



ABF BRIDGE TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

JULIAN FOSTER explains
why the ABF is investing in
technology, and what this will
mean for players and clubs



You may have heard that the ABF is making a major investment in technology over the next few years. This article explains what is going on and what it will mean for players and clubs in future.

Although Australia has historically had extremely good technology for bridge, especially in areas of scoring, our products all have the same sort of issues:

- They are generally 'labours of love' that have been developed by a single person. Although they have served us well, many of the developers do not wish to continue supporting them.
- Several are written using older versions of systems and languages which, over time, stop being supported.
- They are all separate systems and we frequently need to copy data back and forth between them. For example, scoring programs periodically download the ABF Masterpoint Centre

database to get an up to date listing of players. That is only accurate at the point of time it is downloaded – they do not have a live link to the current player listing.

Our National events, in particular, have become almost totally dependent on the current programs to be able to run effectively and, given how successful they have been, as players we now all have very high expectations that everything will just continue to work. But keeping the programs working behind the scenes is not so easy!

The ABF has made the decision to plan ahead, and build software itself to gradually take over from these systems as they are retired. This will be a gradual process taking place over a number of years to make sure the new systems are properly ready and to minimise the risk of anything going wrong.

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DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER EDITION

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IMPROVE YOUR DEFENCE
 with **Ron Klinger**
Solution on page 25

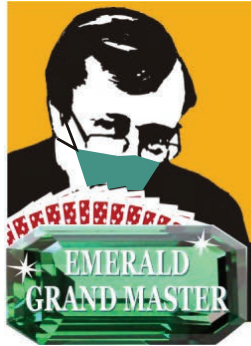
Butler ♠ 10 9 6
 S/Nil ♥ J 10 5
 ♦ J 9 6 4
 ♣ K Q 6



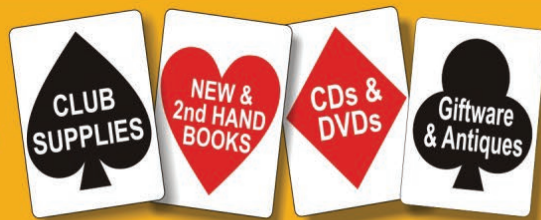
♠ 7 2
 ♥ A K Q 9 8 2
 ♦ A K 8 7
 ♣ 10

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	2♠	4♥	1♠
all pass			4♠

West leads the ♥7: You win with the ♥Q and cash the ♥A, all following. You shift to the ♦K: three - ten - four. Your signaling agreement is low-encouraging. What do you play next?



Paul Lavings Bridgegear



www.bridgegear.com (02) 4295 0870 paul@bridgegear.com

AGENTS FOR

BRIDGEMATES



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<https://youtu.be/BlwvbqC9Hm0>

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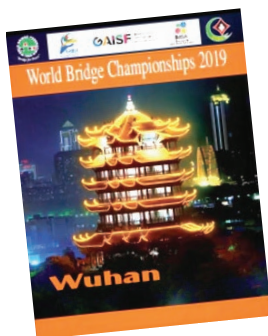
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THE STATE OF BRIDGE – New Players Crisis

Bridge clubs are progressively opening again in the states least affected by COVID-19. With each of the ACT, SA, NT, Tasmania, Queensland and WA each reporting fewer than 10 recorded deaths as at July 18, some clubs began re-opening in July.

In Victoria, with about 5,000 registered ABF players, and many suburbs of Melbourne experiencing lockdown with a second wave of infections, nearly all clubs have stayed closed.

New South Wales clubs with about 13,000 players have hesitated to return in July and the few clubs in Sydney that re-opened have had a limited response.

A major outcome has been that the main beginner's lessons that normally occur in February to April had to be cancelled or postponed meaning Australia has lost nearly a year's intake of new players that are so vital to our game. In the June quarter new players fell from 781 last year to 199 this year and this trend will continue.

We need over 3,000 new players each year just to maintain our membership numbers. With a high attrition rate in our mature aged members the growth of bridge is threatened in the future. Online bridge has been a saviour to many during the shutdown, and has kept people playing bridge, but it may continue in the future to provide an alternative to some, and reduced frequency of attendance at clubs for others.

What many people seem to miss the most about playing bridge during COVID is the social aspect of meeting with friends and belonging to a bridge community in a Maslow sense. This extends to the most competitive players who have missed out on many congresses during the year and for the elite to represent Australia.

Action By Clubs

How many clubs took the opportunity of the COVID break to make their clubs more welcoming and pleasant for their members? To paint their premises, or at least the inside? Steam clean the carpets or even replace them? Renew the curtains or broken louvres? Wash all their cards or boards? Improve the kitchen facilities? Update the honour boards? And perhaps most importantly, to upgrade the women's toilets in a sport where 70% of our members are female. I was given a tour of the SABA club house in Adelaide a few years ago, and the first thing they showed me was the women's bathroom where they had put in about five basins and employed an interior designer to decorate it.

Health Procedure for Re-opening Clubs

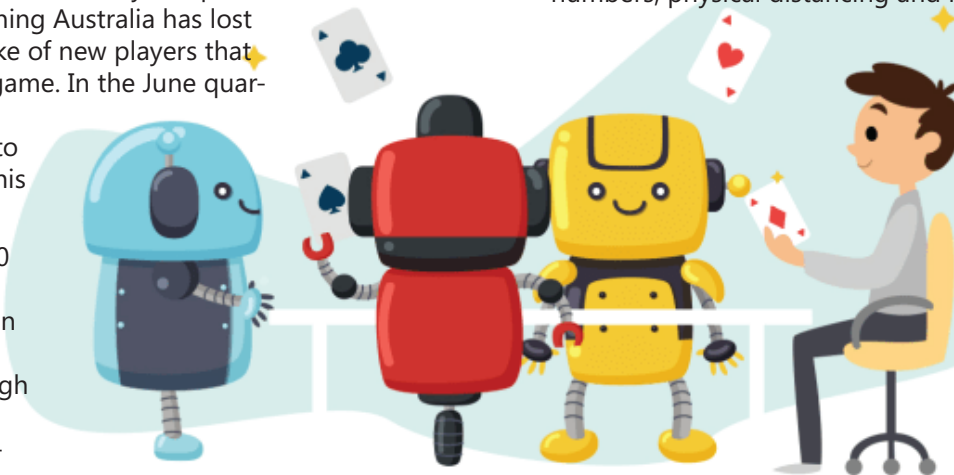
I am not going to bore you with the steps for re-opening which I am sure you are all well aware of except to say that you must include a COVID-19 Safety Plan and Steve Weil from TBIB tells me "we must adhere to all Government legislation, law, rules and conditions". Failure to adhere to these rules could jeopardise the ABF's Public Liability Insurance Cover. I may add also that the standards must be maintained, to avoid leaving the clubs open to class actions for negligence in the future. Barbara Travis in Adelaide got a special dispensation from SA Government to use normal size tables.

Some of the steps, such as combining four bridge tables, or buying acrylic shields on the tables, the 4sqm rule restricting numbers, physical distancing and limitations on food, social

interaction and time spent in the club may not be as friendly and welcoming as in the past.

It is going to require great effort from club officials, directors, volunteers and members to make your club the home away from home that it was or could have been.

What are we going to do?



Marketing Workshops

I had been scheduled to conduct marketing workshops around Australia from March this year to coincide with the influx of new players from beginner's lessons, neither of which eventuated because of COVID.

Now I propose to start them again immediately but this time using Zoom, which many people will have experienced and enjoyed for family and friends getting together. I will certainly miss not being able to visit each club and the less interactive experience teaching and meeting members but it will enable me to run sessions for far more clubs and save the ABF a lot of cost on airfares and accommodation in these difficult financial times.

Attracting new players to undertake urgently required beginners classes, supervised sessions and inclusion of new players quickly into friendly clubs is essential.

Hosting: If you would like to host a Marketing Workshop then complete an [Expression of Interest](#) online or for further information contact us directly at marketing@abf.com.au.



Paul Marston's Free Online Lessons: Introduction to Bridge

Paul Marston, champion player and teacher with over 500,000 books sold, bridge columnist in the Weekend Australian and bridge club owner says, "Teaching beginners has long been my passion, and remains so". Paul is going to provide four free online beginners' lessons on Zoom using BBO on Tuesday 25 August, and 1, 8, 15 September at 2pm.

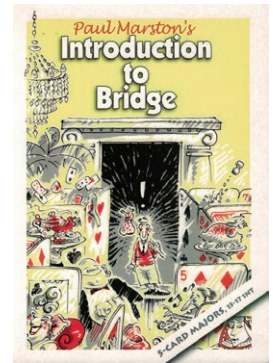
BRIDGE MEMBERS' ROLE

- Paul says he recruits all his beginners through word of mouth without spending on advertising
- This is where we need our 35,000 members to inform and recommend their friends to take the beginners course that normally costs \$149 for FREE. **Phone a friend!**

BRIDGE CLUBS' ROLE

- The players who register through the ABF will be directed back to their nearest club.
- The clubs are asked to organise follow up courses and supervised play to take advantage of the new players to ensure they continue on and become your regular club members.
- If your club does not provide these continued lessons and games then Paul is prepared to provide ongoing education on a charged basis and send them back into your clubs to play.
- We will provide further information in the future on how your contacts and friends can learn to play on BBO and use Zoom to prepare for the lessons.
- The more people that you can recruit to take Paul's lessons the more beneficial this will be for attracting new players to your club.

This is another ABF initiative to provide support for their clubs in a very difficult period.



Paul's books are available at the [Grand Slam web site](#)

ABF Online Bridge

ABF Club Online Bridge has received for the month of June A\$58,000 from BBO to be distributed amongst the 50 participating ABF Online Clubs. Play with your club friends, have fun, contribute some income to your club and earn masterpoints.

If you would like your club to join the ABF Online games please contact Matthew McManus at nec@abf.com.au.

The ABF Nationwide Online Pairs events on Sundays are going from strength to strength with a new event being added: the ABF Nationwide Online Novice Pairs. Why don't you come and join us in front of your fire on a lazy winter Sunday afternoon? **Find out how.**

Sundays 2.30pm AEST

Open: to all ABF Registered Players

Restricted: less than 300 Masterpoints as of April 1, 2020

Novice: less than 100 Masterpoints as of April 1, 2020

Marketing Workshops on Zoom

Peter Cox BEc MBA is the leading economist, analyst and public speaker on the marketing of the media, leisure and sports industries in Australia.

Peter has researched and analysed the history and current state of bridge in both Australia and internationally, the competitive marketplace, the trends in players and club numbers and the challenges and opportunities for bridge clubs in the future.

Peter is conducting Marketing Workshops around Australia on Zoom to help clubs grow members and would like to conduct one with your club members.

GUIDE TO GROWING YOUR BRIDGE CLUB

1. Challenges in the Australian and International Bridge Markets
2. Research on "who we are" and our potential to grow
3. How to acquire new players through local marketing and promotions
4. Social media opportunities in Facebook advertising, Google and Instagram
5. Guide to making all bridge players feel welcome in your club
6. How to retain beginners and supervised players with the Buddy System
7. Bridge On Demand – bridge coaching all year round



8. How to write Press Releases

9. How to apply for ABF Marketing Grants

The presentation takes about two hours. All members of your club are welcome to attend because there are many suggestions on how everyone can contribute to making your club a more welcoming, social and community experience. In particular all club officials, directors, teachers, volunteers and those who would like to contribute to the success of your club are invited.

Please fill in the [Expression Of Interest](#) form to make your booking.

