

Oxfordshire vs Warwickshire, 18 Feb 2007

Oxfordshire welcomed Warwickshire on 18 February for our last match of the 2006-7 Midland counties season (though all other teams still have at least one match to go). After some hard-fought matches, it was very pleasing that all three Oxfordshire teams managed a win against a county that are often hard to beat, even if none of the wins were by particularly large margins. The A team had modest wins in the first two sets, before losing all their lead and more in the third set. The lead was reversed again in an excellent last set, leading to a 20 imp win (13-7 VPs). The B team had a disastrous first set, but thereafter gained all the way, just getting their noses in front by the end for a 7 imp win (11-9 VPs). The C team started and finished with losing sets, but scored strongly in the middle two sets to achieve a 12 imp win (12-8 VPs). Final standings are not yet clear – suffice it to say that all 3 teams could theoretically still win their divisions, but the most likely finishing positions are 2nd, 1st and 2nd. Whatever the final positions it is clear that the county has had one of our most successful years ever in this competition, so well done to everyone who has contributed.

As far as individual pairs' contributions to the results were concerned, there seem to have been some rather bigger differences than usual between the different measures produced, for example those including and excluding the C team scores. But using the yardstick that compares with the largest number of other scores, ie Butlerimps compared with a datum calculated from all 3 teams' scores, results were as follows¹ (bearing in mind as always that this only reflects the actual results obtained rather than how well the pairs played!):

A team

Rob Procter/Mike Robinson	+52
Tim Pike/Alan Wilson	0
Chris Cooper/Nathan Piper	-16
John Slater/Nelson Stephens	-26

B team

Andrew & Dinah Lintott	+22
Krys Kazmierczak/Sandra Nicholson	+9
Marian Day/Nick Perceval-Price	-6
David & Jeremy Bygott	-25

C team

Ian Angus/Greg Moss	+22
Norman Gascoyne/Ron Quanton	+10
David Flower/David Stead	+3
John Clifford/Gillian Lonsdale	-24

I thought there were quite a few interesting boards, but fewer people than usual have told me about any of what happened at their table, so what follows is inevitably rather selective. (In order to save time typing out relevant hands I have attached the full

¹ Thanks as so often to Jeremy Bygott for compiling these.

hand records at the end of this report, so please refer to them to see what I am talking about!.)

Board 1 was a flattish game around much of the room, but produced some fireworks in one half of the A team. Tim and I tried to make life difficult for EW by overcalling 2C over 1S on the S hand and then raising to 4C on the N hand over W's Sputnik double. But this only seemed to push EW into a slam – E felt he had too much playing strength simply to bid 4H over 4C so tried 5H instead, and W had little hesitation in accepting the invitation with 6H. Tim can hardly be blamed for doubling as S, I would have thought – though on neither of the other two occasions when slam was bid was there a double. Neither can Tim be blamed for leading DA, I think, rather than a C –but that was enough to give E the contract when he guessed hearts correctly (not surprisingly in view of the double). In fact the only EW pair to register a minus score were our teammates who stopped in 5S after looking for a slam. Here S found the C lead, and declarer misguessed hearts.

Board 2 was mostly about E's choice of re-opening bid after 1S (2H) P P. I'm sure I would have chosen 2S, worried about the H void for defending H if partner wanted to make a penalty double. But what do I know? Against us the Warwickshire E happily doubled and W even more happily passed. That was -500 for what looks like a pretty cast iron overcall for S (certainly compared with the one on hand 1). When teammates didn't find the re-opening double and didn't manage to make the resulting 3N, we had lost 26 imps on the first two boards we had played! Elsewhere Procter/Robinson picked up 800 on this hand, while one B team pair lost no less than 1100, so it was clearly a bit of a trap for NS.

Board 6 was all mostly about the defence to 4H, and I guess the amount of information provided by EW in the bidding might have had a big impact. Where E showed both his suits with a weak opening it was easy for S to switch to A and another spade after cashing CA at T1. Elsewhere this may not have seemed so obvious – game seems to have made 4 times and gone off 6 times, but unfortunately 3 of the 4 successful declarers were from Warwickshire, with Procter/Robinson the sole successful EW pair for Oxfordshire, and Gasgoigne/Quinton and Tim and myself the successful Oxon defenders.

