2006 Mixed Pairs

The mixed pairs was held as usual at Toowong Bridge Club, and the organizers were buoyed by the slight increase in numbers compared to previous years, as well as the good response to the new event, a one-day Swiss Pairs for Novices.

The usual suspects made it to the 8-table final and quite a few of the pairs took a turn in the lead at some stage throughout the day. In the end Rosa Lachman and Bill Hunt emerged from the pack to win narrowly from Eva and Tony Berger, with Therese and myself in 3rd place. Joan Butts and Kaarel Vohandu won the Plate from Bronwyn Macleod and Terry O'Dempsey, and Robyn Clayton and Alan Smith won the Consolation with Judy Perl and Robert Ashman and Yvonne Kilvert and Geoff Olsen in equal 2nd place.

Due to the particular number of entries, and presumably the desire of the Director, Alan Gibson, to avoid skip rounds, it was a particularly long qualifying on the Saturday, with 66 boards, and only slightly less with 60 boards on the Sunday. Many moans were held about the length of the qualifying rounds in particular, but I for one, prefer not to have any skips when the movement allows it.

Q 1	AJT		
Bd 1	9875		
DIr N	J542		
Vul Nil	64		
K9532			86
JT2			Q63
9			AKQ3
KJ85			Q932
	Q74		
	AK4		
	T876		
	AT7		
W	N	E	S
	/	1C	/
1S	/	1NT	/
2C	//		

On board 1 in the first qualifying round, East picked a good time to open with the weaker minor when she intended to rebid 1NT, and West preferred the known minimum 4-3 fit to 1NT when his red suits were wide open.

It must be unusual to have such a fine suit as AKQx and yet never mention it, but it was the winning action on this hand when 2C was cold and 1NT and 2S were both going off.

Therese led the HA and switched to a spade, but all we could take were 2 spades, 2 hearts and a club for –90.

1NT looks easy, but declarer has only 6 tricks in the minors and too much to do on a diamond lead to set up the heart trick. Obviously when East opens 1C and rebids 1NT the diamond lead is easier to find, but what if East opened 1D and rebid 1NT? Now it is likely that 1NT will make.

Another paradox is that to defeat 1NT South has to lead declarer's best suit.

Q 1	K3		
Bd 2	JT7643	3	
DIr E	-		
Vul NS	AJT82		
J742			865
AK8			Q95
A75			QJT32
Q76			93
	AQT9		
	2		
	K9864		
	K54		
W	N	Ε	S
		/	10
/	1C	/	18
/	2C	/	2N
/	3C	/	3N ⁻
//			

If ever there was a case for cashing the Ace of dummy's known long suit to decide what to lead next, board 2 in the first qualifying round, would provide evidence for it. Especially when the lead chosen was from Jxxx, and into declarer's second suit to boot!

My bid of 2C was 4th suit, and Therese's 2NT rebid showing a club stopper, hinted at a singleton heart. My 3C rebid was intended to show my 6-5 distribution, but Therese only thought I was confirming a club suit, not shown by 4th suit. The 3NT rebid definitely showed a singleton heart, as Therese could have bid 3H with a doubleton.

Having seemingly shown my distribution I passed 3NT, albeit with some reluctance, and West led the S4. Therese won in hand and led to the CJ, which held. Now it was time to run for home and rely on the clubs coming in since another finesse could be taken if need be. 9 black suit winners was +600 and a good score, but the same as in a successful 5C.

Look at what happens if West leads the HA to look at dummy! South is known to have a singleton, thus West can lead the H8 at trick 2 for East to return a diamond, and EW make 6 tricks for -200.

Q 1 Bd 12 Dlr W Vul NS AQT2 64 KJT632 4	64 AJ95 5 AJT982	2	J8743 T82 874 75
W / / / //	K9 KQ73 AQ9 KQ63 N 1C 2H 5H	E / /	S 1H 4NT 6H

On board 12 in the first qualifying round, I was tempted by my good club pips and 2 Aces into opening the bidding, and when I raised Therese's 1H response on the next round she momentarily made me doubt the wisdom of the opening bid when she launched into Blackwood.

My 2 Aces and heart support were all she needed, and when the trumps were friendly it was an easy 12 tricks and +1430. If the trumps did not break, it is only necessary to ruff a diamond before drawing

After my 5H response Therese could have offered me the choice of slams, in case I only had 3-card heart support, but this would not have been a good time to choose 6C unless South was declarer as a spade lead from East skittles the contract.