If you have any further questions contact Peter at petercox@ozemail.com.au or on his mobile on 0413 676 326.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Allison
Stralow



In mid March the ABF recommended clubs close to protect the bridge community and minimise the potential impacts of COVID-19. Four months later a number of clubs have returned to face-to-face bridge as restrictions are

lifted in some states and territories. Others continue to play online, and the ABF has begun to discuss the continuation of ABF and club online bridge in the future. A club which feels they cannot provide a safe environment for members, staff and/or cannot implement and enforce gathering and social distancing measures in line with regulations, should strongly consider not re-opening. My thoughts are with our Victorian and New South Wales members who have been impacted by the spikes in cases resulting in restrictions being reintroduced.

The ABF understands the impact of COVID-19 has been significant, and I thank the 95.8% of clubs that have paid their annual capitation fees in these trying times. In response to queries about where the capitation fees go, see below for a Q&A explaining the many benefits and opportunities provided by the ABF.

To all of the Australian Bridge Community, take care, stay resilient and keep safe.

CAPITATION FEES: A Q&A WITH THE PRESIDENT ON WHERE YOUR MONEY GOES

With COVID-19 adversely impacting many people financially, some clubs have asked the ABF if their capitation fees should be waived or discounted for the 2020 or 2021 membership years.

Here is a Q&A with the ABF President, Allison Stralow, to answer the questions we have received over the past few months from clubs. We hope this will help our 35,000 plus players understand where their capitation fee goes.

Q. How much is the ABF's capitation fee?

A. In 2020, the ABF's capitation fee was set at \$16.10. Most States and Territories charge an additional local capitation fee – usually around \$10. As a player you probably pay one annual fee to your club which includes your club's membership fee, the State/Territory capitation fee and the ABF's capitation fee.

Q. What do you think is the biggest benefit the ABF delivers to clubs and members?

A. The ABF has taken out three insurances on behalf of all States/Territories and clubs to protect paid employees, directors, volunteers and all club members. The Public Liability Insurance and Volunteer Worker Insurances are funded by the ABF and the Management Liability Insurance is shared with states / territories and clubs.

Q. What else does my capitation fee get spent on?

A. Part of your capitation fee is passed on to the WBF as the ABF is required to pay a capitation fee for each of its registered players. The remainder of your capitation fee helps the ABF deliver a range of services to both clubs and players.

Q. Give me some examples of other services delivered to my club?

A. Firstly nearly every bridge club has a bridge teacher who helps new players learn to play. The ABF funds the education of those bridge teachers through the excellent courses conducted by Joan Butts and her team. These courses provide both initial training for bridge teachers as well as on-

going professional development. During shutdown, Joan has continued to run professional development training programs via Zoom.

Secondly, to run a bridge session, each club needs a trained director. Training, development and qualification of bridge directors has been a key part of the ABF's program for many years. While some of this work is performed at the State and Territory level, in recent times the National Director Development Officer has run workshops designed to improve the skills of club directors. In early 2020 the ABF, in co-operation with NZ Bridge, funded a major training course designed to improve the knowledge and skills of our national directors from Australia and New Zealand.

Thirdly, getting new players to take up the game is an on-going challenge for clubs. The ABF's Head of Marketing, Peter Cox, has provided invaluable resources and programs and administered marketing grants funded by the ABF to assist clubs with this important activity. In late 2019, Peter expanded his work by running marketing workshops for groups of clubs and this activity will recommence once bridge clubs resume operations.

Q. What has the ABF been doing to provide bridge to clubs during shutdown?

A. The ABF has established a contractual agreement with BBO (Bridgebase Online) to enable games to be played online using the BBO platform for a very small table fee per player. This agreement delivers both organised games and masterpoints for players as well as revenue back to affiliated clubs. This agreement will continue after Covid-19 shutdown ends and will create a new on-going opportunity for clubs to offer games to players who might be reluctant to return to bridge at the club for some time.

Q. What does my capitation fee get me as a player?

A. All registered players receive membership of the ABF's Masterpoint Scheme. This provides you with a way of measuring your progress in the bridge world. Every time you are promoted up a rank in the scheme, the ABF sends a certificate to your club for presentation to you as a player.

Q. I'm not really interested in masterpoints so as a player what else do I get for my fee?

A. You will also receive access to copies of the ABF's free bi-monthly newsletter which are sent to the clubs and made available online. Additionally, your club receives a subscription to Australian Bridge Magazine, so as a member you ought to be able to access that highly regarded journal free of charge. Finally, you can access the excellent online learning videos produced by Joan Butts which the ABF has funded
www.abf.com.au/education/learn/

Q. I really like competing at bridge. What opportunities are there for me to pit my skills against the best?

A. Players can participate in the various national events such as the Summer Festival of Bridge and the Australian National Championships that the ABF organises or supports throughout the year. It also funds two pairs of restricted players from each state to attend the Australian National Championships. Additionally, it funds the annual GNOT event providing travel

support for 60 teams from around the country who have qualified via heats and regional finals to contest the final held in Tweed Heads. For our highest-level players, it provides extensive funding support for Open, Seniors, Women's, Mixed and Youth teams to compete in international championships which are held annually.

Q. Did the ABF reduce its costs during the shutdown? Did the Management Committee take a pay cut?

A. The ABF took steps to review the workloads of all its contractors, redeploying some to support the online bridge efforts and cutting back on hours for others. The ABF Council and the ABF Management Committee are all volunteers and as such receive no remuneration or honorariums. Shutdown hasn't meant that all work has stopped. The ABF's commitment to improving its technology and scoring systems, which will benefit all clubs and players, has continued. This newsletter's feature story on the technology project (page 9) will give players an insight into what is coming over the next few months.

ABF SURVEY RESULTS

In the July Marketing Bulletin, Peter Cox asked members to write in with their experiences of playing online during the lockdown. Here are some of the responses.

Community bridge clubs often have small numbers of players willing and able to play online bridge, so would find it difficult to run a viable online bridge session for their own members. So four Sydney clubs have joined together to run sessions during the pandemic. Through the efforts of Theo Mangos and Nicoleta Giura the Easts, Kiama, Randwick and Wollstonecraft bridge clubs now run four sessions each week, three open sessions, and one supervised session. Experienced players sometimes mentor the less experienced players at the supervised session.

Allen Rosenberg

My club Beenleigh-Logan Bridge Club was one of the first to get started with online bridge, and lessons thanks to Val Roland and the committee. Val does Supervised play every Wednesday 9:30-11:30 on Zoom and Bidding on Friday 9:30-11:30. It is working so well, we may even continue to do it online when this is over. Players from other clubs join us as well.

Val has been very active in getting tournaments going, not only with our group but with others in Queensland; teaching them directing and how to run them, and she is also happy to be a sub. I appreciate the help and support she has given me. At the moment I am playing bridge about 14 hours a week, mainly so that when we return to the club and competition we will not have forgotten everything. Thanks to everyone who has helped make this possible.

PS. I love reading your magazines and learn a lot from them.

Mary Simon

Peninsula Bridge Club gave us the opportunity to join BBO, helping those of us not computer literate. I am so grateful for this knowledge as I have played daily on BBO, hopefully improving my game, enjoying meeting people all over the world, making new friends, very rarely feeling intimidated when making wrong play, often getting good advice from the best.

Thank you BBO, I will continue long after life returns to normal.

Katherine Armstrong

BBO has been fantastic, it allows me to play whenever I want and for as long as I please. The VBA competitions are fantastic and can only thank Andrew who took the time to set me up. Now I have become the "setter upper" for so many people! They are loving it. Let's all support our clubs, this is the new normal.

Wendy Freeman

As a Novice, I would like to see ABF address the needs of the many members new to the game and who currently sit in the Under-100 masterpoints group. Currently the online Stepbridge game is offering these sessions and getting great response. Could ABF look into this and offer the same? These newer members are the future of the game.

Jann Small

We are very conscious of the importance of our newer members, with 70% of players having less than 100 masterpoints. We have started up a Novice section in our Nationwide Online Pairs on Sundays at 2:30, which is proving very popular. Also a number of clubs are providing rookie sections in the ABF Club Online games on BBO as well during the week.

Peter Cox, ABF Marketing

Mary Simon has been awarded the prize subscription to Australian Bridge Magazine.

HOW WOULD YOU PLAY?

with
Barbara
Travis



Solutions on page 23

QUESTION 1

♠ K 6
♥ 6 3
♦ K Q J 6
♣ A Q 5 4 3

♠ A 10 5 3
♥ A K 4
♦ 7 4
♣ J 10 9 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	pass	1♠
pass	2♦	pass	3NT
all pass			

If North-South were playing Blackout, then South can re-bid 3♣, game forcing. Then North would do best to rebid 3♥ (fourth suit forcing) and you arrive in 3NT once again.

West leads the ♥Q, East following with the ten. How would you play?

QUESTION 2

♠ A 9 4
♥ J 7 5
♦ J 9 3 2
♣ J 8 4

♠ Q J 7
♥ A K Q 6
♦ A Q 10 8
♣ Q 9

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			2NT
pass	3NT	all pass	

West leads the ♠2, fourth-highest. You are playing Teams. What is your plan?

QUESTION 3

♠ K 10 6
♥ A 8 6
♦ 6 5
♣ 10 7 6 4 3

♠ Q J 9 7 3 2
♥ K Q 4
♦ Q 8 3
♣ A

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
2NT ¹	3♠ ²	pass	4♠
all pass			

1. At least 5-5 in the minors.
2. Weaker than bidding 3♦ (cue raise).

West makes the very good opening lead of the ♠A, revealed as a singleton when West then switches to the ♣K.

What is your plan?

ABF BRIDGE TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM

by Julian Foster

(continued from page 1)



A common misconception seems to be that we are building an online bridge playing platform. No we are not – we will leave that to BBO, Stepbridge and others! The ABF bridge technology system is intended to become a web-based bridge management portal, ultimately capable of handling every aspect of organised club and tournament bridge. It will provide all the services that players need to organise their bridge, and everything that a club or state body needs to run their bridge operations. For example:

- Scoring
- Event entry
- Forums
- Teaching
- Results
- Payments
- Membership management
- Masterpoints / PQPs

The system will be provided free to all affiliated bridge clubs and their members. The primary cost is being financed partly from ABF reserves, and partly via the State bodies agreeing to forego various ABF grants. Ongoing running costs will be centrally financed from existing ABF income, such as masterpoints and capitation fees.

Who is working on this?

Mark Guthrie (nto@abf.com.au)

Mark (pictured below left) is the ABF National Technology Officer in charge of the project. He has led the decision-making leading up to the project and the primary technology choices being used to build it. He is also currently serving as the primary developer (this may change in future).

Mark has extensive experience, and spent 17 years working in IT at Macquarie Bank in a number of locations.

Julian Foster (julian.foster@abf.com.au)

Julian's role is basically to pull together the "requirements" (what exactly we need the system to do) and then test what the programmers build.

Julian (pictured right) is an experienced bridge player, and an accountant in a previous life with Deloitte before moving



more towards the software world and working in development of specialist taxation software. He has been involved in bridge administration for many years and is a past Treasurer and Chairman of the New South Wales Bridge Association. Although never having convened a major event himself, he has worked closely with those who have.

Mark and Julian report to a Technology Steering committee which consists of a group of experienced people in bridge, software and business:

- Peter Busch
- John Grosvenor
- Ian McKinnon
- Geoff Schaller
- Stephen Fischer
- Matthew McManus
- Peter Reynolds
- Neil Williams

The Steering committee in turn report to the ABF Management Committee.

What will it look like?

