

SAWBA Pairs 2026 Bulletin Number 1

The 2026 South African Women's Bridge Association is holding their annual national pairs competition on 14 and 15 March. The tournament is played on the Realbridge Format and attracts red masterpoints. A total of 36 pairs entered that was a little disappointing but thank you to all those who have supported this event.

The final of this event will be played on Sunday 15 March and there will be delayed kibitzing available on the RealBridge Kibitz site [RealBridge](#)

Well done to those pairs who qualified in their sections and bad luck to those who were on the cusp.

SAWBA Qualifying Rounds Results

A Section

Pos	No	Pair	Average	MP	Bds
1	29	Val Bloom & Nicola Bateman	59.94%	1141.3 / 1904	56
2	25	Glynis Dornon & Dawn Palmer	59.15%	1126.3 / 1904	56
3	28	Peta Balderson & Vanessa Armstrong	58.97%	1122.9 / 1904	56
4	31	Lotte Sorensen & Tas Nestoridis	58.08%	1105.9 / 1904	56
5	4	Patricia Jane Crosse & Bev Hewitt	55.24%	1051.8 / 1904	56
6	27	Diana Rosslee & Irene Sundelson	55.15%	1050 / 1904	56
7	26	Tanya Rawson & Janne Masojada	54.32%	1034.2 / 1904	56
8	15	Jenny Foaden & Renee Kenny	53.28%	1014.5 / 1904	56
9	19	Kit Gilmour & Maureen Holroyd	53.02%	1009.5 / 1904	56
10	3	Jackie Solovei & Linda Kaufmann	52.71%	1003.6 / 1904	56
11	30	Janice East & Sue Botha	52.67%	1002.8 / 1904	56
12	32	Delys Shepard & Helene Roberts	51.50%	980.6 / 1904	56

B Section

13	6	Glenda Macleod & Rosemary Gowans	51.46%	979.8 / 1904	56
14	36	Jenny Ten-Bokum & Christine Jeffrey	51.25%	975.9 / 1904	56
15	7	Linda Campbell & Di Knowler	51.23%	975.4 / 1904	56
16	9	Leora Fintz & Laureen Harris	50.99%	970.8 / 1904	56
17	21	Gill Wansell & Kathy Botha	50.93%	969.7 / 1904	56
18	17	Frances Harrison & Roxy Kelly	50.68%	964.9 / 1904	56
19	2	Sandy Wentzel & Erica Zimet	49.95%	951.0 / 1904	56
20	22	Liezel Hutton & Kathy Light	49.60%	944.4 / 1904	56
21	5	Alison Puggia & Wendy Tee	49.56%	943.6 / 1904	56
22	8	Sheila Francis & Jennifer Adams	48.29%	919.5 / 1904	56
23	14	Jill Rabie & Carol Grunder	48.24%	918.4 / 1904	56
24	23	Yvonne Blaine & Margie Du Toit	47.42%	902.9 / 1904	56

C Section

25	33	Jane Bodin & June Pryce	47.34%	901.4 / 1904	56
26	34	Sandra Jacobs & Cynthia Cohen	47.16%	897.9 / 1904	56
27	1	Karen Barnes & Anne-Marie Waterman	46.83%	891.6 / 1904	56
28	12	Ester Goosen & Dianne Penlington	46.73%	889.8 / 1904	56
29	16	Mignon Leigh & Bridie Bullen-Smith	46.71%	889.4 / 1904	56
30	20	Barbara Crosby & Shirley Pollock	45.97%	875.2 / 1904	56
31	13	Julie Pfister & Arauna Viljoen	44.32%	843.9 / 1904	56
32	35	Patsy Els & Marilyn Nel	44.13%	840.2 / 1904	56
33	11	Karen Rothbart & Lauren Dove	43.68%	831.7 / 1904	56
34	18	Anne Cook & Madeleine Willsher	43.19%	822.4 / 1904	56
35	10	Caryn Querido & Lynette Marx	41.64%	792.8 / 1904	56
36	24	Jacqueline Gien & Sharon Sopher	39.71%	756.1 / 1904	56

Board 15



Not vulnerable vs vulnerable you hear pass on your right. What do you open?

