

ABF NEWSLETTER

AUSTRALIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION INC.



Editor: Barbara Travis (editor@abf.com.au)

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TOWNSVILLE BRIDGE CLUB TURNS 50

Townsville Bridge Club celebrated its 50th year this year, and has been revisiting its history.

Among the many of us who enjoy bridge as a pleasant social activity, there is a 'hard core' of people who take their bridge seriously, some very seriously. Our club has been the starting ground for a number of people who have gone on to distinguished careers in bridge. One of these is Laurie Kelso.

Laurie was a Townsville boy and studied at James Cook University between 1980 and 2000, receiving a PhD in Inorganic Chemistry. Well before then, he was a member of the Townsville Bridge Club. He first appears on the Club's honour board as part of the Championship team for 1987. (The other players were B. Chalker, J. Smith and L. Owens.) He was a member of the Championship Team every year from then until 1995. In 1988, Laurie and Beth Whebell were the Champion Pair. Laurie was on this honour board several times, too.



Laurie Kelso, circa 1988 (with Beth Whebell), and Laurie now (below)



He is remembered by many still in the Club as an intelligent and analytical player. He is now considered the most distinguished Director in Australia as indicated by the positions he holds: National Tournament Coordinator and National Tournament Director for the Australian Bridge Federation, Senior Director for the World Bridge Federation and Secretary of the WBF Laws Committee.

He makes an annual pilgrimage back to the Barrier Reef, to direct its Congress.

Sean and Matt Mullamphy also hail from Townsville. Sean has also been a top Director in Australia, and Matt has won many national titles and represented Australia in our Youth Team in 1989 and 1991.



Matt Mullamphy with Beth Whebell in 1989

THE BARRIER REEF CONGRESS

The inaugural Barrier Reef Congress was held in Townsville in 1996. The impetus for this congress came from the Mackay Contract Bridge Club, which raised the issue with the ABF of the distance problems facing players in north Queensland wishing to accumulate gold points. In 1993 there was a meeting in Townsville between Eric Parsons (Mackay), Jan Smith (Cleveland Bay) and Laurie Kelso (Townsville) to coordinate a joint northern lobbying effort to achieve such a congress.

In 1995 approval was given for a northern gold points event. The inaugural event was convened by Doris Mann, with Laurie Kelso as Congress Director. The first Congress was held in the PCYC Wellington Street building, and attracted 33 tables for the Pairs and 36 tables for the Teams.

The next Barrier Reef Congress will be held in Townsville from 14th to 18th May 2018. John Tredrea is the Convenor, and the venue will be the Townsville Stadium in Lyons Crescent, Annandale.

Jean Dartnall, Townsville BC

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The next Newsletter will be published in April 2018, rather than March. Newsletters will now appear in February, April, June, August, October and December each year.

DEADLINES FOR APRIL 2018:
ADVERTISING: 20TH MARCH 2018
ARTICLES: 24TH MARCH 2018



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The ABF Council, our "Board of Directors", met in November. Issues discussed included ANC changes, succession planning and plans for the re-organisation of our approach to Youth bridge. You will see that we have asked for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for a new role of Youth Development Officer later in this Newsletter.

Thanks to the South Australian Bridge Federation who have confirmed that, following the withdrawal of the Northern Territory, South Australia will host the 2020 ANC in Adelaide.

ABF capitation and masterpoint fees have not increased since 2014. To catch up with inflation, Council intends to increase these fees by 5.1 per cent effective 1 April 2019, and to index them to CPI from 2020. We will announce changes each year after the previous year's AGM to assist States and Clubs with budgeting.

The ABF is appointing a new National Recorder, John Brownie, from 1 January 2018. John is a retired NSW Judge and past President of the North Shore Bridge Club in Sydney. The ABF Management Committee thanks Phil Gallasch for his contribution over the past few years.

New travel arrangements were introduced for the Grand National Open Teams this year, with the aim of providing better and fairer travel subsidies for competing teams. We will be asking participants for feedback on the new arrangements, so we can improve them for the future.

On behalf of the ABF Management Committee I wish everyone the very best for the remainder of the holiday season and a happy and prosperous 2018.

Bruce Neill

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NONAGENARIANS ENJOY LIFE AND BRIDGE

Cleveland Bay Bridge Club in Townsville, Queensland, is a small but active club with a home club membership of approximately 40 people. Five of our regular playing members are now nonagenarians, and two of them are still having lessons to improve their playing skills even more!