The next page shows a screenshot of the home screen from the Mockup website (referred to as the **Dashboard**). It shows broadly what the project is intended to look like. Down the left will be navigation to a series of **Modules**. Across the top will be shortcuts to particular key aspects. The central part of the screen will display results and events (personalised to you in both cases). The bottom section will include rolling news items from the ABF, your state body, and your club(s) as well as discussion forums. You can visit the Mockup website at

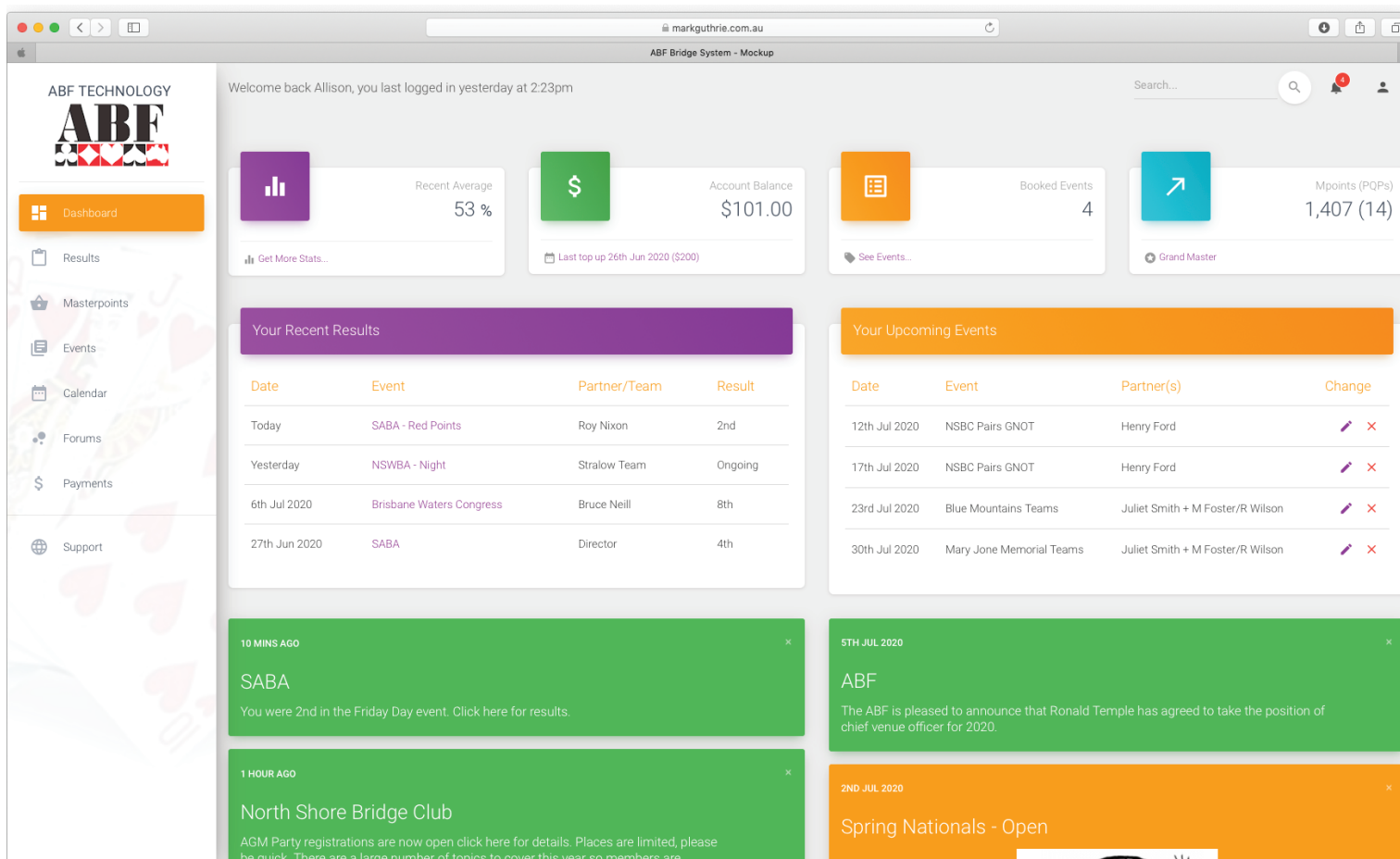
<https://tinyurl.com/abfsys>

to play around with this in more depth if you want.

The system will be web based, and players will need to register and log in using their ABF number. There are several reasons for this, but the most important is to allow the system to already have some basic details about you. That means it can present information customised to you, and can fill in various things automatically for you (e.g. you will no longer need to key in your name or ABF number when entering an event).

What are the benefits for players?

- A single place to go to for almost all your bridge activities.
- See all your latest results in one place.
- See a calendar of all your upcoming bridge events (with the ability to enter and pay for them all online).
- An easier, simpler, way to enter all bridge events online.
- The ability to run an account with the ABF and use it to pay online for all your bridge – initially major events, but later extending to your local club sessions as well. See the next page for what this will look like.



- Receive news items about bridge, and customise what you get in your **news feed** (a bit like a Facebook news feed).
- Take part in discussion forums about bridge (a bit like a local Bridge Winners).

What are the benefits for bridge clubs?

- A single place for all your bridge administration.
- Access for your administrators to separate areas of the system that allow you to manage:
 - * Contact details (no need to maintain separate details with the ABF and your state body)
 - * Your list of members
 - * Other areas (congresses, masterpoints, ABF account, etc).
- No need to have separate software systems for different things (scoring, Pianola, etc).
- The ability to set up your Congress, advertise it via its own dedicated webpage, and accept online entries and payments.
- The ability to accept online card payments using the ABF's payment gateway.
- The ability to run an account with the ABF and accept "ABF dollars" as payment from players – initially for your Congress, but later for your club sessions too (this also means no need to offer books of vouchers to players and a big reduction in the amount of cash you have to handle).
- Simpler interaction with the Masterpoint Centre (this area is still being worked on, but we hope to reduce the amount of processing that scorers and club Masterpoint Secretaries currently have to do).

What are other benefits?

Although less visible to players and clubs, there are other benefits as well:

- A system built using up to date technology that is not reliant on a single person to be maintained.
- A single system with a common database in the background that each area can access – no need to copy or transfer information around.

One key new area: ABF dollars

ABF dollars are an important new feature. The idea is that players will have an account with the ABF. You won't have to use it, but if you want to, you can manually add funds using an online card payment and use those funds to pay for bridge rather than separately paying each time you enter or play an event. The new entries system also being developed within the project will include ABF dollars as a possible payment method. If you wish, you can also turn on **Auto Top-Up**. This will enable your account to automatically top-up by a set amount every time it drops below \$20 (similar to the public transport cards that are now common in all our cities). Finally you can make internal transfers to other players (perhaps they have entered an event and paid for you).

Ultimately, you will be able to use your account whenever you play bridge (from a National event to your local club session). The system will start out being able to handle congresses, and club sessions will be added later. The payment administration behind the scenes gets handled by the system, the ABF, and the clubs. Be assured that all card payments are totally secure – we are using Stripe as our card payment provider, and no card details are stored in our system.

See below for an example of what a player's **Statement** will look like, showing all these sorts of transactions.

Where can we get more information?

There are assorted sources of information available:

ABF TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

For more background on the overall ABF technology strategy and how it has fed into this project, there are assorted documents here:

<https://www.abf.com.au/about-abf/abf-technology-strategy/>

YOUTUBE VIDEOS

Mark and Julian periodically release videos on You Tube. These include background information, regular project updates, and deeper dives into proposed functionality in some areas. These are referred to on the ABF website but are also available directly here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZPuvivkdbzl4kg-cwxQuNQ/playlists>

MOCKUP WEBSITE

The mock-up website from 2019 illustrates what the system could look like, including some of its core functions:

<https://tinyurl.com/abfsys>

The mock up includes representations of the main areas, but everything is dummy so not everything works fully. Click on the ABF logo at the top left to see more notes about the mock-up and what it does and doesn't do.

LIVE SESSIONS

Obviously for most of 2020 we have not had much face to face bridge. Once it resumes, we are hoping to attend several major congresses, and will aim to run some demonstrations and question/answer sessions. Look out for advertising through Congress brochures and websites!

When will it be released?

The project will be delivered in stages over the next 2-3 years. We expect the first release to be available in late 2020 or early 2021. This will include:

- Framework
- Dashboard
- Events (National events and State/Club congresses)
- Calendar
- Payments for congresses (ABF dollars and online credit card gateway)
- Basic forums and news items
- Masterpoints (view data only).

How can I get involved?

There are a number of ways you can help with the project if you are interested:

FOCUS GROUPS

There are focus groups who are looking at particular areas before we start developing them (e.g. major events, club congresses, scoring). This is critical for us to ensure that we are in touch with the people on the ground so that we end up building what users actually want.

TESTING

We are obviously testing the system as we are building it. However, those of us working closely with the project are not always best placed to spot potential problems – particularly around whether something is user-friendly or not.

Therefore, as we approach each release, we will also be looking for prospective users to test an advance version of the system. This will generally involve accessing the system on the internet and doing two things:

- Following a given script to check the system passes set tests
- Ad-hoc 'playing around' to see what you can find!

Anyone interested in helping with either of these areas is urged to contact Julian Foster on

julian.foster@abf.com.au

and you can be included in a user-group.

Date	Counterparty	Type	Description	In(\$)	Out(\$)	Balance(\$)
24 Jun 2020		Auto Top Up	Payment from VISA ending 4242	100.00		115.00
24 Jun 2020	New South Wales Bridge Association Inc	Congress Entry	Congress C		45.00	15.00
24 Jun 2020	Mark Guthrie(ABF: 620246)	Pay a Friend	Congress B		45.00	60.00
24 Jun 2020	Canberra Bridge Club Inc	Congress Entry	Congress A		45.00	105.00
24 Jun 2020		Manual Top Up	Payment from VISA ending 4242	150.00		150.00



YOUTH BRIDGE NEWS

with
Leigh and Bianca Gold

2020 AUSTRALIAN ONLINE YOUTH TOURNAMENT

With the lockdown continuing and no face to face bridge for many, The ABF agreed to hold the 1st Australian Online Youth Tournament (AOYT). Invitations were sent to all states and territories for an event that would run over a month, in which each state would play against each other state twice, with the two top teams progressing to a 48 board final.



When entries closed we had five strong teams entered, and play started late June on BBO. All matches allowed kibitzers, and I'm sure for those who watched, they would have seen some exciting bridge. Before I move on to the hands, I want to say thank you to all those that made the event a success. The players, NPCs and especially those that support youth bridge. Thank you Paul Lavings for generously donating book vouchers for 1st and 2nd and the expert players for donating their time playing with one of the players on the winning team in an upcoming game.

The Qualifying had some great boards, In the 1st round robin Victoria met ACT.

Victoria did well with a few pressure bids. On board 2, the 3♠ bid by Damon Flicker put Diya Shah, East, under pressure:

Board 2 ♠ Q 10 9 6
E/NS ♥ 7 4
 ♦ 6 5 3 2
 ♣ K 3 2

♠ 5
♥ 10 9 8 6
♦ A K Q J
♣ J 10 6 5

♠ J 8 3
♥ K J 5 3
♦ 10 9 4
♣ A Q 7

♠ A K 7 4 2
♥ A Q 2
♦ 8 7
♣ 9 8 4

WEST Dev	NORTH Damon	EAST Diya	SOUTH Seb
dbl	3♠	pass all pass	1♠

East's 4-3-3-3 shape was a concern, with so many losers. Diya decided to pass, allowing Seb Wright to play 3♠ going two

down. In the other room, Bec O'Reilly decided to open the East hand 1♣:

WEST Jamie	NORTH Andrew	EAST Bec	SOUTH Josh
dbl	2♠	1♣	1♠
dbl	pass	pass	pass
4♥	all pass	3♥	pass

Josh Tomlin overcalled 1♠ and Jamie Thompson doubled. Andrew Spooner could have put the pressure on with 3♠ now but chose to only bid 2♠, allowing Bec to bid 3♥. Now it was an easy path to game and 8 imps to Victoria.

