

GNOT Regional Final

After two changes of venue, this year's regional final ended up at Bundanoon Club. There was a record field of fourteen teams: three from SHBC, three from Bowral, a Goulburn team and seven teams from Illawarra. The usual strong contingent from Illawarra was strengthened even more this year with the presence of the Emerald Grand Master, Paul Lavings.

It was heartening to see many highlanders making their first foray into this event. There is a huge difference between club bridge and competitive bridge and I am delighted that every team managed at least one win. The highlands had three teams in the top six – no mean performance given the strength of the field.

The Most Dangerous Boards of the Day

In any bridge event, the two most dangerous boards of the day are the first board and the last one. Before the first board, you may have been greeting friends and catching up on the latest news, Before the last one you may be thinking what you will be doing after bridge – what is on the shopping list, what is for dinner and so on. Your mind may not be fully focused on bridge and this is a dangerous state to be in. This is especially true on the first board where the result tends to set the tone of the day.

Board 3	♠ AJ8642					
Dealer S	♥ AQJ7					
Vul E-W	♦ 75					
	♣ 4					
♠ T		♠ 953				
♥ 853		♥ T6				
♦ QT42		♦ K983				
♣ J9532		♣ KQ76				
	♠ KQ7					
	♥ K942					
	♦ AJ6					
	♣ AT8					
12						
3 8						
17						
	Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
	N	-	-	7	6	6
	S	-	1	7	6	6
	E	2	-	-	-	-
	W	2	-	-	-	-

This was very true for me at the GNOT. After racing round setting up the room at the start of the day, I sat down and picked up north's cards on this deal. I needed to switch rapidly into bridge mode.

As South, Kate opened 1NT and I needed a plan. I decided I would first transfer to spades and then show my heart suit. Kate supported hearts rather than spades, preferring the 4-4 fit. Now, I counted 16 fit points and I decided to try for slam with a Roman Key Card sequence. Eventually, we ended up in six hearts. The full sequence was:

- 1NT – 2♥
- 2♠ – 3♥
- 4♥ – 4NT
- 5♣ – 6♥

After the club lead, 13 easy tricks rolled in and we were off to a good start. Mind you, it was just as well that we bid the slam because Rakesh and Helen matched it at the other table.

Chris