6NT by South is also cold if declarer reads the position, as West is squeezed on the run of the clubs and hearts, and must come down to a Singleton SA and Kx in diamonds, where a spade exit endplays West for the 12th trick.

Q 1 Bd 16 DIr W Vul EW T96 KQ62 A 86432	AKJ43 A3 KQJ76: -	2	8752 954 T4 KT97
80432	Q		K19/
	JT87		
	9853		
14/	AQJ5	_	•
W	N	E	S
1	2C 3D	/	2D 4D
/	6D	//	40

On board 16 in the first qualifying round, I decided not to risk 1D being passed out by opening with a forcing 2C! Normally I do not open 2C with 2 suits unless I am very strong, as it can be difficult to show both suits at a convenient level, but since my second suit was spades, I thought I could handle most situations.

Therese's initial 2D response was negative or waiting, prescribed by the system when you do not hold at least one Ace and King or better, but her 4D raise when I showed my first suit showed something after

We do not play exclusion Blackwood, and I did not want to bid 4NT with a void, so I just bid 6D, hoping Therese had at least 1 useful card, and so it proved.

She won the opening lead of the HK in dummy and returned to hand with the SQ to lead the CA to discard the H3, and then could claim 12 tricks.

Q 1 Bd 22 Dir E Vul EW	AQJT8 8 72 73	K7	_
T93		A7	
KQ84			Г95
K9862		A(QT4
	4		
	KQJ6	542	
	J63		
	J5		
W	N	E	S
		1NT	4H
/	4S	//	

It is often said that you should not "preempt over a preempt", but on board 22 in the first qualifying round I thought that my hand justified breaking this rule. Luckily I survived both the opponents and partner.

In our system Therese could have shown her heart suit by transferring with 2D, planning on raising my 2H response to game, but this would fail if I had any reason to not bid 2H, so she made the preemptive bid.

I knew that my 4S bid was in danger of being misinterpreted, and held my breath (in silence) while Therese considered the possibilities before thankfully passing.

My reasoning was that my hand figured to take a 7 tricks with spades as trumps, but only 1 (or maybe none) if hearts were trumps. Any tricks that Therese had in her hand would add to my tally of 7, so I was likely to be ahead. It was disappointing when dummy went down to see that there were no extra tricks for me and I went 3 down. Still -150 was a fair score as others were double in hearts or spades at the 3 and 4 level.

Q 1 Bd 30 DIr E Vul Nil KT86 AK8 K6532 J	QJ7 Q973 AJ8 T62 A543 JT2 QT4 Q84 N	92 654 97 AK9753 E S / /	On board 30 in the first qualifying round, East has plenty of tricks in the 1NT contract, but no way to get to hand to enjoy them. As I have noticed on many occasions, a singleton (or void) in your partner's longest suit is not always an advantage. A small doubleton club would have enabled East to duck a club and possibly get a total of 5 club tricks instead of just 1! After the 1D opening and 1NT response, East was marked with club length, so that was the one suit that Therese was not going to lead. Her choice of the S3 was ducked to my Jack and I exited with the C6. East ducked the club, and now had 5 more tricks, as long as she could get to hand. Therese led another spade, and declarer ducked again and at trick 4 I exited with a spade to Therese's Ace. The DQ would have been best now, but instead Therese led the HJ, won on the table and declarer exited with a diamond to Therese's Ten. Next came the HT, and declarer exited with another diamond and I got cold feet, rising with my DA to cash out for 2 down and +100.
Q 2 Bd 10 Dir E Vul All J2 KQJ96 62 T765	KQ9 7 AQT74 AKJ2 T654 T8432 KJ9 Q N	A873 A5 853 9843 E S / / 1H / 3D	On board 10 in the second qualifying round, it was fortunate for our prospects that Therese bid hearts before West had a chance to, and thus averted the killing lead. Since we had bid 3 suits, East gave no thought to his short heart holding and my lack of interest in hearts and merely led a 4 th highest S3, which I won with the SK. Having escaped what was almost certainly a fatal heart lead, I ran for cover and cashed my 10 tricks for +630. Conventionally, when your opponents have bid to game without interference and suddenly the hand that is not on lead doubles, the opening leader is expected to lead dummy's first-bid suit. This convention would have worked a treat here, as a heart lead produces a quick 6 tricks for the defense, and West mentioned that he gave some thought to doubling for a heart lead. However, I would have understood the meaning of the double as well, and maybe EW
F 1 Bd 8 Dlr W Vul Nil K AKT982 8 AKJT9 W 1H 3C 4C	97 Q76 T762 Q842 AT632 J4 AKJ93 7 N /	QJ854 53 Q54 653 E S 1S 2D 3S /	On board 8 in the first round of the final, I had a nice looking hand that turned to mush when the bad trump break came to light, as by then I had lost control and I finished 2 off. The East hand is a clear cut response of 1S when the West hand opens 1H, but is obviously not pulling its full weight when South overcalls 2D, and then the bidding got too high. From my point of view I had 2 good suits and the King of partner's suit, so I thought that game was likely, possibly even in spades! The pass of 4C was a surprize, and the sight of dummy a disappointment, especially the doubleton heart. North led a dutiful D7, and I had to ruff the second round. The top club, 2 top hearts and a heart ruff set the suit up, but warned of the bad trump break, and the hand was over. Oddly, 4C by East can be made, as the DQ is safe from attack and the force does not work