Board 5 saw the return of Flannery:

Board 5 ♠ K J 5 3
N/NS ♥ Q J 7 3 2
 ♦ A 10 7 3
 ♣ —

♠ 8 7
♥ A 8 5
♦ K Q
♣ Q J 7 6 3 2

♠ A Q 6 4
♥ K 9 6
♦ J 6 5 2
♣ 10 9

♠ 10 9 2
♥ 10 4
♦ 9 8 4
♣ A K 8 5 4

WEST Dev	NORTH Damon	EAST Diya	SOUTH Seb
	2♦	pass	4♥
	all pass		

A product of the early days of bridge, Flannery has made a big comeback with our younger players. 2♦ opening shows five hearts, four spades, and 11-15 HCP. This worked wonders on this board, as Seb was able to make an aggressive 4♥ bid locking out any action from West and buying the contact.

At the other table they were playing Precision:

WEST Jamie	NORTH Andrew	EAST Bec	SOUTH Josh
	1♥	pass	2♠
3♣	4♥	5♣	dbl
all pass			

After a 1♥ opening (11-15) and a Bergen three-card raise (10-12), Jamie thought it may be a good time to look at a potential sacrifice if the opponents reached game. He knew it was very unlikely they would look for penalties here once they had found their fit.

This time however he struck gold, hitting Bec with five-card support, and in the process picking up 8 imps.

The very next hand shows the 'law' in action.

Board 6	♠ 9 6 5			
E/W	♥ J 8			
	♦ Q 9 7 6 5			
	♣ K 9 4			
♠ 10 8 7		♠ A K		
♥ A 9 4 3		♥ Q 10 7 6 5 2		
♦ J		♦ A 8 2		
♣ 10 7 6 5 3		♣ Q 2		
	♠ Q J 4 3 2			
	♥ K			
	♦ K 10 4 3			
	♣ A J 8			
WEST Jamie	NORTH Andrew	EAST Bec	SOUTH Josh	
		1♥	1♠	
2♥	2♠	3♥	3♠	
4♥	all pass			

At the first table, Jamie diagnosed the ten-card fit and knew his diamond shortage would come in useful during the play. He was hoping if NS did bid on to 4♠, he would have enough defence with a potential diamond ruff or two.

At the other table the bidding was the same up to 3♠. Young Dev Shah, sitting West, didn't have the experience to know that these hands can move – he sold out to 3♠, conceding 12 imps to Victoria.

The next three boards Victoria handed back 29 imps in unforced errors, before striking again on board 13:

Board 13	♠ 9 7 3			
N/All	♥ 7 4			
	♦ A Q 7 5 2			
	♣ 10 8 5			
♠ 8 6 2		♠ A K 10 5 4		
♥ Q 10 9		♥ A 8 6		
♦ K J 10 8		♦ 9 4		
♣ A Q 2		♣ J 7 4		
	♠ Q J			
	♥ K J 5 3 2			
	♦ 6 3			
	♣ K 9 6 3			
WEST Jamie	NORTH Andrew	EAST Bec	SOUTH Josh	
	pass	1♠	pass	
2♦	pass	2NT	pass	
3NT	all pass			

After Bec opened 1♠, Jamie decided his hand was worth a game force with so many tens, nines and eights. Notice that

with his 4333 he choose 3NT and never showed his spade support. Jamie's holding suggest that the contract will make the same number of tricks whether in notrumps or in spades.

WEST Dev	NORTH Damon	EAST Diya	SOUTH Seb
	pass	1♠	2♥
3♠	all pass		

At the other table Dev choose a limit raise and Diya didn't have a move to game, winning 13 imps to Victoria. Victoria ended up winning the match 63-43.

A great hand came up in the NSW vs SA match:

Board 14	♠ K J 10 8 6 4			
E/Nil	♥ 4			
	♦ A J			
	♣ A J 7 4			
♠ Q 7 2		♠ A 9 3		
♥ Q 7 6 2		♥ K 9 5		
♦ 9 7 6 2		♦ K 10 8 5 4		
♣ 9 6		♣ Q 8		
	♠ 5			
	♥ A J 10 8 3			
	♦ Q 3			
	♣ K 10 5 3 2			
WEST David	NORTH Jacob	EAST Tony	SOUTH Lara	
		1♦	2♦	
pass	2♠	pass	3♣	
pass	3♠	pass	4♣	
pass	5♣	all pass		

WEST David	NORTH Jacob	EAST Tony	SOUTH Lara
		1♦	2♦
pass	2♠	pass	3♣
pass	3♠	pass	4♣
pass	5♣	all pass	

After East opens 1♦, Lara Topper bids 2♦! Now dear readers, I'm not 100% sure what this means but it led to Jacob Rose who was sitting North bidding a lot of spades, and South bidding a lot of clubs, before Jacob realised that he also held clubs and subsiding in game which duly made.

WEST Cameron	NORTH Bertie	EAST Tamara	SOUTH George
		1♦	1♥
pass	1♠	pass	2♣
pass	2♠	all pass	

At the other table George Bartley sitting South showed his hearts, and over Bertie Morgan's 1♠ bid, he now showed clubs. A lot of people use Michaels and Unusual 2NT to show either a weak or a strong hand, leaving the middle hands to be bid naturally. This makes it easier for partner to know what level to place the contract, with the only downside being you give the opponents more time to also find their contract. At this point the wheels fell off when Bertie decided to bid a non-forcing 2♠ with what looks like a game force with club support. This got passed out for 6 imps to NSW.

The round robin finishing with QLD and SA easily making the final. Results can be found [here](#).

The final was held Saturday 26th July with the lead swapping every 12 boards. In the end SA pushed away in the final 12 boards running out winners 162-110.64. We will have hands and a write up of the final for the next edition. Thank you all again for supporting the event and hopefully see you back at the table soon.



San Jose 8-year-old proves to be a giant bridge player

Photo by Nhat V. Meyer, Bay Area News Group

From the MERCURY NEWS in San Francisco, SAL PIZARRO reports on Andrew Chen, the ACBL's youngest Life Master

I don't know about you, but when I was 8, my card game expertise extended to a few victorious rounds of Go Fish. But Andrew Chen of San Jose was awarded Life Master status by the American Contract Bridge League just three days after his eighth birthday last month, making him the youngest person to reach that milestone in the organization's history.

Andrew joined the ACBL after playing in one of Silicon Valley Youth Bridge's pizza parties in 2018. It didn't take long for him to figure out his calls from his bids, and he racked up 215 masterpoints – the scale the ACBL uses to rank players – in less than 12 months, making him the league's Rookie of the Year in 2019.

To reach Life Master status, Andrew had to accumulate 500 masterpoints, which he did while playing an online game – thanks, COVID-19 – hosted by Palo Alto bridge club Think Slam on May 27.

"I'm totally thrilled," Andrew said about his accomplishment. "I feel like my hard work has paid off, and I want to thank everyone who helped getting me there."

With the way he plays, he should save that line. He's probably going to need it as he breaks records accumulating more points and moving up the ABCL's ladder. So how is an elementary school kid entranced by a game that, let's be honest, conjures images of senior citizens sitting around a kitchen table? "Every bridge hand is like a puzzle to solve," Andrew says. "I like working things out."

Bridge is a bit of a family tradition, as both Andrew's parents and grandparents also play. He and his 10-year-old brother, Charlie, won a trophy playing together at the San Mateo County Sectional Tournament in 2019. Sometimes, he and Charlie invent new card games to play when they're not playing bridge, too.

Andrew's father, Steve Chen, says the family has been playing quite a bit during shelter in place, sometimes with real cards and sometime with iPads, which saves them from having to deal and automatically keeps records of the hands. "A family of four," he said, "is the perfect size for bridge."

Now that sounds like some good advice for families bored while stuck at home.

spizarro@bayareanewsgroup.com



Continuing Professional Development Days

Zoom teaching sessions are continuing, and, looking on the bright side, they have some advantages. The recent ABF Zoom teacher training session (one day of four 1-hourly segments) on Help with Play, contained, in the same "room", teachers from all states...NSW, Victoria, Queensland, ACT, Tasmania, SA and WA. This offered a unique opportunity to compare teaching views and bidding ideas. I'm limiting the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) days to twenty participants, so that everyone has a chance to contribute.

The newest CPD Day is a Zoom day for teachers on *How to Teach and Play Slams*. I created this after observing the slam bidding habits of the increased numbers of players on BBO. Combined with the fact that there are so many more results to compare from online tournaments these days, it offered further proof of what we already know: that the average players' slam bidding is not accurate, and that the experts outgun them vastly in this area.

As usual, the average player is nervous of bidding slams, and they stay (safely) in game. There is a need to relook at teaching methods.

In the Slam CPD Day, I cover:

- the big difference between bidding slam with balanced hands, and unbalanced ones,
- the importance of controls,
- when Blackwood is useful and when it is not,
- when to use cue (control) bidding.

See the ABF Education web page for dates of Zoom teacher training sessions. These are free, totally supported by the ABF.

Here are two hands which required an investigation into slam, whether or not it was the correct contract. I watched some very experienced women dealing poorly with this hand in an online teams match. What do you open vul, in second seat, with:

♠ A K Q 10 8 5 ♥ A ♦ A K 8 6 5 ♣ 3

Assuming you open 2♣, the bidding will go

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	2♦	pass	2♣
pass	3♥	pass	2♠
			?

What do you choose for your next bid?

At one table I watched, they opened 1♠, and over partner's 1NT response, bid (only) 2♦, which was PASSED OUT! I can't imagine this hand being opened anything less than a game force.

At the other table, they were playing Precision, and South opened 1♣, and after a short (too short) series of exchanges,

decided to leap to 6♠! This of course failed, so the table which hadn't even reached game, WON a few imps! Slam doesn't make here, but it could have been investigated a bit more scientifically. Here are the four hands, reproduced from my website. 4♠ is possibly the superior contract for Matchpoints, but I'm not sure how to reach that rather than 5♦.

E/NS	♠ J	
	♥ K J 9 6 3	
	♦ 9 7 2	
	♣ 8 7 4 2	
♠ 6 3 2		♠ 9 7 4
♥ Q 8 7 5		♥ 10 4 2
♦ Q J		♦ 10 4 3
♣ A K Q 5		♣ J 10 9 6
	♠ A K Q 10 8 5	
	♥ A	
	♦ A K 8 6 5	
	♣ 3	

The second hand was played in an ABF online tournament, with around 100 tables. Approximately one third of the players bid to 6♥, and not everyone made it. It comes down to the play in clubs. Low towards the ♣J is recommended, having cashed one of the top honours first. A trump must be left in dummy in case the clubs do not break.

♠ A J 5	
♥ 9 7 4	
♦ A J 8 3	
♣ J 8 7	
♠ 7 6 2	♠ Q 10 9 3
♥ 10 6	♥ J 3
♦ K 9 7	♦ Q 10 6 5 4 2
♣ Q 10 9 5 4	♣ 3
	♠ K 8 4
	♥ A K Q 8 5 2
	♦ —
	♣ A K 6 2

Of course it's easy when we can see all four hands, isn't it? I look forward to seeing people who are interested in ABF Accreditation days online soon. Check out the ABF website:

<http://www.abf.com.au/education/>

BATTLE FOR THE ASHES

The inaugural Beaumont-Stamford International Challenge

by Barbara Travis

July has been a very busy time for bridge in South Australia, with most bridge clubs re-opening for face-to-face bridge.

Many of my club players have taken to online bridge, particularly via BBO, like ducks to water. In fact, we've seen some creative new bridge challenges.

The Ashes: Beaumont vs Stamford

Bill Bradshaw, who originally hails from Stamford in England and still has relatives playing at the Stamford Bridge Club, responded to a suggestion that Stamford BC would like to have a teams challenge against another club.