We celebrated the birthday of our youngest nonagenarian recently, with cake and song at our new clubhouse.

Their contribution to our Club is outstanding with one of our nonagenarians bringing a homemade cake or biscuits for afternoon tea every Sunday without fail.

They are wonderful members and very much appreciated in our Bridge community.

Pat Leighton, Cleveland Bay BC



Karin leRoux (Convenor), Faye Franklin, Chris Rosevear (President), Julie Cowling. Julie and Faye were overall winners of the Central West Novice Pairs



From left to right: Frances Huntington, Ragnar Hasselberg, Margaret Davis, Herb Hill, Frances Hartman

CENTRAL WEST NOVICE TOURNAMENT

The 3rd Central West Novice Tournament (50 MPs and under) was held over the weekend of 28th & 29th October. Players came from Redlands (Qld), Brisbane Water, Sydney, Illawarra, Mollymook, Canberra, Cootamundra, Goulburn, Orange, Bathurst and the Blue Mountains, with more than 20 people attending their first bridge tournament. 30 pairs and 9 teams competed for wonderful prizes including wine goblets inspired by the Napoleonic "Abeille" (bee) range of French pressed glassware. All competitors were very happy with the fun-filled atmosphere and welcome given by the club.

PAIRS:

OVERALL

- 1st Julie Cowling - Faye Franklin (Illawarra)
- 2nd Phil Cummings - Dick Ellis (Bathurst)
- 3rd Conny Szency - Graham Jones (Illawarra)

10-30 MPs

- 1st Conny Szency - Graham Jones (Illawarra)
- 2nd Gayle Calvert - Steve English (Blue Mountains)
- 3rd Peter Horwood - Alan Adcroft (Bathurst)

0-10 MPs

- 1st Peter Horwood - Alan Adcroft (Bathurst)
- 2nd Catherine Cook - Susan Lund (Goulburn)
- 3rd Joyce Cavanagh - Jean Shea (Cootamundra)

TEAMS:

- 1st HORWOOD: Peter Horwood - Alan Adcroft, Jim Driscoll - Sue Stacey (Bathurst/Canberra)
- 2nd ADAMS: Joy & John Adams, Phil Cummings - Kevin Wilds (Bathurst)
- 3rd McAULIFFE: Diana McAulliffe - Georgina McMahon, Pamela Bedwell - Jenny Burchmore (Sydney)

John Shield, Bathurst & District BC

KAY DAVIS TURNS 100

Kay Davis from Tomaree Bridge Club turned 100 recently.

Tomaree BC reports that they think it will be a long time before we again have a celebration such as this. To have someone at this age well enough to physically climb the stairs and agile enough mentally to play our game at two sessions each week is quite rare. Kay not only plays bridge very well but she and her partner Bud were equal winners of the Tomaree Bridge Club's 2016 Pairs Championship.

Kay was born into a large farming family in County Cork on Sunday November 11, 1917. At a relatively young age, Kay went to England where she trained to be a nurse. In England, Kay married David Davis, an officer in the British army. During World War II Kay served as a nurse, then after the War the family lived in Europe for some time. It was here that Kay developed a fondness for French champagne!

In 1967 Kay, her husband, two daughters and a son emigrated to Australia and settled at Nelson Bay. Kay joined the bridge club at Nelson Bay shortly after it formed and has been playing regularly ever since. Kay has a highly developed social conscience and it was due to her urging that the Tomaree Bridge Club has adopted a local cause to support each year. In 2017 that cause was the Women's Crisis and Refuge Centre. Even on her birthday, Kay eloquently requested the local council to make a parcel of land available so that a one-level bridge club could be built.



Robbie and Barry Feyder finished 2nd in the Spring National Novice Pairs. What's special about this, you may ask? Well, Barry earned his first master points in September 2017, and was willing to give a national novice event a go, even with 0.15 MPs! This is their story.

We both learnt to play bridge as youngsters (many decades ago). We learnt a simple form of Acol and the basics of card play from our father who was a keen bridge player. Over the many years after our adolescence, we played a smattering of social bridge. Barry started playing the occasional game of social bridge a few years ago – this was once a month at his swimming club at Balmoral. As an aside Barry is a keen ocean swimmer - he and a friend swam as a relay team from Palm Beach to Manly last year.

