

EASTERN ZONE PLAYOFFS FOR THE STATE AND COUNTRY TEAMS 2019

By Paul Lavings, Figtree

On the weekend of November 15th - 17th 10 teams in total, 4 from NSWBA, 4 from country regions and 2 from the metropolitan area, will play off for the NSW State Teams title and the NSW Country Teams title.

Tablelands Illawarra zone hosted an eight team playoff in Bowral in May which was won by the LAVINGS team, Helen Lavings-Paul Lavings, Jeff Carberry-Walt Davis.

The IBA team travelled down to Mollymook on Sunday 29th June for a 56 board (4 x 14) playoff against Moruya Bridge Club, the Far South Coast winners, Richard Prickett-Patricia Afflick, Sue Neill-Robert Van Der Hoek.

Far South Coast started off well, winning the first set of 14 boards 37-33. In the second set IBA picked back 5imps, 46-41 to lead by 1 imp at half-time. These two slams made a big difference.

BD: 21 ♠AK5	Dir: N
♥KQ4	Vul: N-S
♦AQJ43	
♣94	
♠Q63	♠
♥J75	♥T983
♦T752	♦K986
♣J52	♣AQ876
♠JT98742	
♥A62	
♦	
♣KT3	

NORTH	SOUTH
Paul	Helen
2NT	3H (transfer)
3S	4NT
5D (3 kc)	6S All pass

The bidding was effective if not scientific. Paul liked his 19 hcp with a 5 card suit and weak doubleton well enough to upgrade to a 2NT opening (20-21). CA was onside so plus 1430 and 12imps in.

BD: 25	♠AKQ4	Dir: N
	♥QJ92	Vul: E-W
	♦	
	♣AK982	
♠532		♠JT8
♥T864		♥K53
♦K8643		♦AQJ52
♣5		♣J6
	♠976	
	♥A7	
	♦T97	
	♣QT743	

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
Paul	Afflick	Helen	Prickett
1C	1D	2C	Pass ??
3D	Pass	4C	Pass
4D	Pass	4H	Pass
6C	All pass		

West should have of course preempted the auction to at least 4D giving N/S a hard time. As it was Paul was able to splinter and then show a huge hand with 4D. Jeff and Walt made it much tougher at the other table to talk the opponents out of the slam.

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
VDHoek	Jeff	Neill	Walt
2C	2D	Pass	3D
4C	Pass	5C	All Pass

That was 11 imps in.

The third set started well.

BD: 2	♠K92	Dir: E
	♥J753	Vul: N-S
	♦QJ4	
	♣KJ6	
♠T3		♠J764
♥Q84		♥T62
♦K76		♦A95
♣AQ843		♣T52
	♠AQ85	
	♥AK9	
	♦T832	
	♣97	

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
Paul	VDHoek	Helen	Neill
	Pass	1D	Pass
1H	Pass	1S	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All pass

East led C10 and West played an encouraging C3 from West, how would you plan the play? It looks like East has C 10xx and West C AQxxx and the diamond honours are split. So you don't have time to play on diamonds and need 7 tricks from the majors.

Paul won CJ and played AK and another heart. The defence won the HQ and continued by ducking a club so Paul won CK, cashed HJ and played S9 to SQ, back to SK and a 3rd spade. When the S10 drops 10x or Jx is twice as likely as J10x so Paul finessed the 8 to bring home 9 tricks and 12 imps.

IBA won the set 43/6 picking up 37 imps to lead by 38 going into the last set which IBA lost 15/3 to win the match by 26 imps. This hand where we lost 12 imps was very interesting:

BD: 15	♠9532	Dir: S
	♥JT2	Vul: N-S
	♦T	
	♣T9865	
♠QT84		♠KJ
♥A8763		♥KQ95
♦832		♦KJ765
♣4		♣73
	♠A76	
	♥4	
	♦AQ94	
	♣AKQJ2	

Helen, South, opened 1C and Paul responded 1H (showing 4+ spades) not wanting to pass 1C knowing the opponents had a big fit somewhere. 5C couldn't quite make though in the other room, Moruya got to 5C after the following auction:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
Afflick	Jeff	Prickett	Walt
		1C	Pass
Pass	Double	2D	2H
3C	Pass	5C	All Pass

Walt led the HA, and declarer ruffed the second heart. Trumps were drawn in 2 rounds finishing in dummy. Declarer then finessed the DQ, cashed the DA and cross-ruffed to leave this position with the lead in dummy.

	♠953		
	♥		
	♦		
	♣9		
♠QT8			♠KJ
♥8			♥9
♦			♦K
♣			♣
	♠A76		
	♥		
	♦		
	♣K		

Now a Spade lead caught East napping, look at how declarer had set up the play – East must jettison the King under the Ace, otherwise winning the SK on the next trick means he's finished. 11 tricks and minus 12 imps!

Note however the skillful defense still required from West, if East does, correctly, jettison the King.

Declarer now leads the S7, what do you play as West? You can see that West must play the SQ, swallowing East's Jack – the Crocodile coup – a fine play if you can bring it off !