

# WALES IN THE CAMROSE: EDINBURGH – January 2015

## MATCH ONE

The first weekend of the 2015 Camrose season brought some old faces back to the team after a long break. The selected team was the same team which won the Commonwealth Games event for Wales in September of 2014: Gary Jones & Tim Rees, Patrick Jourdain & Tony Ratcliff, John Salisbury & Mike Tedd with Paul Denning as NPC. The last appearances in the Welsh Camrose for these pairs were 2013 for Gary & Tim, 2004 for Patrick & Tony, and 2014 for John & Mike. Welcome back to Patrick & Tony.

The team was bemused when Tim didn't arrive on Friday, but then they heard that he was in hospital and might not arrive. When it became clear on Saturday morning that he would not be able to travel, Paul stepped in to play with Gary. This never-before partnership played one set in each of the four remaining matches to give the other two pairs a vital rest on each day. And they played well! Tim is now recovering and we expect he will be able to play in March.

**WALES & ENGLAND.** Wales lost heavily to England and EBU last year but did better the year before. This year they started off against some new caps, from the team who were second in the English 2014 Premier League. With no Tim Rees, Wales played the first evening four-handed.

The match started with the four other tables playing in 2H going off in a 6-0 fit, while both Wales and England found their 6-3 club fit and made a plus score. You must decide - is the blame on opening a weak two with Q5 – AJ8653 – 54 – K93, or in the system for not allowing a 4036 hand the ability to bid 3C?

The NIBU team (making the number of teams up to 6 since the next weekend is in Northern Ireland) struck the first serious blow by being the only team to bid the excellent 5D contract on board 2. Four tables allowed the non-vulnerable opponents to steal the hand in 3S-2 while Scotland tried 4H on a 4-3 fit and didn't find the winning line (hard to see but the only way with a 4-2 trump break). This was the position at four tables

765	T	After a fourth in hand 1D opener, it went 1S-2C-3S and opener has to evaluate the hand. All four passed (with short spades highlighted in partner's hand it might be worth a double) and three partners let that go, while John Matheson for Scotland doubled, and got 4H for his troubles. The table when dealer tried 2S in first seat saw it go 2S-P-3S-X and when the club hand jumped to 5C, the bigger hand rescued to 5D and found partner very suitable. Missed opportunity for the others?
K975	QJ6	
AKQT4	853	
K	AQ9753	

The first big swing in our match was when Wales failed to take a ruff (an obvious ruff?) against 4H and that let it make for -13 imps. Northern Ireland also gained 12 imps on that hand when their man took a unilateral sacrifice in 5C over the ill-fated 4H. The next hand was a hum-dinger and Wales pulled back most of the loss ...

2		Commentators were formulating auctions where East started 1H, when North who was dealer did just that – opened 1H (at 5/6 tables). This is a problem for East and two sitting there passed, two doubled and Patrick Jourdain bid 1N. For Wales Tony raised to 2N and Patrick bid game, which was no problem after a spade lead taken by the SQ and a diamond to the jack. England passed 1H out, giving Wales 10 imps.
JT982		
KQ4		Only for Scotland and Ireland did South bid, 1S in both cases, and the Scots after East's double could double this for takeout (ensuring a 5D contract) while the Irishman copied his partner with a pass, allowing North to bid 2C which the big hand doubled. It looks like this was read as showing clubs and West ended in 4Cx going -800 for 16 imps to Scotland. Disaster!
AJ63		
Q75	AK94	The two Northern Ireland teams played in diamonds, 5D and 6D – but they both went one off for a flat board.
7	AK543	
T9863	AJ52	
KQ92	--	
JT863		
Q6		
7		
T8754		

Board 11 gave Wales their next chance for a gain. While everyone else pre-empted (4 of 3S, 1 of 4S), for Wales Tony Ratcliff opened 1S in second seat with KJ85432 – AT4 – 932 – void, and heard 2N (minors) on his left and a forcing 3H from partner. He raised to game and Patrick was allowed to play there while the pre-empters had a 4N overcall to show the minors and had to defend 5C. The defence to 4H was kind and declarer started just right, but had to read the opponent's shape as 0256 rather than 0355 at the key moment to make his game. And didn't ☺

The light openers continued on the next board, with just QT2 – QT32 – A97642 – void for a first in hand 1D opener. Game was easy on this hand but the opening bid led to a shaky 5D contract (which Tony duly made) while the 3N and 4H reached elsewhere were easy to make. A fewimps changed hands alongside these hands but overall it was low scoring and 23-23 for Wales-England at the half way mark. The other matches were low scoring too (but not quite as low) with Northern Ireland just 5imps ahead of NIBU and Ireland 2imps ahead of Scotland.

For the second half Sally Brock & Barry Myers came into replace Jonathan Mestel & Paul Barden against Jourdain & Ratcliff, while Brian Callaghan & Heather Dhondy stayed on against John Salisbury & Mike Tedd. A curious problem was given to Barry Myers and Tom Hanlon on B20 when opponents opened 3C and they faced K5 – AKQ2 – A83 – 6543. Rather short of spades and short of a club stop, they both overcalled at the 3-level in their four card heart suit; it worked fine when partner had J865 in support - but neither could make the 4H to which their partner raised them. A few boards later there was a chance for a pretty play found by Sally Brock for England and Phil Stephens for Scotland ...

	Q9764				
	Q865				
	KJ3				
	T				
T		85			
AJ9742		K			
98		AQT764			
QJ92		K765			
	AKJ32				
	T3				
	52				
	A843				

At the one table where West passed, North-South stopped in 3S but elsewhere after a weak two opening South bid 2S and was raised to game by partner. The commonest lead was a top club and – although it wasn't a certainty – three Souths set off on the right path, ruffing all the clubs in dummy while drawing trumps.

The lack of a top heart lead marked East with a singleton honour, so now – being in dummy – the H5 went to the HK and East had to give declarer a diamond trick as the tenth trick. In the NI-NIBU match neither declarer managed the ending successfully, while for England Brian Callaghan fished out the D9 at trick one rather than a club and that gave Wales no chance to shine (and it earned England 11imps).

After none in the first stanza, there was one respectable slam hand (bid by Ireland but one suit broke badly and they went off) earlier in this set and then this came along

AKQJQ874	632				
--	J973				
AKT5	3				
76	KQ952				

Two pairs started 1S and although one pushed to the five level, neither reached the slam. We saw an Acol Two Bid here from David Greenwood (2S-2N-4S-P), and the others were a strong 1C and three of 2C. Wales reached the slam after 2C-<2H>-X from Patrick Jourdain, and then <3H>-3S-P-4S-P-5H-P-6S-end. Play was straightforward for 11imps to Wales.

The Irish reached the slam after 1C(strong)-<2H>-P-<3H>-5S-P-6S. It is an excellent contract but tight in that every card in East is working well, and it is hard to judge that this is the case.

The last board of the match saw East-West with 12 hcp opposite 12 hcp and the Irish stopped in 1N while everyone else bid the vulnerable 3N; it is a feature of their light opening style not to force to game with 12 hcp and the style does well at times but here three queens were sitting underneath the KJ which made it easy (the game was always a good one).

When the smoke cleared Northern Ireland had hammered NIBU by 34-1 in that set, Wales had gained 9 on England and Ireland had gained 6 in Scotland. This put Northern Ireland at the top of the table (just over 16 VPs), followed by Wales (12 VPs) and then Ireland (11 VPs).

END OF MATCH ONE