

## Report on match v Glos – 12 Dec 2004

Last Sunday I had the pleasure of 32 boards with Lynne Hayes, with whom I had only played perhaps 32 boards before. Despite several hands testing our agreements and some that tested areas we had not discussed, our bidding came through relatively unscathed and I think we only messed up on one hand where we missed a good 24-point 3NT. So first I will record my thanks to Lynne for an enjoyable afternoon's bridge. Now comes the hard part – writing a report for you based on just the hands and scores but without the stories that lie behind the scores. I will do my best, covering those hands I thought were interesting or where there was at least one significant swing.

One of the privileges of writing the report is to write it from one's own viewpoint so I won't make any attempt to shy away from a biased North-South view of events. For a start I will present the Butler scores only comparing North-South's amongst themselves and East-West's amongst themselves. Any comparison of a North-South score with an East-West score except against an adjudicated par result is meaningless. As Nick Smith would no doubt confirm, most of the difficult par results to achieve lay East-West's way and Gloucestershire showed them-selves better able to achieve par. By way of example, on board 23, par for North-South is -2220, whereas the Butler datum score was -660, so a North-South with -1390 on their card may feel entitled to +13 rather than -12. This is not to say that Oxfordshire's North-South's would have fared any better with the East-West cards, but rather to indicate that systems played in Gloucestershire lent themselves to these cards – again see board 23.

### North-Souths:

Dickinson/Southcomb (B)	+13
Gascoyne/Squires (C)	+6
Nicholas/Roberts (A)	-6
Procter/Hayes (B)	-9
Flower/Stead (C)	-18
Noble/Bennett (A)	-35

### East-Wests:

Cooper/Pfeiffer (C)	+50
Slater/Stevens (A)	+44
King/Watkins (C)	-27
Smith/Prior (B)	-30
Brown/Keep (B)	-44
Wilkes/Webley (A)	-50

And now to some of the hands:

Board 4  
(ALL)

	9842	
	A964	
	J8743	
Void	Void	Q63
T752		KQ83
KT9		AQ5
AK9742	AKJT75	QJ5
	J	
	62	
	T853	

At our table the opposition were somewhat confused about their systems. West opened 1 club, East bid a Baron 2NT and Lynne reasonably decided not to come in vulnerable. West bid 3 clubs, alerted by East, East bid 3 diamonds not alerted by West, West bid 3 hearts and East raised to four, neither being alerted. West now bid 5 clubs alerted and East bid 6 clubs, passed around to me. Enquiry revealed that East thought 3 clubs was asking for five-card majors (surely he denies this by bidding 2NT?). Both players told me that they had themselves shown a four-card heart suit, but neither was certain that his partner held four hearts. So, being fairly certain that Ace of hearts and a heart ruff would take 6 clubs off whereas 6 hearts or 6NT might be making, I decided not to double and we took our +100.

In the A-team this board lost us a lot of IMP's with both Gloucestershire East-West's making game and both Oxfordshire East-West's losing 200 playing in 5 hearts. In the C-team the result was the other way round with Oxfordshire pairs making 4 hearts and 3 no trumps and the Gloucestershire pairs going off in these same two contracts! Meanwhile in the B-team the board was flat despite one North-South from each team making 4 spades doubled – if East responds a heart, South gets in with 2 spades and North raises to four which East now doubles.

Board 5  
(N/S)

6 clubs was bid and made at three tables, by Slater/Stevens, Cooper/Pfeiffer and one Gloucestershire pair on the following hands:

94 AQT85	
AKJ	T
9652	KJ
KQJ7	AT963

John Slater tells me that he mistakenly pulled out the 2 diamond card after Nelson had opened 1 spade. Once Nelson rebid 3 clubs, there was no way they were going to stop out of 6 clubs and the contract now only needs the spade finesse. At other tables I assume

it was played the other way up and a small diamond lead would put declarer to a nasty guess, and one which he would almost certainly get wrong as it would be from Ace to three. Now that would have been a brilliancy it would have been a pleasure to report!