Those who opened 1NT had an easy passage to 3NT that had excellent chances of making opposite



Quite a few pairs did go down in 3NT, but making 3NT was worth a 78% score

Those who opened 1C with the above hand had no rebid after partner's 1S response. Some chose an underbid of 1NT and were left to play there and others chose 2C with a similar result. Others chose an overbid of 2D and got to 3NT.

The advantage of opening 1NT on the hand is that you have 2 unprotected King doubletons making it desirable to have the lead coming up to your hand. In addition, it is a descriptive bid even though you have 2 doubletons, and it is easy to predict that you will have rebid problems if you open 1C.

The scorecard

Contract	Lead	Score	MP
3NT-2 W	♥3	100	34 0
3NT-1 W	♥3	50	26 8
3NT-1 W	♦Q	50	26 8
3NT-1 E	♥6	50	26 8
3NT-1 W	♥3	50	26 8
3NT-1 W	♥3	50	26 8
3NT-1 W	♥3	50	26 8
3NT-1 E	♠7	50	26 8
2♣+2 W	♦K	130	17 17
2♣+2 W	♦K	130	17 17
1NT+3 W	♦2	180	13 21
1NT+3 W	♦2	180	13 21
3NT= E	♥6	400	6 28
3NT= W	♦2	400	6 28
3NT= E	♥4	400	6 28
3NT= W	♥3	400	6 28
3NT= W	♠5	400	6 28
3NT+1 W	♦Q	430	0 34

Board 16 Dealer W EW Vul		♠ 642	
		♥ KJ5	
		♦ K62	
		♣ AK84	
	♠ J9853		♠ KQ107
	♥ 63		♥ A982
	♦ A10		♦ 984
	♣ 10762		♣ QJ
		♠ A	
		♥ Q1074	
		♦ QJ753	
		♣ 953	

On this hand it was quite common for North to open 1C in 2nd position. East made a takeout double and South bid 1H. Now, most West players elected to

pass and thereby failed to adequately compete on the hand.

What does one need to respond to partner's takeout double when there has been an intervening bid by responder? I believe that bidding, especially at the 1 level just shows 5-8 high card points. The extra spade in the West hand makes this bid clearcut and above average in terms of this definition. Bidding 1S pushes opponents up and using law of total tricks, E/W may even bid up to 3S which is one down and will beat any partscore by N/S even if you get doubled. Those who bid 1S were handsomely rewarded

The scorecard

Contract	Lead	Score	MP	
3♠-2 W	♣A	200	34	0
1NT+2 N	♠7	150	32	2
2♥+1 S	♠5	140	30	4
3♦+1 S	♠3	130	27	7
3♦+1 S	♠5	130	27	7
1NT+1 N	♠K	120	24	10
3♠-1 W	♣A	100	22	12
1NT= S	♠5	90	18	16
1NT= N	♠K	90	18	16
1NT= N	♠K	90	18	16
3♥-1 S	♠J	50	12	22
4♥-1 S	♦A	50	12	22
3♣-1 N	♠K	50	12	22
4♥-2 S	♠5	100	8	26
2♠= W	♣A	110	3	31
2♠= W	♣A	110	3	31
2♠= W	♣A	110	3	31
2♠= W	♣A	110	3	31

Defending Against the Multi

Board 17		♠ K8	
Dealer N		♥ Q3	
None Vul		♦ A7632	
		♣ J542	
	♠ J5		♠ Q103
	♥ AK975		♥ 1084
	♦ KQ54		♦ J9
	♣ K7		♣ A10963
		♠ A97642	
		♥ J62	
		♦ 108	
		♣ Q8	

It is very difficult to defend against the multi 2D. However, one of the big disadvantages of playing the multi 2D is that it allows opponents to bid their major suit at the 2 level. Most of the players at SAWBA today did not take advantage of this fact when South opened a multi 2D in third seat. They passed to see what would happen. Next time the bidding came round to them they had to either bid 3H or make a takeout double, neither action being ideal. A simple 2H bid over 2D would have resulted in them playing there or in 3H which may make or 1 down.

