

WALES IN THE CAMROSE: BELFAST – March 2015

MATCH FIVE

Wales had slipped in the third match but retained a healthy lead (11 VPs) as they went into the final day of the second Camrose weekend and held their place with match four. There only remained the match against Scotland; in Scotland Wales had beaten Scotland by 58 imps, and at this point anything better than losing by 11 imps would (subject to there being no fines) guarantee the Camrose trophy. Meanwhile Scotland this weekend had beaten the two Northern Ireland teams but lost by over 60 imps to both England and Ireland.

WALES & SCOTLAND. The first board was a humdinger ...

--	AJT975
A3	K8
AKQJ9842	T6
A43	K87

It was a 2C opener in most books (1C for the strong club people) but only the Scots had the perfect machinery in response – Iain Sime bidding 3C to show four controls (AA or AKK or KKKK) and his partner could bid an immediate 7N. The Welsh had a system mix-up which led to a 6D guess at the end. The NIBU pair never bid diamonds; after 2C-P-2S and a 3H overcall, the big hand bid 3N in case that was the last making game (give partner AKQxxx spades and out), and was raised to 6N, over which 7N was a winning guess. Forrester-Gold did a bit better after 2C-2S-3D-3S-3N-4D and ace asking but might have bid the same with one less diamond (and now only 12 tricks). The pair from the North stopped in 6D after a double of a heart cue (with QJ6542 of hearts) left them worried about a loser there. The Irish had a fairly convincing auction after it started 1C(Polish)-1S(positive)-3D(setting the suit) and when Tom Hanlon bid 7D he could count 12 tricks and knew there would be some other chances. Ireland and Scotland were the winners here (11 imps each).

The next hand was an easy game made in all rooms, but then came ...

	T3	
	QT98763	
	974	
	K	
KQ9	A42	
--	AK542	
AK9	Q	
AJT8432	Q965	
	J8765	
	J	
	JT8532	
	7	

Only one South opened (at green) with 2S and that got a 3C overcall, and after P-3H-P-3N-P the East hand jumped to 6C. That was for NIBU and in the other room over P-1C(could be 2), Ian Lindsay for NIBU tried 3H giving rather a problem to Allfrey, who found a pass now, and passed again when partner doubled. He collected +800 but that wasn't good enough at this vulnerability and 11 imps went to NIBU.

The other four tables started P-1C but we had one case of a club showed any 16+, two where it could be a doubleton in a weak NT hand, and one where it promised clubs. These attracted three overcalls of 3H and one of 4H. Over 3H two Easts chose 3N and then cued 4H when partner took out to 4C; both pairs used Blackwood (a bit unsatisfactory) and were forced to stop in 6C as they knew an ace was missing. Both made 12 tricks.

After the strong club, 1C-3H East doubled (showing some values) and heard partner bid 5C. He raised this to 7C (reckoning he had rather more values). The last table had a real problem after 1C-4H since double was takeout and partner had only promised 2 clubs; Frazer Morgan reasoned well that his partner had to be so short in hearts on this auction that he had clubs, so he tried 5C over 4H and it proceeded P-5H-P-5S-P-7C-end.

Both declarers in 7C took the (losing) club finesse, which is with the odds when you know that North has long hearts and South has short hearts. The 4H jump strongly suggested that line, but there was a case at the other table for thinking that 3H bidder might have bid more with a void. The result of all this was 16 imps to Ireland and Wales, whose pairs had stopped at the 6-level.

There were no more slam hands on the set although England bid and made one (respectable but on minimal values) when opening leader (naturally) led out from an AK holding at trick one.

Now to a smaller hand which provided some interest ...