Four teams of keen bridge players formed, and a date was set for our first Beaumont-Stamford International Challenge. On Tuesday 14th July, at 7pm SA time / 10.30am UK time, play started (16 boards in 8 board halves, "English-style").

Three of our four teams won their head-to-head match against Stamford, giving Beaumont the title, and an annual event was born. Next year's date has already been organised.



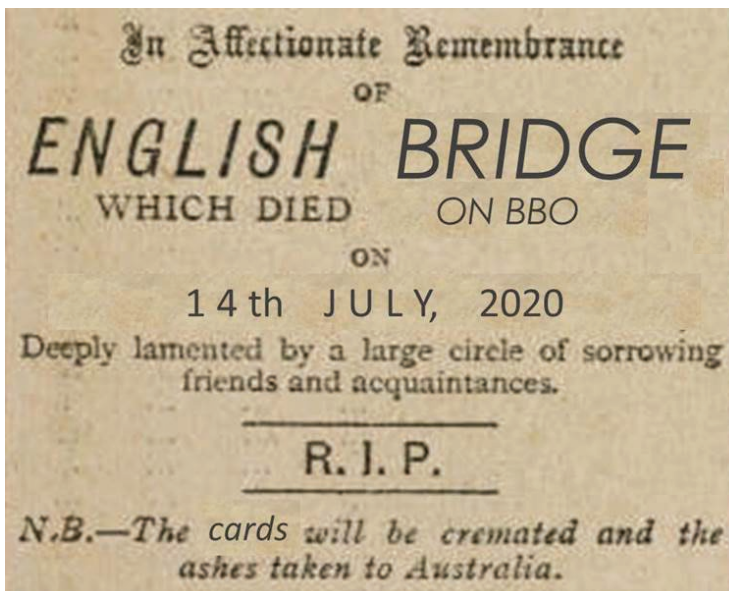
Furthermore, Bill, a cricket tragic, ordered an urn online, headed outside with a deck of cards (or more) that he incinerated, and he has created our own trophy, The Beaumont-Stamford International Challenge – for The Ashes!

I can't report on a bridge event without providing some hands.

Second board of the match, you hold:

♠ K Q J 3 ♥ A ♦ A K Q 8 2 ♣ K J 8

There are two passes to you, you open 2♣ and LHO doubles (showing clubs). This is passed round to you. What do you do?



Catherine Ellice-Flint passed it out, hoping to make 2♣ doubled on sheer power. She made nine tricks with a little help from the defence.

♠ 6 4
♥ K 8 2
♦ 9 5 4
♣ A Q 9 3 2

♠ K Q J 3
♥ A
♦ A K Q 8 2
♣ K J 8

♠ 9 7 5 2
♥ J 10 9 7 3
♦ J
♣ 10 6 5

♠ A 10 8
♥ Q 6 5 4
♦ 10 7 6 3
♣ 7 4

2♣ doubled making nine was NNN for EW. No game makes, as the defence can beat 4♠ by leading a trump to South's ace for a club return. At the other table, 3NT failed on a club lead.

Peter Bower and Mick Coogan (Stamford 4) bid this hand well, for a deserved gain:

♠ 8 4
♥ A K 3
♦ 10 6
♣ A K J 10 9 7

♠ A K Q 10 7 2
♥ 6 5
♦ A K 3
♣ Q 6

3♣ natural, GF
5♥ 2 aces
6♥ 2 kings

1♠
4NT
5NT
7NT

Old-fashioned, natural jump shifts along with old-fashioned Blackwood worked effectively on the hand, with South knowing that his ♣Q-6 were great cards for his partner's 6+ club suit.

On the next hand, lack of discipline cost a game swing.

♠ K 6
♥ K J 9 7 4 2
♦ 4
♣ A K 9 8

♠ 8 7 5
♥ A Q 10 8 6
♦ A 8
♣ Q 4 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
pass	2NT ^{GF raise}	3♠	4♥
pass	4NT	pass	5♠
pass	6♥	all pass	

I suspect that South thought his 4♥ bid was 'fast arrival', given the game forcing response from North, whereas North thought it was encouraging. These agreements are really important to your partnership – I would play that 4♥ was fast arrival and pass would be more encouraging. The other issue was that North's ♠K was no longer a good card, with the spade bid over his king; the hand would be better if West had bid spades, not East.

The spade lead resulted in instant defeat.

Further Challenges

The Beaumont-Stamford Challenge was played in such good spirit, and obvious enjoyment and love for the game that, while they were playing, I decided to initiate further international teams challenges. They are not elitist, simply enjoyable competition with overseas players.



Catherine Ellice-Flint and Bill Bradshaw with the Ashes

We now have acceptances from two other clubs in the UK: Berwick Bridge Club, the northern-most bridge club in England (Tuesday 11th August) and the New Melville Bridge Club in Edinburgh (Tuesday 1st September).

Berwick Bridge Club plans to organise for everyone to play the same boards, English-style (i.e. 8-board halves), with a Zoom discussion session afterwards. The New Melville Bridge Club, on the other hand, wants to play what is (in the UK) called "Australian-style" (i.e. a 16-board match).

Both clubs have been amazing with their support for the idea of international challenges, and there's been no problem proposing a 7pm (SA) start time, which is 10:30am in the UK!

This sort of notion can be adopted by any bridge club where the players are comfortable playing online with BBO. We are only limited by our imaginations (and time).

Online Teams Leagues

Once it was evident that the March lockdown would last longer than initially hoped, we tried to come up with some alternatives for competition bridge, whilst awaiting some SA virtual clubs to be established. The SA (Lockdown) Online Teams League was born.

League #1, with 12 teams playing a full round robin during May, was won by BIRD (Sheila Bird - Felicity Smyth, Jon Hunt - David Gue, Mike Doecke - David Parrott).

League #2, organised by Sheila Bird and Jon Hunt, held in June, saw a slightly different format, where 12 teams played in two sections, with semi finals between 1st in one section and 2nd in the other section. That League was won, somewhat fortuitously by TRAVIS (Barbara Travis - Arjuna de Livera, Howard Melbourne - Nic Croft, George Bartley - Bertie Morgan).

League #3, being played during July, will be the last League. 8 teams are playing a Board-a-Match competition. BAM is not played much in Australia, and Sheila and Jon thought it would provide an interesting alternative to everyday teams matches.

Many thanks to Sheila and Jon for their very professional organisation of these final two Leagues.

Other events in South Australia

The SA Bridge Federation is re-commencing Thursday night bridge with a Walk-In Pairs on Thursday 23rd July. The State Teams Phase 1 then starts from Thursday 30th July. To date, 24 teams have entered (with a maximum capacity of 28 teams).

Bridge at Beaumont held its annual Christmas in Winter Congress on Sunday 19th July (before the proposed opening of the State border, which did not eventuate). This may have been the first post-lockdown Congress in Australia. The venue, Mt Osmond Golf Club, limited numbers to 18 tables, to ensure the required 1.5m social distancing (separation of tables).

After a cancellation or two because of concerns from the interstate Covid issues, 17 tables of diehard bridge players turned up on a cold, wet and foggy day for the 9:30am start. A morning's bridge was followed by a two-course Christmas lunch, followed by more bridge – and all with a lovely log fire to warm us up.

The congress winners:

A GRADE

- 1 Felicity Gunner - Heather Motteram
- 2 Therese Demarco - Lori Smith
- 3 Ingrid Cooke - Pam Morgan-King

B GRADE

- 1 Lucy Fisher - Tina Hesketh
- 2 Deborah Cramer - Peter Turnbull
- 3 Vicki Djurasevich - Carolyn Mroczek



WORKSHOPS WITH WILL

with William Jenner-O'Shea

BIDDING WITHOUT RESPONDER

Occasionally, you open the bidding and your partner doesn't respond. To pass your one-level opening, your partner has less than 6 HCP. If either of your opponents makes a bid, then you might want to compete, but all of the rules are different.



Let's start with an example. You open 1♦, followed by pass, and pass from your partner. You are mentally preparing to play in 1♦, but your RHO overcalls 1♥. Now what?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
pass	pass	1♥	?

Firstly, consider balanced hands. If you play Standard, then you either have 12-14 HCP and you typically rebid 1NT, or you have 18-19 points, planning to jump to 2NT. Since your partner has passed, you should downgrade all of your bids, as partner has no points! If you have 12-14 points, simply pass; there is no reason to compete when partner has less than 6 points. If you have 18-19 points, it might be worth competing, but simply bid 1NT. The purpose of jumping was to show strength, to possibly find a game. Don't jump to look for game if your partner hasn't responded. After your 1NT bid, partner will often pass, but can retreat from 1NT by bidding a 5+ card suit if they have an unbalanced hand. If you play Acol, then you have 15-19 points, and should pass with the lower range (15-17) and bid 1NT with 18-19 points.

Now let's take a look at unbalanced hands. You are welcome to bid on, but be warned that partner is very weak. If you have

a nice six-card suit then maybe rebid it, but consider how many tricks you are likely to win in your own hand. You can't assume that partner will have a fit, or any tricks for you at all.

You open 1♦, and the bidding proceeds pass, pass, 1♥, back to you.

Example 1:

♠ A J 9 ♥ 3 ♦ K Q J 10 8 7 ♣ A 2

You can probably win seven or eight tricks: five diamonds, two aces, and maybe another spade. It is worth competing, so bid 2♦. If you had this hand with a seven-card diamond suit you might bid to 3♦, just to get in their way (not to look for game).

Example 2:

♠ K J 2 ♥ K J ♦ K J 7 6 5 4 ♣ K Q

This time, your 17 HCP is not worth many tricks. With scattered honours, and a dubious quality diamond suit, the sensible choice is to pass. With no help from partner, this hand won't make many tricks.

There is a similar, but subtly different auction, which begins with you opening the bidding, for example 1♥, and your **left-hand opponent** overcalling 2♣. Now partner passes, and your other opponent passes back to you. There is a chance that your partner has no points, be warned! However, partner might have a reasonable hand and possibly even a good hand, with clubs, and has passed as a trap. If you are short in clubs (two or fewer) you should double. Although the double is for take-out, partner can pass if they have reasonable clubs and a few points. Otherwise, they will simply compete to their best suit.

For those bridge players who care about the environment, the ABF's sponsor, PENLINE, makes Reusable Coffee cups and Water Bottles, as part of its "War on Waste". If you are interested in more information, please contact Maryo Derofo by email: maryo@penline.com.au

BRIDGE INTO THE 21st CENTURY

by Paul Lavings



LEBENSORHL

Partner opens 1NT and your RHO overcalls 2♥. What would you call on the following hands, nil vulnerable:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	2♥ ¹	?

1. Five hearts and a 4+ minor.

1. ♠ K J 8 7 6 ♥ 4 3 ♦ 10 7 6 3 ♣ 6 3
2. ♠ Q 10 6 5 ♥ 3 ♦ 10 9 7 6 4 ♣ K 10 2
3. ♠ 8 2 ♥ 7 6 ♦ K Q 10 9 2 ♣ J 10 9 2
4. ♠ 8 2 ♥ 7 4 ♦ A K Q 7 6 4 ♣ K 8 7
5. ♠ Q 8 7 ♥ 6 4 ♦ K 9 8 4 ♣ Q 10 6 3
6. ♠ A 8 7 4 ♥ A 7 ♦ K 10 7 3 ♣ J 10 7
7. ♠ A 7 2 ♥ A 9 8 ♦ Q 10 7 4 ♣ 8 7 5
8. ♠ K 8 2 ♥ 10 6 ♦ K Q 8 2 ♣ Q 10 6 3
9. ♠ A 8 7 6 3 ♥ 6 2 ♦ K 8 7 2 ♣ K 10
10. ♠ A Q J 8 7 6 3 ♥ 7 6 ♦ 6 ♣ 9 6 5

SOLUTIONS

1. 2♠. You may think you are too weak to compete but you have a good five card suit, a little bit of shape and you don't want to sell out to 2♥. Even going minus 50 is an improvement over minus 110 or minus 140 in 2♥. The big pay-off comes when opponents bid on to 3♥ and fail by one trick and you have turned a minus into a plus.