Board 14 was also about defending, this time 4S by south. DK looks a normal lead, with no other suit remotely attractive, and then it's just a question of W playing a second D when this is allowed to hold. Attitude signals might seem more helpful than count signals here to enable W to do the right thing, but curiously of the 2 Oxon pairs defending in the A team it turned out the other way round. Playing attitude, Nelson started a peter with D4, but this did not make the position clear enough to W, who switched. Playing count, I played D7 and declarer picked a poor time to try to muddy the waters with a falsecard, playing D8. This proved to be all the help Tim needed, since if I had held 7642 I would have played my second highest not my highest D – if declarer had simply followed suit with D6 then Tim would have had to guess whether I had started with J742 or 8742. Moral: don't falsecard just for the sake of it – it often makes the defence easier not harder. Overall, 4 NS pairs made game.

Board 15 is not easy for NS to bid to a sensible spot, and was probably Oxon's most successful of the day, with a net gain of 47 imps! Curiously, EW scored +500 twice,

both times from undoubled contracts! NS went 5 down in 3N against Tim and myself, and 5 down in 5D against Clifford/Lonsdale.

Board 17 led to a not very good slam contract at several tables – though it only needs H10 in the N or S hand to make it cold. As it was there was no way to play the H suit successfully except double dummy – neither a first round finesse against H10 or playing for a 3-3 break worked. Overall more than half of the tables bid to slam, but only one Gascoyne/Quainton made it – perhaps on the lead of HA?

Board 22 is a good 6D or 6N for EW, but is not easy to bid. In practice almost everyone made 7 with the D finesse working, but only Slater/Stephens' opponents bid a slam – bad luck for them.

Board 24 was probably the most interesting slam hand of the day, though. In the C team two Warwickshire pairs played in game and one Oxon pair went off in 6S. Everywhere else those in 6D or 6S made the contract. The real interest was in the A team where one Oxon and one Warwickshire pair bid up to 7D, surely the right contract on these hands? Slater/Stephens failed to find the usually recommended trump lead against a grand slam, and declarer had no trouble ruffing two clubs in dummy to make 13 tricks. Chris Cooper had a more difficult time on a trump lead, though. At first sight, it looks like you now need a 3-2 spade break to provide a 13th trick (you can't ruff out the spades on a 4-1 break to establish the 5th spade since there is no outside entry to the suit). At second sight, it looks like you can give yourself the extra chance of a 4-4 H break by ruffing a few hearts in hand. At 3rd sight, though, there is a problem – after ruffing a C in dummy declarer wants to draw trumps, but has to find discards from dummy. On the second round of trumps you can throw a spade, but on the third round surely you will throw a H to keep the spades intact, and now there is no long H to establish. At 4th sight, though, there is a way round this – you need to play enough rounds of hearts before drawing trumps to know whether the suit is breaking, and your trumps are good enough to be able to afford to do this. So....win D lead in dummy and ruff a H. Then play CA and a C ruff. Now cash HA and ruff a H high. Draw a 2nd round of trumps, discarding a S. Since trumps are 3-2 you can afford to cross to SA and ruff another H high. Now when you draw the last trump you know H have broken 4-4, so you can discard another S from dummy on the 3rd round of trumps. (And there's also the chance of a squeeze against N if he started with 4S and 5H.) Not an easy line to find at the table, though! (Thanks to Nathan Piper and John Slater for (separately) working it out afterwards.)

Board 28 provided a 12-card fit for EW, but those who bid 5D weren't very successful. Tim and I were lucky that oppo decided to sacrifice in 5S despite the vulnerability (at least I think it was bid as a sacrifice), giving us an easy +500.

Board 29 provided a bidding problem for EW – I wonder how many top pairs would find 5D other than in a bidding competition? The popular choice was between 3N and 4S, both of which sometimes made and sometimes went off. (I made 3N as W on a C lead by winning CK and immediately playing a S to the K.) Well done to Gasgoyne/Quainton and to Procter/Robinson's opponents for reaching the far better contract of 5D.