<p>T643 85 Q954 QT9</p>	<p>KQ9 KT9 JT6 J742</p>	<p>AJ875 Q632 87 A6</p>	<p>With NS vulnerable it started at all tables from East with 1S-X and we saw three raise to 3S, two to 2S. Now North tried 3N three times, although one attempt seems to have been interpreted by his partner as showing the minors (he forced them into 5C). In 3N on a spade lead, one declarer lost to the DQ and the other to the HQ and both went off on spade continuations.</p>
<p>2 AJ74 AK32 K853</p>			<p>After North's pass, one East was allowed to play in 2S, one in 3S, but at the other table Forrester doubled again – which led to 3Sx being the final contract. South started a top diamond in all cases and then struggled. One played a club but declarer guessed that right (but muddled later to end with 7 tricks), while the others played a spade. Allfrey put South to the test with a second diamond (ducked) and was then able to find 8 tricks. NIBU played CA and another at this point, making +300 trivial for his defenders.</p>

Finally from this stanza there was the curiosity of board 14, on which at both of its tables England played in game (going off), while at both of its tables Northern Ireland played in a part-score making, and Wales played the part-score in both rooms in their match. In this case Filip Kurbalija managed to play his trump suit of AQT93 – 8 for the six tricks he needed to make 2H, while Patrick Jourdain's slightly ambitious 2N contract (only 22 hcp) drifted 3 off.

This set had seriously hurt Wales chances; not listed above were two 3N games which were bid only by Scotland and were too difficult to beat, which accounted only for 19 of the 26 imps by which Scotland were leading. In the other matches England was only 4 imps ahead of NIBU (the closest NIBU were to come to winning a set of boards), and the Republic of Ireland were 28 ahead of the top team from the North. Wales were still ahead in the table but extrapolating that set of results to the next stanza would see Ireland win the Camrose.

And so the last set of boards of the weekend kicked off with three teams in contention for the trophy. This turned out to be the lowest scoring set of boards of the weekend, with 150 imps changing hands over the 16 hands across 6 tables. Over the first five boards Wales dribbled away 6 imps while Ireland pulled in 16 imps to take a tiny lead overall lead in the table (0.01 VPs). Wales regained the lead with some good fortune on this board

<p>AKQ9 AKQ 32 AK95</p>	<p>862 -- AKJ875 8762</p>	<p>Against silent opposition in most cases (Mike Tedd opened a weak 2H in third seat, amazingly the others didn't) five tables bid up to a slam. 6N is best as it offers chances if either minor behaves but the Northern Ireland teams in 6C & 6D weren't punished as neither minor behaved today. Scotland, who guessed to bid 7N (interference does help!) were not punished either. Wales somehow (2D-3D-3N-P actually) stopped in 3N which made for a 14 imp gain.</p>
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There were two difficult hands towards the end of the set, on which Wales suffered

<p>J7 972 AK98 AJT3</p>	<p>K9653 Q3 J65 KQ2</p>	<p>Wales bid 1N-P-2H(transfer) and this got doubled for a lead. The Scots in a similar position (1C-P-1H(transfer)) managed to stop in 2S and the NIBU team managed to stop in 3S, but Wales ploughed on to 3N which went three down vulnerable but only cost 3 imps when Scotland lost 4 trump tricks to go down two in a makeable 2S.</p>
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and the penultimate board was

<p>AK KJT97 2 AKJ97</p>	<p>QJ9865 85 763 Q2</p>	<p>Both tables in our match started 1H-<2D>-P-<3D>-4C and the spotlight was on responder. Wales chose 4H which had no play with hearts 4-2 and a club ruff available (and found). Scotland chose 4S which was a winner except that the opener (for reasons not yet uncovered) bid 6C which ended down 2. The other four tables didn't overcall on 72 – A2 – AQT98 – 6543 and contracts of 4H or 4S all made easily.</p>
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The stanza finished with a total gain to Scotland of 9 imps, while England picked up 21 against NIBU and Ireland 28 against the North. Final VP scores were

Ireland : 137.24

Wales : 135.48

England : 132.14

It was a sad end for Wales but it was close and congratulations to Ireland for coming through at the end. Over the second weekend, England had come out top but they needed a near maximum win against NIBU in the last match to take the trophy; the hands and their choices did not combine to allow that. As always, the Northern Ireland association despite its small numbers provided excellent hospitality and a most efficient service. Many thanks.

END OF MATCH FIVE
