

WALES IN THE COMMONWEALTH: GLASGOW – Sep 2014

last updated : 1900 (BST) Sat 13 – after day six

WALES 1... gold medal winners- beat Canada & India

WALES 2... missed by one place, 9 wins, 4 losses

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The 4th Commonwealth Nations Bridge Championship – and Wales has played in them all - runs in Glasgow this year. For the first time Wales has two teams entered, with the first of these the winners of the play-off in July, comprising Gary Jones & Tim Rees, Patrick Jourdain & Tony Ratcliffe, John Salisbury & Mike Tedd. The second team – which is non eligible to win a medal (only one team per country can) - is Paul Denning & Patrick Shields, Richard Plackett & Julian Pottage.

The competition has 28 team entered and they are divided into two pools for the first four days, playing a full round robin within the pool. The two Welsh teams (like the two English teams and the two Scottish teams) are in different pools. After the 13 matches of the round robin, the top four from each section (approximately – there are special rules to ensure enough medal hopes reach the semi-final) proceed to the knock-out stages which come over days five and six.

In the past, Wales picked up a silver medal in the 2002 instance in Manchester, while Scotland picked up the gold medal last time around in India. Some of the current squad were involved in that initial success, and some have played in all four instances of the CNBC – but they haven't owned up to this yet.

The India team has Gary and Patrick and Tim, and they ended 9th overall but 5th of the medal hopefuls. They beat England by a large margin but lost by more than that to Scotland in the last match of the round robin.

Day 1 : Wales1 play England2 and Australia : Wales2 play England1 and Chairman's team

Each match is 14 boards and for the round robin the seating is blind. The English squads are well known to the Welsh, having all appeared for England or EBU in the recent Camrose series.

Wales did not tod well in the first match losing to two squads from England who played solidly throughout. Some had played the Crockfords (English Teams Championship) over the weekend and were clearly more warmed up than the Welsh. The first board proved fascinating and swingy

8 AKJ4
A62 T843
KT2 J83
AT9763 K8

The 1C opener got a 1S overcall and the third hand doubled to show hearts. After a 2C rebid the responder bid either 2N or 3N, and played in no-trumps with a spade lead into the AKJ. Playing clubs starting with the king cuts you off from the spades, but for Paul Denning in 2N this was fine – he cashed just the second spade and then set about clubs. The CK saw the jack from RHO, but Paul recognised that he would have to lose a trick if it were Q542 onside, so he continued with the CA dropping the doubleton QJ and had an easy 9 tricks, for 2N+1. The other room saw England, in 3N, at trick two play CK and then to the CT and CQ. Now a heart switch would have generated 5 tricks for the defence; Wales2 didn't find this ☹. For Wales1 Patrick Jourdain in 3N won the first lead and ran the C8 at trick two. His plan was to retain the club entry to cash his top spades, but Catherine Curtis for England2 found the HK switch and killed the dummy. Yet another variation was when two Scots were gifted the CQ and switched to DQ from AQ7 (playing partner for the DJ) rather than the HK from KQ7 (playing partner for the HJ). The diamond play allowed 3N to make. The jury is still out on the best line (for declarer and for defence).

The opening match was two wins for England, by 26 imps against Wales1 and by 51 imps against Wales2. In the second match of the day both Welsh teams managed to pull themselves together and they both got wins. The hands seemed more swingy but less interesting. The swingiest board was this

	AKJ9753		In the two tables where Wales2 played the Chairman's team (Paul Hackett & sons) the bidding went from North at love all, 4S-X-P-P-P. The opening lead in one room was CA ruffed and the other had HA then CA ruffed. Patrick Shields tried the D9 at trick two and was allowed to win the DQ and now a spade finesse, and he was out for one off. Same in the other room. For Wales1, John Salisbury hopped up with the DA at trick two and now declarer could not avoid losing SQ and a diamond ruff for 2 off. When Guernsey played the "Black Swan" team from Australia, Dan McIntosh was allowed to make 4S when his opponents refused to cash their hearts, while his team-mates took out the double of 4S, bidding 5C-P-6C to create an enormous swing (but despite that 17 imps, Guernsey lost the match)
	74		
	JT94		
	--		
Q842		T	
Q65		AKJ8	
8		A73	
Q7653		AKT92	
	6		
	T932		
	KQ652		
	J84		

Wales1 beat Australia by 5 imps, and Wales2 won by 3 imps. They are lying 10th and 11th respectively in their groups.

Day 2 : Wales1 play Jersey, Scottish President's, Northern Ireland, Guernsey

Day 2 : Wales2 play Australia Ladies, Malta, Singapore, Canada

Wales1 faced one difficult team and three lesser teams winning as expected but losing to the Scots by 12 imps in a very low scoring match. This moved them up to 4th place in the group, which is the target for reaching the knock-out stages on Friday.

