

April 4, 2026

Bridge with Richard Ward

The 2026 World Youth Transnational Championships will be in Hefei, China from 3rd August. Australia has already named the Under 31, Under 26 and the Under 26 Women containing several Queenslanders. This week, the Under 16 team was announced: Solcita Lu (NSW), Genevieve Hunter (NSW), Ada Sun (Qld), Alex Wu (Qld), Elizabeth Brayshaw (WA) and Oliver Brayshaw (WA).

NORTH		W / ALL VUL	
♠	A K Q 8 5		
♥	10		
♦	8 5 2		
♣	Q 10 9 3		
WEST		EAST	
♠	9 3	♠	10 6 4
♥	A Q J 9 7 3	♥	6 4 2
♦	J 10 9 6	♦	4 3
♣	2	♣	J 8 6 5 4
SOUTH			
♠	J 7 2		
♥	K 8 5		
♦	A K Q 7		
♣	A K 7		

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2H	2S	PASS	4NT
PASS	5H	PASS	6NT
PASS	PASS	PASS	

A simple Roman Key-Card enquiry with spades as trumps saw North show two key cards plus the queen of trumps. As South wanted to protect the king of hearts, it made sense to try for a no trump slam. After West led the jack of diamonds, declarer played three diamond winners straightaway, discovering that it was West who held four cards in the suit. Given West's vulnerable weak two opening in hearts, declarer placed ten red-suit cards on the left so at most three cards in the black suits. Next came the ace of clubs, in case West had a singleton jack of clubs, followed by the jack and ace of spades. As West followed to all three black suit winners, his original distribution had to be 2-6-4-1. West was now void in clubs, making it a certainty that running the ten of clubs through East would produce a trick. It was then a simple matter to claim twelve tricks. Of course, if West had shown up with only one spade, indicating an original 1-6-4-2 shape, the odds would have been 2-to-1 that East held the jack of clubs. So, declarer's best play then would still have been to finesse East for that card.

Competition bridge has been booming this year with the 'house full' sign going up many weeks ahead of the closing dates. In particular, the Central West Congress in Orange, the Barrier Reef Congress in Townsville and the River City Gold Mixed Pairs in Brisbane all have waiting lists. However, the fuel crisis has forced some pairs to withdraw recently so it may not be too late to secure a place.