Towards the end of 2016 we decided to start playing bridge more seriously and went to a few supervised sessions, until Barry fell ill. Liz Sylvester came to the rescue and arranged partnerships for me, with Andrew Refshauge and Ron Smith, where I amassed 5.11 master points over the three months from June.

As Barry started feeling stronger, we decided to enter the Novice Pairs in the Spring Nationals. We decided to play basic Standard American and had three practice sessions, where Barry garnered 0.15 Master Points.

Day 1 of the Spring Nationals arrived. We were ranked 18th of the 18 pairs. The first match was a real wake up call. We got 34%. We continued to struggle in the second match with a slightly better 47%. Then we started fighting back and by the end of Day 1 we were in the middle of the pack: 10th of the 18 pairs. We had won 3 of the 6 matches (1 by a slender margin) and lost 3. Just getting through the day was a big achievement for Barry, who was still very weak.

On the first day we didn't play badly, but we were not getting the results we should have. The main problem was that we were not being competitive in our bidding. We were allowing our opponents to stay low instead of pushing them to a more difficult (higher) contract by bidding competitively.

A case in point is Board 14 in Round 2. We allowed our opponents to play in a makeable 2♣. We kept them to 8 tricks, but we should have been bidding, to push them higher:

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

Allowing our opponents to play in 2♣ for 8 tricks was worth only 38%. *[Robbie is being hard on himself, because other opponents simply bid too high. On this hand, competing could prove very dangerous for North-South. However, the principle is correct – one needs to push the opponents around. Ed.]*

On the drive into the tournament on Sunday morning, there was a concerted discussion on being more competitive



Robbie Feyder, Paul Lavings (sponsor), Barry Feyder

(aggressive) in the bidding. We realised that we were letting our opponents play too many easy hands and were not competing in the bidding. Our card play is probably the strongest part of our game, since we have played bridge on and off for many years. But our bidding, especially our competitive bidding, was letting us down.

Board 24, Round 9 was a case in point. We were more aggressive in our bidding. We played in 4♠, a marginal contract which made. Even if we had gone down by one trick, it would still have been a good board for us.

<p>♠ A 9 7 5 ♥ A J 8 7 6 4 ♦ 3 ♣ 9 3</p>	<p>♠ Q J 3 ♥ Q 9 ♦ A 6 5 2 ♣ Q J 7 2</p>
<p>♠ K 10 8 6 4 2 ♥ void ♦ J 8 7 4 ♣ A 10 6</p>	<p>♠ void ♥ K 10 5 3 2 ♦ K Q 10 9 ♣ K 8 5 4</p>

Making 4♠ was worth 100%, but even going down one would have scored 87% for East-West, since North-South can make 10 tricks in hearts (and some made 11).

Sunday saw a complete about face and we won our first five matches, some quite convincingly, and moved into first place with one match remaining! The final match saw a little of the return to conservative bidding and we lost this match. This relegated us to second place by a slim margin of 1.3 VPs.

What lessons were learnt:

1. Communication is important and you need to open the channels so that, as a partnership, you can be more competitive in the bidding.
2. It is more fun competing in the hands.
3. There is still a long way to go in our bidding and our defensive play.

Overall, playing in the competition was a great experience and a lot of fun. At our level, we think the key is to minimise errors in bidding and playing. Playing 120 hands over 2 days certainly helped with that. We played much better towards the end of the tournament and found the novice competition a lot less formal than expected. Everyone seemed relaxed and willing to share a laugh. We will be back next year!

Robbie Feyder

MAJOR TOURNAMENT RESULTS

OPEN PLAYOFFS

12th to 16th November, Canberra

- 1st Joe Haffer - Phil Markey
 2nd Sartaj Hans - Andy Hung
 3rd Max Henbest - David Wiltshire

GOLDEN WEST SWISS PAIRS

17th to 19th November, Mandurah, WA

- 1st Kaipeng Chen - Fiske Warren
 2nd Helen Cook - Jonathan Free
 3rd Don Allen - Trevor Fuller

- Best Seniors: Ian Bailey - Dave Parham (5th)
 Best Country: Jessica Chew - Rez Karim (6th)
 Best Restricted: Valerie & Martin Broome (8th)
 Best Women's: Salim Songerwala - Noriko Sakashita (13th)
 Best Veterans: Anton Pol - Andrew Swider (19th)

