

Medwin Berkowitz 2025 - Bulletin number 2

After 2 days of play and five 18 board matches, the Eastern Cape team have convincingly emerged as the winners of the 2025 Medwin Trophy. Well done to Chris Castelein, Kevin Smith, Glynis Dornon and Dawn Palmer.

Team	1	2	3	4	5	Total
CASTELEIN	10.86	16.16	16.46	13.56	10.86	67.90
ASHBERG	4.68	15.50	3.54	18.48	14.96	57.16
HINGLE	15.32	3.84	13.34	16.90	6.44	55.84
PEENZ	12.89	4.50	15.84	6.44	13.56	53.23
DORFIN	9.14	18.05	4.16	3.10	5.04	39.49
OLIFF	7.11	1.95	6.66	1.52	9.14	26.38

The Berkowitz trophy was won by the KZN team. Well done to Linda Campbell, John Barlow, Wilf Sperry and Di Knowler.

Pos	No	Team	Score
1	4	CAMPBELL	61.46
2	2	MUTCH	56.41
3	1	POTGIETER	53.61
4	3	BERMAN	44.71
5	6	KALOGEROP	42.49
6	5	CROSBY	41.32

No Fit, No Bid, Disobeying the Law

Board 55		♠ 32	
Dealer S		♥ J9532	
All Vul		♦ AQJ7	
		♣ 76	
♠ K54	♠ J876	NT	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣
♥ AKQ	♥ 108764	N	9 8 6 10 11
♦ K10864	♦ 2	S	9 8 7 10 11
♣ Q5	♣ J32	E	4 5 6 3 2
		W	4 4 6 3 2
	♠ AQ109	Par +600 5♠= NS	
	♥ —	NS: 8 + 13 = 21 HCP	
	♦ 953	EW: 2 + 17 = 19 HCP	
	♣ AK10984		

No fewer than 4 of the 6 East/West pairs got into trouble on this deal. Have a look at the auctions and see what you think.

W	N	E	S	W	N	E	S
			1♣				1♣
X	1♥	P	1♠	X	1♥	P	1♠
2♦	X	P	P	2♦	P	P	P
P							

The 2 auctions above demonstrate the principle that when opponents have no fit, neither do we. I agree with West's initial double but when opponents failed to find a fit and partner could not bid over 1H, it is time to give up. 2D went down 4 for -1100 in room 1 and -400 in room 2

W	N	E	S	W	N	E	S
			1♣				1♦*
1NT	P	2♦*	3♣	1NT	P	2♦*	3♣
3♥	P	P	P	3♥	P	P	P

Although West has very strong hearts (AKQ), he does not have the trump length required to compete to the 3 level. Partner's transfer does not promise any

points and 3H went down either 2 or 3 tricks for -200 and -300. As it turned out this was not a disaster as N/S could make 11 tricks in clubs but 5C proved to be an impossible contract to reach. In both cases, North, incorrectly, failed to double 3H.

Balancing

W	N	E	S	
1♣	P	1♠*	P	♠ 762
2♠	3♦	X	P	♥ Q5
P	P			♦ AQ652
				♣ Q65

With nobody vulnerable, the North player with the above hand managed to resist overcalling immediately but when West raised his partner's response to 2S, he couldn't resist coming into the auction. We usually don't like leaving opponents to play in their 8-card fit at the 2 level but many pairs commonly raise to 2S with only 3 card support. When you have 3 cards in their suit, leave the balancing to partner who will strain to make a takeout double with spade shortage. If he doesn't bid, it is likely that you do not have a fit and it is too dangerous to come into the auction. Bidding 3D holding the 'death' shape (5332) proved to be expensive and the contract went down 6 tricks for -1400. (Double

dummy, declarer could have got out for -500) The full hand is shown below.

