

Notrumps, no fear *by Derrick Browne*

The Butler Open Trials at the Australian National Championships in Canberra in July were won by Arjuna de Livera and Ian Robinson, with Martin Bloom and Peter Gill in second place. Here is a hand from Stage Two of the event:

Stage 2, Match 7

Dealer South, nil vul.

NORTH
S AT8765
H AQJ
D Q4
C Q4

WEST
S KQ42
H T73
D T86
C KT9

EAST
S J3
H K865
D KJ753
C 85

SOUTH
S 9
H 942
D A92
C AJ7632

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass
Pass	1S	Pass	2C
Pass	3S	Pass	3NT
All pass			

South felt 2C was justified as a passed hand but North's jump to 3S cast doubt on that approach. After responder promises 10 points with the 2-level response, opener's jump to 3S is forcing so South took a shot at 3NT.

If West had led a diamond, the contract would have had no play but West chose the H3. Declarer tried the HQ, as a successful heart finesse and an even club break would see the contract home with 10 tricks. East won the HK and returned a heart so the contract made.

East had the chance to shoot the contract by switching to the DK at trick two! This knocks out the entry to the long clubs. Declarer might duck this and win the next diamond with dummy's queen but West could still kill the club suit by winning the second club and exiting in a major.

North's 3S was a mild overbid but 2S would have been an underbid – a 15 HCP hand with a 6-card suit is usually worth a jump rebid as opener. An off-beat alternative is to open 1NT with the North cards. Then East would have to lead the DK to defeat 3NT by North, not a realistic possibility.

Here is a hand from another recent event, the Trumps Winter Teams on 19 July. After East opens a weak two in spades, what action should West take?

WEST	EAST
S —	S KJ8743
H A83	H T54
D T76	D A53
C AKQT842	C 5

Joshua Wyner was one of the West players to make the winning call of 3NT. Assuming the clubs run, the West hand will take eight tricks, and it is surely not too much to hope that partner can provide one more. At the other table, West subsided in a conservative 3C. There were the same nine tricks in both contracts, so Wyner scored a handy pickup, helping his team on its way to win the event.