GRAND NATIONAL OPEN TEAMS: FINALS

24th to 27th November, Tweed Heads

UNDEATED: SYDNEY 1, ADELAIDE 1

SEMI FINALS

SYDNEY 1:

Liam Milne - Sophie Ashton - Sartaj Hans - Adam Edgton - Nabil Edgton - Nye Griffiths 107.1
defeated

ADELAIDE 1:

Russel Harms - Phil Markey, Zoli Nagy - Justin Williams 16

SYDNEY 3:

Michael Wilkinson - Shane Harrison - Matt Smith - Fraser Rew - David Wiltshire 75
defeated

ADELAIDE 2:

Roger Januszke - John Zollo, David Anderson - George Smolanko 50.1

FINAL

SYDNEY 1 97 *defeated* SYDNEY 3 67

Best Country Team: North Queensland

GNOT SWISS PAIRS

- 1st Jodi Tutty - Stephen Fischer
 2nd Paul Wyer - Bill Haughie
 3rd Ken Dawson - Rosemary Crowley

SENIORS' PLAYOFFS

3rd to 7th December, Canberra

- 1st Terry Brown - Peter Buchen
 2nd Ron Klinger - Ian Thomson
 3rd Avi Kanetkar - Bruce Neill

WOMEN'S PLAYOFFS

3rd to 7th December, Canberra

- 1st Candice Ginsberg - Barbara Travis
 2nd Paula McLeish - Diana Smart
 3rd Kim Frazer - Anna St Clair

REPRESENTATIVE TEAMS

AUSTRALIAN UNDER 26 v. INDONESIA UNDER 26

On 11 and 12 December, the inaugural Australia - Indonesia Youth Test took place. The Indonesians defeated Australia by 51 IMPs, 273-222. The Australian squad comprised:

Matt Smith - Jamie Thompson
 Renee Cooper - Francesca McGrath

COMMONWEALTH NATIONS BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Commonwealth Nations Bridge Championships will be held at the Gold Coast from 14 to 18 February 2018, leading into the Gold Coast Congress.

The ABF is supporting four teams at the Championships, with two teams contending (Open and Youth). Those in our representative teams are:

AUSTRALIA GOLD (OPEN)

Joe Haffer - Phil Markey
 Max Henbest - David Wiltshire
 Pauline Gumby - Warren Lazer

AUSTRALIA GREEN (YOUTH)

Jamie Thompson - Matt Smith
 Tomer Libman - Andrew Spooner
 Renee Cooper - Francesca McGrath

AUSTRALIA SENIORS

Terry Brown - Peter Buchen
 Ron Klinger - Ian Thomson
 Avi Kanetkar - Bruce Neill

AUSTRALIA WOMEN'S

Candice Ginsberg - Barbara Travis
 Paula McLeish - Diana Smart
 Kim Frazer - Anna St Clair

Round	6	Table					11 EW
Pair	5	Paula McLeish - Di Smart					
Opps	10	Helene Pitt - Ruth Tobin					
Board	Cont	Dec	Lead	Score	Datum	IMPs	
21	2♥	E	♠A	110	-110	0	
22	2♠	W	♥2	-100	100	0	
23	3NT	N	♦9	-630	620	0	
24	3NT	N	♠8	-430	420	0	
25	2♥	E	♥8	110	-110	0	
26	4♠	W	♣Q	620	-620	0	
27	4♠	W	♣9	-50	50	0	
28	6♠	E	♥J	980	-980	0	
29	3♥	E	♥10	140	-130	0	
30	6♣	W	♦2	920	-920	0	
Total						0	
VPs						10.00	

Paula McLeish and Diana Smart had a draw (10-10) against Helene Pitt and Ruth Tobin during the Women's Playoffs. What was so incredible was the 10-board match ended with no IMPs being exchanged - a 0-0 draw. I doubt many 10-board matches have this outcome. (I have had a 0-0 draw over 7 boards but never over 10 - Ed.)

ABF POSITION VACANT

ABF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OFFICER: EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The ABF Management Committee has decided to restructure the support for Youth Bridge. To assist in achieving the goals of increasing the quantity and quality of young bridge players, we are seeking Expressions of Interest for the role of ABF Youth Development Officer.

