



A GAME AT THE NOOSA CLUB

Barbara Travis

www.bridgeatbeaumont.com

On Friday 31 July, my brother John (Gill) died. John was my first bridge partner and was my 'protector' when some of the players at the NSWBA were not very pleasant towards me. I will miss him dearly. He was one of the world's "nice guys", gathering friends wherever he went. He (almost) never had a bad word to say about anyone.

John had spent the past 40 years living in Queensland, playing less bridge. More recently, on their return to Noosa, John was heavily involved in teaching and coaching. In May, when Peter (Gill) and Liz visited, he organised a family competition – very typically Gill-ish. John, Peter and Liz sat East, each playing with one of John's students.

So when Lauren and I visited in early July, we had a similar family competition. This article is the result of our game.

Weak jump overcalls seem to have gone out of favour, but I still love them. Why not preempt the opponents, especially when you are short in one or both majors?

North opened 1♠ and I held:

♠ K 7 2 ♥ 9 ♦ Q J 9 8 5 2 ♣ K 7 3

I overcalled 3♦, simply to up the ante. South was weak with six hearts but chose to pass (I might have made a negative double). 3♦ was passed around to North who held:

♠ Q J 9 8 6 4 ♥ A K J 8 ♦ A ♣ 5 2

They should have acted, but chose to pass, so I managed to win the contract in 3♦, with the opponents having game available in hearts.

Some Norths rebid 3♠ but that wasn't a winning rebid. I suspect those who were successful bid hearts, or maybe my hand didn't bid.

♠ Q J 9 8 6 4
♥ A K J 8
♦ A
♣ 5 2

♠ 10 5 3
♥ 7 5
♦ K 7
♣ A Q 10 9 8 4

♠ K 7 2
♥ 9
♦ Q J 9 6 5 2
♣ K 7 3

♠ A
♥ Q 10 6 4 3 2
♦ 10 8 4 3
♣ J 6

With a minor misdefence, 3♦ made. One down would still have been a top against 420 to 510 that North-South were making in 4♥ (the spades could be made into winners for club discards from South).

Let's see weak jumps make a return (within reason); they are ideal for hands without much in the way of defence.

This hand was not well-handled by the North-Souths at the club. North held:

♠ A 9 7 ♥ K Q 10 8 6 2 ♦ 8 5 ♣ 8 5

Partner opened 2NT, showing 20-21 HCP. I was shocked that 3NT making 13 tricks was only worth 50% to us (East-West). Many just played in 4♥ (13 tricks) with others transferring then rebidding 3NT (!), as happened against us.

I love four-level transfers, and not enough people play them. One of the main reasons that I love four-level transfers is that I can transfer at the three-level and then rebid 4NT, knowing it is quantitative, so there is no misunderstanding.

On the other hand, if I transfer at the four-level, I can then pass, or I can rebid 4NT, which becomes RKCB,

and there can be clarity between the different 4NT bids.

So, after the 2NT opening bid, I would transfer with 4♦ (choose which version of four-level transfers you play), partner bids 4♥ and then I bid 4NT RKCB. Partner now shows three keycards and I can bid 5NT, guaranteeing all the keycards. Partner, holding:

♠ K Q 10 5 4 ♥ A 7 ♦ A J 7 ♣ A K 9

should now bid 7♥, expecting six heart tricks, two clubs, one diamond and four or five spade tricks.

(Interestingly, with the 5NT bid, North has actually shown their whole hand!)

The next hand is simply included as one that was 'fun' to play:

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	pass	2♣ ¹	pass
2♦ ²	pass	3NT	all pass

1. Strong enough to reverse, so bidding suits in natural length.
2. Understandable.

South led the ♠4 around to the ten and queen. This looked like a hand where it may be useful to have the defenders make some discards, so I cashed five rounds of clubs (throwing one spade then two diamonds from dummy). Initially North needed to retain diamonds to control the suit, so they threw a heart, then a diamond, but then a second heart.

Having seen a couple of heart discards, I now started work on hearts. A heart to the ace and a heart back to the king; that didn't drop the four remaining hearts, but I exited a heart to North to make my fourth heart into a winner. North returned a spade, won with the ace, and now my ♥5 executed a show-up squeeze on South. I held the ♠9 and ♦4; West was reducing to the ♦A-Q; South needed to retain the ♠K, so was forced to discard down to the ♦K. The penultimate trick saw me leading my diamond and South's king popped up. Twelve tricks and an equal top.

Of course, had North discarded diamonds on the clubs, all dummy's diamonds can be established easily.

