

The 2002 Babich Wines New Zealand Wide Pairs

By Richard Solomon and John Knight

The 4th New Zealand Wide Pairs, and the first sponsored by Babich Wines, proved to be most successful with both the number of competing clubs (43) and pairs(712) being the highest so far.

Although the winners (Bev Smith-John Knight) came from Ashburton and the second placed pair (Sue Stephens-Ian Bryant) played at the Hibiscus club, the place to be for high scores was at the Franklin Bridge Club in Pukekohe, where three of the top eight pairs played. On the night, three pairs recorded 70+% sessions at their local clubs but only the winners were above that level when the overall matchpointing had been completed.

The overall listing has been well publicised. However, here are the top four overall scores with their scores at their local club shown too:

		Club	Overall %	Local %	Direction
Bev Smith	John Knight	Ashburton	72.53	71.76	E/W
Sue Stephens	Ian Bryant	Hibiscus	69.32	72.16	N/S
Steve Boughey	Richard Jedrychowski	Franklin	68.67	66.07	E/W
Grant Jarvis	Trevor Robb	Franklin	68.41	73.51	E/W

On then to the winners and some tales of a successful night in Ashburton:

THE INGREDIENTS OF SUCCESS By John Knight, Ashburton

An early New Zealand bridge writer gave his view that successful bridge was 60 % luck, 25% intelligent bidding, 10% initial lead and 5% play of the hand. One might disagree with these figures but, even today, the leading contribution to a high percentage is — luck and lots of it. Of course, it helps to be playing well, but my experience is that the two go together and conversely, if you're out of form, you're also out of luck.

Board 2

Dealer: E Vul: NS	<i>North</i> ♠ J54 ♥ 65 ♦ J1063 ♣ QJ93	
<i>West</i> ♠ 8632 ♥ 108 ♦ AK875 ♣ 64	<i>East</i> ♠ AK1097 ♥ AQ74 ♦ 94 ♣ 108	
	<i>South</i> ♠ Q ♥ KJ932 ♦ Q2 ♣ AK752	

East opened 1S , South made a Michaels cue-bid 2S , West 3S , passed round to East who tried 4C (pass or correct). West, who believes East's proper place at the table is dummy, was faced with the unattractive prospect of watching partner defend, or, equally unpleasant, play a marginal 4S . Deciding that a few telling points could, as usual, be made in the post mortem about the quality of the declarer play, West bid 4S , passed all round.

N/S had not at stage had the benefit of reading the commentary and South began with ♣AK. Declarer won the diamond switch and led a trump to the king. When South's queen fell, even East, whose eyes glaze over at the words 'Restricted Choice', suspected that with an opponent announcing two five-card suits, at least, nothing was going to break very well. Back to dummy with a diamond, a trump finesse and the jack was drawn.

Now, with nothing much better to do, declarer led a small heart to dummy's ten, losing to South's jack. South's bête noire is conceding a ruff and sluff. Unable to tell that in this case it would not help declarer, and perhaps bemused by declarer's antics, led ... a heart.

On this board we reached a contract the commentator did not consider.

Board 1

	<i>North</i>	
Dealer: N Vul: None	♠ 843 ♥ KJ65 ♦ K86 ♣ 1092	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ AKQ2 ♥ 974 ♦ A4 ♣ K854		♠ 9765 ♥ 108 ♦ 9732 ♣ Q76
	<i>South</i>	
	♠ J10 ♥ AQ32 ♦ QJ105 ♣ AJ3	

South opened 1D . West is a staunch believer in making a INT overcall whenever the values and shape allow and not worrying about miracle fits. Here, the INT overcall ended the auction (and kept East in the right place - dummy). Making four spade tricks, a diamond and eventually a club was very satisfactory in view of the 9 tricks N/S can make in hearts.

This deal gave East the greatest mental anguish of the evening.

Board 15

	<i>North</i>	
Dealer: S	♠ J654	
Vul: NS	♥ J62	
	♦ 952	
	♣ KQ6	
		<i>East</i>
<i>West</i>		♠ 3
♠ AKQ72		♥ 10
♥ Q743		♦ AKQ10863
♦ J74		♣ A1032
♣ 8		
	<i>South</i>	
	♠ 1098	
	♥ AK985	
	♦	
	♣ J9754	

After South's pass, West opened 1S and East responded 2D. South came to life with 2H (we like to bid in Ashburton and live dangerously). West doubled for penalties (yes, some of us can still do this) and East went into a trance. Vulnerable opponents had been doubled after being unable to bid on the first round. This might easily go for 800 — even 500 might be enough if 3NT or 5S were the limit. But had 2D really described East's hand? After many minutes East came to life with 4NT and over 5D bid 6D. South led the ♥A and dummy was a delight. (And, yes, declarer did trump a club before drawing trumps; alternatively, a spade ruff sets up dummy's spades with D J as an entry). Was that only 60% luck? 2H looks to be only one down.

And so it continued for Bev and John. Theirs was indeed a night to remember and for John a great way to celebrate his 65th birthday. Thanks to all who took part. As well as giving yourself a good time, you have helped finance this magazine. I trust you'll be back again on October 17th, 2003.

