

The Thea Teale Trophy

19th November, 2023

Commentary by Liz McGowan



The Thea Teale Trophy (National Bronze Pairs)

About Thea Teale

Thea was a member of both Carlton and Melville Bridge Clubs in Edinburgh and served on the Board at the Carlton. She was a respected and at times feisty bridge player, and achieved some notable competitive successes at local and national levels. Perhaps most importantly of all, Thea was a lovely person, unfailingly polite, good-humoured and generous to both partners and opponents. Keen to win, graceful in defeat she is sorely missed at the bridge table.

Thea died in 2015 and left a very generous legacy of £20,000 to the SBU, who decided to spend the money over five years to fund education—including schools (50%), Juniors (25%) and promotion of Bronze Events countrywide (25%). At the time Council announced "This legacy will reflect Thea's love of the game and her enjoyment of the way in which it brings together players of all ages and levels."

Board: 1		♠ J85	
Dealer: N		♥ K8543	
Vul.: None		♦ KJ32	
		♣ J	
♠ T742		♠ K63	
♥ A76	W N E	♥ QJT9	
♦ QT5	W S E	♦ 984	
♣ 986		♣ Q74	
		♠ AQ9	
		♥ 2	
		♦ A76	
		♣ AKT532	
N	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣		9
N	6 5 4 6 6		HCP 8
S	6 5 4 6 6		
E			
W			17

The Double Dummy analysis tells you that 12 tricks can be made in 3 strains, but that requires two 3=3 breaks and two finesses. Anyone who bids slam does not deserve such good fortune. After a normal start: Pass - 1♣ - 1♥ - ? South will bid either 3♣ or 2NT and the partnership should reach a normal 3NT game.

Board: 2		♠ KQ732	
Dealer: E		♥ AT6	
Vul.: NS		♦ AKJ	
		♣ J7	
♠ A		♠ 86	
♥ QJ94	W N E	♥ K82	
♦ 98732	W S E	♦ QT65	
♣ QT6		♣ A943	
		♠ JT954	
		♥ 753	
		♦ 4	
		♣ K852	
N	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣		18
N	2 4		HCP 9
S	2 4		
E	1 3 1		9
W	1 3 1		4

How high should South raise after North's fourth in hand 1♠ opener? 'Only' 4HCP, but you should upgrade for the fifth trump and useful singleton. It may not matter how high you go; North will probably bid game after any response. Some leads are helpful, others less so – unlucky if you are put to the club guess and go wrong.

Board: 3
Dealer: S
Vul.: EW

♠ AQJT74
♥ 6532
♦ 742
♣

♠ 9862
♥ JT84
♦ AK9
♣ 73

♠ K53
♥ 7
♦ Q86
♣ AKJ854

N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	1	3		
S	1	4		
E		3	2	1
W		3	2	

7
12 HCP 8
13

South's 1♣ opener gives West a problem. You should not make a takeout double with a void spade, but passing seems wet. My personal choice is a 1♥ overcall with such a fine suit (see Mike Lawrence: 4-card overcalls only at the 1-level.) That might get you too high, but 5♥ is wrong only if East was going to lead trump against 4♠ by North.

Board: 4
Dealer: W
Vul.: All

♠ 876
♥ QJ3
♦ 2
♣ KJT742

♠ QJ2
♥ A86542
♦ AQ4
♣ 6

♠ AT9543
♥ K
♦ J93
♣ A98

N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	2		3	
S	2		3	
E	2	3	3	
W		3	3	

7
13 HCP 8
12

Some duplication here! Best not to get too high at this vulnerability, but hard not to in a competitive auction. Any plus score should be useful, but a mere +100 may be quite rare.

Board: 5
Dealer: N
Vul.: NS

♠ KJ94
♥ AQ
♦ 96542
♣ T7

♠ T52
♥ J74
♦ J873
♣ 963

♠ 73
♥ KT863
♦ AKT
♣ AQ2

♠ AQ86
♥ 952
♦ Q
♣ KJ854

N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	4	1	3	
S	4		1	2
E				
W				

10
2 HCP 16
12

South's turn for the problem over a 1♥ opener. A takeout double is almost sure to get a response in diamonds and you are not strong enough to change the suit after that. 2♣ may shut out the spade suit, and this suit is not strictly speaking good enough for a 1♠ overcall. But that third choice works well here, when a lucky lie in the club suit lets 10 tricks make.