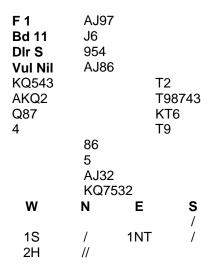
3C 4C

F 1 Bd 10 Dlr E Vul All 86 Q4 KT863 A432	AJ3 K93 A74 KQJ8		K5 JT8752 QJ T97
	QT97	42	
	A6 952		
	95 <u>2</u> 65		
W	N	Е	S
		2D	/
2H	2NT	/	3H
/ //	3S	/	4S

On board 10 in the first round of the final, I had 2 chances to beat 4S, and missed them both, with North eventually making 11 tricks instead of 9.

My 2D was a multi, and when South bid 3H as a transfer to spades, it was obvious that my suit was hearts. The 3H bid was not alerted, but Therese had bid 2H as a relay, so it could be argued that we had already bid hearts and that 3H was therefore a cue-bid. This was the first clue I had as to Therese's heart holding as she did not double, therefore implying a poor holding in hearts.

Nonetheless I still led the HJ, won on the table with the HA as Therese played the H4, which unfortunately I knew was low and therefore I thought encouraging. When North finessed to my SK I had another chance to beat 4S by shifting to the DQ, and I did consider this, but alas I led another heart and declarer was home, discarding all of dummy's diamonds on the good clubs.



On board 11 in the first round of the final, my best option is probably to pass 1S, and hope it makes. However I bid 1NT in the hope that I would get the chance to bid 2H as I estimated that if hearts were trumps, my hand would get a few more tricks than if spades were trumps, and these would add to whatever tricks Therese had for her opening bid.

I got a very pleasant surprize when Therese rebid 2H, and since my dubious response had definitely improved the part-score, I decided not to push my luck and passed.

The sight of dummy caused a few raised eyebrows, and general opinion was that I should have at least raised, but I am unconvinced that is the correct action, even though 10 tricks were easy enough.

The key to 10 tricks was Therese's minor suits, and if they were swapped, 9 tricks is the probable limit of the hand. Therese could even have solid spades and hearts and still NS could win 4 tricks in the minor suits.

F 1 Bd 13 Dir N Vul All AJ7 T2 KJ876 643	Q8654 KQ Q9 AJT8		T932 9763 T52 75
	AJ854		
	A43		
	KQ92		
W	N	Ε	S
	1S	/	2H
/	2NT	/	4NT
//	5D	/	6NT
//			

On board 13 in the first round of the final, North bid a dubious 2NT instead of 3C after the 2H response (maybe a hint of Hideous Hog?), and paid the penalty when he next found himself in a no-play 6NT.

When Therese won my lead of the D5 and cashed the SA I thought that my lead had hit the jackpot, but closer examination showed that 6NT could never make unless West unwisely led away from the DK.

However 6C is cold from either hand as it is possible to make the 12th trick by discarding diamonds on the hearts and ruffing the D4.

Without a diamond stop North would have been better to have bid 3C rather than 2NT as his heart holding was very powerful and maybe 4H is a better contract than 3NT.

