JT
 AK96
 J982
W **N** **E** **S**
 // 1D 4H 5D

On board 1 in the first match I did not want to make it too easy for NS so bid 4H, which could be a disaster if doubled as I only have 7 tricks. Assuming the poor slam was not bid, the winning action for NS is to play in 4HX, which gains them +500, although one East was allowed to play in 4H undoubled for only -150.

South did not know what to bid over 4H, as she thought double would be for takeout and she only had 3 spades, and pass was out of the question, but her 5D bid could have been a big disaster.

North came to the fore with a 5-card diamond suit, and after ruffing the second heart he drew trumps and made the key play of the CJ, ducked all around. He fell from grace at the next trick by running the C9 next, so we scored up 11 tricks for -400.

One EW played in 5HX for -800, and 4 NS pairs made 12 tricks in diamonds, so we got a surprising 60%.

M 2 976
Bd 8 8652
Dlr W K765
Vul Nil J6
 4 AJ3
 3 A7
 AJ42 QT93
 AKT9754 Q832
 KQT852
 KQJT94
 8

W **N** **E** **S**
 1C / 1D 4D!
 4H / 4NT 5S
 6C / / 6H
 / / 7C //

On board 8 in the second match I had one of the most distributional hands I have had in nearly 50 years of playing Bridge.

Since the 1C opening could have been short, I jumped to 4D, the only 'real' suit, to show both majors.

West bid 4H to show a control, and East bid 4NT to play, over which I tried to buy the hand in 5S. However, West was having none of that and bid 6C.

I believed that 6C was likely to make, so showed my other suit with 6H and West was unsure of what was happening so passed it to East, who was also not sure what was on and took the push to 7C.

When the diamond finesse lost as expected (surely I had 6610), the grand slam was 1 off for +50.

Two NS pairs were allowed to make 4HX, which was the top NS score, but +50 was 80% to us. Four EW pairs bid 6C for an equal EW top, but 4 others sold out to 5HX and did not find the spade ruff to take it 2 off.

M 3
Bd 16
Dlr W
Vul EW
 A64
 JT7532
 -
 7643

K3
 AQ6
 AKQT76
 QJ

QT98
 4
 943
 K9852

J752
 K98
 J852
 AT

W **N** **E** **S**
 / 2NT / 3C
 3NT //

On board 16 in the third match Norths were in a dilemma with such playing strength and HCPs, but the bare QJ in clubs was a negative.

Tim elected to open 2NT, showing a balanced 20-22, although the almost solid 6-card diamond suit may elevate this hand to a 2C opening after all.

I inquired about a major suit fit, and when Tim denied this, settled for 3NT and East led the ST.

There are 11 top tricks and after winning the SK at trick 2 Tim simply claimed 12 tricks as he could not afford to take the club finesse for 12 in case it lost and he only made 10!

However, if he was to cash the hearts and then the diamonds, or the other way around, East is squeezed out of the SQ or CK and no finesse is necessary.

Two pairs bid the slam but 3 others made 12 tricks for +490, so only 30% for +460.

M 4
Bd 19
Dlr S
Vul EW
 AJ2
 8643
 A742
 98

KQ53
 AJT95
 T53
 K

9
 Q72
 J98
 AJ6432

T8764
 K
 KQ6
 QT43

W **N** **E** **S**
 / 1H 2C /
 / X //

On board 19 in the fourth match I was attracted to the Vulnerability when East overcalled 2C, and without heart support, I decided to look for a penalty rather than a 5-3 spade fit, so I passed and awaited the expected takeout double from Tim.

The takeout double confirmed the spade fit, but I did not expect to get to game, so went for the +200, as it was pairs after all, by passing the double.

After the HK won the first trick I made a bad switch to the DK, instead of a spade, which would have probably given us an extra trick. Repeated spade leads will probably cause East to lose control and go 2 off for +500.

Declarer won the DA and led a heart off the table won by Tim with the HA and I ruffed the next heart, cashed the DQ and exited with the D6.

My club holding was worth 2 more tricks, so that was 1 off and +200. Three NS pairs bid and made 4S, so +200 was worth 70%.

M 5
Bd 28
Dlr W
Vul NS
 AKQ62
 KJ84
 762
 5

J84
 Q76
 KQ98
 J93

T975
 A3
 J3
 KQ762

3
 T952
 AT54
 AT84

W **N** **E** **S**
 1S / 3D! /
 4S //

On board 28 in the fifth match my 3D showed 7-11 and 4-card support for spades, or 10-11 and 3-card support, and Tim elected to bid game without asking about which hand type I held.

North made it hard for Tim by leading a trump, and when dummy tracked it became even harder as my best suit and half of my HCPs were opposite his singleton.

He won the first trick in hand with the S6 and led a club up, but South won the CA and cashed the DK and when North won the DA next, he led another trump.

The appearance of the HQ after Tim ruffed a heart simplified matters, and he could discard a diamond on the CQ and draw the last trump for 10 tricks and +420.

Game was fairly routine, but 1 made 11 tricks, 1 went off, and 2 did not get to game, so 60%.