Alan Wilson

<p>1 ♠ 86 Dir: N ♥ J32 Vul: None ♦ 9532 ♣ QJ86</p> <p>♠ K5 ♠ AQJ10743 ♥ 10864 ♥ KQ95 ♦ KQ876 ♦ ♣ A5 ♣ 43</p> <p>4 ♠ 92 12 12 ♥ A7 12 ♦ AJ104 ♣ K10972</p>	<p>2 ♠ Q1094 Dir: E ♥ 43 Vul: N-S ♦ AJ10963 ♣ 8</p> <p>♠ 5 ♠ AK8762 ♥ K10862 ♥ ♦ Q7 ♦ K52 ♣ AQ654 ♣ 10973</p> <p>7 ♠ J3 11 10 ♥ AQJ975 12 ♦ 84 ♣ KJ2</p>	<p>3 ♠ A5 Dir: S ♥ 9762 Vul: E-W ♦ A8 ♣ KJ874</p> <p>♠ 104 ♠ KQ876 ♥ AK54 ♥ Q108 ♦ K6 ♦ 1072 ♣ AQ953 ♣ 62</p> <p>12 ♠ J932 16 7 ♥ J3 5 ♦ QJ9543 ♣ 10</p>
<p>4 ♠ 86 Dir: W ♥ J10632 Vul: Both ♦ 9832 ♣ A4</p> <p>♠ J1095 ♠ A ♥ 984 ♥ AK7 ♦ QJ ♦ AK74 ♣ KJ103 ♣ 98752</p> <p>5 ♠ KQ7432 8 18 ♥ Q5 9 ♦ 1065 ♣ Q6</p>	<p>5 ♠ K6 Dir: N ♥ Q1087 Vul: N-S ♦ K10 ♣ KQ1065</p> <p>♠ AJ107 ♠ Q943 ♥ 64 ♥ 532 ♦ A985 ♦ 6432 ♣ J72 ♣ A9</p> <p>13 ♠ 852 10 6 ♥ AKJ9 11 ♦ QJ7 ♣ 843</p>	<p>6 ♠ J Dir: E ♥ 53 Vul: E-W ♦ J86 ♣ J1097643</p> <p>♠ K8 ♠ 97643 ♥ J1084 ♥ AQ962 ♦ AKQ92 ♦ 73 ♣ Q2 ♣ K</p> <p>3 ♠ AQ1052 15 9 ♥ K7 13 ♦ 1054 ♣ A85</p>
<p>7 ♠ Q853 Dir: S ♥ 984 Vul: Both ♦ KQ6 ♣ 987</p> <p>♠ AJ976 ♠ K2 ♥ AJ7 ♥ KQ10 ♦ A872 ♦ 1094 ♣ J ♣ AK1052</p> <p>7 ♠ 104 15 15 ♥ 6532 3 ♦ J53 ♣ Q643</p>	<p>8 ♠ Q Dir: W ♥ 1098 Vul: None ♦ AK2 ♣ KQJ986</p> <p>♠ AJ63 ♠ K9852 ♥ AQ72 ♥ K4 ♦ Q83 ♦ J10964 ♣ 103 ♣ 7</p> <p>15 ♠ 1074 13 7 ♥ J653 5 ♦ 75 ♣ A542</p>	<p>9 ♠ KQ72 Dir: N ♥ QJ10 Vul: E-W ♦ J6 ♣ KJ98</p> <p>♠ 108654 ♠ J3 ♥ K95 ♥ 763 ♦ 10952 ♦ A874 ♣ Q ♣ 10653</p> <p>13 ♠ A9 5 5 ♥ A842 17 ♦ KQ3 ♣ A742</p>