In bridge, 'waiting to see what happens' is a strategy that usually does not work. I know that bidding 2H may hit the opener's suit, but this occurs rarely.

Overcalls

Board 18	♠ 6	
Dealer E	♥ KQJ85	
NS Vul	♦ A2	
	♣ Q10865	
	♠ AJ974	♠ K853
	♥ A43	♥ 106
	♦ 875	♦ KQJ643
	♣ J4	♣ 7
	♠ Q102	
	♥ 972	
	♦ 109	
	♣ AK932	

Have a look at the East hand. It was remarkable to me that so many pairs did not overcall 2D when North opened 1H after 3 passes. The advantages of bidding are a. You

want a diamond lead b. it takes up a lot of space. c. It is fairly safe. I see players bidding 2D in similar positions with 12-13 counts and 5332 shape with scattered values. This is a very dangerous overcall whereas the East hand in this example has a lot of playing strength and an excellent suit making the overcall clearcut. I would make the call even if I was not a passed hand. I may even consider bidding 3D at this vulnerability to make life difficult for my opponents. Failure to bid allowed opponents a free run and gave E/W a very poor score as 4S was makeable their way.

The Scorecard

Contract	Lead	Score	MP	
4♥+1 N	♣7	650	34	0
4♥= N	♦K	620	30	4
4♥= N	♣7	620	30	4
4♥= N	♣7	620	30	4
3♥+1 N	♣7	170	24	10
2♥+2 N	♦K	170	24	10
3♥+1 N	♣7	170	24	10
4♠-1 W	♥K	50	16	18
4♠-1 W	♥K	50	16	18
4♠-1 W	♥K	50	16	18
4♠-1 W	♥K	50	16	18
5♠-1 W	♥K	50	16	18
3♠= W	♥K	140	9	25
3♠= W	♥K	140	9	25
3♠+2 W	♦A	200	6	28
4♠= W	♥K	420	2	32

Alerting

Board 25		♠ 87	
Dealer N		♥ K9642	
EW Vul		♦ KQJ10	
		♣ 53	
	♠ KQ10		♠ J9432
	♥ AJ8		♥ Q53
	♦ 874		♦ A63
	♣ K872		♣ Q4
		♠ A65	
		♥ 107	
		♦ 952	
		♣ AJ1096	

At many tables, the bidding went 3 passes followed by a 1C opening. North overcalled 1H and East bid 1S. At none of the tables did East alert the 1S bid as promising at least 5 cards. Most people play negative doubles and therefore 1S promises 5 as double would show 4. At all these tables, West was happy to raise with only 3 card support because they knew partner had 5+. This was information that opponents were entitled to receive.

It is very important to alert any bid that carries more information than its natural meaning. 1S response typically only shows 4 but when there has been a 1H interference most people play that it shows 5+.

Full disclosure has become the norm in tournament bridge. South Africa is still a bit behind in accepting this concept.

An example of good alerting

♠ A9
♥ J64
♦ AQJ543
♣ 82

W	N	E	S
		1♦*	P
1♠	2♣	2♦*	3♣
P	P	P	

Note East's alert of 2D. Why? The pair was playing support doubles and therefore the 2D bid usually denied 3 spades. This was important information to give opponents. 2D is a completely natural bid but still needs to be alerted if you play support doubles.

A Complex Play Problem

♠ K754
♥ AJ102
♦ K
♣ 8652

♠ AQ
♥ KQ7
♦ AJ842
♣ AK9

Most pairs got to 6NT playing N/S on the above combination. 6 pairs made 12 tricks, 11 pairs made 10 or 11 tricks.

The lead most often was the JS. How would you continue?

You have 11 tricks off the top but where is the 12th trick? The most obvious line is to duck a club and then hope that the suit breaks 3-3 but I think there is a better line.