M 6	KJ62			On board 1 in the sixth match East opened 1C (Precision) and West doubled to show 4-7, over which Tim bid 2C, his only cue-bid, intending to show spade support.
Bd 1	J854			
Dlr N	8			
Vul Nil	KJ72			I suspected what the 2C was meant to be, but just in case I showed my other suit, and Tim showed his spades, or at least preference, either being good enough for me.
984	-			
T62	AKQ973			West led the HT and I ruffed and thought about a club to the CJ looking for an extra trick, but if East has both honours and a trump comes back I am worse off so I elected to go for the cross-ruff.
Q964	KT5			
Q95	AT83			West had to follow to hearts 3 times, so I ruffed hearts and diamonds backwards and forwards, with my small trumps, and finally high trumps, and gave up the last 2 tricks for +450 and 70%.
	AQT753			
	-			
	AJ732			
	64			
W	N	E	S	
		1C!	1S	
X	2C	2H	3D	leading to the CJ at trick 2 would have given me 12 tricks since East was void in spades, and the complete cross-ruff would still work, but no extra MPs as 2 were doubled in spades, and 1 EW found their 4-3 club fit for -800, and all others made only 10 in spades.
/	3S	4H	4S	
//				

M 7	987532			On board 7 in the seventh match I had a dilemma when the 1NT overcall was passed out. My instinct was to lead a diamond, and if my spade was a small singleton, I definitely would have as I cannot help develop partner's opening bid suit.
Bd 7	KJ5			
Dlr S	KQ5			
Vul All	K			However, the SK could have been a big help in setting up the spades, so that was my lead. The sight of dummy was a shock, as assuming East had a stopper, Tim's spades must have been headed by the 9!
QJT4		A6		
9643		AQT		
T4		J63		
QJ7		AT986		
	K			Declarer won the SA and went to dummy to lead the CQ, covered by Tim (another stiff King), and declarer went back to the CJ in dummy and cashed the spades, with 10 tricks in the bag!
	872			
	A9872			
	5432			Since we were playing MPs, declarer risked these 10 tricks by taking the heart finesse while in dummy, and when this worked he had 11 tricks for -210 and only 15% for us.
W	N	E	S	
			/	
/	1S	1NT	//	If we had cashed diamonds, it is certain that declarer would have made the rest of the tricks, especially if trapped in hand.

M 7	A65			On board 12 in the seventh match East made a weak-jump overcall, and we quickly got to game in spades, with West strangely quiet.
Bd 12	AKT9642			
Dlr W	QT			West led the CA and switched to a small diamond, and I could have put the hand to bed by inserting the DT at trick 2, but instead played the DQ, then cashed the SA and led the S5 off the table.
Vul NS	2			
J3		K98		
QJ7		8		
J7432		98		East made it easy for me by rising with the SK, and returned a diamond to dummy, so I drew the last trump and with 10 top tricks, cashed my remaining spades hoping for a squeeze or mis-defence.
AT4		J987653		
	QT742			Since West does have sole control of the red suits, she was squeezed on the run of the spades and postponed the inevitable by discarding both clubs and a diamond, but when I next cashed the CK, she had to discard a second diamond, so I had 11 tricks for +650 and 65%.
	53			
	AK65			
	KQ			
W	N	E	S	
	1H	3C	3S	
4C	4S	//		This would have been a good time for West to sacrifice, as it is only 3 off, which would have given 65% to EW.

M 8	7		
Bd 17	K762		
Dlr N	KJ8732		
Vul Nil	72		
AKQJT9		65432	
J		AQT93	
Q5		T6	
AT63		Q	
	8		
	854		
	A94		
	KJ9854		
W	N	E	S
	/	/	/
1S	2D	4C	X
4S	/	/	5D
/	/	X	//

On board 17 in the eighth match North passed as dealer, but bid 2D over Tim's 1S opening in 4th suit, although 3D may have been more disruptive.

Since I have 5-card support, a source of tricks, and a shortage, I wanted to be in game, but as a passed hand it was cost-free to show a feature on the way.

Thus I jumped to 4C as a splinter bid agreeing spades. South doubled my splinter bid and then sacrificed in 5D over our spade game.

I led the CQ and South erred by covering, which made it easy for Tim, but I am sure he would have played the CT suggesting a spade switch.

I ruffed the return of the CT and exited with a spade, won by Tim with the S9, and a heart back would have led to an easy 4 off as I could cash 2 hearts and give him a ruff.

Instead Tim led another club and North erred by discarding a heart, so I ruffed again, cashed the HA and gave Tim a ruff. Thus it was still 4 off for +800 and a clear top, one of very few on the day for us.

M 9	K6		
Bd 19	QJ32		
Dlr S	AJ98753		
Vul EW	4		
T9753		A82	
A7		986	
Q84		KT	
K72		A9853	
	QJ4		
	KT54		
	62		
	QJT6		
W	N	E	S
			/
/	1D	X	1H
1S	2H	/	/
2S	//		

On board 19 in the ninth and last match I wanted to get involved in the bidding since I held 2 Aces and a King, but my 5-card club suit was a little flimsy for a two-level overcall.

Accordingly, I doubled for takeout, since I had 3-card support for both majors. When Tim freely bid 1S over South's 1H response, I was interested, but left any further action up to Tim, and he duly obliged by bidding 2S when 2H was passed back to him.

North led the HQ to Tim's 2S, and Tim won the HA and ducked a spade to South, who cashed the HK and returned a diamond to North. Tim ruffed the next heart and cashed the SA, and dummy won the next diamond.

Since the spades broke 3-2, Tim had 8 tricks now, losing 2 spades, a heart, a diamond and a club for +110.

According to Deep Finesse 8 tricks is the limit in hearts for NS or spades for EW, but some NS pairs made 9 and 10 tricks in hearts, so our +110 was a top.