<p>10 ♠ K974 Dir: E ♥ A3 Vul: Both ♦ J842 ♣ KJ7</p> <p>♠ Q63 ♠ A102 ♥ 94 ♥ 10762 ♦ AQ9 ♦ K653 ♣ Q8632 ♣ 109</p> <p>12 ♠ J85 10 7 ♥ KQJ85 11 ♦ 107 ♣ A54</p>	<p>11 ♠ 952 Dir: S ♥ K9 Vul: None ♦ AK10532 ♣ J8</p> <p>♠ 10873 ♠ A6 ♥ 1053 ♥ AJ842 ♦ 986 ♦ Q7 ♣ K107 ♣ AQ62</p> <p>11 ♠ KQJ4 3 17 ♥ Q76 9 ♦ J4 ♣ 9543</p>	<p>12 ♠ AQJ105 Dir: W ♥ 85 Vul: N-S ♦ A1083 ♣ K3</p> <p>♠ 943 ♠ K82 ♥ 96 ♥ QJ732 ♦ Q652 ♦ KJ97 ♣ A954 ♣ Q</p> <p>14 ♠ 76 6 12 ♥ AK104 8 ♦ 4 ♣ J108762</p>
<p>13 ♠ Dir: N ♥ QJ42 Vul: Both ♦ Q75 ♣ AQ9873</p> <p>♠ A10743 ♠ J9865 ♥ 75 ♥ AK9 ♦ J642 ♦ K3 ♣ J2 ♣ K65</p> <p>11 ♠ KQ2 6 14 ♥ 10863 9 ♦ A1098 ♣ 104</p>	<p>14 ♠ K872 Dir: E ♥ KQ94 Vul: None ♦ 953 ♣ A2</p> <p>♠ A103 ♠ 4 ♥ A652 ♥ 10873 ♦ KQ10 ♦ J742 ♣ J85 ♣ Q763</p> <p>12 ♠ QJ965 14 3 ♥ J 11 ♦ A86 ♣ K1094</p>	<p>15 ♠ A94 Dir: S ♥ 4 Vul: N-S ♦ K73 ♣ KQJ983</p> <p>♠ K1072 ♠ QJ865 ♥ AQ8 ♥ J105 ♦ 9 ♦ J1065 ♣ A10754 ♣ 2</p> <p>13 ♠ 3 13 5 ♥ K97632 9 ♦ AQ842 ♣ 6</p>
<p>16 ♠ 982 Dir: W ♥ A2 Vul: E-W ♦ K8 ♣ Q108532</p> <p>♠ Q75 ♠ AKJ1063 ♥ J10865 ♥ 4 ♦ 542 ♦ 76 ♣ 74 ♣ AK96</p> <p>9 ♠ 4 3 15 ♥ KQ973 13 ♦ AQJ1093 ♣ J</p>	<p>17 ♠ K107 Dir: N ♥ 4 Vul: None ♦ AK10962 ♣ Q109</p> <p>♠ J8 ♠ 9642 ♥ 10872 ♥ A6 ♦ QJ83 ♦ 754 ♣ 852 ♣ J743</p> <p>12 ♠ AQ53 4 5 ♥ KQJ953 19 ♦ ♣ AK6</p>	<p>18 ♠ A62 Dir: E ♥ 106 Vul: N-S ♦ A1094 ♣ K754</p> <p>♠ 54 ♠ 1073 ♥ K542 ♥ A98 ♦ K2 ♦ 853 ♣ A9632 ♣ QJ108</p> <p>11 ♠ KQJ98 10 7 ♥ QJ73 12 ♦ QJ76 ♣</p>