The role will also take over the responsibilities currently undertaken by David Thompson in his international role, as well as developing initiatives to expand the pool of youth players locally and nationally. The attached document has detailed information, including the closing date and remuneration.

For more information, go to: <http://www.abf.com.au/abf-youth-development-officer-expressions-of-interest/>

Expressions of interest are to be directed to Allison Stralow, ABF Secretary, secretary@abf.com.au, by Monday 22 January.

BOOK REVIEW

MASTERING THE BASICS OF CARD PLAY, by Nigel Rosendorff of Sydney, is a book for absolute beginners. It is ideal for those who have never played any card games involving tricks and trumps.

It covers all the basics of sure tricks, potential tricks, blocked suits, entries, finessing, setting up a long suit, drawing trumps and when not to draw trumps, and basic defensive strategies. This deal from Chapter 4 is a good example of the level to which the book is pitched.

You are playing in 4♠ (South):

♠ K J 2
♥ 5 3
♦ J 8 7 6
♣ A 9 5 4

♠ 3
♥ Q J 10 9 8 4
♦ K 10 9
♣ 10 8 2

♠ 7 5 4
♥ 7 6
♦ A Q 5 3 2
♣ K Q J

♠ A Q 10 9 8 6
♥ A K 2
♦ 4
♣ 5 4 3

West leads the ♥Q.

Declarer has nine tricks. If, after winning the first trick, declarer draws trumps, he will wind up with nine tricks – a trick short.

The way to make an extra trick is to make a void in dummy (hearts), then trump a heart in dummy for the extra trick.

This is how the play should go. South wins with the ♥K, plays the ♥A, followed by the ♥2, trumping high, with either the ♠K or ♠J, as he does not want to suffer the ignominy of being over-ruffed by East if he trumps in dummy with the ♠2.

When it is safe to do so (because you have all the high trumps), trump high, so that you are not overruffed by an opponent.

Ron Klingner

McCUTCHEON AWARDS

The McCutcheon Trophy is awarded to the person who wins the most master points in a calendar year. Category Awards recognise bridge players according to their Master Point Category at the start of the year, and how many points they earned during the year. Congratulations to all the winners.

OVERALL WINNER

1st	Warren Lazer	469.59 MPs
2nd	Pauline Gumby	468.52 MPs
3rd	Justin Williams	401.39 MPs

CATEGORY WINNERS

SILVER+ GRAND MASTER	Warren Lazer
GRAND MASTER	John Newman
GOLD LIFE MASTER	Shane Harrison
SILVER LIFE MASTER	Deana Wilson
BRONZE LIFE MASTER	Matt Smith
LIFE MASTER	Yumin Li
** NATIONAL MASTER	William van Bakel
* NATIONAL MASTER	Jessica Chew
NATIONAL MASTER	Francesca McGrath
* STATE MASTER	Hans van Weeren
STATE MASTER	Paul Dalley
* REGIONAL MASTER	Alan Sims
REGIONAL MASTER	Arianna Yusof
** LOCAL MASTER	Ingrid Cooke
* LOCAL MASTER	Fiona Han
LOCAL MASTER	Ruth Perris
CLUB MASTER	Ramanan Rajkumar
GRADUATE MASTER	Colin Lane
NIL MASTER	Hong Pui Edmond Lee

MOST IMPROVED

1st	Paul Dalley
2nd	Ingrid Cooke
3rd	Elisabeth Sylvester



McCutcheon Trophy quinella

DON'T POKE A UNICYCLIST WITH A BROOM (Spring National Open Teams)

You're playing a long event in a new partnership, and on the first board, partner goes down in a cold game. How do you feel? What would you say?

In October, at the Spring Nationals, something fantastic and unexpected happened. After playing almost every event for years, I was finally on a team that went all the way in a top-flight tournament! Many of Australia's best players have tried, and failed, to drag me across the line before, but in the end it was Justin Williams (South Australia) and Tom Jacob - Brian Mace (New Zealand) who succeeded. I've chosen three interesting hands from the event. Come up with your line of play before reading the solutions.

On the first board of the first match, I declared 4♠, sitting West, after my RHO pre-empted in diamonds:

♠ K Q J 9 8 2 ♥ J 9 2 ♦ K 10 ♣ 3 2	♠ 5 4 3 ♥ K Q 3 ♦ J 8 7 ♣ A K 8 5	West	North
4♠	All Pass	East 1♣	South 2♦

LHO led ♦6 to RHO's ace, then a diamond came back to my King (LHO showing a doubleton).

