

## The Welsh Cup Final

The belated 64-board final of the 2009 Welsh Cup was held on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October, at the Gwent Bridge Academy in Newport. Having 6-person teams is a big advantage in arranging earlier rounds, but when all 12 players were determined to play the final, arranging it was a nightmare!

Wales's two leading teams had reached the final – all the players have played for Wales on many occasions – and it saw a husband and wife (Filip and Diane Kurbalija) on opposite sides.

Although Filip's team took a small early lead, Adrian Thomas's team won the next five sets of eight to put the result beyond doubt. The final margin was 159-110, reversing the result when the two squads had last met in the final.

The standard of play was generally high. Several swings happened when Adrian's team judged better in competitive auctions, such as when Diane held:

S	void
H	K 7 4 2
D	A 6 5 3 2
C	A J 8 5

Fourth in hand at favourable vulnerability, she heard opponents bid 1S 4S. In the other room this hand passed and 4 Spades made, but Diane doubled. 5 Diamonds was reached (a good save) which pushed her opponents to 5 Spades down one.

On another hand, Adrian held:

S	3
H	A 6 3
D	K 10 9 4 3
C	A J 4 2

Again fourth in hand at favourable vulnerability, Adrian heard 1 Spade, 3 Hearts from partner, 3 Spades on his right. He bid FIVE Hearts, which can be made, pushing opponents to 5 Spades, again one down. In the other room this hand fancied its defensive chances in a slightly different auction so sold out to 4 Spades making.

The best play hand of the match fell late on to a member of the losing team, Patrick Jourdain:

Dealer East, North-South Game.

		S	6 4 2				
		H	2				
		D	A K 7 5 4 3				
		C	J 9 2				
S	10 9			S	K Q 8 5 3		
H	A Q 6 4 3			H	9 7 5		
D	10 9 6 2			D	J		
C	10 3			C	K Q 8 7		
		S	A J 7				
		H	K J 10 8				
		D	Q 6				
		C	A 6 5 4				

West	North	East	South
Shields	Ratcliff	Denning	Jourdain
		1S	1NT
2H	3NT*	All Pass	

\*3NT denied a heart stop (North goes via a Lebensohl 2NT with a heart stop)

At the other table N/S stopped in a quiet 2 Diamonds making nine tricks for 110. Jourdain chose to overcall 1NT and was raised to the good-looking game, which is straightforward if Diamonds break.

Against South's 3NT, West led the spade ten to the queen which held. A switch to the H9 was covered by jack and queen. Now West switched to a low diamond, attempting to cut communication with dummy. Patrick won with the queen and played a high heart. West won and played a second diamond to the ace. Patrick cashed the diamond king discarding a club, finessed the jack of spades, and cashed one good heart leaving this ending:

		S	none				
		H	none				
		D	7 5				
		C	J 9 2				
S	none			S	K 8		
H	6 4			H	none		
D	9			D	none		
C	10 3			C	K Q 8		
		S	A				
		H	10				
		D	none				
		C	A 6 5				

Declarer now cashed his last heart throwing a diamond from dummy. What could East discard?

If he threw a club, after ace and another club, the last two tricks would be won by the spade ace and a good club. So Paul threw a spade. But now Patrick cashed the ace of spades to remove East's exit card and then led a low club. When West played a small club Patrick put in the nine. East won and had to return a small club which ran round to dummy's jack.

The well-deserved winners: Adrian Thomas, Peter Goodman, Paul Denning, Patrick Shields, Jill Casey and Diane Kurbalija. Runners-up: Filip Kurbalija, Tim Rees, Mike Tedd, John Salisbury, Patrick Jourdain and Tony Ratcliff.