The diamond suit offers some possibilities. You can hope that the Queen will come down in 3 and if that fails, a squeeze in the minors might develop. The combination of chances is an improvement over the 3-3 club break. Therefore, win the spade, diamond to the king, spade to hand, LOW diamond and win the return. Cash the ace of diamonds to check if the queen is dropping and then cash all your hearts and spades ending in dummy. In the end position, East will be unable to hold onto his 4th diamond and 3 clubs and the slam will roll home. The 4th spade in dummy also may act as a threat and if East and West hold 3 clubs each, neither of them will be able to hold on as one will be protecting spades and other diamonds – a double squeeze. On the actual hand, the simple squeeze worked well enough to produce 12 tricks.

All those who made 12 tricks got a little help from their friends, so to speak, and none found the squeeze play.

The full hand

Board 37 Dealer N NS Vul	♠ K754			
	♥ AJ102			
	♦ K			
	♣ 8652			
♠ J1092		♠ 863		NT ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣
♥ 8653		♥ 94		N 12 12 13 11 11
♦ 653		♦ Q1097		S 12 12 13 11 11
♣ 104		♣ QJ73		E 1 1 0 1 2
	♠ AQ			W 1 1 0 1 2
	♥ KQ7			Par +2210 7♥= NS
	♦ AJ842			NS: 11+23=34HCP
	♣ AK9			EW: 5 + 1 = 6 HCP

The 4-card ending will be

S 7
H 10
D -
C 86

S 10
H 8
D -
C 104

S -
H -
D Q
C QJ7

S -
H -
D J
C AK9

When you play the 10 of hearts, East must surrender

Sometimes you just must accept some bad luck!

Board 46		♠ J874	
Dealer E		♥ Q72	
None Vul		♦ Q72	
		♣ KQ4	
	♠ AK95		♠ –
	♥ A8		♥ K10953
	♦ K5		♦ A109
	♣ AJ853		♣ 109762
		♠ Q10632	
		♥ J64	
		♦ J8643	
		♣ –	

2 of South Africa's top pairs, Lotte Sorensen, Tas Nestoridis and Val Bloom, Nicola Bateman had excellent auctions to get to the very good 6C slam on the above hand. They were the only pairs to get there and they were cruelly punished when both the clubs broke badly with the King and Queen offside. I estimate the chances of this slam making as being well over 80%. Good bridge resulted in them getting a joint bottom on the hand.

Despite this poor result, Val and Nicky qualified top and Tas and Lotte ended up 4th overall in the qualifying rounds.

Interestingly, the double dummy analysis says that 12 tricks are possible on this combination. Declarer must not draw trumps, cross ruffing and eventually North will be endplayed in trumps. This is an impossible play to find at the table and would be greatly anti-percentage.

Partner Has Shown a Weak Hand With a Long Suit in Your Shortest Suit

Board 54		♠ QJ109	
Dealer E		♥ KQJ9	
EW Vul		♦ 8	
		♣ AQ75	
	♠ A2		♠ K7654
	♥ A753		♥ 104
	♦ 52		♦ A643
	♣ K10964		♣ J2
		♠ 83	
		♥ 862	
		♦ KQJ1097	
		♣ 83	

Many pairs came a cropper on the above hand. I will show you some of their auctions

W	N	E	S
		P	2♦*
P	3NT	P	P
P			

W	N	E	S
		P	2♦
3♣	3NT	P	P
P			

Here in both examples, South showed a weak 2 in diamonds. (note the failure of South in the second hand to alert the 2D opening!!). When partner opens a weak 2, I like to picture partner with a 6 card suit headed by KQJ with nothing else (here partner delivers the goods). Picture how many tricks will you be able to take in NT holding the North hand. You will take no diamonds tricks, and all tricks will have to come from your hand.

Rule: when partner preempts in your shortest suit take no action with less than 16 hcp. When he preempts in a suit that you have a singleton, you need at least 18-19 HCP to take any action and if you have a void, you need 20+ HCP to act. Paradoxically if you have 3+ in the suit, you can almost always raise at least 1 level regardless of your point count.

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

Same story- partner has shown a weak hand with long diamonds – just pass. Partner will not be able to help you make tricks in NT but will make lots of tricks if diamonds are trumps. The 1NT rebid by north is not recommended. North has neither a balanced hand and also does not have 12-14 HCP. A 1H rebid is much better and when partner corrects to 2D, pass is again recommended.

