

## Hands from the Wiltshire Championship Pairs Final – 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2015

Have a look at these two interesting play hands from this year's event. This was hand 27:

Dir S	4	
Love all	A 10 8 7 5 3	
	K 8 2	
	K 9 5	
K J 10 8		A 9 7 5 2
J 6 4		2
J 9 4		A 7 5 3
A J 7		8 6 4
	Q 6 3	
	K Q 9	
	Q 10 6	
	Q 10 3 2	

North opened 2♥ which was passed round to West who boldly bid 2♠. The final contract ended up in 3♠ and North led the A♥. At trick 2 he switched to a low diamond won by South's Q♦. Unable to continue diamonds without cost, South switched to a low club. Declarer played the J♣ (in case South had underled KQ) but North won and continued clubs. The defence had taken the first 3 tricks and it appeared as if there were losers in both clubs and diamonds. The only chance was an elimination so declarer ruffed a heart, played a low spade to the 10, ruffed a second heart with the A♠ and finessed the J♠. Now the last trump was drawn and the position was:

	none	
	10	
	K 8	
	5	
8		none
none		none
J 9		A 7 3
7		8
	none	
	none	
	10 6	
	Q 10	

Declarer now led the last trump, North discarding a heart and South the 10♣ because neither player could afford to bare their diamond honour. In the 3 card ending, declarer could exit with a club and whichever defender won would be endplayed.

On board 32 a slam was bid at most tables but 6NT was impossible to make when the diamonds did not break. At our table 6♦ was the contract which is makeable on careful play. This was the hand:

Dir W	A 9 6 5 3 2		
EW Vul	K 5 2		
	A 10		
	5 4		
J 10 4		K 8 7	
J 9 6		10 8 7 3	
Q 9 8 4		6 3	
9 7 3		J 10 8 2	
	Q		
	A Q 4		
	K J 7 5 2		
	A K Q 6		

North opened 1♠ and South responded 2♦ and then rebid 3♣ over 2♠. North bid 3NT and South called 5NT which we play as asking partner to pick a slam. North bid 6♦ which became the final contract and West led the 6♥.

The contract appears to depend on making all 5 trump tricks or perhaps ruffing a club in dummy and then hoping for Qx in trumps or a 3-3 break. But perhaps there is a better chance although South will have to read the position carefully. Best play in trumps is to finesse the 10♦ at trick 2, then cash the A♦. Now, if the diamonds don't break there are two possible chances. One is a black suit squeeze and in preparation for that possibility declarer should play A♠ and ruff a spade at this point (leading a club to the Ace will fail because the defence will be able to break up the squeeze by leading a 2<sup>nd</sup> club). Now try the K♦ discarding a spade. If the Q♦ doesn't drop and you think East holds both the last spades then you can just play the J♦, win the return and cash two hearts ending in dummy to operate the squeeze against East. If, however, you read West's distribution to be 3-3-4-3, then all you have to do is cash 3 clubs, the A♥ and the K♥ and ruff another spade in hand. Your losing club and losing trump fall together on the same trick at the end.

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