Possibly South may still end in 6NT, but in slams, every contract requires 12 tricks so there is not the same aversion to minor suits and South may have launched straight into Blackwood after the 3C rebid.

F 1	A6542		
Bd 18	A5		
DIr E	T84		
Vul NS	A74		
Q8			J3
Q8			K942
AK92			763
T8652			KQJ9
	KT97		
	JT763		
	QJ5		
	3		
W	N	Ε	S
		/	/
/	1S	Χ	4S
X	//		

On board 18 in the first round of the final, I had visions of bad breaks and impending doom when East doubled my 1S opening and West doubled the jump to 4S. My reasoning was that since neither opponent had enough to open the bidding, it could only be distribution that prompted their re-entry into the auction.

Therese's jump to 4S was part of our approach to bidding, in that sometimes it makes (as here), and sometimes it goes down, but the loss should not be high, and the preemptive value may keep the opponents out of a game of their own. My hand should not be light to open in 4^{th} seat.

East led the CK and I played a spade to dummy intending to finesse if East played a spade honour, and was disappointed that neither honour appeared.

It looked like 1 down on a 3-1 trump break as I could still win the next spade in hand and ruff a club, and then enter my hand with the HA to ruff another club.

To my surprize, everyone followed to the 2nd trump and I found that 4SX was cold. Lucky for me that East did not have QJ of trumps alone as I would have lost the second round and bee 1 down.

F 1 Bd 21 Dir N Vul N AKJ87 62 QT95 A6	Q94 AK97 A2 JT73		T653 5 K87643 95
	2		
	QJT8	43	
	J		
	KQ84	12	
W	N	E	S
	1NT	/	2D
Χ	2NT	3S	4H
//			

On board 21 in the first round of the final, my 2NT response to the transfer showed 4 hearts and a maximum, so Therese was in no doubt that 4H was worth a shot.

The double of the transfer bid showed 2 suits, 1 of which was spades, which is why East ventured 3S on such a poor suit and minimal values.

Looking at all 4 hands it is amazing that EW allowed us to play in 4H when they have such a good spade fit and the vulnerability in their favour, but maybe they had hopes of beating 4H?

Therese had no trouble in 4H and lost just the 2 Aces for +650. The real test would have come if EW had bid 4S and we had doubled. This goes 2 off, but only if South leads the DJ after cashing just 1 heart (easy since my hand is know to have 4 hearts), and after getting the ruff, leads the CK. It is not always right to lead a side suit singleton when holding only 1 trump.

F 1 Bd 29 DIr N Vul All T AT9873 76542 K	875 - AQJT9 T854	93	AQ96 J64 - AQJ763
	KJ432		
	KQ52 K8		
	92		
W	N	Ε	S
	/	1C	X
1H	2D	Χ	2S
3H	/	4H	//

On board 29 in the first round of the final, we were told that NS were playing normal style take-out doubles, and that therefore South had shown a good hand when he doubled and then bid another suit after his partner freely bid 2D.

As you can see, South has a mediocre hand, especially in view of the heart bid on his left. Also, in my view, North's explanation of South having a good hand does not ring true with her non-support! She has a void in our suit, 3-card support for spades, and a good side suit, and yet there was not even a token bid at the 3-level.

Therese ruffed the diamond lead in dummy and led a trump, inserting the HT when South played low! She then cashed the CK and entered dummy via another diamond ruff to cash the clubs, noting the fall of the DK. South elected to ruff the first club low, but Therese could overruff, cash the HA, and throw South in with his last trump. South's forced spade return allowed all her diamonds to be discarded for 12 tricks and a well earned +680.

F 2	T5		
Bd 1	AQ32	2	
DIr N	AQ3		
Vul Nil	KQ85	5	
A942			KQJ86
-			964
9762			KJ4
T9643			72
	73		
	KJT8	75	
	T85		
	AJ		
W	N	E	S
	1H	1S	4H
4S	Χ	/	5H
//			
F 2	OT86	35	

On board 1 in the second round of the final, Therese picked a good time to ignore the rule that the 5-level belongs to the opponents! The reason was her exceptional trump support and therefore our probable lack of heart tricks. My double indicated defensive tricks, since her 4H jump promised little more than a lot of hearts.