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

“Well I tried!!!”, would be reasonable remark from South when 3NT went 3 down

The scorecard

Contract	Lead	Score	MP
3♠-3 E	♦K	300	33.9 0.1
2♠-2 E	♦K	200	31.8 2.2
3♦+1 S	♣6	130	29.7 4.3
2♦+1 S	♣6	110	26.5 7.5
2♦+1 S	♣4	110	26.5 7.5
+ / -			20.4 13.5
2♦-1 S	♠A	50	14.9 19.1
3NT-1 N	♥10	50	14.9 19.1
3NT-1 N	♠5	50	14.9 19.1
3NT-1 N	♠7	50	14.9 19.1
3NT-1 N	♠5	50	14.9 19.1
3♦-1 S	♠A	50	14.9 19.1
2NT-1 N	♣2	50	14.9 19.1
3NT-1 N	♥10	50	14.9 19.1
2♦-1 S	♠A	50	14.9 19.1
2NT-2 N	♣J	100	4.3 29.7
3NT-3 N	♣J	150	1.1 32.9
3NT-3 N	♣J	150	1.1 32.9

SAWBA 2026



Improving Players Corner

Submitted by Carol Stanton

Count your tricks

When the opening lead hits the table, what do you do? What you should be doing is RACE.

Review the bidding

Analyse the lead

Count your winners or your losers

Evaluate how to get extra tricks.

Let us take a look at hand 51 from the SAWBA qualifying sessions and see what we can work out.

Most players landed up in 3NT to either make or go down. Whether you made it or not really depends on whether you count your tricks or not.

♠ J53
♥ KQJ53
♦ A3
♣ K65
♠ Q82
♥ 8
♦ KJ652
♣ AQJ4

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

2♠ in this sequence is 4th suit forcing and asks for a spade stopper. As the 2♠ bid was artificial and no one actually bid spades as a suit most North or South declarers got a spade lead.

Let's start by reviewing the bidding.

♠ J53
♥ KQJ53
♦ A3
♣ K65

Generally, when we review the bidding we count how many HCP (High Card Points) we have between both hands and try and work out where the missing points are. We have 27HCP so our opponents have 13. We don't know where the missing points are because, unfortunately, our opponents did not bid.

♠ Q82
♥ 8
♦ KJ652
♣ AQJ4

♠ J53
♥ KQJ53
♦ A3
♣ K65

Analyse the lead

We can't discover a lot by this lead as the bidding called for the spade lead (4th suit forcing does not guarantee a spade suit so it is often a good lead) so we should be wary about doing the rule of 11 when the bidding demands such a lead. In fact, we can draw quite a few assumptions about the hand if they failed to lead a spade e.g. East must have a lot of spades and West very few or West has a great suit they are trying to establish.



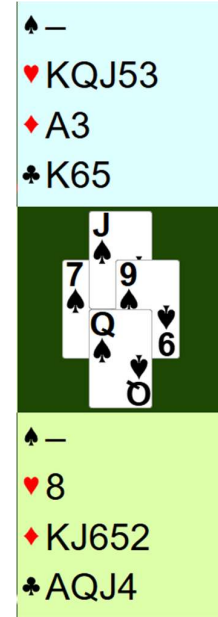
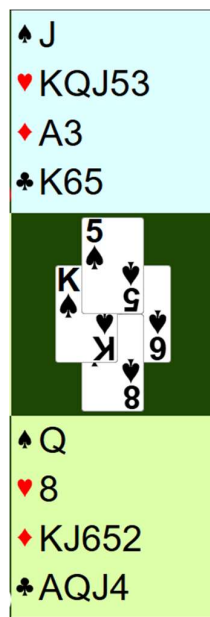
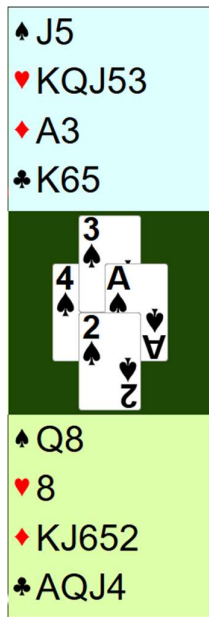
But we do get a spade lead and the first three tricks go as follows:

♠ Q82
♥ 8
♦ KJ652
♣ AQJ4

Trick one

Trick two

Trick three



We have won one ♠ and 12 spades are out leaving only one spade in our opponents' hands.

