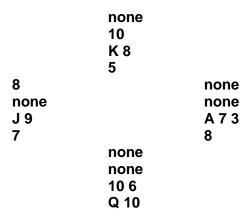
## Hands from the Wiltshire Championship Pairs Final – 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2015

Have a look at these two interesting play hands from this year's event. This was hand 27:

```
DIr S
             4
Love all
             A 10 8 7 5 3
             K 8 2
             K 9 5
KJ108
                           A 9 7 5 2
J 6 4
                           2
                           A 7 5 3
J 9 4
AJ7
                           864
             Q 6 3
             K Q 9
             Q 10 6
             Q 10 3 2
```

North opened 2♥ which was passed round to West who boldly bid 2♠. The final contract ended up in 3♠ and North led the A♥. At trick 2 he switched to a low diamond won by South's Q♦. Unable to continue diamonds without cost, South switched to a low club. Declarer played the J♠ (in case South had underled KQ) but North won and continued clubs. The defence had taken the first 3 tricks and it appeared as if there were losers in both clubs and diamonds. The only chance was an elimination so declarer ruffed a heart, played a low spade to the 10, ruffed a second heart with the A♠ and finessed the J♠. Now the last trump was drawn and the position was:



Declarer now led the last trump, North discarding a heart and South the 10♣ because neither player could afford to bare their diamond honour. In the 3 card ending, declarer could exit with a club and whichever defender won would be endplayed.

On board 32 a slam was bid at most tables but 6NT was impossible to make when the diamonds did not break. At our table 6+ was the contract which is makeable on careful play. This was the hand:

DIr W	A 9 6 5 3 2	
EW Vul	K 5 2	
	A 10	
	5 4	
J 10 4		K 8 7
J 9 6		10873
Q984		6 3
973		J 10 8 2
	Q	
	A Q 4	
	KJ752	
	AKQ6	

North opened 1♠ and South responded 2♠ and then rebid 3♠ over 2♠. North bid 3NT and South called 5NT which we play as asking partner to pick a slam. North bid 6♠ which became the final contract and West led the 6♥.

The contract appears to depend on making all 5 trump tricks or perhaps ruffing a club in dummy and then hoping for Qx in trumps or a 3-3 break. But perhaps there is a better chance although South will have to read the position carefully. Best play in trumps is to finesse the 10 → at trick 2, then cash the A →. Now, if the diamonds don't break there are two possible chances. One is a black suit squeeze and in preparation for that possibility declarer should play A → and ruff a spade at this point (leading a club to the Ace will fail because the defence will be able to break up the squeeze by leading a 2<sup>nd</sup> club). Now try the K → discarding a spade. If the Q → doesn't drop and you think East holds both the last spades then you can just play the J →, win the return and cash two hearts ending in dummy to operate the squeeze against East. If, however, you read West's distribution to be 3-3-4-3, then all you have to do is cash 3 clubs, the A → and the K → and ruff another spade in hand. Your losing club and losing trump fall together on the same trick at the end.

Chris Dixon February 2015