

## 2018 National Seniors Teams in Canberra by Richard Wallis

After a break of a couple of years, one of which I was cruising to South America, David McLeish and I again teamed up with Tony Hutton and Malcolm Carter to contest this year's Seniors Teams in Canberra. As usual it was a Swiss format involving 9 matches of 20 boards to qualify 4 teams out of 42 for the semifinals.

As expected, we started off well against a lower ranked team, but then came up against team 3, and even though the first board was an excellent start at our table, gaining +500 from a part-score hand, it was downhill after that and a near maximum loss put us back into the middle ranking.

After that we were playing catch-up, and our final finishing position of tenth was the result of 3 wins on the final day. The final was between De Luca (Attilio De Luca, Russell Harms, David Lusk and Peter Chan) from South Australia and Free (Jonathon Free, Ron Klinger, Robert Krochmalik, Paul Lavings Kim Morrison and Paul Wyer) from Sydney, Gold Coast and Perth, and Free won by 38 Imps over 48 boards.

Our victors in round 2 finished second in the Swiss but lost the semifinal to De Luca and the top seeds and winners of the Swiss were beaten by Free in the other semifinal.

<b>M 1</b>	T54	On board 7 in the first match my 3S response showed 4-card support, and 4-7 HCPs, which was a slight exaggeration of my points.				
<b>Bd 7</b>	AKJ85					
<b>Dir S</b>	AQ2	South could have upgraded his hand because of his 4-card support and spade void, but kept out of the auction, and David raised to game, to which North led the HK.				
<b>Vul All</b>	K4					
AKJ976		Q832				
7		T32				
KJ65		T3	Since every key card was wrong and North continued hearts at every opportunity David was forced to lead diamonds and clubs himself and finished an 'unlucky' 1 down for -100.			
AQ		9876				
	-	If the 2 points I was missing had been the DQ, 4S would have been cold!				
	Q964					
	9874					
	JT532	However at the other table Tony did offer support for hearts, and Malcolm bid 5H over 4S, and was doubled for his trouble. Now the losing finesses in our 4S contract meant that 5H was cold, and careful play meant there were 12 tricks, so that was +1050, and we gained 14 Imps after all.				
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>			
			/			
1S	2H	3S!	/			
4S	//					

<b>M 2</b>	8	On board 7, which was our first board against team 3 in the second match, I believe that North bid 2C intending to invite game next by rebidding 2NT, but when South bid 2NT himself over my 2S overcall, he raised to game hoping his clubs could come in!				
<b>Bd 7</b>	K5					
<b>Dir S</b>	QJ72					
<b>Vul All</b>	JT9875					
Q		KT965432	Of course David led the SQ and South tried to maintain control by ducking, but then David had to lead another suit and chose his own this time by leading the H6, since unless I have an honour any heart lead gives up 3 tricks in the suit.			
QT9643		J2				
K85		43				
Q32		A				
	AJ7	Now South was in trouble, and when I won the CA over the CK next and returned a heart, his fate was set. In desperation he took the losing diamond finesse, but that was 4 off for -400.				
	A87					
	AT96					
	K64					
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	Declarer's play of the CK at trick 3 was a good try, as the only singleton honour that helps his cause is the CQ. At the other table Tony toiled in 4C for 10 tricks and 11 Imps, the only bright spot in our match.		
/	2C	2S	1NT			
/	3NT	//	2NT			

match.

<b>M 3</b>	JT743			
<b>Bd 13</b>	-			
<b>Dlr N</b>	98432			
<b>Vul All</b>	Q53			
A96		KQ		
AK95		QJT632		
QJ		K		
AJ96		T742		
	852			
	874			
	AT765			
	K8			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
	/	1H	/	
2NT	/	3C!	/	
3D	/	3S!	/	
4NT	/	5C	/	
6H	//			

On board 13 in the third match we had a bit of luck that rescued a disaster and promoted it into a loss.

My hand is definitely minimum, but I do have a reasonable 6-card suit and good spade values, and I thought I was too good for a weak 2H opening.

David responded with a Jacoby 2NT and my rebid showed 11-13 HCPs and nothing else. The 3D rebid asked about a shortage, and I bid 3S to show a diamond shortage, forgetting that the first response of 3H shows no shortage.

Thus David explained correctly that I had a club shortage, and when RKCB revealed only 1 Ace was missing David bid the slam.

Now many with South's hand would lead their DA, but since I had shown a club shortage, South probably did not think there was any urgency, and chose a negative lead of the H8.

In with a chance I cashed 2 hearts, unblocked the spades and entered dummy with the HA to discard my DK, and the double club finesse brought home 12 tricks for a lucky 13 Imps.

