

WALES IN THE CAMROSE: EDINBURGH – January 2015

MATCH FIVE

After the fourth match, Wales had crept into the lead in the Camrose table but England and Ireland were just a whisker behind. Wales' last match however was against Northern Ireland who were not playing with the form of last year, and the next two teams in contention were playing each other.

WALES & NI. The first Welsh gain was on board 2 when the Northern Ireland South showed his 55 shape in the bidding making the hand double dummy for Mike Tedd and that was 11 imps in. When we go to board 4 the perennial problem of how high to pre-empt arose. At amber (both vulnerable) you are first in hand with

♠8 ♥--- ♦QJT97632 ♣KJ63

and three different answers emerged. Wales tried just 3D and that didn't work as either opponent could happily bid and they reached 4S making 11 tricks. Both NIBU and Scotland tried 4D which succeeded in one case (P-P-P) but John Murdoch doubled in pass out seat with QT93 – AK76 – A – T752 and that got to the easy 4S game. The other three opened 5D (matching advice I once picked up from the Italians about always opening at the 5-level with 0-1 in the majors). That opening got P-P-P twice and P-P-X once and making 10 tricks was always cheap compared to 4S. Actually, one of the 5D bidders (and the 3D bidder) couldn't open 4D since that showed spades, so the free choice of 5D was only made by England and Ireland.

On the next board two teams had disasters, but not Wales ...

KJ9872	65	QJ	K76	6	Q97	62	AJT9852	43	AKJ82	A53	Q3	AQT5	T43	KT987	4	Five out of six tables opened a weak two bid with the North hand in first seat at red. Every East overcalled in hearts and where the suit was known to be spades South bid 4S at two tables but Wales only bid 3S. Over a multi 2D the Souths all chose different options (one each of P, X and 3H). West got to bid his clubs at most tables and three tables ended in game East-West (twice hearts, once clubs and twice doubled) - while the other three were in less interesting contracts
																Against 5H Gary Jones led the SA and switched accurately to a diamond. Declarer drew trumps and finessed the club. Ducking would have collected +300 but it was enough to take it and beat the contract. In the same position Ireland at trick one led the C4 and Sally Brock realised to go up with the CA, drop the CQ, and play a second club. Hanlon rose with the CK but didn't find the necessary defence of forcing dummy in spades, and declarer was able to draw trumps ending in dummy and run the clubs. Against 5C the lead was SK and a second spade and declarer had no difficulty knocking out the CK and making 11 tricks. Wales got the only plus score for North-South.

There were plenty of slam hands in this set, and across the four Ireland gained on two, Northern Ireland on none, and the others each on one. This was the best bidding exercise amongst them

5	A854	AKT642	AT	AKT3	KQT	953	QJ6	Everyone (apart from the strong club) started 1D-1S and then they split : Wales tried 2D, N.Ireland tried 1N and the other three chose 2H. Auctions at those tables were long and ended in 5D, 6D and 6N (while the strong club pair got to 6D too). The minor suit slam is clearly best as evidenced when England played 6N and had a club played through the ace after giving up a diamond, and had to choose between the club finesse and the hearts coming in. And chose wrongly. Not an issue in 6D. How did you get on?
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This was the most spectacular of those slams ...

	AKQT5		One table (playing a Polish club) opened 1S but the other Souths all started 1C. At four tables West shows a two suiter, while two simply overcalled 1H. Northern Ireland recovered from that when East made a 3D fit jump, but NIBU didn't and they were the only team to allow the Scottish opposition to settle in 4S.
	J5		
	863		
	J85		
--		974	
AT842		K973	
AT952		KQJ74	Every other table continued with 5D and Ireland passed this out while the other four tables bid 5S. The Irish continued with 6D over that and England responded with 6S, doubled and two off. The Scottish West actually doubled 5S but John Matheson took that out into 6D and he got the top score on the hand (and Scotland's best board of the weekend) when that made for a gain of 18 imps.
Q63		9	
	J8632		
	Q6		
	--		
	AKT742		

At the end of the set Wales were 30 ahead of Northern Ireland, while Scotland led NIBU by 28 and Ireland led England by 23 imps. Patrick & Tony came in to replace Gary & Paul for the last set. As it always seems to be (but this must be an illusion, isn't it?) the last set had lots of big hands. On boards 18, 20 and 22 the East West pairs all got 2N openers. There were slams bid on boards 24 and 26 and 27 and 28, and everyone missed the excellent slam on board 20. That board had a number of interesting facets ...

