

WALES IN THE CAMROSE: MANCHESTER – March 2014

MATCH THREE

The third match started with England in the lead and Wales at the bottom and now we had to play the EBU – the only team we had beaten on the previous weekend. They had two pairs we had played before but Phil King and Cameron Small – who were to play both stanzas – were new to us.

WALES & EBU. We started with Laura & Mike partnering Filip & Patrick, and there were plenty of interesting hands. The second board was this

	KJ5		East dealt at green and all tables started with P-P but here things diverged; three tables tried 3D, two tried 4D and one even tried 5D (doubled for -4 and 800). One North tried 3N (making easily) but the others all doubled. Where 3D was doubled, South leapt to 5C and Phil King bid 6C while David Gold passed. When 4D was doubled it wasn't so easy, and Filip Kurbalija had to settle for 5C, while at the other table East raised to 5D and pushed John Ferguson into bidding 6C. There were no problems in the play.
	AQ94		
	AK		
	K982		
Q92		A843	
32		8765	
JT976542		Q3	
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	T76		Two of those who opened just 3D couldn't open 4D as for them that showed a good 4S opener. One of them could have tried 3N as a 4-level minor suit pre-empt, but that still gives South enough room to show values and so reach the slam.
	KJT		
	8		
	AJT753		

Half way through the set we had this interesting board ...

	64		All tables ended in 3N by North, after four of the Wests had opened the bidding with 1C. But it was a nebulous club so two of those got a club lead and two got a heart lead (and when West was silent there was one of each lead too). All declarers started with a spade to the SJ and four of the defenders ducked this; which was right, as when it was taken declarer had an easy time setting up spades. Three of the tables where SJ scored had already received a heart lead, so there was a strong expectation of a heart and diamond entry to dummy, so they continued spades and duly set the suit up.
	AJ42		
	T97		
	AKQJ		
AQ7		932	
87		KT53	
KQ3		8652	Against Wales however, Frances Hinden had led a club and now when Graham Osborne (who had opened 1C) ducked the spade it wasn't clear whether spades could be set up. Patrick Shields now came back to hand and led towards the Q96 of hearts; this surprised East who paused long enough before playing small to locate the HK (and thereby all the other high cards) and now Shields rose with the HQ. He ducked a heart next and Frances overtook the H7 with the HT to play through a spade. Graham won and played a third club. It was looking awkward but now the HA squeezed West out of his fifth club, allowing Shields to cash his fourth club and then run DT to end play West. Flat board.
T9643		72	
	KJT85		
	Q96		
	AJ4		
	85		

The next board saw a common Irish tactic give Scotland a headache (and gain 9imps); after a weak 2S on your left and 3C from partner RHO bids 4S and you hold 6 – J53 – AK9543 – KQT; what can you do but bid 6C and it is ominous when that goes P-P-X and the man cashes out the H-AK and then gives his partner a ruff. The field was in 5C-1 but by firstly opening 2S on a dreadful hand (T97542-Q7-T76-54) and then raising to the limit with only three card support, the Irish had put on the pressure and it paid yet again.

A few boards later we had a curious set up; 5 declarers found themselves playing in 3N holding just 976 in the suit overcalled on their left. The fact that dummy had KJ5 helped a lot and at four tables that suit was led at trick one. Twice declarer played small from dummy losing to South's 10 and was now doomed (although Wales was given it back!). The only two options which matter are when LHO holds AQ in the suit and QT in the suit. With the overcall the former is more likely, so logic drives the winning choice, here as often.

There were three slam hands in this set not mentioned yet; just to give an honest picture, we note that board 4 was six tables in 6N making (although I suspect that only Rex Anderson from Northern Ireland knew they were missing the key DQ which ruled out the grand slam). Also that on board 14 the easy slam was bid at 5 tables, and on board 6 there was only one table which holding AT3 – T87 – KQ62 – AKQ investigated a slam opposite a passed partner and was rewarded when partner had the perfect 1543 hand. Well done to Bakhshi and Townsend.

At the end of the set EBU were leading Wales by 8 imps while the North were 6 imps ahead of England and Ireland were 21 up on Scotland. Wales switched Laura & Mike out and John & Mike came in. There wasn't as much of interest in the hands now. Wales lost 10 when the opposition bidding led to a lead which gave declarer the ninth trick in 3N, but also lost through some unprovoked accidents; the opponents gave little back. Our biggest gain was John Salisbury making 3N with a combined 25 count when the opposition had stopped in 1N; but the judgement there wasn't entirely wrong as only 3/5 tables made 3N and some of them might be tagged as fortunate.

<p>J643 KT9754 J2 9 AK2 J2 KQ98 Q875</p>	<p>975 AQ83 743 K43</p>	<p>This was a curious hand in some ways. Five of the six tables opened a weak two as North and most had West double 2H for takeout. This left East in a bit of a quandary, since everyone played 2N as Lebensohl here. Two chose to overbid slightly to 3N, one passed and one tried 2S. There are those to argue that the most common hand you have when partner doubles a weak two for takeout is a scattering of values and something in the suit in which partner (and often partner of the opener) is short – so that 2N as natural is really wanted.</p>
<p>QT8 6 AT65 AJT62</p>		<p>Anyway, back to reality - at two tables South had to lead to 3N. Both chose a club but unluckily for Northern Ireland their man chose the CJ which cost one trick and cost the contract. England gained 12 imps from that when Tony Forrester started with the C6. [In fact leading partner's suit also works perfectly well here too]</p>

and there was one good play problem

<p>K84 AK JT972 965</p>	<p>2 J965 AQ5 AQJT4</p>	<p>After LHO opens a weak 2S and partner doubles for takeout, five tables ended in 3N and had a lead of a spade round to the king at trick one. Clearly either of the minors suits could bring you nine tricks. The best line is to start with the DJ and see if they cover. Three tables found that while two just ran C9 immediately. The opener was caught unprepared at all three tables and covered the DJ, with no good reason to do so. Those declarers got 9 tricks while the two who ran the C9 went two off.</p>
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Wales did badly in this set, losing 13 imps on the board just reported, to lose the match overall by 40 imps. Meanwhile England had gained 21 and Ireland collected another 8, so that when converted to VPs we had England 4 VPs ahead of the EBU who were 2 VPs ahead of Ireland, and Wales were the only team below average ☹

END OF MATCH THREE