Board: 6
Dealer: E
Vul.: EW

♠ KJT7
♥ K94
♦ Q54
♣ Q98

♠ 985
♥ T52
♦ KJ9
♣ K732

♠ AQ62
♥ A83
♦ A863
♣ T6

♠ 43
♥ QJ76
♦ T72
♣ AJ54

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

11
7 HCP 14
8

A weak NT will buy the contract. Our DD solver makes 8 tricks via the backward diamond finesse: run the Jack through North; if they cover finesse the nine next time. Non-peeking players will be happy enough to make 7 tricks after tackling diamonds in a more normal fashion.

Board: 7
Dealer: S
Vul.: All

♠T8	♠J5	♠AQ
♥A85	♥J432	♥KQ9
♦AJT8753	♦Q64	♦K92
♣5	♣A432	♣KQJT6

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N					8
S					9
E	6	1	4	6	5
W	5	3	5	4	3

HCP: 20

12 tricks are easy for East provided the first play in diamonds is low towards the Ace, uncovering South's void. Perhaps South will give a clue to the winning approach by preempting in spades. A spade lead is necessary to hold West to 11 tricks in diamonds. Pre-empts are a double-edged sword.

Board: 8
Dealer: W
Vul.: None

♠Q9643	♠T52	♠AKJ87
♥QT85	♥AJ764	♥92
♦543	♦Q2	♦AJ
♣A	♣QJ6	♣T872

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N					10
S					8
E	1	4	4		4
W	1	4			4

HCP: 13

This time West has a clear raise to 4♠ when partner opens 1♠. But North-South may find a minor suit game if South employs an Unusual 2NT. Games do not look to bad, but a club ruff defeats 5♦ and spade leads causes declarer to lose trump control in clubs.

Board: 9
Dealer: N
Vul.: EW

♠83	♠T42	♠97
♥AJ7	♥K64	♥QT98
♦KJT6	♦983	♦AQ52
♣A986	♣K742	♣QT3

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N					6
S					13
E		2	3	2	2
W		2	3	2	2

HCP: 10

How many spades should South open? 1♠ will surely provoke some competition, but it does not look easy for East-West to land in exactly 3♦. A weak 2♠ may be passed round to East, who should re-open with a double, in case partner has a trump stack. A bold 3♠ will probably buy the contract, but may push East-West into an indiscretion...

Board: 10
Dealer: E
Vul.: All

♠AQT6	♠K7	♠J95
♥J642	♥AK	♥T8
♦KQ	♦97543	♦A862
♣AT5	♣KQJ8	♣6432

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N					16
S					16
E	1	1			1
W	1	1			1

HCP: 5

Playing weak no-trump West may open 1♥, and North will overcall 1NT. South has nowhere to run after this start, and -100 is the likely outcome. If West opens a strong no-trump North does best to pass, his values are mostly in the wrong places for a penalty double. And you lose only 90 for a better score!

Board: 11
Dealer: S
Vul.: None

♠ Q754	♠ AT2	♠ J963
♥ 8	♥ AKJ65	♥ T973
♦ 753	♦ JT	♦ K964
♣ QT985	♣ 432	♣ 7

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N	7	4	7	6	5
S	7	4	7	6	5
E					
W					

♠ K8	♠ K8	13
♥ Q42	♥ Q42	
♦ AQ82	♦ AQ82	4
♣ AKJ6	♣ AKJ6	HCP 4
		19

Lots of tricks for North-South if they take the diamond finesse. If they play in hearts 13 tricks are easy – just ruff a spade in the South hand. In No-trump you have to sort out the timing for a double squeeze with spades the pivot suit. Double Squeezes are not too tough if you just cash winners.

Board: 12
Dealer: W
Vul.: NS

♠ Q85	♠ AJ7	♠ KT96
♥ K54	♥ AJ93	♥ Q762
♦ KJ97	♦ AQ653	♦ 2
♣ K75	♣ 3	♣ QT82

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

♠ 432	♠ 432	16
♥ T8	♥ T8	
♦ T84	♦ T84	12
♣ AJ964	♣ AJ964	HCP 7
		5

Not easy to get a plus score here. West opens a weak 1NT, and a natural 2♦ overall would be useful here. Those playing a more artificial defence to 1NT may start with a double. East may run for fear of a long diamond suit; if not South should pull to 2♣. Any contract will prove difficult to make.