Board 9  
(E/W)

	AK8	
	Q2	
	T64	
754	AQ943	QT9632
KT7		A4
AQ97		852
876	J	52
	J98653	
	KJ3	
	KJT	

At our table the bidding and play was straightforward. I opened the North hand 1 club, East made a weak jump overcall in spades, Lynne bid 3 hearts and my 3NT closed the auction. After a small spade lead, the play of the king of diamonds at trick two ensures the contract without risk. The contract was made by both A-team North-South's, but not by their Gloucestershire counterparts, whereas this time it was the C-team that lost out at all tables. Presumably those going off did so in 4 hearts with two heart and two diamonds to lose – but if anyone found the brilliancy of the lead of the spade Queen against 3NT please inform the selectors!

Board 11  
(Neither)

For the benefit of any reader who didn't play in the match, I will present this as a question. How carefully do you look in the mouth of a gift horse?

Lynne held:

AQJT3

6

K72

AJT9

She opened 1 spade, LHO doubled, I bid a pre-emptive 3 spades and Lynne bid a two-way 4 spades – it may make but if it doesn't, the opposition probably have four hearts on. With suitable apology I tabled my strictly one-way dummy of:

9762

5

QT53

8642

LHO leads the heart King on which RHO plays low. After some thought LHO continues with the heart Ace which you ruff in dummy and discard a diamond from your hand. LHO looks considerably surprised.

Should she now run the spade 9? Decide before reading on.

As LHO was looking like a man who felt he had just committed a fatal error, I have to agree with Lynne's decision to do so. She was to regret this when it lost to a singleton king with a club and a diamond still to lose for one off. At some other tables 4 spades was made because a club switch at trick two picked up a club honour, the king of spades was dropped perforce and the jack of diamonds was found on-side. Our Gloucestershire defender was honest enough to claim no credit for his inadvertent ruff and discard - he would have expected his partner to have bid 4 hearts with the hand he held. At most other tables he did so and East-West went on to 5 hearts, going a couple off.

Board 14

(Neither)

You hold:

J2

86

AT

AKQJT93

and RHO opens a heart. This looked to me a good hand for a 3 heart bid asking partner to bid 3NT with a heart stop – the only question was whether partner would play this convention. Lynne alerted my bid, a good sign I thought, and LHO doubled, passed back to me, so I retreated to 4 clubs where I played. Dummy was:

KT97

975

Q8743

5

After three rounds of hearts, I ruffed in and drew trumps continuing with an extra round to reach this position:

J2	KT9
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Void	Void
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AT	Q8
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3	Void
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RHO had thrown a small heart, leaving one heart still out. I needed Q of spades to be on-side, so I led the spade jack and ran it when it wasn't covered. RHO now thought for some time before playing low (if he wins, I can win the return in hand and discard a diamond on the long spade). The 3 of clubs now squeezed him out of his last heart and a spade left him end-played to lead away from Kx in diamonds. At the time I thought I was justifiably pleased with this, but realised afterwards that East has made a defensive error by not inserting the Queen of spades, as I have to cover this with dummy's king and a duck of the ace leaves me unable to play the squeeze card. Did anyone find this defence?

Board 15

(N/S)

	982	
	T973	
	9873	
Q7543	76	T
KJ654		Q82
6 KJT542		
Q2	AKJ6	K85
	A	
	AQ	
	AJT943	

3NT played by South turns out to be difficult to defeat, being made at five tables and only defeated when played by Bennett/Noble. If the bidding has given an indication that West may hold five hearts, even on fourth highest leads East should duck a heart lead thereby ensuring four heart tricks are available when in with the club king as South can be placed with a singleton honour and therefore one heart stop. However if West has kept quiet throughout the auction, the five may look just as likely to be fourth highest of four and there becomes an argument for not allowing declarer a cheap trick with the ten and/or an entry to dummy, so I have sympathy with those who covered.