With three Aces missing, I had to avoid a second trump loser. How would you play?

Instinctively, I led the ♠Q from hand, in what I later realised was a redundant deceptive ploy. My ♠Q lost to RHO's singleton ♠A, and he quickly capitalised, by forcing me to ruff another diamond with a top trump. Because I had to trump high from my ♠K-J, LHO's ♠10-7 was promoted into the setting trick.

I hope you would have crossed to dummy to lead a trump. Had you done so, the ♠A singleton would have beaten thin air, and you could have felt justifiably smug, making your contract.

Back to the original question: how would you feel if your partner butchered the first board of an event? Justin Williams, my partner, gave nothing away by his expression when I went down. If you're lucky like Justin was, your partner won't even realise their error, and will finish the match with misguided-confidence intact.

Criticising partner at the table is like poking a unicyclist with a broom; nothing good will come of it.

Now for the board that amused me most from the whole tournament. It started with a world champion passing out of turn (often referred to as a POOT, by tournament directors). North was dealer:

West	North	East	South (W.C) Pass !!!
1♠ 4♣	Pass Pass All Pass	1♥ 1NT	Pass Pass Pass
♠ K Q 9 7 4 3 ♥ 2 ♦ Q 9 ♣ K 5 4 3		♠ 5 2 ♥ A 8 6 4 3 ♦ K J 5 ♣ Q J 8	

The ♦2 was led to the world champ's Ace. Next, he cashed the ♣A and led another club, which I won in dummy. Over to you: how would you play the trump suit, spades, for only one loser? (Hint: it's all about the initial POOT.)

Normally I would just hope the ♠A was onside and lead towards the ♠K-Q twice, but I was confident that RHO would have opened the bidding with three Aces, so that option seemed hopeless. Feeling nervous, I played a spade to the ♠9, needing the ♠J-10 onside, and the Ace appeared! Ten tricks.

That was a great feeling – the cards had the decency to reward clue-spotting. Respect the POOT!

The last board is a defensive problem that one of our opponents faced. Your opponents bid to 3NT, and the ♥7 is led by South, your partner:

West 1♠ 3NT	North Pass All Pass	East 1♦ 2NT (18-19)	South Pass Pass
-------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------

Partner's lead of the ♥7 is 4th highest from an honour, or second-top from rubbish.

North (You) ♠ K 5 3 ♥ 5 3 2 ♦ A K ♣ 10 7 4 3 2	Declarer Partner ♥7 led
--	---

Declarer wins with the ♥Q at trick one, then plays the ♦Q. Can you and partner beat this contract? Use clues from the auction.

You can beat the contract if partner led from ♥AK97(x): you'll take three+ hearts and two diamonds. That holding is consistent with the lead. But can partner hold ♥A-K according to the auction?

Dummy has 7 HCP, you have 10 HCP, and declarer showed 18-19. 7 + 10 + 18 = 35, leaving partner with at most 5 HCP. So, she doesn't hold ♥A-K. Which other suit might produce tricks? Well done if you switched to a club! This was your last chance to beat the contract.

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

A nerdy side note: when North switches to a club, South must make the peculiar play of the ♣J. If South plays the ♣9 (3 – 5 – 9 – K) – the ♣J will block the suit, and the contract will make.

Somehow, we landed in a final, largely due to the stellar performance from team-mates Tom Jacob and Brian Mace in the qualifying. We played the FISCHER team in the final: Stephen Fischer - David Morgan, Richard Brightling - David Hoffman. We were trailing at lunchtime, but it was an enjoyable match because our opponents were pleasant.

I don't have any tips on how to stay young, but I would recommend a tight final if you'd like to age quickly. Our opponents had my heart rate up for the whole eight hours. We entered the final session with a slender lead and a 12 IMP gain on the third last board left the final score 92.1 to 74 IMPs.

I was the only one in the room not to have won a national teams event before. When the result came through, our opponents were gracious enough to share in my joy!

John Newman

BOBBY EVANS SENIORS' TEAMS

David Hoffman reports on another close final, but Seniors are already aged!

After two of the three days of qualifying, the leading teams were HOFFMAN on 83.85 VPs, LIVESEY on 78.57, and WALSH on 73.38. Surprisingly BEAUCHAMP (the #1 seed) was in 14th place, below average.

