

Tales from Canberra

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SHBC sent a club team (Steve Brabyn-Tony Lye-Mardi Svensson-Rakesh Kumar) to compete in the very first Sean Mullamphy Australian Country Clubs Championship, held as part of the Australian National Championships in Canberra this month.

There were 12 teams in this first iteration of the competition (the organisers had anticipated more – hopefully the event will grow) of which 8 were from regional NSW and 4 from smaller ACT clubs (city clubs with <150 members were eligible to participate). Teams of 4 players would have found the format gruelling – a round robin of 11 matches $\times$ 16 boards over 3 days meant 64 boards on each of days 2 and 3 – and several clubs did indeed send teams of 6.

Notwithstanding that, the SHBC team did well, staying in the top 4 for the first 8 rounds and actually leading the field after rounds 3, 4 and 6. Unfortunately we were smashed by the 3 strongest teams (which included Mollymook and Ballina, who finished first and second respectively) so were eventually 6th with 6 wins, 1 draw and 4 losses (one was only small). We did, however, beat the two Canberra teams who finished ahead of us (this included a 20-0 win against the team that finished 4th and beat two of the top-rated teams, as well as a 14-6 win against the team that beat all three of them).

Here are some interesting deals from the event. I'll present two of these to you as problems. Firstly, you are West with neither side vulnerable. South deals and opens 1S. With your 8-card suit, you decide to overcall 4D. North jumps to 6S! You lead $\spadesuit A$ and this is what you see:

	(dummy)
	$\spadesuit A874$
	$\heartsuit AK87$
	$\diamondsuit 8$
(you)	$\clubsuit KQ95$
$\spadesuit 63$	
$\heartsuit 2$	
$\diamondsuit AKT96532$	
$\clubsuit 63$	

Partner follows with $\diamondsuit 4$ and declarer with $\diamondsuit 7$. What will you play at trick 2?

Secondly, you hold:

$\spadesuit A$
$\heartsuit 8$
$\diamondsuit T98752$
$\clubsuit 96532$

The opponents are vulnerable and you are not. You pass as dealer and LHO opens 1S. Partner overcalls 2S, a Michaels cue bid showing 5+/5+ in hearts and a minor with some 10+ hcp. RHO bids 3H, a cue raise showing good support for spades. What will you bid?

Below is an exciting deal from an early match – a 31 combined hcp grand slam that was only bid at 2 of 12 tables. All it needed was for clubs to break 3-2 – they did.

BD: 17	♠QJ752	Dlr: N
	♥Q654	Vul: None
	♦95	
	♣J4	
♠9		♠AKT43
♥KT7		♥AJ83
♦AK		♦872
♣AKQ8765		♣2
	♠86	
	♥92	
	♦QJT643	
	♣T93	

At our table, after a 1S opening by East, the auction was 2C-2H-4NT (keycard ask in hearts, a good strategy as West held ♥K and would also find ♥Q useful)-5H (two keycards, no queen)-7NT. That was a significant swing against us, although we still managed to win the match, which was against the team who eventually finished third.

On the first problem hand, did you continue with another diamond, hoping partner might over-ruff dummy? That would have given declarer a terrible headache, because the full deal was as below:

BD: 11	♠A874	Dlr: S
	♥AK87	Vul: None
	♦8	
	♣KQ95	
♠63		♠QT
♥2		♥QJT9653
♦AKT96532		♦4
♣63		♣T42
	♠KJ952	
	♥4	
	♦QJ7	
	♣AJ87	

It is still possible to make 6S by ruffing with the ace, then taking the spade finesse and successfully praying for trumps to break 2-2. Fortunately for us, West switched to a heart, so all was well.

This was the full deal for the second problem hand. At our table, I bid 5C as pass-or-correct and we played there. The contract can't be beaten. Meanwhile Steve and Tony played in 4SX, also cold, so this was worth 15 IMPs against the Monaro team, whom we beat by 17 IMPs.

BD: 25	♠A	Dlr: N
	♥8	Vul: EW
	♦T98752	
	♣96532	
♠Q53		♠KJT9874
♥AQ753		♥J9
♦QJ6		♦A43
♣T4		♣Q
	♠62	
	♥KT642	
	♦K	
	♣AKJ87	

The deal led to a double game swing at several tables. So much excitement!!



Some of the bridge columns published on our club website will now appear on the [bridge page](#) of our regional online newspaper, The Southern Wire. In addition, The Southern Wire will publish columns that will not appear elsewhere.