On the other hand five clubs was usually defeated and two pairs were able to double heart contracts for 300 and 500 rather than bidding a doubtful game. At our table West showed a red two-suiter, according to the card, and Lynne ended up playing in spades by South! Her relief when she made nine tricks anyway matched her shock when RHO showed out on the second round of trumps. It transpired that our opponents had told us beforehand that their card was wrong about two-suited overcalls and we had said to them that they could tell us if it came up. They saw both of us look at their cards but said nothing and we had both forgotten that the cards were incorrect. My view is that they should have reminded us of the situation even at the risk of reminding their partner, but we didn't check out the legalities.

Board 16

(E/W)

As North I held T86, 96543, J87, 98. RHO opened 1NT, LHO bid a strong 3 spades, partner 5 diamonds, RHO 5 spades and LHO a prompt 6 spades, passed back to me. On this sequence, coupled with the speed of the opposition's bidding it is difficult to imagine that partner is going to have two defensive tricks so the par sacrifice of 7 diamonds, going for 800, isn't hard to find. I suppose there is a risk that the opposition may have 7 spades on and now bid it, but as John would say "That is for the birds".

The East-West hands were:

KQ5	AJ9742
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J72	AKQ8
43 2	
AKJ64	Q2

Apart from our table just two Oxfordshire pairs (Smith/Prior and Cooper/Pfeiffer) and two Gloucestershire pairs in the A team reached 6 spades – if East looks for a major fit via Stayman, South’s 5 diamond bid makes things a bit more difficult. One unfortunate Oxfordshire pair tried 3NT losing the first seven tricks in diamonds.

Board 17  
(Neither)

	AT74	
	2	
	K9876	
J9	KQ7	53
JT974		Q6
AQ54		JT92
J8	KQ862	A6432
	AK853	
	Void	
	T95	

This would have been a flat board in game were it not for three Gloucestershire pairs who sets their sights on 6 spades. In the C team against King/Watkins and Cooper/Pfeiffer they were not up to the challenge, whereas their declarer in the B Team against Smith/Prior showed the way home. I am not sure of the complete order of play, but suffice to say that he managed to ruff three hearts in dummy without being over-ruffed (lucky there!) and had to finesse the club jack as he did not have enough entries to hand to lead twice towards the king/queen (lucky there). If you enjoy hard luck stories, this deal features strongly in Nick Smith’s E-mail account of his last eight boards!

Board 18  
(N/S)

With North holding KT2, QJ8, 963, AQ85 opposite 4, AK9, KQJ72, K964, North-South want to be in 5 clubs rather than 3NT. Lynne and I bid 1 diamond, 2 clubs, 4 clubs, 5 clubs. I was fortunate to survive the technical error of failing to play the club nine under my ace to cater for the possibility that the jack appearing from East on the first round was a singleton, but let’s not go into that! I will also pass quickly over the fact that one of our A team pairs over-stretched to 6 clubs, one of our C team pairs played in 4 hearts and one of our East’s presumably didn’t lead a spade from a six card suit against 3NT – so generally not a good hand for Oxfordshire.

Board 21  
(N/S)

The success of 4 hearts by East-West tended to depend upon whether declarer decides to play for diamonds to be 4-2 or 3-3. As there is not much to go on, some got it right, some

got it wrong, and some stopped short of this game shot on slim values. I record all this only to suggest that any gains or losses on this board are more likely to be the result of chance than skill or error.

Board 23 (referred to in my preamble)

(ALL)

	J8	
	AKT75	
	KJ942	
T95	9	AKQ73
Void		Q9
T6		A85
AKQJT872	642	654
	J86432	
	Q73	
	3	

The West hand here poses a considerable evaluation problem on any system. Playing Acol one could open 1 club, 3NT or 5 clubs. If you are playing a strong club I don't know whether 1 club could ever be right, but what is going to be better? Pass?

Our Gloucestershire opponents had no such problems. Their 2 club bid included hands with eight playing tricks in a suit, exactly what West holds. So the bidding proceeded:

W	N	E	S
2C	2H	2S	3H
4C	4D	6C	P
P	-	P	

After wrapping up all the tricks, West was annoyed with East for jumping to 6 clubs rather than bidding 5 diamonds and East thought West should bid 4 hearts over 3 hearts to show the control and spade support. Silently I wondered whether we had given them too much space to investigate – perhaps Lynne can bid 4 or even 5 hearts – but as an unpracticed partnership there must be a concern that we have at least one more winner to cash and/or more playing losers than we actually have. However, for the present our opponents' dissatisfaction at missing a cold grand caused us to look forward with optimism to the rest of the set. After all we had just gained 13 IMPs against the par contract, hadn't we?

