

WALES IN THE CAMROSE: LLANDRINDOD WELLS – January 2014

MATCH FIVE

Wales had just picked up its first win and now had the England team to play. This was the two teams at the bottom of the table, with England about 8 VPs ahead of Wales.

WALES & ENGLAND. We started with Salisbury & Tedd alongside Roderick & Towers. The first stanza hands didn't offer much good bridge but the three matches exchanged 87, 87 and 94 imps, so there was a lot going on. The second board produced a bidding problem and a swing in two matches. Partner opens 1D and over your 1S bids 3C; what do you bid now with A96543 – KJT3 – 8 – Q7 ? Three pairs chose 3N which ended the auction, one chose 3H (and a mix up ended in 6C-1) and the fifth chose 3S. Only this last choice by Jeffrey Allerton got to the excellent 6S, to join the Welsh pair who avoided this bidding problem by opening 2N (showing 20-22) on a 3154 19-count!

Board 6 had some constructive play issues to address ...

642	KQ3		The auction started everywhere with 1H by East and 1S by South and five tables ended in 4S mostly on the lead of two rounds of hearts. One declarer ruffed the second, drew trumps and then set about his side suits. This was careless and when he lost to the DK he was forced again and when they won the CA they could cash a heart for one off. Others were more careful, playing on clubs first and then diamonds to set up the side suits before drawing trumps. No harm befell them.
J87	653	T5	
53	AQ982	AKQT42	
98432	J5	KT6	
		AT	
	AJ987		One unlucky declarer was doubled in 4S and got the D5 lead, despite the heart opening. That looked like a singleton and rather than go two off, up when the DA and after trumps were drawn East carefully ducked the second diamond, killing that suit and leaving declarer with two clubs to lose, for one off. A very effective double from the Irish West !
	9		
	J74		
	KQ76		

Board 9 produced double figure swings in all three matches

A	7643	One table opened 2N (Wales again ☺) but the rest started with 1C and after a 1S response three openers leapt to 3N. The strong club system pair could bid 2C and one Irish pair's auction still defies analysis. The question is how well you recognise 3N as showing long clubs. One pair did and bid 5C; another pair didn't and passed; but the third – Ben Green for England – found the 4C bid and that was just right and some cue bidding got his partner to 6C. Gains for England and the two Irish teams on this.
AJ2	5	
K96	A8753	
AKJ942	Q65	

This bidding problem was solved only at one table

AT	32	Four tables opened 1N and the other two (weak NT pairs) opened 1C. Left hand opponent bids spades now at every table. One responder just bid 3N but the others all started with a takeout double. The 1C openers, who had received a raise initially, sold out to 3S and 4S and collected in 50s. After the takeout double the Scots did get to 3C but left the oppo in 3H when they re-opened; the Irish & English bid on to 3N. This is clearly hopeless but Wales continued to 4S and while responder suggested taking the +500, the opener bid 5C and had to settle for +400. But that was the only decent game and good enough for 7 imps.
A5	K97	
Q432	AJT76	
KQT82	J97	

At the end of the stanza England were 33 ahead of Wales and Northern Ireland were 43 ahead of Scotland with the other match quite close. Wales switched Kurbalija & Shields in, replacing Roderick & Towers.

The second stanza started off with a game which was made twice, and might be instructive ...

	QT753 AKQ5 Q7 73		Everyone opened 1S as North and ended in 4S. Most times South has bid clubs and North has bid hearts, but once South just showed a 3 card spade raise. Three tables found a club lead and when the CJ won, East knew to play another one when on lead and the contract was quickly down.
J8 97 K6542 KJ96		K92 T643 A83 852	One (too clever?) East started with a small diamond and from then on declarer always had time to set up a diamond for a club discard, and was home. The Welsh East started with the S2 (a dangerous choice perhaps) and declarer won in hand, to lead the D7. This was now the key moment, and when East ducked it was too late. Well done John Holland for putting the defender to the test, but sleepy East should have realised it only gains to duck when declarer has dropped the D7 on the table by mistake.
	A64 J82 JT9 AQT4		

Not long after came this hand -

	KQJ8 QJ4 K94 742		Except where South opened 2H once, the bidding went, from East, P-P-1S-P and then 2S-X. At this point most Wests bid game but cunning Derek Patterson passed and was rewarded when it got passed out and dummy was just perfect. The other tables all reached 4S by West and North doubled.
A6543 -- AQ75 AT96		T972 KT832 T3 K8	Everyone led the HQ and was disappointed to see it ruffed. Every declarer in 4S crossed to the CK and took a losing diamond finesse. At this point Norths all found the spade switch and this held declarer to 9 tricks (except where Scotland later fumbled).
	-- A9765 J862 QJ53		That finesse might have been premature as taking a second heart ruff, and a club ruff, and a third heart ruff gets you six tricks and when you play the fourth club North is in difficulties. In fact, from this position North will end up playing a diamond for you and that is your tenth trick. The winning defence – should it be found? – is to lead a top trump at trick one.

There were two positional hands during the set. On one, you hear partner overcall LHO's 1D opener with 1H and you have KQJ9 – AJ3 – KT63 – A4. Only two Wests found the right answer here, offering partner 3N as an option and this made all the difference as a diamond through at trick one beats 4H played from the other side. Gains for England and Ireland. And there was a slam needing a finesse – there would be nothing in the play except you have a choice of two finesses; the Scots bid the slam and (with more concealed from the opposition, and so a little help) guessed right, the Welsh bid the slam and guessed wrong.

This bidding problem came up towards the end -

KQT963 542 -- AJ74	A KJ3 QJT7 KQ952	Everyone started 1S-2C but then half the field supported clubs and half the field rebid spades. One instance of club support went back to 4S, and one instance of spade rebid went back to clubs (5C). The two who supported clubs with a jump in diamonds (3D once, 4D once) were rewarded by bidding on to 6C and making it – gains for England (Patterson & Selway) and for EBU (Mestel & Kendrick).
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After the last board was played we found Wales had lost by 80 imps, Scotland had pulled back 15 to be 28 down to Northern Ireland, and a very tight segment (34 imps exchanged) between Ireland and EBU left the latter ahead by 6 imps. The overall table now saw England overtake EBU in the bottom half, and Ireland overtake Scotland at the top, leaving Northern Ireland in third place and Wales at the bottom.

Oh well – next time ☺

END OF MATCH FIVE AND END OF THE WEEKEND