2. Double. Again you don't want to sell out to 2♥ with your good shape and scattering of tens and nines. If partner doesn't have spades but has say 2-3-4-4 shape, he will bid 2NT scrambling, asking you to choose a suit (rather than making a unilateral guess of 3♣ or 3♦).

3. 2NT. The Lebensohl convention whereby 2NT is an artificial bid instructing partner to bid 3♣ and pass if you now bid a suit below the opponent's suit. You certainly want to compete with

3♦ so when partner bids 3♣ you correct to 3♦ which shows competitive values only.

4. 3♦. Another Lebensohl bid wherein a direct bid at the three-level is forcing to game. If partner bids 3NT you could pass or bid 4♦ forcing or 4NT invitation to slam. My choice would be to pass 3NT.

5. Double. Even though you have three spades instead of four you have a little bit of shape and a good number of points. Passing would be too soft, you don't want to sell out to 2♥ unopposed with these values.

6. 2NT. Again a Lebensohl bid with the mnemonic slow shows and direct denies. Whenever you have a game-going hand with a stopper in the opponent's suit you start with 2NT (slow shows).

You have four spades also so over the forced 3♣ you now bid 3♥ to show your spades. If you had a heart stopper and not four spades you would bid 2NT and then 3NT to show the heart stopper but deny four spades.

7. 3♦. A difficult choice whether to show your spades and no heart stopper via 3♥ or start with a forcing 3♦. I prefer the 3♦ option since partner can still bid 3♠ to show spades.

8. 3NT. In the Lebensohl convention direct denies so 3NT denies both a heart stopper and four spades. You need to discuss this with partner because in the heat of battle a lot of players (who claim they play Lebensohl) instinctively bid 3NT with a stopper.

9. 3♠. Game forcing with five spades. If you have an invitation with five spades you first bid 2NT and over the forced 3♣ you now bid 3♠.

10. 4♦. A transfer to 4♠. You want to be in 4♠ but very much want the strong hand to be declarer which could be vital to the success of the contract. If you had a good hand with diamonds you would simply bid a game forcing 3♦ over 2♥.

Why 4♦ and not 4♣? Traditionally clubs is a transfer to hearts and diamonds a transfer to spades, so given the choice 4♦ is the transfer to 4♠.

Paul Lavings

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A GAME AT THE CLUB

with
Barbara Travis

There's a theme through the first few offerings today.

I was playing South and held:

♠ K Q 5 4 3 ♥ K ♦ Q J 9 8 4 ♣ 9 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	pass	1♥	1♠ ¹
2♥	3♥	pass	4♠
all pass			

1. Not sure if we played Michaels!

I had to decide why my partner made a cue raise when we were both passed hands. I was confident she was aware we had both already passed, so decided she felt she had a really good raise. Therefore, I bid 4♠ because of my 5-5 shape. I was right – but I'd have bid 4♣ on her hand:

♠ A 8 7 6 4 ♥ J 10 9 8 4 ♦ 5 ♣ A J

As she said, she figured I had a heart void – which makes the whole hand even stronger.

Then I held:

♠ A 8 5 ♥ A K J 10 6 ♦ K 2 ♣ Q 7 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	pass	1♦	1♥
pass	2♥	pass	?

I decided to punt 4♥ which proved wrong opposite:

♠ Q 10 9 7 3 ♥ Q 9 5 2 ♦ J 6 ♣ 8 5

I had three minor losers, so played for East to hold the singleton ♠K – somewhat forlornly – and went down one.

After the hand, I explained to partner that once you use cue raises, the 3-level raise is freed up, and can be used for weak hands with 4+ card support, just like the hand she'd held. If I'd thought she held 0-6/7 HCP, then I would have stopped in 3♥.

With this new knowledge, here's the next hand, this time from partner's perspective. As North, all vul, you hold:

♠ K 8 5 4 ♥ 3 ♦ K 7 4 3 ♣ 10 9 8 4

WEST	NORTH	SOUTH	EAST
pass	1♥	pass	1♣
3♠	all pass	1♠	2♥

Fancy picking up a hand that fitted the three-level raise within a few hands of the discussion! What wonderful timing. Opposite my:

♠ A 10 9 6 3 ♥ Q 7 6 ♦ J 8 ♣ K 9 3

spades broke 2-2, the aces were onside and nine tricks were cold, with East-West able to make nine tricks in hearts.

Personally, cue raises (unassuming cue bids) are one of the conventions I would prefer not to live without. They simplify life when you overcall, preventing you from getting too high, differentiating between good hands and poor raises, and then giving you back the three-level raise as a more preemptive bid too. Partner, who was familiar with cue raises, but didn't have many of her own partners who play them, is now a convert too.

What does this auction mean to you?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	2♣	1♦	pass
		2NT	

The 2NT rebid should retain the same meaning as opener's jump rebid to 2NT, after all you are now rebidding 2NT over partner's 1♥ response. It should show about 18-19 HCP. With a minimum opening bid, you should pass the 2-level overcall, unless you play support doubles (to show 3-card support). Opener held:

♠ A 10 4 ♥ K 7 2 ♦ K Q 7 2 ♣ Q 10 2

and while I can appreciate the temptation to rebid 2NT, it is wrong. On this occasion it meant that East-West got too high.

You are North, vulnerable, and hold:

♠ Q 10 3 2 ♥ — ♦ K Q 8 7 ♣ A 6 4 3 2
 WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
 pass pass 1♥ pass
 1♠ ?

I would open 1♣ on the North hand. I'm comfortable about my rebid, being able to bid 1♠ over the anticipated 1♥ response. However, if I held a 0-4-4-5 hand shape with those 11 HCP, I may well pass, being uncomfortable in terms of my rebid should partner respond 1♠.

Having said that, what action would you now take on the above auction? I would double – takeout of the two bid suits. It brings both clubs and diamonds into the picture. Bidding 2♣ should show a better suit (or a 6-card suit).

The last hand of my session was one that led to lots of questions afterwards. Sitting South, I held:

♠ 3 ♥ A J 9 8 2 ♦ A K J 7 6 3 ♣ K

Nil vulnerable, your LHO opens 3♠ which is passed around to you. With no 'gadgets' at your disposal (I play non-Leaping Michaels, so could bid 4♦ to show a good diamond-heart two suiter), what bid would you make? Whilst many bid 4♦, it doesn't seem to be the 'practical' bid to me – and I bid 4♥ instead. At least a couple of others chose to double – with one South being unhappy when partner passed 3♠ doubled. I like the theory, "Don't make a takeout double if you don't want your partner to leave it in." This hand seems to meet that criterion, being too two-suited (and, therefore, offensive rather than defensive).

Here's the full hand:

♠ A Q 4
 ♥ K 7 5
 ♦ 10 8
 ♣ 8 7 5 4 3
 ♠ K 10 9 8 6 5 2 ♥ J 7
 ♥ 10 6 4 ♥ Q 3
 ♦ 9 ♦ Q 5 4 2
 ♣ A 6 ♣ Q J 10 9 2
 ♠ 3
 ♥ A J 9 8 2
 ♦ A K J 7 6 3
 ♣ K

West led the ♦9, a likely singleton. I covered with dummy's 10 and East played the queen. Being Pairs, I wanted overtricks, so I now led a spade to the queen which won, and discarded my ♣K on dummy's ♠A. Now it was time to play the hearts, so I cashed the ♥K, then led towards my hand. East's ♥Q was a welcome sight and I wrapped up 13 tricks for a shared top.

After the hand, I asked East whether she thought her partner's lead was a shortage lead. She replied in the affirmative, and so I suggested that she should not cover dummy's ♦10. Given that she held four diamonds, either they were breaking 2-2-4-5 around the table, or (more likely given the lead) 1-2-4-6. Look at her spot cards. By covering the diamond, she was making all my diamonds into winners. If she hadn't covered, firstly I am in the wrong hand for the spade finesse, and secondly I will have to finesse again later on – meaning that I would have to keep entries to dummy to repeat the finesse.

Keep in mind the count you can get in any suit. Furthermore, it is generally considered that, having pre-empted, the lead of a different suit is a shortage. Combining both those factors can often indicate whether to duck or cover a critical honour.

BOOK REVIEW with Nick Fahrner

WINNING IMPS by Rakesh Kumar

International Match Points (more commonly known as IMPs) is the scoring system used for Teams bridge and Swiss Pair games. And while the mechanics of IMP bridge and the more commonly played Matchpoints are the same, there really is a wide gulf between them in terms of bidding, declarer play and defense.

Surprisingly, there has been little in bridge literature that focusses on the strategies of IMP bridge. Rakesh Kumar's new book fills this void nicely.

Rakesh is a popular player from the Southern Highlands in NSW and a frequent player in congresses and state and national events. I know Rakesh well enough to call him a bridge tragic (takes one to know one). For 20 years he's had a column in the NSWBA Bulletin covering his success and failures at the table.

Rakesh's first bridge book, Winning IMPs, is based on material from his column and discusses the strategies that lead to successful IMP play. This text focuses on the four essential areas of winning IMPs bridge:

- sound constructive bidding
- better competitive bidding that balances caution with a bit of extra aggression
- careful declarer play to ensure you make your contract
- becoming a more thoughtful defender.

And all the key points are illustrated with many hands taken from actual tournament play.

Here's a hand that caught my eye in the section called Never Give Up!

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
 2♠ 1♥ pass 2♥
 pass 4♠ all pass

N/Nil ♠ K 10 3
 ♥ A 10 7 5 4
 ♦ A 7 5 4 2
 ♣ —
 ♠ A J 7 6 5 4 ♠ Q 9 2
 ♥ K J 6 ♥ Q 3
 ♦ — ♦ Q J 10 9 6 3
 ♣ K 8 7 5 ♣ A 3
 ♠ 8
 ♥ 9 8 2
 ♦ K 8
 ♣ Q J 10 9 6 4 2

North leads ♥A followed by a low heart which you win in hand. You then play a low club which North ruffs! What now? The first step is not to panic. Win North's return in hand, play the ♥J and spectacularly discard your ♣A from dummy (that should impress your partner) and ruff your two small clubs in dummy. Rakesh notes that when this hand appeared in a weekend congress, 10 out of 12 declarers in 4♠ went down.

If you'd like to download a sample of *Winning IMPs*, here's a link:

<https://bit.ly/kumar-imps>

Winning IMPs is available from *The Bridge Shop* as a paperback for \$35.95 or a PDF download for \$20.99.

A RAY OF LIGHT IN THE TIME OF COVID

by Lyndall Shaw, Whittlesea Bridge Club

Which do I love more: teaching or playing bridge? No need to decide – I love them both.

I play bridge in the charming township of Whittlesea. Located just ten minutes north of the expanding suburbs of Melbourne, Whittlesea is a hub for those suburbs and for the country towns of Kilmore, Broadford, Wallan and Kinglake. With rolling green hills one expects to see contented cows. One certainly sees cows, sheep and horses, all of whom refuse to verify the 'contented' assertion. Plenty of kangaroos, wallabies and wombats too, making night travel treacherous.

Whittlesea is an old town, once the centre of a food bowl for Melbourne. People from Melbourne used to take the train to Whittlesea to roam the countryside on weekends. No rail link these days. So you may not be surprised that I chose Whittlesea for the location to form a bridge club unimaginatively named as such. My last working years were spent managing a very large teaching department in a TAFE – no time to teach or play bridge. But retirement was approaching, and so the planning began. Last year Whittlesea Bridge Club celebrated its tenth anniversary. Our main weekly session sports 8-10 tables on Monday afternoons. Yes, I do manage to teach on Monday mornings. Other sessions happen in Kilmore and Wednesday evenings in Whittlesea. Not very popular this evening session: I blame the kangaroos.