Looking at the EW hands there only appears to be 3 losers in 4S, but there are not necessarily 10 winners on repeated heart leads, which is probably why Deep Finesse does not rate 4S as an EW contract.

EW were able to cash 2 spades tricks, but I won the diamond switch from West expecting an easy time. However, when West failed to follow to the first trump, I cashed the CA and CJ, and then finished drawing trumps to cash the remaining clubs to discard the diamond losers.

That was +450, and a whole lot better than we may have gotten out of 4SX, in spite of DF's pessimism.

F 2 Bd 5 Dir N Vul NS 4 KJ85 KJT743 T9	QT86 92 2 AKQ8		K2 AQ1 A86 32	Г643
	AJ973	3		
	7 Q95			
	J764			
W	N	Ε		S
4H	1C 4S	2H //		2S

On board 5 in the second round of the final, EW made it very easy for us by not competing to the 5-level, in spite of their known fit at favourable vulnerability.

My 1C opening promised at least 4 clubs, so the known club fit and singleton in the opponent's suit justified Therese's 2S overcall on such a minimal hand. She hit the jackpot when I raised to game.

I opened 1C rather than 1S as it is very difficult for the opponents to keep you out of the bidding when you hold the top suit, and when I rebid spades at my earliest opportunity, I am known to have an unbalanced hand. Of course, this was not obvious when I supported Therese.

I do not know why EW did not bid the obvious 5H, which can make 10 tricks and is therefore an excellent save, but maybe each thought that the other was weaker than they actually were, or each had visions of beating 4S.

F 2	98732		
Bd 8	Q63		
DIr W	2		
Vul Nil	KQ84		
JT654			Q
T2			J875
Q76			JT84
AT2			J975
	AK		
	AK94		
	AK953		
	63		
W	N	Ε	S
/	/	/	1D
/	1S	/	2H
/	2NT	/	3N7
//			

On board 8 in the second round of the final, I received a favourable club lead in 3NT and West won the CA and led a spade. That gave me 9 tricks and prospects looked good for 10, provided I could duck some tricks to rectify the count, but the spade position looked dangerous.

Accordingly, at trick 3 I ducked a diamond to West, who quickly came back another spade. and I was at the cross-roads.

If East had the 4th diamond, I could set up the 5th card for the 10th trick, but I could not let West in so that was out. A good option that I missed, was to lead a club and cover West's card, then I could win the return and I would be able to get a complete count of the hand.

What I had failed to notice was the 2nd spade had already squeezed East, and I had 10 tricks all along. I cashed the HK and when I led next to the HQ I felt sure that a finesse of the HT was going to work, but instead opted for 9 tricks to keep par.

F 2 Bd 13 Dir N Vul All AT7432 76 63 984	J9 KJ54 K9 A7652 86 A3 AQJT85 QJ3 KQ5 QT982 742 KT N E S 1C 2D 2H 3H / / 3NT //	On board 13 in the second round of the final, I missed a valuable inference in the bidding through acting too quickly and luckily did not pay too high a price. My 2D overcall was intermediate, and if Therese was strong, she would have bid 2S on the 1 st round. As it is she is not strong enough to make a forcing bid, so has to pass. The 2H bid from South was a negative free-bid, which is why NS do not get too adventurous. When she next came in over 3H, I should have realized that she had a long suit and not much more and was relying on my strength for outside tricks. 3S is almost certain to go 1 off, but 3NT could have been horrendous. As it was I got lucky when the DK was doubleton on-side and I made 8 tricks also for -100. Since 3H was making for -140, this was a bargain.
F 2 Bd 20 Dir W Vul EW AKJ 953 AQT6 876 W 1NT 2S 4S	QT8 Q42 KJ9 KQT4 965432 K8 5 AJ52 7 AJT76 87432 93 N E S / 2H / / 3S / //	On board 20 in the second round of the final, EW bid a speculative 4S that should have had no chance, until my lapse in concentration during the play gave declarer a chance, but luckily he did not take advantage of it. I led the CK which declarer won to cash 2 spades, showing up at least 3 top losers. Unfortunately I missed Therese's discard on the 2 nd trump, so although I knew from the bidding that she had a red Ace, I had to guess which one it was after winning the club exit and cashing my SQ. Since I also knew that Therese had either the DQ or HJ, I chose the D9, as a heart lead if Therese had the DQ allowed declarer a successful guess. This extra diamond trick allowed declarer to discard a heart on the DA and then run the C8 for the 10th trick. Luckily while I knew that I also had the CT, he did not, and took the 50% chance that the HA was on side and discard a club. 1 down and +100. If I had led a heart, he has to take the club finesse to avoid 2 off.
F 2 Bd 21 Dir N Vul NS T95 QT9 KJ4 T875	QJ76 J62 Q3 KQ43 K84 K8 T97652 J2 A32 A7543 A8 A96 N E S 1NT / 2D 2H / 3NT	On board 21 in the second round of the final, North opened 1NT with dubious values and paid a heavy penalty when the final contract was wrong-sided. South may have had some visions of slam if a heart fit came to light, but was happy to subside in 3NT if that was North's choice. The nature of North's values may have made 3NT a better contract than 4H on the 5-3 fit, but not this time. Since I had nothing better to do I led the DT, without much hope of any gain, but confident of not giving too much away. Declarer took the only hope by ducking in dummy, but when Therese won the DK and returned the DJ, declarer's fate was sealed. If North had passed, and South was able to open 1H, 10 tricks in hearts would have been easy with South declarer, and 9 tricks in notrumps also available, though an avoidance play was required in spades if West did not lead a diamond.