Board: 13
Dealer: N
Vul.: All

♠ J73	♠ A65	♠ 982
♥ KQJ5	♥ T763	♥ A42
♦ AK976	♦ 3	♦ QT52
♣ Q	♣ T8742	♣ KJ9

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N			2		
S			2		
E	2	3	3		
W	2	3	3		

♠ KQT4	♠ KQT4	4
♥ 98	♥ 98	
♦ J84	♦ J84	16
♣ A653	♣ A653	HCP 10
		10

For all their 26HCP East-West should not make game: there are 4 top losers in a suit contract, and 5 in no-trump. But it is notoriously difficult to cash top winners and some will make when North-South are reluctant to lead spades. 3NT, as ever, “is the game most likely to succeed when it can be beaten”.

Board: 14
Dealer: E
Vul.: None

♠ A8	♠ 652	♠ QJT74
♥ AQ97	♥ 543	♥ 82
♦ AKQ54	♦ 872	♦ T96
♣ 73	♣ Q985	♣ AT2

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N					
S					
E	4	5	4	6	3
W	4	5	4	6	3

♠ K93	♠ K93	2
♥ KJT6	♥ KJT6	
♦ J3	♦ J3	19
♣ KJ64	♣ KJ64	HCP 7
		12

This time 26HCP allow East-West to make slam in diamonds with two finesses working and the ♦J unable to beat dummy on the fourth round of hearts. And game in most other strains. But the best score is likely to come from doubling 1NT. Perfect defence holds South to a single trick with the ♠K for -6, 1400. Less perfect defence will still score well. Maybe North-South can scramble into a contract that is difficult to double, but their best chance on this deal is to take up the strong no-trump.

Board: 15		♠7			
Dealer: S		♥A3			
Vul.: NS		♦AJ876542			
		♣J7			
♠QJ65	W	N	♠K843		
♥K954	E	S	♥T7		
♦QT			♦93		
♣K95			♣Q8642		
		♠AT92			
		♥QJ862			
		♦K			
		♣AT3			
N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N	2	1	2	6	1
S	2	1	2	6	1
E					
W					
				10	
				11	HCP 5
					14

“What do you call an 8-card suit?” “Trump!” In theory 5♦ is the ‘right’ game to be in, but in practice at pairs it will be outscored by 3NT. I do not expect anyone to find the killing lead of the ♥K to beat 3NT by removing dummy’s entry.

Board: 16		♠QJ9			
Dealer: W		♥JT2			
Vul.: EW		♦QJ632			
		♣98			
♠K542	W	N	♠86		
♥K4	E	S	♥AQ3		
♦KT98			♦A75		
♣AK7			♣QJT64		
		♠AT73			
		♥98765			
		♦4			
		♣532			
N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N					7
S					16
E	5	4	2	4	5
W	5	4	2	4	5
				4	HCP 13
					4

Hard to imagine any contract for East-West other than 3NT. The scoresheet will be pretty unexciting, but an extra overtrick will pay huge dividends.

Board: 17		♠985			
Dealer: N		♥973			
Vul.: None		♦J76			
		♣KQ82			
♠K63	W	N	♠QT74		
♥KQ5	E	S	♥JT84		
♦AKT4			♦Q83		
♣975			♣J6		
		♠AJ2			
		♥A62			
		♦952			
		♣AT43			
N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N					6
S					15
E	1	2	2	2	1
W	1	2	2	2	1
				13	HCP 6
					13

This board would have little interest at teams, but every trick counts at Pairs. A weak no-trump works well: even if West doubles: one down is only -100, better than the 110 available to East-West in two of a major. It is easier for East-West to get into the action over the strong no-trumper’s 1♣ opener.