Board 56		♠ 762		
Dealer W		♥ Q5		
None Vul		♦ AQ652		
		♣ Q65		
♠ KQ3			♠ 10954	NT
♥ 7632			♥ AKJ	♠
♦ K			♦ J10943	♥
♣ AJ872			♣ 4	♦
				♣
	♠ AJ8			N
	♥ 10984			S
	♦ 87			E
	♣ K1093			W
Par -140 1♠+2 EW				
NS: 10 + 8 = 18 HCP				
EW: 9 + 13 = 22 HCP				

Excellent Auction

Bd 58, Dlr E
 3NT+2 W

W castelein

N Ice Peenz

Other table
 4♠-2 E

Kevin Smith E

Adri Peenz S

W	N	E	S
		1♠	P
1NT	P	3NT	P
P	P		

Kevin Smith made an excellent bid on the above hand when he bid 3NT over partner's 1NT response. A 2NT rebid shows 18-19 points balanced and therefore jumping to 3NT should show a long spade suit with a 'balanced' hand and 17-19 HCP's. I've seen many players bidding 3NT in this situation with a standard 2NT bid but your agreements regarding 3NT bids should include the interpretation above. 3NT proved easy to make 11 tricks, whereas 4S went at least 1 down at the 5 other tables.

Endplayed at trick 2

×
DDS
6

Bd 62, Dlr E
3NT-1 E

W

♠ AJ
♥ 864
♦ A842
♣ AJ10

1

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>
↺

S

♠ K1054
♥ KQ5
♦ 10965
♣ 4

7♥

2♥

3♥

♥

♠ 8632
♥ 10
♦ Q73
♣ Q832

N

Other table
3NT-1 W

E

♠ Q97
♥ A9
♦ KJ
♣ K9765

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
1♦	P	1NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

E/W got to a normal 3NT contract. When South led the Jack of heart and followed with the 10H, the heart position became an open book. It looked clear that South had a doubleton and if left on play, whatever they played next would be helpful for declarer. At the table, East won the 2nd heart and now had to pick up the QC to make the contract. When West guessed incorrectly, that was 1 down.

The Most Eloquent Bid in Bridge

W	N	E	S
P	P	1♣	1♠
P	P	2♦*	2♠
P	P	P	

♠ K93
♥ A
♦ AKJ5
♣ AQ1065

Greg Hingle holding the hand above won the pot when he made two good decisions. Firstly, he opened 1C despite holding 21 HCP. Many East players opened an imperfect 2NT. Secondly, he passed 2S when any further bidding would misdescribe his hand. Sometimes, pass is the best bid you can make. 2S went 2 down. Three E/W pairs got to unmakeable 3NT contracts when their partner's turned up with an unsuitable 5 count.

The full hand

Board 68		♠ Q		
Dealer W		♥ J109652		
All Vul		♦ 643		
		♣ J32		
♠ 654	♠ K93		NT	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣
♥ KQ873	♥ A		N	5 6 5 4 5
♦ 987	♦ AKJ5		S	4 6 5 4 4
♣ 87	♣ AQ1065		E	7 7 7 9 8
			W	7 6 7 8 7
	♠ AJ10872		Par -110 1♦+2 E	
	♥ 4		NS: 4 + 10 = 14 HCP	
	♦ Q102		EW: 21 + 5 = 26 HCP	
	♣ K94			

Bidding after Partner's Preempt

<div><div><div>♠ KJ85</div><div>♥ K107</div><div>♦ KJ4</div><div>♣ Q107</div></div><div><div>♠ 1073</div><div>♥ AQ6432</div><div>♦ 7</div><div>♣ 863</div></div><div><div>♠ AQ42</div><div>♥ 85</div><div>♦ 8632</div><div>♣ AK2</div></div><div><div>NT</div><div>♠ ♡ ♦ ♣</div><div>N 8 6 5 8 6</div><div>S 8 6 5 8 6</div><div>E 5 6 8 5 6</div><div>W 5 7 8 5 6</div></div><div><div>Par +100 3♥X-1 EW</div><div>NS: 13 + 8 = 21 HCP</div><div>EW: 13 + 6 = 19 HCP</div></div></div>				Contract	Lead	Score	
				3♥-1 W	♦ J	50	
				3♥-1 E	♠ 9	50	
				3♥-1 E	♦ A	50	
				3♦-1 S	♠ 7		50
				3♦-1 S	♣ 6		50
				4♦-2 S	♠ 3		100

Many years ago I learnt an important rule. When partner preempts in your shortest suit, take no action with less than 15 HCP.