F 2 Bd 23 Dir S Vul All KJ6 T5 9762 KT93	AQ9752 9632 4 76 3 AKQJ874 QJ A52 T84 - AKT853 QJ84 N E S 1S 4H 4S	On board 23 in the second round of the final, we were outgunned and gave up early after forcing South to make a decision at the 4-level. This was just as well as North found a way to go 1 off! North's plan appeared to be to discard 1 club loser on the top diamonds and then cross-ruff for 10 tricks, but this plan was bound to come unstuck since Therese was likely to be short in hearts also. When I played the QJ on the top diamonds, North could now have taken a spade finesse (taking my only trump), ruffed another heart, and then discarded the last heart on the DT, conceding just 1 spade and 2 clubs. Instead, they led the DT and discarded their 2 nd club, but now Therese could over-ruff the 3 rd heart, and exit with a club, leaving declarer with a spade and heart loser.
F 2 Bd 26 Dir E Vul All KT84 Q96 876	J3 AK753 54 KJ92 A975 J2 AJ32	On board 26 in the second round of the final, because West had only bid spades in response to the take-out double, East was reluctant to lead the suit at any time and I was allowed to make 9 tricks. Of course the best result for us would have been to let EW labour in 2S, which may have gone 2 off for +200, but at least +100 was available.
T83	A65 Q62 T84 KQT9 Q74	East made a 'safe' lead of the HJ, which I won and led the D5, thinking I may have to lead up to dummy twice. However, to my surprize, East rose with the DA and led another trump. One of my spade losers now went on the 3 rd diamond winner, and I lost just 1 trick in each suit for +140.
W / 2S //	N E S 1D / 1H X 1NT / / 3H	The looming diamond honours in dummy should have alerted East to the need for a spade switch, but in any case it must be safe to duck the first diamond. The duck also cuts me off from immediate access to dummy for the spade pitch, and lets East decide about leading a spade when a club is led.
F 2 Bd 27 Dlr S Vul Nil Q765 974 K95 K76	A932 KJ AJ3 AJ52 KJT8 AQ62 T64 T9 4 T853 Q872	On board 27 in the second round of the final, EW got carried away with the spade fit and bid once too often on minimum hands. When Therese came back into the auction with a takeout double after her initial first-round pass, I gave some thought to converting the double to penalties, but decided that it was too close for comfort. However, when East unwisely bid 3S over my 2NT, I had no doubt about doubling for penalties. Initial trump leads will probably restrict EW to 6 or 7 tricks, but I with 4 trumps I was looking to a forcing defence, so started with the HK! The sight of dummy was a disappointment, but when Therese encourage,
W / 1S / /	Q843 N E S / 1C / / / 2S X / 3S / X //	I knew that there was no great harm done. Declarer won on the table and led a low trump, and I won the SA and led another heart, again won on the table and exiting with a low heart. The CQ now will hold declarer to 6 tricks, but with nothing to guide her Therese led the D2, and I won the DJ, DA and exited with a diamond for +300. A trump back by me mat still have netted +500.