Board: 18		♠K74			
Dealer: E		♥A986			
Vul.: NS		♦QJ74			
		♣T9			
♠J62	W	N	♠T3		
♥K75432	E	S	♥Q		
♦AK			♦T985		
♣K2			♣AQ8765		
		♠AQ985			
		♥JT			
		♦632			
		♣J43			
N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N	1				10
S	1				14
E	1	1	1	3	
W	1	1	1	3	
				8	HCP 8
					8

A good board for the modern style pre-empt. The best way to reach the making 3♣ is for East to open 3♣. The suit is not ideal, but the hand is useless in other strains. Of course, this means West has to pass, and many will be tempted to go after game in hearts... I expect a lot of score in the minus column.

Board: 19
Dealer: S
Vul.: EW

♠ T96
♥ T943
♦ AQ54
♣ 92

♠ AKJ4
♥ J6
♦ K87
♣ T765

♠ Q753
♥ AK
♦ JT3
♣ QJ83

♠ 82
♥ Q8752
♦ 962
♣ AK4

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N	2	1			6
S		2	1		
E	2		2		12
W	2		2		9

12 HCP 13

'Only' 25HCP for East-West this time – and the duplicated distribution means they cannot make more than 8 tricks in any strain. Most will reach 4♠, and West may make 9 tricks if the defenders do not find their club ruff.

Board: 20
Dealer: W
Vul.: All

♠ JT64
♥ JT82
♦ K932
♣ T

♠ AQ3
♥ Q743
♦ Q
♣ QJ832

♠ 95
♥ AK96
♦ A764
♣ K95

♠ K872
♥ 5
♦ JT85
♣ A764

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N	1				5
S		1			
E	3	5	1	6	13
W	3	5	1	6	8

13 HCP 14

Do not worry about missing 6♣! The DD solver is having a laugh – note that you have to play hearts for no losers, and if you found the line eyebrows would be raised. Most will play in 4♥. If North goes after a club ruff he makes the play easy: best not to lead a singleton when you have a natural trump trick or two.

Board: 21
Dealer: N
Vul.: NS

♠ 654
♥ KJT
♦ T9
♣ Q9832

♠ J83
♥ Q42
♦ A73
♣ AT75

♠ T972
♥ A9763
♦ 854
♣ 6

♠ AKQ
♥ 85
♦ KQJ62
♣ KJ4

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N	3	2	1	2	4
S	3	2	1	2	4
E					
W					

11 HCP 4

South may be tempted to upgrade to 2NT opposite a passed partner, but whatever the opening bid North-South should reach 3NT safely. Missing three Aces you need to guess hearts to make an overtrick -another decision that would not matter much at teams but makes a huge difference at Pairs

Board: 22
Dealer: E
Vul.: EW

♠ JT4
♥ T9763
♦ 95
♣ 732

♠ K
♥ Q
♦ KQT732
♣ KQT54

♠ Q9853
♥ J2
♦ J64
♣ 986

♠ A762
♥ AK854
♦ A8
♣ AJ

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N	2	2	4		1
S	2	2	4		
E		3	3		15
W		3	3		20

15 HCP 4

It is not generally a good idea to open 2NT with 5=4 in the Majors. Ask yourself: how disappointed will I be if it goes 1♥ - All Pass? Here 2NT may silence East at the vulnerability but South will be disappointed to miss a better contract in hearts. Over 1♥ East will show both minors and may get too high missing all 4 Aces.

Board: 23
Dealer: S
Vul.: All

♠ T95
♥ AKT97
♦ 92
♣ Q73

♠ AQ7643
♥ Q8
♦ Q76
♣ J5

♠ J8
♥ J652
♦ AKT5
♣ 986

♠ K2
♥ 43
♦ J843
♣ AKT42

N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	1	1	3	3
S	1	1	3	3
E	2	1		
W	2	1		

9
11 HCP 9
11

Those playing 4-card majors, where 1♣ is natural and often 5-cards, have a better chance of reaching the top spot than those for whom 1♣ is a meaningless way of getting into the auction. When West overcalls 2♠ North is really worth only one bid – and when worth only one bid use it to show support for partner.