	KQ843		All Wests passed in first seat at amber, and only one North (Lindsay-Burns for NIBU) had an honest 2S opener – spades and a minor – with the North hand. (This opener let South pinch the hand in 3C-1 against a silent Scotland). So at most tables East opened, with 2 of 2N, two strong 1C and a 1S bid from Brian Callaghan. Two of those last starts got diamonds into the picture and bid to 5D; they were initially relieved that diamonds were 3-0 since otherwise the slam is easy (Morton's fork at trick one for the defence), and then doubly when the spades are 5-1 for otherwise 5D was going off!
	876		

	JT863		
JT		A7652	
AJ52		KQ	
T75432		AKJ9	
Q		K4	
	9		Wales and NI both opened 2N and through a 3C enquiry ended in 3N. The C5 was led at both tables, and was followed by three rounds of diamonds. Both Souths managed now to find the CA continuation necessary to beat the contract (Scotland didn't in a similar situation). Congratulations to Patrick Jourdain, and a little also to Rex Anderson although he had an easier time as his partner had doubled 3C. It wasn't a great suit to ask to be led, but the double does at least discourage a red suit lead which could well give away a trick. Patrick worked out that East had shown 5 spades in the auction and 4 diamonds in the play, so should be 5242 to open 2NT.
	T943		
	Q86		
	A9752		

The one grand slam in the set was this

			Wales, NI and NIBU were all give a clear run and had no difficulty bidding 7D, but when England and Scotland started with 1D, and Ireland with a strong 1C, the fourth hand was able to overcall safely with 1S, and now after West showed a suit the next hand produced a jump raise in spades. There was no cue bidding now and no asking for aces – it was all guesswork, and both Iain Sime and Tom Hanlon guessed right to bid the grand – while England lost out by stopping in 6D. It shows the importance of getting into the auction, in this case with only KT964 – KJ – T4 – 7542.
--	AJ5		
A8	T6542		
AKQ875	J963		
KQJ96	A		

and finally here's a bidding exercise on which only two succeeded ...

	J92		With dealer West and NS vulnerable, it was a surprise to see Wales and Northern Ireland being allowed to open the bidding in fourth seat, after which they bid only to 4S. Both Scotland and NIBU opened a weak two bid in first seat. Over the Scottish 2H-P-4H, Robin Burns bid 5H with the South hand and put dummy down when partner bid 6C, but the other table stopped in 4S.
	874		
	Q52		
	KJ72		
T63		87	
AKT62		QJ93	England were also allowed to open in fourth seat but East-West came in firstly with 2H and then a psyche of 2S; still Brock & Myers had enough momentum to bid up to 6S now on general values. The English third in hand opening by East (1C he chose) had a devastating effect on the Irish, as they focussed now on a club stop to get to 3N, despite West having bid hearts, and when they got to 3N the opposition cashed the heart suit to put it one off. That was 17 imps to England – unfortunately for them two very good results on the same board.
43		JT87	
654		983	
	AKQ54		
	5		
	AK96		
	AQT		

Across those five slam hands, England and Ireland shared the honours at 2-2, Wales came off better at 1-0 against N Ireland, and NIBU scored 2-0 against Scotland. That contributed usefully to the only NIBU win of the weekend, although they remained in last place. The Republic had beaten England by 48 imps, while Wales beat the North by 31 imps. The final table reads

Wales in first	71.67
Ireland second	71.33
England third	57.71

and the other three teams below average (which was 50 VPs). This is the first time that Wales has come first in a weekend of this format (it did tie for first once, last time it was in Scotland), and they went through the weekend only losing points on one stanza – which is quite an achievement. The same Welsh team has been selected for the next match – we wish them all the best.

END OF MATCH FIVE AND THE REPORT
