

Individualists by *Derrick Browne*

The 2009 NSW Individual Championship on 1 August was won by Pauline Gumby, with Fraser Rew second and Tom Kiss third.

Individual events are rarely held these days. Playing two boards with each of a multitude of different partners is not everyone's idea of bridge entertainment. But those imbued with sociability, flexibility and a spirit of adventure find it great fun.

Gumby has won many of Australia's top bridge events but still has a humble friendliness that puts partner and opponents at ease – although that ease didn't last long for her opponents when she partnered Andrew Peake on this board:

Dealer East, EW vul.

	NORTH		
	S J2		
	H KQJT9		
	D QJ83		
	C Q6		
WEST		EAST	
S AT754		S 93	
H A765		H 8432	
D 72		D 5	
C 92		C KT8753	
	SOUTH		
	S KQ86		
	H —		
	D AKT964		
	C AJ4		
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	<i>Gumby</i>		<i>Peake</i>
		Pass	1D
Pass	1H	Pass	1S
Pass	2C*	Pass	2NT
Pass	3D	Pass	4NT
Pass	5C	Pass	6D
Dble	Pass	Pass	Redble
All pass			

2C was "fourth suit forcing", indicating game values (bidding 3D without going via fourth suit would merely invite game).

With a void, it would be best to cue bid to slam but in an Individual, simplicity rules. When Gumby denied an ace, Peake settled for 6D. West greedily doubled and Peake redoubled, then promptly wrapped up 12 tricks.

Agi Szollos was the only declarer to bring home this 4H contract by South:

Dealer East, both vul.

	NORTH		
	S AQT5		
	H KT3		
	D AJ85		
	C A6		
WEST		EAST	
S 64		S K972	
H 2		H AJ9	
D KQ9432		D 6	
C 9854		C JT732	
	SOUTH		
	S J83		
	H Q87654		
	D T7		
	C KQ		

Some South players opened a weak 2H, but Szollos passed because the suit lacked quality. West opened a weak 2D, and Szollos finished in 4H.

West led the DK. At one table where West had not bid diamonds, declarer ducked, then got a shock to find the diamond continuation was ruffed.

Even if there was no diamond bid to warn declarer of the bad break, the first trick should be taken with the DA, capturing West's honour. Szollos did this, then played a trump to the queen, and another trump back. As the cards lie, East always makes two trump tricks.

After taking those tricks, East exited with a club, Szollos winning with the CK. Next, she could lead the D10 to drive out the DQ. The DJ would then be a winner, on which a spade could be discarded - but that would still leave declarer relying on the finesse to avoid a loser in spades. At tables where West had not opened a weak 2D, there was the chance that the D9 might be short, so dummy's D8 would then come good, allowing another spade discard and eliminating the need for the spade finesse.

But West's weak 2D changes all that. Szollos led the SJ and ran it. Even if the finesse loses – as it does – East will have no diamond to return to partner, and eventually the diamond loser is discarded on dummy's fourth spade.