COVID came blasting down upon us on Friday the 13th (of March). Our congress was a week away. What to do? 500 people allowed at this point. Monday, our regular session would allow the committee to meet and discuss our plans. Well, you guessed right. No congress, no bridge session on Monday, and no face to face committee meeting. A huge learning curve for me, watching events unfolding worldwide, and the introduction of the term "social

distancing". Many phone calls (too early for video conferencing) and all committee members agreed to shut up shop. ABF advice was being followed to the letter.

So now what? Clearly online bridge needed consideration. We (husband Peter and I) heard that a friend Jenny was setting up a system using BBO at Waverley, our original home club. What a lot of work that would be! For Peter, a retired IT professional now in his mid seventies, new developments are getting harder. When I considered the approximately 50 active players in our club, how many of them would venture to take the leap to learn to play online? 25% to 50% I would estimate. That is 12½ to 25 players (did I mention that I taught Maths)? Not viable numbers. Another option was StepBridge. This well established South Australian based club has been running online bridge for years. As an Australian affiliated club, masterpoints are earnable. Due to COVID, StepBridge has greatly increased its number of sessions – four open sessions each weekday for example.

Have you noticed that the younger you are, the easier it is to acquire technical skills? Like many bridge clubs, most Whittlesea players are retired, ranging in age from 60 to 90. I am in my mid 70s and very nervous about acquiring new skills. Lucky was I to have Julie – certainly younger than me – to "hold my hand" (by phone, of course) and guide me through joining, registering and actually playing on StepBridge. I can still remember my shaking. I took three sessions of play to calm down. Now, three months later, it feels the same as face to face bridge. The tension now comes from the bridge, not the technology. How to get other Whittlesea players on board? I developed a set of simple instructions. By relating my experiences of Julie's hand-holding, and knowing the willingness of others to do likewise, I simply let club members know some of the players who were already active.

Next came the ABF initiative to clubs to set up hubs (better not call them clusters) using BBO. Great! But our club is too small. How fortunate was our club to have Bill Jacobs doing the hard yards in setting up his Northern club on BBO. It is no secret that Bill is a bridge hero of mine, with both his playing and teaching ability. Our clubs have some overlap in membership. Bill very kindly agreed to welcome Whittlesea members to his online group. Absolutely wonderful! The advantage of playing in Bill's group is that one is playing among friends. Our club currently has about 30% of its members playing in one or both online options. I am loving both.

Enter the shining light in this story: Jing. Jing migrated from China, with an engineering degree and a few months experience working in her field. Unable to find engineering work in Australia she set about managing a café and bringing up her two sons, now in their twenties. Now, at last, Jing has the opportunity to resume the game she played briefly in her uni days. And she is doing so with an enthusiasm second to none. I had only played a couple of sessions with Jing before Maxwell's Silver Hammer descended. Jing was playing friendly BBO sessions with golfing friends, and I was playing on StepBridge. I have grandkids in their twenties so I guess Jing is a generation younger than me. She easily learned StepBridge. Then she set up a BBO session for me to experience this software. (Now I could partake in Bill's sessions and recommend them to club members).

In the short period of two months, Jing has acquired over 4 MP easily, moving through the rank of Graduate Master and close to Club Master. Jing works full time in aged care and only plays two sessions a week. After each session we go through each hand. StepBridge sends an email to each player showing all the bidding and the play of each card. All contracts for the board are beside the play. It is thus easy to explain declarer play as well as bidding and defence. It provides me with the best teaching tool I have encountered. Bridge teachers will appreciate my pleasure in being to explain to Jing that QJ bare is not really worth three points, and have the evidence right there in front of us. And Jing gets it!

Teaching and playing! I am in heaven!
Thanks Jing.

HOW WOULD YOU PLAY?

with Barbara Travis



Solutions to problems on page 8

HAND 1

♠ K 6	♠ J 8 7 2
♥ 6 3	♥ 10 8 7
♦ K Q J 6	♦ 10 8 2
♣ A Q 5 4 3	♣ K 7 6
♠ Q 9 4	♠ A 10 5 3
♥ Q J 9 5 2	♥ A K 4
♦ A 9 5 3	♦ 7 4
♣ 8	♣ J 10 9 2

Against South's 3NT, West leads the ♥Q - 6 - 10. How would you play?

South does best to duck the first lead (in case hearts are 6-2). You have 2 spade winners and 2 heart winners.

Most people would just lead the ♣J to take the club finesse. However, what happens when the club finesse fails, East returns a heart, then West has the ♦A? Now you only have 8 tricks and will go down if hearts break 5-3.

Therefore, you need to realise to remove West's potential entry before taking the club finesse. The reason: you want to take the club finesse at the point when East is the 'safe' hand, having run out of hearts. (It's not a problem should hearts break 4-4, but it is a problem if hearts are 5-3.) So the club finesse can wait, but the 'extra' trick that you may or may not need from diamonds must be organised first.

At trick 3, you should lead a diamond. If West wins the ♦A, you have 10 tricks. If West ducks the diamond, you now cross back to hand with a spade to take the club finesse, leading the ♣J first. Now you will make nine tricks - two spades, two hearts, one diamond and four clubs.

HAND 2

♠ A 9 4	♠ K 5 3
♥ J 7 5	♥ 10 8 4 2
♦ J 9 3 2	♦ 7 5
♣ J 8 4	♣ A K 6 5
♠ 10 8 6 2	♠ Q J 7
♥ 9 3	♥ A K Q 6
♦ K 6 4	♦ A Q 10 8
♣ 10 7 3 2	♣ Q 9

Against South's 3NT, West leads the ♠2, fourth-highest. What is your plan?

In a Teams match, one declarer played low without much thought. East won the ♠K, realised his partner did not have many points, and decided to play on the club suit. He cashed the ♣K, then led a low club in case West held the ♣Q. South's ♣Q won, but when the diamond finesse failed, declarer went down on the club return.

At the other table, declarer counted his winners - the ♠A, four hearts, three (or four) diamonds. While a ninth trick could always come from a black suit, it was important to win the ♠A immediately, to establish the diamond winners - because the club suit was somewhat ratty.

When West won the ♦K, a spade return gave declarer his ninth trick, or a club lead would establish a ninth trick in the club suit.

HAND 3

♠ K 10 6	♠ 8 5 4
♥ A 8 6	♥ 10 9 7 5 3 2
♦ 6 5	♦ A 10
♣ 10 7 6 4 3	♣ 8 5
♠ A	♠ Q J 9 7 3 2
♥ J	♥ K Q 4
♦ K J 9 7 4 2	♦ Q 8 3
♣ K Q J 9 2	♣ A

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
2NT ¹	3♠ ²	pass	4♠
	all pass		

1. At least 5-5 in the minors.
2. Weaker than bidding 3♦ (cue raise).

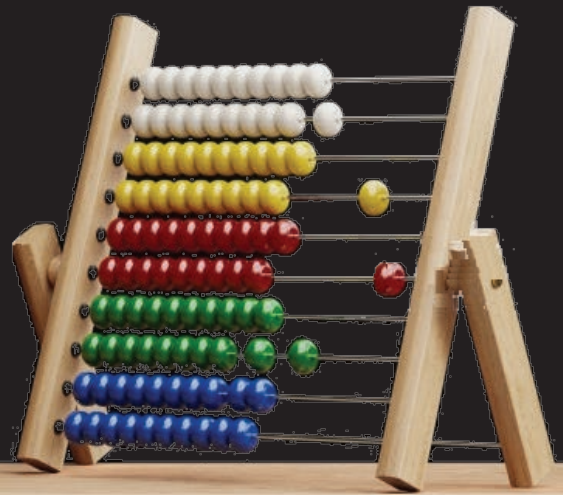
West makes the very good opening lead of the ♠A, revealed as a singleton when West then switches to the ♣K.

What is your plan?

You need to ruff a diamond, but you need to ensure that East cannot get the lead twice, or he will lead trumps, stopping the diamond ruff. If you lead a diamond from hand, East will win the ace if the queen is led, or the ten if a small diamond is led. So, you must cross to dummy with the ♥A, then lead a diamond towards your queen. This will restrict East's ability to win the lead. He can rise with the ♦A and lead another trump, which you win in dummy to lead the second diamond to the ten - queen - king. Mission accomplished - East has been kept off lead and you can trump the diamond loser in dummy, then cross to hand to draw trumps and claim your 10 tricks.

BEHIND THE MATCHPOINTS

with Brad Coles



This article is the last in a series of short articles addressing some common questions and misconceptions about Matchpoint play.

The expert declarer

"I wouldn't normally have bid game, but I added a trick for your card play".

Or alternatively, "I know I should have bid 4♥, but I always go down when I'm in game".

There is some sense to this logic, but not as much as you might think.

In Australian Bridge Magazine many years ago, a mathematician attempted to calculate how good a game has to be to make it worth bidding, using card play skill as parameters. The logic was complicated, but it came down to a simple formula:

If your individual chance of making game, plus the field's chance of making game, is greater than 100%, then you should bid it.

So for example, if you are a typical declarer considering a 30% game, then you should not bid it (30+30=60, less than 100%).

But if you fancy your declarer skills as being twice as good as everyone else (you think you can miraculously bring home this 30% contract 60% of the time)... then you still should not bid it (60+30=90, still under 100%).

If your card play is that good, you'll do better to stay in a part-score and try to get a top board by making overtricks.

The same applies to a weak declarer bidding a good game. If you are nervous about your declarer skills, staying out of a good game won't help you. If all the other tables are making 620, you are booked for a bad score whether you score 140 or -100. You may as well bid the game, to get some practice.

The borderline decision is, as you would expect, the 50% game. If a game has a 50% chance of making, you should bid it if you think you are an above-average declarer.

Playing for overtricks

"I could have made that, but I was playing for an overtrick".

We all know the importance of overtricks at Matchpoints, but not everybody appreciates the importance of plus scores.

At any form of scoring, your first priority is to make your contract. There are times when it may be appropriate to put your contract at risk in the search for an overtrick, but these do not come up often.

If your card-reading indicates that your overtrick play is likely to work, you should back your judgement. But without a clear read on the hand, it's best to look for overtricks that won't jeopardise your contract.

Bidding notrumps

Playing in a major, you get 30 points per trick, but in notrumps you get an extra ten points. So you should always try to play in notrumps at Pairs – right?

This isn't strictly true, because often the trump suit will be worth a trick. Or the trump suit might save you from an enemy attack.

When you bid a major suit game at IMPs, you presumably think that the trump suit will play better than notrumps. That's why you forego the nine-trick game in favour of the ten-trick game – you expect to gain at least one trick from having a trump suit.

That extra trick is even more valuable at Matchpoints. While 3NT scores only 600, an extra trick in the major will get you to 620. Notrumps is only better if the trump suit is not worth anything. 3NT is great for Teams play – 600 is a great score, and it doesn't matter that 4♥ might have scored 620. But at Pairs, you can't ignore the extra trick that a trump suit might provide.

There are two occasions when you might choose 3NT, gambling that the trump suit will not be worth an extra trick:

1. When both hands are balanced, with no ruffs possible, and every suit is doubly-stopped, 3NT may be right. You might have the same tricks (and same losers) in any contract.
2. When you have a very high point-count, say 30+ HCP, you will often find the same one or two losers in 3NT and 4♥. This is especially true at slam level; if you have all the high cards, missing just an ace, 6NT will score better than 6♥. Taking ruffs in 6♥ is no use when you already have all the tricks in high cards. The more tricks you have, the less likely it is that a trump suit will be able to provide an extra one. For example:

♠ Q J 10 9 8
♥ K 10 6 5
♦ 5
♣ A 3 2

♠ A K 7
♥ A Q J 4 3 2
♦ A 4 3 2
♣ —

You have plenty of ruffs available in 7♥ or 7♠, but you don't need them. 7NT is the correct spot, with 13 top tricks.