During this session, we had an elaborate afternoon tea break. Lauren, who was sitting in the same seat as me (East), talked in vague terms about a hand: "We are playing Pairs. If you had eleven tricks but could take a finesse for ten or twelve, you'd finesse, right?" I never recognised the hand, but here it is:

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

We played 4♥ by East. The ♦2 was led and I won with the queen. As I led a trump, I wondered several things: should I finesse the ♣Q, should I try to ruff out the ♣K, or would the ♦K-10 perhaps draw out the jack for two spade discards from dummy? South won the ♥A and led a small club. Now I had to make a decision, so I went with the sure-fire eleven tricks (not realising this was the hand Lauren had mentioned!). I won the ♣A and tried to trump out the ♣K by leading a small club. North flew with the king and I ruffed. I drew the remaining trump and now could throw my spade loser on dummy's ♣Q. As it happened, North only held ♣K-x-x so my line was the winning option for twelve tricks.

Against Lauren, when South won the ♥A, she led a spade, so now Lauren tried the club finesse, making only ten tricks! She had determined that, if South led a club, she'd try my line. Unlucky!

I consider the next hand 'unlucky'. Partner opened 1♦ and I decided to respond 3NT, not caring for my balanced hand shape:

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

When the auction has been one-minor – 3NT, who leads a minor? The auction basically asks for a major suit lead, since East has denied a four-card major. Our South held a 3-3-3-4 shape with ♣A862 and unerringly led a club, so we lost the first five tricks – as did the field. Of course, if West was declarer, North has five clubs and will definitely lead the suit. Ah well...

I know I often harp on about counting. Another favourite topic that I nag about is entry management. Declarer failed to look after her entries on this hand:

♠ K 10 9 3
♥ 6 2
♦ A J 5 2
♣ Q 9 5

♠ J 5
♥ Q J 7 4
♦ 9 6 3
♣ 10 8 3 2

♠ A Q 4 2
♥ 10 9 8
♦ 10 7
♣ A J 7 6

♠ 8 7 6
♥ A K 5 3
♦ K Q 8 4
♣ K 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	2♣	pass	1NT
pass	3NT	all pass	2♥

West led the ♥Q, which held. At this stage, I already knew that partner had very little in outside points! Declarer won the second heart lead and cashed four diamonds.

While finding two discards was uncomfortable for me, I also knew that declarer now lacked entries to dummy! I threw one spade and one club. Declarer now realised she needed to tackle the spades.

She led the ♠8 from hand - jack - king. I won the ace, then exited a small spade, so I still had my heart exit later. Another spade was led to my queen, and I now led my heart, declarer winning. Whatever declarer now did, she was going down: the ♣K could be ducked; a club to the queen would be won with the ace and a club returned, with partner winning the last trick with her ♥J.

When we were talking about the hand afterwards, I mentioned to declarer that she needed to look after her entries. She also acknowledged that she'd had solid spade spot cards (10-9-8-7-6) which was also a good indicator to work the spade suit while she still had entries.

My final hand also relates to entry management:

♠ Q J 9 8 3
♥ 6 3
♦ A Q 9 8
♣ Q 3

♠ A K 10 5
♥ Q 10 9 8 7 4
♦ —
♣ A 5 2

♠ 7 4
♥ K J 2
♦ J 10 4
♣ J 10 8 7 6

♠ 6 2
♥ A 5
♦ K 7 6 5 3 2
♣ K 9 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠	pass	2♦
2♥	3♦	3♥	4♦
4♥	all pass		

North led the ♠Q, won with the king. This hand involves either trumping two spades in dummy or establishing dummy's club suit for discards. Even knowing North held five spades, I think I would just cash the ♠A, then ruff a spade with the ♥J, trump a diamond to hand, then ruff the last spade with dummy's ♥K.

If South overruffs either ruff, you can still trump the other spade in dummy.

Only now do you start to draw trumps, leading the ♥2 from dummy towards your hand. Your only losers will be the ♥A and two clubs. Drawing trumps first on this hand may prove disastrous, particularly if you use dummy's high hearts or if the hearts prove to be 3-1! You then would not have the entries to dummy for establishing the clubs.

This was the last session of bridge that John ever played. The result: 1st John Gill, equal 2nd Lauren Travis and Barbara Travis!

I hope you have enjoyed this tribute 'to John' – though it never mentions his results. I told him I was writing this and he was very happy to endorse it.

I do have one hand I remember playing with John. It dates back to the Gill family team, which played in the Barrier Reef Congress in Cairns in (I think) 2008. I was playing with John, and my daughter Lauren played with Peter.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
John		Barbara	
		1♥	pass
1♠	dbl	3♥	pass
4NT	pass	5♠	pass
6♥	all pass		

John's hand was:

♠ A K Q J 10 x ♥ J x x ♦ x x ♣ x x

As he put down dummy, he realised he'd bid me to a slam missing two keycards (and likely aces). LHO led a club, which RHO won with the ace. She now tried to cash her ♦A, but I trumped.

As I racked up twelve tricks and John apologised to the opponents, I also pointed out to him that he could have passed 5♠!

At bridge, John was lucky. He had only one 'bit' of misfortune in his life – and he would have acknowledged that – and that was cancer.