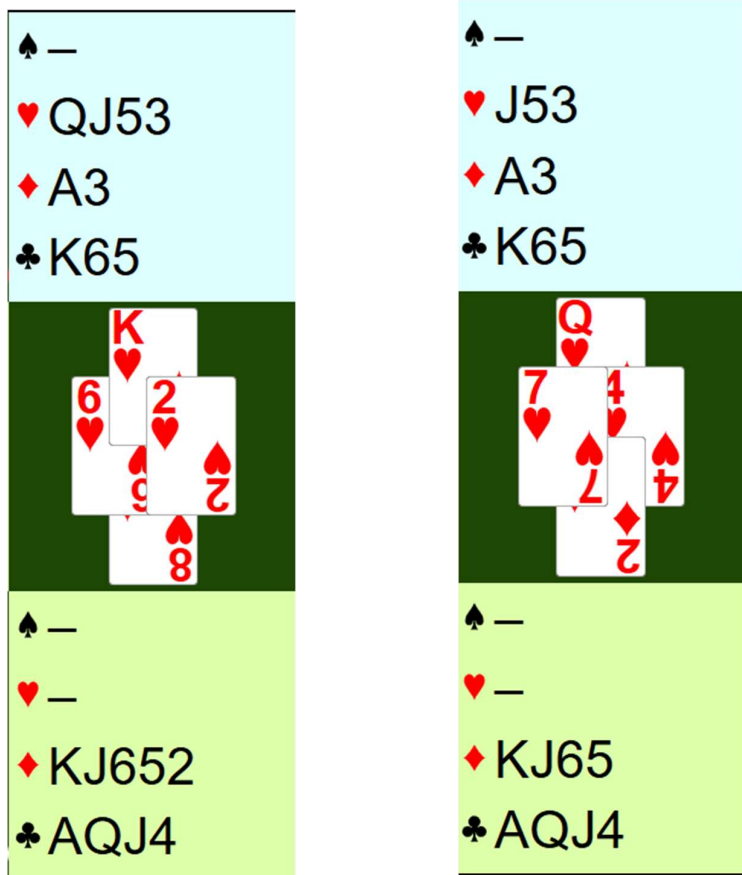
How many tricks do we need? 9

How many tricks do we have? 1

How many certain tricks (tricks we can win without losing the lead) do we have? 4 ♣ tricks (AKQJ) 2 diamond tricks (AK). That brings us to 7 tricks. We need 2 more. Where should we get them? I vote hearts. Now we just have to plan our order of operations. We need the Ace of diamonds and the King of Clubs as entrances to our hearts. Should we be worried about losing the lead? Absolutely not!! The opponents will only get 1 more spade trick (12 have gone) and the heart Ace. Once we win the Q of spades we should immediately start working on the hearts. We play a small heart to the king and it wins! So we play the Queen of hearts. And this wins!

Trick four

Trick five



Should we be greedy and try another heart? Absolutely NOT. We have our contract. We only needed two heart tricks and we should be highly suspicious of all this ducking. Let's get our contract. Run the clubs and claim the 2 diamonds. 3NT made!

Did you think that was easy? If so you should be playing in SAWBA with us! Here are the overall results

Contract	Lead	Score	
3NT+1 S	♠9	430	
3NT= S	♠9	400	
3NT= S	♠9	400	
3NT= N	♠9	400	
3NT= S	♠4	400	
3NT= S	♠9	400	
3NT= S	♥6	400	
3NT= S	♥9	400	
2NT+1 N	♠10	150	
+ / =			
3NT-1 N	♠6		50
3NT-1 S	♠2		50
3NT-1 N	♠6		50
3NT-1 S	♠9		50
3NT-1 S	♠4		50
3NT-1 S	♠9		50
4♥-1 N	♠A		50
3NT-1 S	♠9		50