<b>M 3</b>	976542			
<b>Bd 19</b>	8			
<b>Dlr S</b>	863			
<b>Vul EW</b>	T86			
-		J		
A93		KJ7542		
J72		AQT94		
AQ95432		K		
	AKQT83			
	QT6			
	K5			
	J7			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
			1S	
3C	4S	//		

On board 19 in the third match South and the vulnerability kept me out of the bidding by jumping to 4S on just a Ten, admittedly with 6-card support!

Since David's jump overcall showed a 6-card suit and 10-12 HCPs, it is possible I would have bid 4H over 3S, and definitely if my CK was not singleton, but the 5-level was too high at adverse vulnerability, so I meekly passed. If I wanted in, 4NT would show 2 other suits.

We have 4 unassailable tricks, so 4S duly went 1 off for +50, but it was obvious that we can make game in any of the other suits, and since David had an extra club 6C is cold, the heart loser being discarded on the diamonds. If the diamond finesse had worked, 7C was cold.

At the other table I do not know how, but EW did get to game and Tony sacrificed in 5S, which was obviously doubled and 4 losers meant -300, so 6 Imps out.

<b>M 4</b>	2			
<b>Bd 6</b>	A976			
<b>Dlr E</b>	AK54			
<b>Vul EW</b>	KQ32			
AQJ954		T6		
J2		Q83		
Q9632		7		
-		AJT9654		
	K873			
	KT54			
	JT8			
	87			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	
		3C	/	
3S	X	//		

On board 6 in the fourth match South made a very aggressive pass of North's take-out double of David's 3S response, and then took their eye off the ball at a crucial time.

North led the DA and switched to a trump at trick 2, South withholding their SK.

David now trumped a diamond on the table, discarded a heart on the CA and exited with a heart, won by North.

Almost any lead from North can lead to 1 down, but if it is the DK next, it must be followed up with another diamond to give South a ruff.

North elected to lead the DK and another, but South failed to ruff this, so David's diamonds were now good, and he only had to lead trumps and extract South's small trumps for +730.

At the other table Tony played in 4H and brought home 10 tricks for +420 and 15 Imps.

**M 5**  
**Bd 6**  
**Dir E**  
**Vul EW**  
 AT764  
 653  
 4  
 AQ86

KJ3  
 KT42  
 AQ652  
 9

2  
 AJ97  
 K98  
 KJT75

Q987  
 Q8  
 JT73  
 432

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
1S	2D	1C	/
X	/	2H	3D
//			

On board 6 in the fifth match, the uncertain nature of the 1C opening worked against us, at least in our minds.

My pass over the 2D overcall can show a lot of hands, but it does deny more than 2 spades, as with 3 spades I would normally have made a support double. It also is possible that I have some of South's diamonds and I am waiting to convert a double into penalties by passing, but it is very unlikely I have more than 4 diamonds.

Over David's reopening double, I bid my heart suit, and now when South came forth with support, we were stuck, although with only 4 hearts, at most 2 spades and 3 diamonds I am marked with at least 4 clubs.

I led the S2 and received my ruff, collecting 5 tricks in all for 1 down and a paltry +50. Even 2H makes 8 or 9 tricks, so this was a loss.

Worse was yet to come as at the other table EW did find their club fit, and bid all the way to game, making on the nose for -600 and 11 Imps out.

**M 6**  
**Bd 3**  
**Dir S**  
**Vul EW**  
 AT984  
 J8  
 A2  
 KT52

5  
 KQ74  
 QJ543  
 943

762  
 A932  
 K98  
 J87

KQJ3  
 T65  
 T76  
 AQ6

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
1S	X	2S	1C
/	X	//	/

On board 3 in the sixth match NS got a little frisky in the bidding and backed themselves into a corner.

The bidding on the first round was normal, but North's only reason for doubling again is to compete for the part-score, but it looks like South has spades, so 2S should have been the final contract.

After the second double South could expect a little more from partner, so cannot really be blamed for passing with such a good trump holding, but it is risky at teams scoring, and 2NT may have been wiser.

It is only a part-score hand and not for NS so they should have subsided.

In 2SWX, North led the DQ, and David won on the table and led the S7, and ran it! He was not under any pressure after that and duly made 8 tricks for +670 and 12 Imps against 3DN going 1 off at the other table.

**M 7**  
**Bd 10**  
**Dir E**  
**Vul All**  
 KQJ83  
 9  
 K8  
 K6532

97  
 AKT83  
 QJ2  
 A84

T542  
 J65  
 AT964  
 7

A6  
 Q742  
 753  
 QJT9

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
1S	2H	3S	/
4S	//	/	4H

Board 10 in the seventh match was a battle of the majors, and we had the spade suit. My 3S jump showed 4-card support and less than a limit raise, and it was likely that South's 4H also showed 4 hearts, as they had already passed.

North led the HA to 4S and dummy was very threatening, as it is likely that declarer has a singleton heart. The trump switch looked obvious now, but North followed up with the CA before leading the DQ.