<p>19 ♠ Q96 <i>Dir: S</i> ♥ K653 <i>Vul: E-W</i> ♦ 72 ♣ K954</p> <p>♠ K3 ♠ 10874 ♥ A9872 ♥ Q ♦ AKQ4 ♦ J86 ♣ 73 ♣ AJ1062</p> <p>8 ♠ AJ52 16 8 ♥ J104 ♦ 10953 8 ♣ Q8</p>	<p>20 ♠ KQ <i>Dir: W</i> ♥ Q9875 <i>Vul: Both</i> ♦ 9654 ♣ Q5</p> <p>♠ A8763 ♠ 10 ♥ 10 ♥ J43 ♦ QJ2 ♦ AK1073 ♣ J762 ♣ A983</p> <p>9 ♠ J9542 8 12 ♥ AK62 ♦ 8 11 ♣ K104</p>	<p>21 ♠ J876 <i>Dir: N</i> ♥ 53 <i>Vul: N-S</i> ♦ KJ94 ♣ J63</p> <p>♠ Q10932 ♠ AK5 ♥ Q64 ♥ 92 ♦ Q75 ♦ A10863 ♣ K8 ♣ Q95</p> <p>6 ♠ 4 9 13 ♥ AKJ1087 ♦ 2 12 ♣ A10742</p>																														
<p>22 ♠ Q10942 <i>Dir: E</i> ♥ QJ103 <i>Vul: E-W</i> ♦ 86 ♣ K6</p> <p>♠ 73 ♠ AK5 ♥ K75 ♥ A94 ♦ AQJ10754 ♦ 92 ♣ Q ♣ AJ532</p> <p>8 ♠ J86 12 16 ♥ 862 ♦ K3 4 ♣ 109874</p>	<p>23 ♠ A32 <i>Dir: S</i> ♥ A42 <i>Vul: Both</i> ♦ J54 ♣ J864</p> <p>♠ 976 ♠ KQJ54 ♥ 85 ♥ Q97 ♦ KQ963 ♦ 82 ♣ 1032 ♣ KQ9</p> <p>10 ♠ 108 5 13 ♥ KJ1063 ♦ A107 12 ♣ A75</p>	<p>24 ♠ J1082 <i>Dir: W</i> ♥ Q964 <i>Vul: None</i> ♦ 762 ♣ K7</p> <p>♠ 754 ♠ AKQ93 ♥ ♥ AJ873 ♦ KQ10943 ♦ AJ ♣ AJ65 ♣ 9</p> <p>6 ♠ 6 10 19 ♥ K1052 ♦ 85 5 ♣ Q108432</p>																														
<p>25 ♠ QJ6 <i>Dir: N</i> ♥ K10 <i>Vul: E-W</i> ♦ KQJ974 ♣ A4</p> <p>♠ K982 ♠ 103 ♥ AQJ8 ♥ 975 ♦ A5 ♦ 32 ♣ Q103 ♣ KJ9876</p> <p>16 ♠ A754 16 4 ♥ 6432 ♦ 1086 4 ♣ 52</p>	<p>26 ♠ QJ4 <i>Dir: E</i> ♥ K52 <i>Vul: Both</i> ♦ J ♣ A109743</p> <p>♠ A983 ♠ K762 ♥ AJ98 ♥ Q10 ♦ 5 ♦ KQ642 ♣ KJ82 ♣ Q6</p> <p>11 ♠ 105 13 12 ♥ 7643 ♦ A109873 4 ♣ 5</p>	<p>27 ♠ Q62 <i>Dir: S</i> ♥ K107643 <i>Vul: None</i> ♦ J932 ♣</p> <p>♠ J3 ♠ 104 ♥ Q85 ♥ A2 ♦ AQ854 ♦ 1076 ♣ 832 ♣ AKJ1097</p> <p>6 ♠ AK9875 9 12 ♥ J9 ♣ K 13 ♣ Q654</p>																														
<p>28 ♠ J9842 <i>Dir: W</i> ♥ KJ42 <i>Vul: N-S</i> ♦ A ♣ 875</p> <p>♠ Q10 ♠ 75 ♥ A9 ♥ Q3 ♦ KJ72 ♦ Q10986543 ♣ A6432 ♣ K</p> <p>9 ♠ AK63 14 7 ♥ 108765 ♦ 10 ♣ QJ109</p>	<p>29 ♠ 42 <i>Dir: N</i> ♥ QJ6 <i>Vul: Both</i> ♦ 983 ♣ AQ1074</p> <p>♠ KQ ♠ J9653 ♥ A105 ♥ K92 ♦ KQ764 ♦ AJ52 ♣ 983 ♣ K</p> <p>9 ♠ A1087 14 12 ♥ 8743 ♦ 10 5 ♣ J652</p>	<p>30 ♠ A953 <i>Dir: E</i> ♥ A987 <i>Vul: None</i> ♦ ♣ AK1083</p> <p>♠ QJ42 ♠ K1087 ♥ 532 ♥ K1064 ♦ A65 ♦ K1097 ♣ QJ5 ♣ 2</p> <p>15 ♠ 6 10 9 ♥ QJ ♦ QJ8432 6 ♣ 9764</p>																														
<p>31 ♠ A103 <i>Dir: S</i> ♥ AKJ1064 <i>Vul: N-S</i> ♦ K6 ♣ 84</p> <p>♠ 97654 ♠ J8 ♥ Q75 ♥ 932 ♦ 7 ♦ AJ103 ♣ AQ97 ♣ KJ63</p> <p>15 ♠ KQ2 8 10 ♥ 8 ♦ Q98542 7 ♣ 1052</p>	<p>32 ♠ 98632 <i>Dir: W</i> ♥ 543 <i>Vul: E-W</i> ♦ 8763 ♣ 4</p> <p>♠ QJ7 ♠ K1054 ♥ 762 ♥ AKJ109 ♦ A105 ♦ ♣ J963 ♣ KQ107</p> <p>0 ♠ A 8 16 ♥ Q8 ♦ KQJ942 16 ♣ A852</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5">R E C A P</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>N</th> <th>S</th> <th>E</th> <th>W</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Avg HCP</td> <td>9.75</td> <td>9.53</td> <td>10.53</td> <td>10.19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bal-anced</td> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>12</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Voids/Singles*</td> <td>3/ 8</td> <td>3/17</td> <td>3/13</td> <td>1/ 8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Suit with 7+</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*Number of voids/ Number of singletons in all hands.</p>	R E C A P						N	S	E	W	Avg HCP	9.75	9.53	10.53	10.19	Bal-anced	11	12	12	16	Voids/Singles*	3/ 8	3/17	3/13	1/ 8	Suit with 7+	1	0	2	1
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