

February 25, 2017
 Courier-Mail Bridge Column by Tony Jackman

Today marks the final day's play and associated celebrations of Australia's (indeed Australasia's) biggest bridge event. Over 2000 players are nearing the end of eight days of play at the 2017 Gold Coast Congress, being run at the Gold Coast Convention Centre. What is left for today are the finals of the various teams' divisions and the victory dinner which will be celebrated with much festivity by both winners and losers. The first half of the week was mainly devoted to a variety of pairs' events, headed by the Bobby Richman Open Pairs Championships.

Here the 2017 winners of the Championship were Justin Howard/Tony Nunn just ahead of Matthew Mullamphy/Ron Klinger and in third place were David Lilley/Zolly Nagy. In the B Grade, or Plate division, Brad Coles/Fraser Rew triumphed ahead of Watson Zhou/ShaoLin Sun with Nick Jacob/Michael Ware in third place. C Grade was won by J Foster/D Weston. T Hutton/B Hirst won the D Grade, E Grade was won by J Skipper/J Skipper, F Grade by C Watson/S Watson and the G Grade by A Wanigaratne/N Moore.

Over in the Seniors, the Championship was won by R Krochmalik/P Lavings, followed by T Antoff/M McAuliffe and P Lewis/L Lewis. L Moses/J Gough took out the Seniors' B Grade. The Intermediate Championship winners were J Randall/P Randall with G Gosney/M Plunkett in second place, followed by P Roberts/B Carroll. The Restricted Pairs' Championship was won by J Chew/R Karim and the Novice Championship by D Poulton/N Walsh.

E Dealer NS Vul

	North		
	♠8653		
	♥AKQ		
	♦QJ10		
	♣643		
West		East	
♠J2		♠74	
♥J1097		♥86432	
♦8652		♦9743	
♣KJ7		♣Q10	
	South		
	♠AKQ109		
	♥5		
	♦AK		
	♣A9852		
West	North	East	South
PASS	3S	PASS	1S
ALL PASS		PASS	6S

Today's hand couldn't be easier – yes? No. Declarer can count 12 top tricks (5S, 3H, 3D, 1C). So what's the problem? Well, the HJ lead has blocked the suit so that there are only 11 top tricks (5S, 3H, 2D, 1C) easily available. Solution: In with HA, cash HK and HQ pitching DA and DK from hand, then DQ, DJ, D10 (clubs from hand). Return via SA, CA and claim all but the last club trick to see the slam home.