David embarked on a cross-ruff and emerged with 10 tricks for +620. The peculiar thing about the play is that the trump Ace was not played by South until tricks 13!

At the other table Malcolm made 10 tricks in 4H, so that was a double game swing and a pair of +620s for 15 Imps.

Double dummy 4H can be defeated by East under-leading the DA so that West gets a diamond ruff, but that was not likely.

**M 7**  
**Bd 20**  
**Dlr W**  
**Vul All**  
 863  
 T7  
 K3  
 KQT762  
  
 7  
 AQJ65  
 A64  
 J854  
  
 QT92  
 98  
 QJ972  
 A3  
  

W	N	E	S
/	1S	X	4S
5C	/	/	X
//			

On board 20 in the seventh match I luckily preferred the take-out double to over-calling 2H as East, and was pleasantly surprized when David bid 5C over 4S by South.

South could do no more than pass or double 5C and North led the SK to reveal my threatening dummy, which prompted a diamond switch, won in hand by David to lead a trump.

Since clubs were 2-1 and the heart finesse worked, that was 11 tricks for +750.

At the other table the 2H overcall kept the club suit out of the auction, and Malcolm played the hand in 4S as North.

The defence did not find the double-dummy lead of the D4 followed by the HT and then a diamond ruff, so this contract finished 1 off for -100, but 12 lmps to us.

Of course even the DA lead will take 4S 2 off if East continues, West wins the DK and leads the HT, eventually getting the diamond ruff.

**M 8**  
**Bd 2**  
**Dlr E**  
**Vul NS**  
 63  
 8742  
 AJT96  
 A7  
  
 Q7  
 QJ965  
 8  
 K9642  
  
 J842  
 AKT  
 543  
 853  
  
 AKT95  
 3  
 KQ72  
 QJT  
  

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

On board 2 in the eighth match NS were playing transfer responses to a 1C opening, so 1D showed at least 4 hearts.

David's 2D over the 1S rebid by South showed diamonds, and with 2 spades as a safety net, North rebid her hearts, over which South took a flyer!

I would like to have doubled 3NT for a heart lead, but after partner has bid a suit double normally says lead your suit, so I passed it out.

To my surprize David led the H8 and I won the HK to lead a diamond and David won the DA over the DK and set up his suit.

Declarer could have cashed out the spades now by way of a finesse for 6 tricks, but instead led the CQ, and David took his CA and cashed out his diamonds, followed by 2 more hearts for 8 tricks and somehow another trick came to us for 5 off and +500.

At the other table David's hand played in 2DX for 3 off and another +500, and 14 lmps.

**M 8**  
**Bd 18**  
**Dlr E**  
**Vul NS**  
 AKJT6  
 T  
 862  
 8542  
  
 Q74  
 Q763  
 T9743  
 K  
  
 5  
 K85  
 AJ  
 QJT9763  
  
 9832  
 AJ942  
 KQ5  
 A  
  

W	N	E	S
1S	2H	1C	1H
/	/	3C	3H
5C	X	3NT!	4H
		//	

On board 18 in the eighth match it was not clear who had the ascendancy but I was not planning to let NS have an easy time in 4H.

The first 2 rounds of bidding are normal, but expecting NS to be able to make 4H, as my HK is badly placed, I decided to muddy the waters with a 3NT bid instead of the obvious 4C. Of course I could have passed South out in 3H.

South did bid again, and David came to life with 5C, doubled by North and South led the DK.

Since the clubs were 1-1 I could pitch my DJ on the second top spade and lead a trump and claim 11 tricks for +550.

The same conditions that allowed 5C to make meant that 4H had no chance, so I had a lucky escape. At the other table EW stopped in just 3C, and somehow only made 10 tricks for -130, so we gained 9 lmps.

South rued his missed chance to pass out 3NT and take 4 diamonds on the lead of the DK, 5 hearts and 1 club. Alternatively, after the lead of the DK I could have claimed 3 tricks.

<b>M 9</b>	T2	On board 20 in the ninth match North had by far the best hand but did not use it to his best advantage.	
<b>Bd 20</b>	AKT983	Doubling on the first round and bidding 4H on the next showed a good hand and strong suit, but it kept the diamond suit out of the calculations.	
<b>Dlr W</b>	AK65	A 5D bid next instead of doubling again would have heaped a big reward, and has the safety of the good hearts suit.	
<b>Vul All</b>	A	After 4SX was passed out, North led the HK, then the CA, and the HT at trick 3!	
AQJ96		873	David rose with the HQ discarding a diamond and took the spade finesse which gave him 10 tricks since the clubs are good, but somehow the SK got lost so he actually made 11 tricks for +990.
J		Q654	At the other table Malcolm played in 3H and made 10 tricks for +170 and 15 Imps.
9874		-	
KJ7		Q98652	
	K54		
	72		
	QJT32		
	T43		
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
1S	X	2S	/
3S	4H	/	/
4S	X	//	