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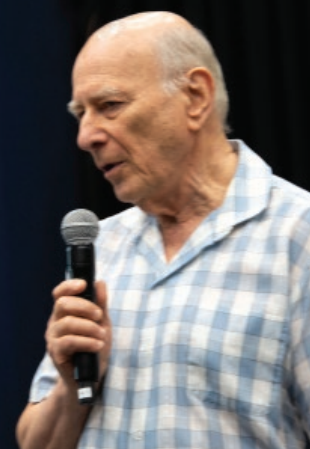
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IMPROVE YOUR DEFENCE

with Ron Klinger

Solution to problem on page 2



CLEAR SIGNAL

From a Butler Trials:

S/Nil ♠ Q 4 ♥ 7 4 ♦ Q 10 5 2 ♣ 9 5 4 3 2	♠ 10 9 6 ♥ J 10 5 ♦ J 9 6 4 ♣ K Q 6	♠ 7 2 ♥ A K Q 9 8 2 ♦ A K 8 7 ♣ 10
♠ A K J 8 5 3 ♥ 6 3 ♦ 3 ♣ A J 8 7		

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	2♠	4♥	1♠
all pass			4♠

Against 4♠, East wins the first two heart tricks. When East shifts to a top diamond, West should discourage diamonds. East can then shift back to hearts to promote the ♠Q. Likewise if East plays the ♥Q at trick 3 and South pitches the ♦3, West should discourage diamonds and, if playing McKenney discards or similar, ask partner to play a fourth heart.

Datum on the deal was NS 130, so that if you defeated 4♠, you collect 5 imps. If you did not find the defence, you lose 7 imps and would have done better by sacrificing in 5♥ doubled for -300 and -5 imps or just -100 and +1 imp if the defence switches to a diamond at any stage.

ENTHUSIASM REWARDED

by
Dennis Zines



As South, you are dealt this hand:

♠ A J 10 8 5 3 ♥ A 10 4 2 ♦ 8 ♣ Q 8

Your partner opens 1♦, you bid 1♠, and partner bids 1NT. You check for a heart fit with 2♣ checkback (East doubling partner's 2♦ negative) and you end up in 4♠. West leads the ♦6 and this is the full deal.

♠ K 9	
♥ K 9 7	
♦ Q 9 3 2	
♣ K J 6 2	
♠ Q 7 4 2	♠ 6
♥ Q 6 5	♥ J 8 3
♦ 6 5	♦ A K J 10 7 4
♣ 10 9 5 4	♣ A 7 3
♠ A J 10 8 5 3	
♥ A 10 4 2	
♦ 8	
♣ Q 8	

Looking at dummy, you wonder about your enthusiasm, noting a diamond loser, a heart loser, a club loser and a possible spade loser. However, your ♥9 and ♥10 look valuable, so you press on by playing the ♦2, East winning with the ♦10. Trick two sees East play the ♦K which you ruff as West follows with the ♦5. It looks as if East holds six diamonds.

As an exploratory measure, you lead the ♣Q. West plays the ♣4, dummy the ♣2 and East after a little hesitation plays the ♣3. Going with your gut, you assume that East has the ♣A, and so with his length in diamonds and 12 known high card points, you decide to play West for the ♠Q by playing the ♠5 and finessing the ♠9, West contributing the ♠2 and East the ♠6.

The ♠K follows and East pitches a diamond, you the ♠8 and West the ♠4. Knowing West had four spades including the ♠Q, you now lead the ♣K to set up a club trick. East wins the ♣A and plays a third club.

From the signals given, you assume West to hold a 4-3-2-4 shape hand. Accordingly, you win the third club in dummy (pitching a heart from hand), ruff the fourth club, and

play the ♠A and a fourth spade (pitching diamonds) for West to win. This is the position with West on lead:

	♥ K 9 7	
♥ Q 6 5		♥ J 8 3
	♥ A 10 4	

West must lead a heart, and depending on which one, you play for the ♥Q and ♥J to be in separate hands. Now you have no heart loser. Thus, your heart pips were valuable after all. There are other defences, but South can always make the 4♠ contract, and this is possibly one of the prettiest outcomes.

North had a minimum type hand, but enthusiasm and thoughtful play led to the deserved reward.



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Bridge Vid

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CUE BIDDING TO SLAM

In our last issue, we looked at how to set up a cue bidding auction to help you find a slam. The first step is to set up a forcing auction, while also telling your partner what the trump suit is. Then we progress into cue bidding (first- or second-round controls), and then finally, if necessary, Blackwood.

Here are some more examples:

♠ 10 8 ♥ A K J 5 ♦ A K J 7 5 ♣ A K

This shape is a difficult one to bid naturally, so I'll treat it as a balanced hand. It's too strong for a 2NT opening, so we'll begin with 2♣. Partner bids a negative, and we rebid 2NT to show 23-24 balanced. Now partner bids 3♣ Stayman, and we show our hearts. Partner now uses the convention we described earlier: he bids the other major, to agree hearts and set up a forcing auction:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	2♦	pass	2♣
pass	3♣	pass	2NT
pass	3♠	pass	3♥
			?

The 3♠ bid shows slam interest in hearts (within the context of the negative 2♦ bid) and allows us to begin cue bidding. Without a heart fit, North probably would have just signed off in 3NT.

We begin the cue bidding with 4♣, and partner bids 4♠. This shows first- or second-round control in spades, and denies a diamond control (not a surprise). With the spades under control, and the knowledge that partner is interested in slam, we can safely go to Blackwood and bid the slam.

To recap: we set up a forcing auction, partner set hearts as trumps and showed a willingness to look for slam, and then we showed our controls.

Another example:

♠ K Q 8 2 ♥ 8 ♦ A Q 6 5 2 ♣ Q 8 2

We open 1♦, partner bids 1♥, and we rebid 1♠. This will usually be an unbalanced hand, as balanced hands would open 1NT or rebid 1NT. Partner bids 2♣, which is fourth-suit forcing, and we show our club stopper with 2NT. Now partner bids 3♦.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	1♥	pass	1♦
pass	2♣	pass	1♠
pass	3♦	pass	2NT
			?

Returning to our first suit, after bidding fourth-suit forcing, shows a forcing hand with real support. Partner first set up a forcing auction, and then told us diamonds are trumps.

We haven't chosen to go towards slam yet, as 3NT is still an option. At this point, partner might just be looking at a choice between 3NT and 5♦. With our hand, we don't want to commit either way, so we'll just bid a non-committal 3♠. This is not a cue bid, as we are still looking for the best game at this point. 3♠ is just describing our values, to help partner make a decision – we would do the same thing with ♠QJ10x.

Partner now bids 4♣. We have gone past 3NT, and we are now deciding between 5♦ and 6♦, so 4♣ is a cue bid.

We now have two options: we could just mark time with a 4♦ bid (forcing, and still encouraging), leaving the next move to partner, or we could make a cue of our own. On this hand, we do have a second-round heart control, so we could cue bid 4♥, but it's not usually a good idea to cue a singleton in partner's suit. For example, if partner has ♥AQJx, he won't know if your cue is the king (very good) or a singleton (not so helpful).

Luckily, we have an easy alternative: bidding 4♦ to save space and let partner make the next cue.

Partner will now cue 4♥, we will cue 4♠, and partner will go to Blackwood.

Here's another strong hand, looking at the concept of an *implied control*:

♠ A K Q J 9 ♥ A K Q 3 ♦ A 6 ♣ Q 10

Again we start with 2♣, 2♦ from partner, and we bid 2♠. We've set up a forcing auction, and now when partner raises to 3♠ we will have a trump suit and can progress into cue bidding. We start with 4♦, saying we have a diamond control but no club control. Now, if partner doesn't have anything in clubs he will just sign off in 4♠. However, if partner does anything else, that will imply a club control. He won't need to actually cue bid the club control – we will know it is there simply because partner has failed to sign off in game. So...

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	2♦	pass	2♣
pass	3♠	pass	2♠
			4♦

If partner cues 4♥ now, for example, this will show a heart control (a singleton in this case, since we have the honours) and it will also imply a club control. Without a club control, partner would always sign off in 4♠.

Summary

Cue bidding applies when all of the following apply:

- we cannot stop short of game
- slam is possible,
- both partners know what suit is trumps.

<https://bridgevid.com>

Click [here](#) for the video version of this article. Peter uploads new videos to his Bridge Vid channel almost daily.

LIMERICKS IN LOCKDOWN

from Kate Courts, Wellington

[LIKE](#)
A wonderful idea of Nyasa Holmes,
To have us submit our Limerick poems,
The attempt to make them properly rhyme
Whiles away some of the spare time,
Caused by the confinement to our homes.

[LIKE](#)
I was taught by Dad
He never got mad
Lead through strength
Always bid your length
What special times we had

[LIKE](#)
There's a bridge system called multi twos,
Which Marelle and Christine often use
It's hard to know
Which way you can go
When all they've bid is fake news.

[LIKE](#)
I have a partner whose name is Kate
Every Tuesday is her carding date
Bridge is the life
For Howard's wife
Who thinks that Bridge has taken his mate.

[LIKE](#)
My good friend and partner is Sarah.
You couldn't find anyone fairer.
We always come last,
But I warn you that's in the past,
So no one expect me to share her.

[LIKE](#)
There's no one quite like our June.
Her bidding was over the moon.
If you gave her advice
She'd reply that's so nice.
I'll be playing by Klinger soon.

[LIKE](#)
Playing bridge with Betsy is a treat
A calmer person you never would meet
She plays bridge with style
Never with guile
Always a play hard to beat

[LIKE](#)
George and Mick have dispensed with convention.
So their bidding is mostly invention.
When they get into trouble,
Mick throws in a double
Which is designed to grab your attention.

[LIKE](#)
The club has a member called Kevin.
Playing with him is sheer heaven.
If you get in a mess,
He couldn't care less.
With Kev all is forgiven.

The Wellington Bridge Club ran a challenge where the players had to write a limerick for every club member. The challenge was successful: every member and associate member was featured in one of the 60 submitted limericks. Here are some of the highlights.

Click the **LIKE** link next to each of your favourite limericks, and the most popular author will win a six-month subscription to Australian Bridge Magazine.

[LIKE](#)
Partner Carole lives out in the hills
She's a player who doesn't like frills
She always stays calm
Though she should show alarm
Just as well we just play for the thrills

[LIKE](#)
Our experienced players are David and Helene
They play bridge a lot, they're so keen
60 years of marriage they celebrate today
We should be at the club to shout. "Hip Hip Hooray!"
Sharing this date with the birthday of the Queen.

[LIKE](#)
A cheerful card player is Callie,
She never cares less for her tally,
But she has us in fits,
she gives me the splits,
'til the director gets cross cos we dally.

[LIKE](#)
A wonderful maths teacher is Maureen
Of playing bridge she's so keen
She would play all day
But must work to pay
So back to school and be green.

[LIKE](#)
Bridge players are a varied lot,
The good, the fair and the inevitable swot,
It's often predicted,
Most are addicted,
So be happy with what you've got

[LIKE](#)
Nyasa led us into a dream,
That we all could be poets supreme,
We didn't ask why,
Just gave it a try,
Which shows we are really a team.

[LIKE](#)
Never say, "Bridge is just a game",
or you might become lame.
Is the Grand Canyon just a hole?
I don't think so...LOL.
It is just the same.

[LIKE](#)
I love to play bridge, that's true
But not necessarily with you
Please don't take offence
It's just that your defence
Leaves a lot to be desired, So true!