

March 28, 2020

## Bridge with Richard Ward

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It can't be emphasised enough that when you play Teams you play the contracts differently from when you play Pairs (matchpoints / duplicate). At Pairs, you are competing against all the other pairs playing in your direction, holding the same cards as you. Each board is a separate entity – scoring from a top to a bottom. Whilst scoring -1400 is likely to give you a bottom (unless the opponents can make 1430 in slam), you can recover on the next board simply by eking an extra overtrick from the hand! At Teams, you are having a head-to-head match against one other team, so the boards are not all equal. A score of -1400 is likely to lose you 13 IMPs, whereas an overtrick is only worth 1 IMP. Therefore, at Teams, the safety of your contract is paramount, with overtricks being a consideration once you know your contract is safe.

<b>NORTH</b>			
♠	7 4		<b>W/ NIL VUL</b>
♥	A J 7 5		
♦	Q 9 3		
♣	A 10 9 7		
<b>WEST</b>		<b>EAST</b>	
♠	A 10 9 6	♠	J 5 3 2
♥	10 4	♥	Q 9 6 3
♦	A J 10 8 5	♦	7 2
♣	8 6	♣	J 5 3
	<b>SOUTH</b>		
	♠	K Q 8	
	♥	K 8 2	
	♦	K 6 4	
	♣	K Q 4 2	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1NT	PASS	2C	PASS
2S	DBL	PASS	3NT
PASS	PASS	PASS	

This hand comes from the qualifying rounds of the Gold Coast Congress Pairs Championship. East-West were playing a very aggressive bidding style so 1NT showed a balanced hand with a scary 8-11 high card points. North-South were up to this challenge and reached a solid game contract to which North led the jack of diamonds won by the king. Had this been a teams match, declarer could almost count 9 tricks by taking the marked diamond finesse against the ten and then establishing a spade trick – 1 spade, 2 hearts, 2 diamonds and 4 clubs is sufficient. But, with pairs scoring, you need to maximise the number of tricks and so our declarer tried the heart finesse at trick 2. When this lost, the defence cleared the diamonds and ended up with 1 spade, 1 heart and 3 diamonds to put an end to 3NT. Pairs can be a most frustrating game.

Trevor Strickland has retired from directing at the Gold Coast Congress after almost 30 years of continuous service. Long-time participants will know Trevor well. Always full of vitality and with a caring persona, Trevor was always there to help in any way that he could, and was an invaluable member of the GCC staff team.

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