Board: 24
Dealer: W
Vul.: None

♠ QT64
♥ AQT32
♦ 3
♣ KQJ

♠ 873
♥ J64
♦ K87
♣ T752

♠ A9
♥ 98
♦ AQT9654
♣ 98

♠ KJ52
♥ K75
♦ J2
♣ A643

N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	5	5	4	4
S	5	5	4	4
E		2		
W		2		

14
4 HCP 10
12

The cards lie kindly for North-South, who have an easy game in either major. East will be tempted to compete strongly in diamonds, but West has the wrong cards for a 5♦ sacrifice, which turns out to cost more than the value of North-South's game.

Board: 25
Dealer: N
Vul.: EW

♠ K4
♥ A65432
♦ Q5
♣ QT2

♠ AJ76
♥ J7
♦ 643
♣ 9765

♠ T53
♥ QT98
♦ K72
♣ AJ4

♠ Q982
♥ K
♦ AJT98
♣ K83

N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	3	3	4	3
S	3	3	4	3
E				
W				

11
6 HCP 10
13

With 24 HCP between them it will be difficult for North-South to avoid game, but the lack of fit and severe communication problems mean most games will fail. 3NT can be made but requires double dummy vision – an early club to the Queen puts East on the spot.

Board: 26
Dealer: E
Vul.: All

♠ J8754
♥
♦ AQJ73
♣ QJT

♠ 2
♥ KQT7
♦ KT42
♣ K962

♠ T
♥ AJ862
♦ 865
♣ A873

♠ AKQ963
♥ 9543
♦ 9
♣ 54

N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	5	1		
S	5	1		
E		2		
W		2		

11
11 HCP 9
9

The Boss Suit Rules. You might even make 12 tricks if the defence do not cash their clubs and you risk the diamond finesse. Hard to imagine anyone allowing East-West to play below the 6-level which will surely be too expensive.

Board: 27
Dealer: S
Vul.: None

♠ J7	♠ 6	♠ Q982
♥ KQ3	♥ A8764	♥ T95
♦ T742	♦ QJ65	♦ 93
♣ KQ92	♣ AT7	♣ 8543
	♠ AKT543	
	♥ J2	11
	♦ AK8	11 HCP
	♣ J6	16

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N	3	4	4	5	2
S	3	4	4	5	2
E					
W					

With far more points but less of a fit North-South require some luck to make even game. 4♥ needs a 3=3 trump break; and 4♠ is lucky to be able to discard one loser on the fourth diamond as East makes a second ruff.

Board: 28
Dealer: W
Vul.: NS

♠ AKJT53	♠ 962	♠ Q74
♥ K4	♥ AQ98	♥ T5
♦ 5	♦ QT	♦ J76432
♣ T965	♣ QJ42	♣ A3
	♠ 8	
	♥ J7632	11
	♦ AK98	11 HCP
	♣ K87	11

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N		5	1	4	
S		5	1	4	
E		2			
W		2			

North-South will do well to compete to 5♥ over 4♠ this time, when trump lie well for them. If they choose to double 4♠ instead North must lead trump to ensure a two trick defeat. Decisions are tougher when opponents hold spades!

Board: 29
Dealer: N
Vul.: All

♠ T42	♠	♠ AKQ865
♥ T	♥ 9765	♥ 84
♦ KQ95	♦ JT762	♦ A4
♣ 97532	♣ KQT8	♣ AJ4
	♠ J973	
	♥ AKQJ32	6
	♦ 83	5 HCP
	♣ 6	11

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N	4				
S	4				
E	1	4	3		
W	1	4	3		

A deal where big trump fits mean there are lots of Total Tricks. The big decisions come at the 5-level where two bridge maxims collide: "When in doubt, bid one more" v "The 5-level belongs to the opposition". At teams best to bid one more for safety (unless you think they may make slam): at pairs – just guess well!

Board: 30
Dealer: E
Vul.: None

♠ K83	♠ JT54	♠ Q96
♥ K7	♥ T	♥ QJ85
♦ KQ752	♦ 964	♦ AJ8
♣ JT3	♣ A8542	♣ K96
	♠ A72	
	♥ A96432	5
	♦ T3	12 HCP
	♣ Q7	10

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N					
S					
E	3	1	2	3	1
W	3	2	3	1	

Weak no-trumpers will reach game in a couple of bids, whether South overcalls or not, and probably squeak home since the defenders cannot establish enough winners to beat 3NT. Strong no-trumpers who habitually open 1♣ with any old 11 count may score badly if they employ discretion.