With one match remaining, the teams in contention were KROCHMALIK, HOFFMAN, WALSH and BEAUCHAMP, who were making a late run. In the last round, BEAUCHAMP continued their rally, collecting 18.43 VPs against KROCHMALIK. WALSH and HOFFMAN both won, leaving these final standings:

Beauchamp	116.31 VPs
Walsh	114.83 VPs
Hoffman	113.51 VPs

However, WALSH withdrew from the final, leaving BEAUCHAMP (Beauchamp - Neill - Kanetkar, Gumby - Lazer) to play HOFFMAN (Hoffman - Brightling, Mendick - Waters) over 56 boards for the Bobby Evans Trophy, with BEAUCHAMP having a 1.4 IMP carryforward.

After the first 14 boards, HOFFMAN led 39 to 27.4, but BEAUCHAMP had a good second set to lead 71.4 to 52 at half-time. The third set went HOFFMAN's way, so they led by 93 to 84.4 with one set remaining. An exciting set was on offer for those watching on BBO.

This was an interesting declarer play hand from the third session:

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

In the Open Room the bidding went:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
1♥	Double (4+♠)	2♥	3♣
3♥	5♣	All Pass	

West led the ♥J, and South grabbed the opportunity to discard his losing spade. The declarer for HOFFMAN played the hand carefully, realising that the club finesse was not necessary, provided he could trump his diamond loser. Therefore, at trick 3, he led a diamond towards his hand, covering East's card with the ♦J. It was essential to lose the diamond to West, because a trump return by West would deprive the defence of their natural trump trick. South won West's return, cashed the ♦A, and ruffed his losing diamond.

South's remaining cards were all clubs, so he could return to hand to lead the ♣A. Provided one honour fell under the Ace, he could concede just one club trick to make his contract.

The BEAUCHAMP declarer had a blind spot after the same heart lead. He discarded his losing spade, but then he put all his eggs in the 'trump finesse' basket. When the club finesse failed, he had one club loser and two diamond losers, giving HOFFMAN 12 IMPs.

Apart from one big loss, BEAUCHAMP was on the right side of a number of gains during the last set and led by 5.4 IMPs with one board remaining...

Board 28	♠ Q 2		
Dealer West	♥ A K 8		
NS Vul	♦ A Q 2		
	♣ A J 7 6 5		
♠ J		♠ K 8 7 6 4	
♥ J 7 6 5 3		♥ 2	
♦ 8 5 4 3		♦ K J 10 9 7 6	
♣ 9 8 2		♣ Q	
	♠ A 10 9 5 3		
	♥ Q 10 9 4		
	♦ void		
	♣ K 10 4 3		

After North's 2NT opening bid, Kanetkar-Neill bid to 4♣, making 12 tricks. In the other room, this was the auction:

West	North	East	South
Lazer	Brightling	Gumby	Hoffman
Pass	1♣	1♦	1♥ (spades)
3♦ (weak)	3NT	5♦	6♣
Pass	Pass	6♦	Double
All Pass			

Brightling and Hoffman use the Banzai point count with balanced hands, which allocates 5 points for an Ace, 4 for a King, 3 for a Queen, 2 for a Jack, and 1 for a 10. Given there are 15 Banzai points in each suit, you then re-evaluate your hand by taking 2/3 of the total (to get back to 10 points per suit). The North hand has 27 Banzai points, which re-values to 18 points, therefore it is not good enough for a 2NT opening bid - which shows 20-22 "post-Banzai points" in the Brightling-Hoffman methods (or 30-33 Banzai points).

Pauline Gumby's 5♦ save put pressure on Hoffman, as any lesser bid would have allowed an easy cue in diamonds. Hoffman went through possible hands that Brightling could hold, eventually deciding that Brightling had to have 4 or 5 clubs. This resulted in the 6♣ call, cold for 12 or 13 tricks. Gumby saved in 6♦, which went for 1400, giving Hoffman 12 imps, and the trophy by 6.6 imps. [6♣ would have been worth 1370 or 1390, resulting in the same 12 IMPs. Ed.]

This was my second win in the event, but the first for Richard Brightling, Stephen Mendick and Bernie Waters.