Wales2 had a good run also – beating the Australian Ladies by 16 imps, the Malta team by 786 imps and the Singapore team by 26 imps before losing by 27 imps to the Canadian team (which from the first match has been the leaders in this pool). In this pool the top teams are further ahead and Wales2 is 15 Vps behind qualifying place.

This hand from match 4 shows the style of bidding we should expect in international circles ...

	6		When Wales2 had the North-South cards they remained silent and the opposition managed to stop in 6S with 14 top ticks and two more from the clubs breaking plus a diamond finesse. When Julian Pottage opened 1S and Richard Plackett responded with a 2-way 2C, the Maltese were in with 2N and this took away the intended 3S jump rebid and made it very difficult to describe the hand, and they stopped in 6S also.
	76432		
	Q6542		
	97		
T9		AKQJ854	
AK5		--	
AT9		KJ8	
AQT54		K62	
	732		
	QJT98		
	73		
	J83		

In the next match, the new style of opening 3N with a good major suit showed up well ...

			Richard P opened 3N with the West hand and East showed some slam interest with 4C, and now a 4D transfer confirmed the suit was hearts and a few minutes later East was declarer in 6H. Played by the long hearts the big danger is a spade through the king, but with the spades protected Julian had time to set up the clubs and make wherever the spade ace was. Wales1 also bid the slam but from the West hand; this time the spade ace was onside, so all was OK.
64		KT98	
AKQT863		J	
K64		A5	
T		AK9765	

Day 3 : Wales1 play Black Swan, Pakistan2, Kenya, India

Day 3 : Wales2 play Barbados, Harris, Guernsey2, South Africa

Wales1 had two difficult teams today, from the two larger countries, and they lost to Pakistan2 but beat India by a small margin. They won the other two matches.

Wales2 had to play three teams from below and one above and won the first three matches but lost to South Africa by 3 imps in the fourth match of the day.

This hand from the first match of the day saw Paul Denning & Patrick Jourdain facing the same problem.

KJ87 KJ543 95 J4	954 Q92 AT6 KT93 AQ32 AT8 KJ32 Q5	T6 76 Q874 A8762	Playing in 3N as South both got a heart lead and won the H9 at trick one. Both took a finesse through East, aiming to lose the trick if necessary to the hand who could not attack hearts. Patrick's finesse was the CT run to the CJ and LHO continued with a diamond (best) round to the jack. Now came the CQ taken by the ace and a heart was pushed through. With two clubs, three diamonds and two hearts in sight, Patrick wanted two spade tricks. So he rose with the HA and cashed his minor suit winners before exiting in hearts to leave West on play at the end, to give him the AQ of spades. Nicely played. Paul found the CJ to give him one more trick in that suit but produced the same end-play for the overtrick.
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This hand from the third match produced some amusement

AQJ T9 96532 T64	64 AKQJ42 A74 53 K32 73 KQJT8 J82	T9875 865 -- AKQ97	For Wales2 the auction started 1H-1S-2D-2S, and now North's 3H was raised to game. East started with the top clubs and continued them for too long, so that Patrick Shields was able to ruff the third and cash the remainder of the tricks. A spade switch at trick three would have beaten 4H. In the other room Julian Pottage bid 1H-2H showing spades and a minor and Wales2 so nearly got to 4S, which makes comfortably. When England played South Africa, Ben Green was on lead as East against 4H and led a small club. Declarer never thought to try the CJ (which would have led to 12 tricks) but she ducked and John Holland won the CT and knew what to do next. Makes 5 tricks of a difference that trick one choice !
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This hand proved too difficult at both tables in the Wales2-South Africa match ..

AJT532 7 KQ3 T97	K987 T862 --- AKQJ8	In one room the bidding went 2S-P-4S, making no effort and on a club lead they quickly wrapped up 13 tricks. The other room tried harder, starting with 1S and responder showing the void diamond. With half of opener's points opposite a void this got a sign off and the easy slam was missed. Does your system cope better?
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The penultimate board for Wales2 was this

K63 AKQJ KT762 K	AJ987 4 AJ8 Q432 Q4 98632 Q43 J65	T52 T75 95 AT987	The bidding in both rooms was 1D-1S-P-P-1N-end. But the leads were different. Richard Plcakett got a spade round to the SQ and SK. With that and the CK and the hearts he could count 6 tricks, so he cashed all of those and exited in spades. They had to play either clubs or diamonds to give him his seventh trick and they duly did. In the other room Shields tried a club at trick one and Paul Denning withheld the CJ, so that the singleton king showed up, Declarer ducked a diamond now round to the queen and the SQ came through, naturally covered by the king and ace. When the S9 came back declarer had a problem, and guessed wrong by ducking. Now all the spades were cashed and declarer – rather than the defence – was thrown in at the end to lead diamonds again and the contract was two off.
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The ranking at this point show Wales1 in a comfortable third place (four qualify for the next stage) although fifth place is only 8 VPs behind. The Wales2 team, with only two pairs and those not as well practiced, have 5 VPs fewer than Wales1 but they are in 5th place in their group and 12 VPs behind fourth. Their prospects of reaching the final stages are not so good.