On the hand above, West opened a weak 2H or equivalent. The East hand had to decide whether to compete to 3H after opponents got into the auction with 3D. Passing was the winning action as no 3-level contract could be made by either side. Occasionally, bidding 3H can work when opponents do the wrong thing but more commonly, it will be a losing action.

×
DDS
6

Bd 82, Dlr E
 5♦ X-1 W

W Kitty Cruise

♠ A
 ♥ AJ10
 ♦ KJ109654
 ♣ 32

0
 0

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>
↺

Jacob Gideon Dorfman
S

♠ J10764
 ♥ K6
 ♦ A872
 ♣ 96

♠ KQ85
 ♥ 752
 ♦ —
 ♣ KQJ1074

N Joe Tal

Other table
 3NT-6 E

Kaja Brekke E

♠ 932
 ♥ Q9843
 ♦ Q3
 ♣ A85

W	N	E	S
		P	1♣
1♦	1♠	X*	4♠
5♦	X	P	P
P			

Kaja Brekke and Kitty Cruise did well on this hand. Firstly, Kaja made a good 'snapdragon double' with the East hand. This double typically shows the 4th suit with tolerance for partner's suit. This facilitated Kitty's 5D bid which proved to be an excellent sacrifice against the making 4S contract reached by N/S. 5DX went 1 down.

The screenshot displays a bridge game interface with four hands and a score table.

Hand 1 (Top Left): Bd 52, Dlr W. 2♠ = S. Player: Sharon Taitz (W).

Hand 2 (Top Right): Player: Patsy Els (N). Other table. 4♠ -2 N.

Hand 3 (Middle Left): ♠ A83, ♥ AQ105, ♦ 42, ♣ 9532.

Hand 4 (Middle Right): ♠ Q6, ♥ 32, ♦ KJ753, ♣ QJ104.

Hand 5 (Bottom Left): ♠ 42, ♥ KJ4, ♦ AQ1086, ♣ AK8. Player: Marilyn Nel (S).

Score Table (Bottom Right):

W	N	E	S
P	P	P	1NT
P	2♥	P	2♠
P	P	P	

Patsy Els and Marilyn Nel were the only pair in the Berkowitz trophy to have a reasonable auction to get to a reasonable contract. This fairly routine auction should have been duplicated across the field, but at other tables, either South or North made undisciplined further bids reaching an unmakeable 4S contract.

Counting your Tricks

Board 53	♠ 8632		
Dealer N	♥ 10976		
NS Vul	♦ 95		
	♣ KJ9		
	♠ 109754	♠ KQJ	NT
	♥ K	♥ AQJ832	♠
	♦ J10864	♦ A7	♥
	♣ A7	♣ 42	♦
			♣
	♠ A		N 1 2 3 3 9
	♥ 54		S 1 2 3 3 9
	♦ KQ32		E 8 11 10 9 4
	♣ Q108653		W 8 11 10 9 4
			Par -450 4♠+1 EW
			NS: 4 + 11 = 15 HCP
			EW: 17 + 8 = 25 HCP

On this hand in the Berkowitz, 2 pairs reached 4H. This looks like an easy make with 6 heart tricks, 2 spades, 1 club and 1 diamond but both declarers went 1 down after making some careless plays which lead to defenders getting a spade ruff to put the contract 1 down.

On the same hand, Walter Focke played 4S well to land 10 tricks. He received the 9 of Diamonds lead which he won and unblocked the hearts and played trumps. When South one the AS, he switched to a club which Walter won and continued drawing trumps. He then ran the hearts and easily came to 10 tricks winning 4 spades, 4 hearts and 2 aces. Another declarer played 4S and he ducked the diamond lead. He won the spade switch and unblocked the hearts and then ruffed a diamond in dummy. He continued playing hearts. South ruffed with the AS and declarer pitched his club. The contract was now cold as declarer can now win any return, ruff a diamond, and play a winning heart to reach the following position:

Having won 6 tricks, there are 4 further trump tricks. Declarer unfortunately lost concentration and went down when he ruffed a heart low.

Thank you to the tournament director, Rod Pienaar, for organizing this event and to all the players and unions who entered this prestigious tournament. Well done, once again, to the winners.

Submitted by Bernard Donde