Well.....

In the A team our Slater/Stevens and Wilkes/Webley bid and made 6 clubs, the former also managing to get themselves doubled, whilst the Gloucestershire pairs only reached 5 clubs.

In the B team Prior/Smith and Keep/Brown played 5 clubs, whilst Dickinson/Southcomb's opponents played 3NT going two off. At least the first of these resulted from the not unreasonable choice of 3NT as the opening bid, raised to 5 clubs by East.

In the C team two more 5 club contracts, one each way, another 3NT two off and a 4

hearts doubled one off.

So.....

The Butler score is -660 for North/South and we get -12 for our efforts. What is there to learn from this sorry tale? Should I: a) take up 2 clubs as a bid to show eight playing tricks? b) ask to play East/West next time? or c) take up chess?

Board 24

(Neither)

West held AT76432, KQT32, T, Void - another difficult hand to evaluate. If you open 1 spade, partner bids 2 clubs. At least, now 2 hearts should be safe from being passed (over 1NT you might be worried). You now hear 3 diamonds – fourth suit forcing. Do you and your partner know what the difference would be between 3 hearts and 4 hearts? If you choose whichever is stronger in your partnership, I think your partner will go on to the slam. If not, you probably subside in game. Partner has K, J965, AJ52, A765.

You win the minor suit lead in dummy, cash the spade king and lead a trump to the king, losing to the ace. You can now ruff two spades high in dummy to set up an easy twelve tricks when hearts break 2-2 and probably also get there if they are 3-1 with a bit more thought. Amazingly our opponent, who had only got to four, tried to play it on a dummy reversal and after getting the spade ace ruffed, only made it when the king and queen of diamonds fell in three rounds promoting the jack as her tenth trick. How did we lose to these people?

In the A team this board was flat in game plus two. In the B team Keep/Brown bid and made slam, as did Dickinson/Southcomb's opponents. In the C Team Cooper/Pfeiffer bid and made the slam. Well done to those pairs who got to slam!

I'm running out of puff and time now so will have to be briefer about the remaining hands. Do I hear cries of relief?

Board 25

For those North's defending 3NT and holding KJx of clubs, the contract is defeated by ducking the queen whether it is the card led or the card led towards. Then there is no entry to enjoy the long clubs in East's hand and West's hand has too many other losers. I have heard from at least one North who failed to do so and has regretted it.

Board 27

If you were West and opened AKQT9, JT72, 976, 3 you have a poor score and my sympathy. North holds 5-5 in the majors and you probably got a negative score. If you pass, you get a plus score from defending against a major or by playing in your partner's diamonds.

Board 29

The hand where Lynne and I missed 3NT bid at most other tables. My hand was 98, AKQJ3, JT3, JT6. I opened 1 heart, Lynne bid 2 diamonds, I bid 2 hearts, Lynne bid 2

spades. Should I be bidding more than 3 diamonds with such a good heart suit when my club and diamond holdings will be very useful in no trumps provided we have a club stop or would 3 clubs (FSF) be overstating the case? I chose to bid 3 diamonds and that is where we played. Lynne also could have taken a rosier view of her 12-count made up of KQ64, 9, A9765, K32, but where were the tricks going to come from with apparently only one club stop?

#### Board 31

A hand of mixed fortunes for Oxfordshire. The A team results were almost completely flat with North/South making game with overtricks at all tables. The B team lost a packet, with Dickinson/Southcomb off in slam and Smith/Prior conceding 1400 in 4 clubs the other way. Gascoyne/Squires picked up the same 1400 but slam was made against Cooper/Pfeiffer to compensate, whilst Flower/Stead missed the game too.

My apologies for the tailing off at the end.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a successful time at the bridge tables in the new year.