Day 4 : Wales1 play Isle of Man, South Africa2, SBU

Day 4 : Wales2 play Pakistan, Malaysia, Scotland

Wales1 lost their match to South Africa2 by just 3 imps (with 131 imps changing hands over 14 boards) and won their other two matches. They held on to the 3rd qualifying place and will meet Canada in tomorrow's quarter final.

Wales2 won all three matches, but had to beat Scotland by 41 imps in the last of these to qualify for the next stage and could only muster a margin of 3 imps. They had chances (but so did the opposition) and Wales2 ended its run with 7 VPs less than their compatriots and one place out of qualifying. In the other section this score would have earned fourth place.

This hand from match 11 caused a few swings, including an important 16 to Wales1 in their match against Isle of Man ...

T94	QJ				
92	AKQJ754	87652			When Paul Denning was South for Wales2, he opened 1C and it proceeded 2D(weak)-2H(forcing)-P. He had only shown a doubleton club so far, so he rebid 3C and heard partner bid 4H. He then bid 6C which made easily. In the other room Wales2 bid 3C over the opening 1C and Pakistan ended in 6H, also making an overtrick.
AKQ872	T65	63			
73	T	J943			
		KJ			For Wales1, the North-South pair managed to bid up to 7C (and they won't tell us how) and this 20% contract rolled home. At some other tables West overcalled just 1D and this allowed for example the Scots to bid 2H(strong)-3C-3H at which point South invoked Exclusion Blackwood and found out about AKQ of hearts and bid 7H. Very easy to get there, when the overcall is at the one level.
	AK3				
	T8				
	--				
	AQ986542				

And the big hand in the next match was this

J	QT9652				
KQT96	7	A542			West dealt at both vulnerable and for Wales2, Richard Plackett opened 2H (pretending to be a weak two bid) and got raised to game. That made easily, although the fact that 6D also made was noted.
KT643	J97	AQ852			
63	AQ5	KT76			In the other room Patrick Shields was allowed to open in second with 1S and over the takeout double, Paul Denning bid 4D showing a raise to game with a void in that suit. Malaysia then bid 4H and over 4S East raised to 5H. South doubled and the defence knew what to do – D7 ruffed, club to ace and another ruff for+200. Although 5S makes for +650, this was an above par result.
	AK8743				
	J83				
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	J942				

LATEST MATERIAL FROM THE TOP OF HERE

Day 5 : Wales1 play Canada in the quarter-final

Day 5 : Wales1 play India in the semi-final

The teams which reached the quarter finals and the line-up was : Wales vs Canada, England vs Scottish President's, India vs Scotland, Chairman's vs Australia. The first named teams in each combination got through and the semi-final draw was Wales vs India, and England vs Chairman's.

Wales will meet the Chairman's team (Paul Hackett & co) to play for the trophy, but the gold medals are already theirs as they are the only medal team in the final. Very well done.

The quarterfinal was 2 segments of 12 boards and Wales fell behind in the first set, losing it by 9 imps. There were two slam hands, of which Canada managed either and Wales managed one. They were

AQT74 K Q43 T964	K32 A3 AT9 AKJ75	Against Wales, the Canadian South opened a weak two with five hearts and it proceeded 2H-P-4H, and the big hand then doubled but had to pass 4S – which made two overtricks, One table got to 6S after a 2N opener in fourth seat but every other pair struggled into game.
A8 AT6 AKQ82 JT7	KQJ95 KQ2 J43 A8	Jourdain & Ratcliffe had this bidding problem, and after 1D-1S-2N they supported diamonds and responder was able to check on aces and the diamond KQ, and Tony could now count 13 tricks and bid 7N. This was missed by Canada, for 13imps to Wales.

And here is Salisbury-Tedd pulling imps in during the second half of the Canada match.

K95 KJT93 KQT3 K	AJ2 A7 J87 Q9876 74 86542 A4 J432	QT863 Q 9652 QT5	South dealt with Ew vulnerable and Mike opened 1H after which, with silent oppo, it went 1S-2D-3D-3S-4S to a rather pushy game. The lead was the H6 threatening a heart ruff but North switched tack, playing a diamond back. South couldn't tell who had the singleton heart, so switched back to hearts. this just took away the immediate danger but John won the HK in dummy and it was difficult to come to hand to lead trumps, so he started with the S9 running it, and when that held he could draw trumps and that was all he needed for 10 tricks.
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Last match of Friday still to come.

Day 6 : Wales1 play Chairman's team in the final

The final game for the trophy was between Wales1 and the Chairman's team (mostly profession bridge players from Manchester and London) and they beat the Welsh in every set to take the trophy.

But the gold medals go to Wales ! England beat India to get the silver medals.

With the team doing so well they feature more in the bulletin that I could deliver – so [click here](#) to read the bulletins (and see their picture).

That's all for now.