Finally, congratulations to Michael Prescott in his first year as convener. The Spring Nationals were run to the high standard set by previous convener, Marcia Scudder.

David Hoffman

DICK CUMMINGS OPEN PAIRS

Dick Cummings was one of Australia's top players from the 1960s through to the 1990s. The Dick Cummings Open Pairs is held over two days, concurrently with the semi-finals and final of the Spring National Open Teams. There were 130 pairs competing on Day 1.

POINTS SCHMOINTS

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

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Double	2♦
2♠	3♦	3♠	All Pass

Despite a combined count of 20 HCP, 4♠ by West can always be made. Suppose North leads ♦A and another diamond. West wins the ♦K, ruffs a diamond, finesses the ♥Q, cashes the ♥A, ruffs a heart, finesses the ♠Q and plays the ♠A or ruffs dummy's fourth heart. There were 15 pairs in 4♠, with nine succeeding (+620, 89% or 650 96%). Making 11 tricks in 2♠ or 3♠ was worth 75%.

The leaders after Day 1 were Matt Mullamphy – Ron Klinger (93.87 VPs), followed by Zhugiang Tian – Watson Zhou (89.12), and Vanessa Brown – Leigh Gold (87.24). Four pairs from the losing semi-finalists in the Spring National Open Teams brought the number of pairs to 134 on the final day.

IMPs v. MATCHPOINTS

Dealer West	♠ 10
NS Vul	♥ A Q 10 6
	♦ Q 9 5 4
	♣ A J 7 2
	♠ Q 6 4 3
	♥ K 7 3
	♦ A K J
	♣ K 9 4

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	1♠	3NT
All Pass			

West leads the ♠2 (3rd and 5th leads) – 10 – King – 3. East returns the ♠J. What should South play (a) at Teams/IMPs, and (b) at Pairs/Matchpoints?

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

You have 9+ tricks as long as you do not lose the first five.

At Teams, it would be folly to rise with the ♠Q at trick 2. If West began with A-x-2, you would be one down. At teams, you duck the second spade and play the ♠Q on the next spade from East.

At Pairs, ducking at trick 2 ensures the contract, but you will be held to 10 tricks. You should be prepared to risk the contract and rise with the ♠Q at trick 2 in the quest for overtricks.

Rising with the ♠Q gives you 12 tricks, +690. Ducking at trick 2 is holding yourself to 10 tricks, +630. Almost the entire field was in 3NT. Results: N-S +720 x 10, 91% (East played the ♠J at trick 1); +690 x 27, 62%; 660 x 18, 25%; 630 x 4, 7%. Note that East's taking ♠K and ♠A at once gave East-West 75%.

West	North	East	South
2♥	Pass	3♥	Double
Pass	?		

Playing pairs, what do you do as North with this hand:

♠ A Q J
♥ 8
♦ Q 8 7 6 4
♣ 10 9 4 2

You have a reasonable hand, but not overwhelming. You are too good to bid a mere 4♦, which might be based on negligible values, but who is to say 5♦ is a make? Another option is 4NT to ask partner to choose a minor. That might find the better minor suit fit. What if partner has five spades, but a poor suit, say 10xxxx. Now you would want to be in 4♠.

You do have a seven-loser hand and so game is a possibility, but which one? The way to find out is to bid 4♥, their suit, and let partner choose. When you bid 4♥, East passes and South bids 4♠, all pass.

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

West led the ♠J. Reluctant to create a finessing position for South, East played low. That was fatal. South won with the ♠K and played ♠A, ♠Q, ♠J, ♦4 to the ♦A, and the ♠K. With diamonds 3-2, he had four spades, five diamonds and the ♠K for 10 tricks.

Repeated heart leads will defeat 4♠. East could have achieved the same by rising with the ♣A and shifting to hearts. That will be enough to beat the contract.

Eight pairs were in 4♠, with one failing (club lead). Five made 10 tricks (92%) and two made 11 tricks (99%). There were 25 Souths in 3NT, most failing by three tricks.

The final results:

1st	Matt Mullamphy – Ron Klinger	168.19 VPs
2nd	Dee Harley – Robbie Van Riel	166.55 VPs
3rd	Ed Barnes – David Wiltshire	159.43 VPs

Ron Klinger



Joe Haffer and Phil Markey, winners of the Open Playoffs

Phil Markey's entertaining article proves that to win, even the Open Playoffs, you don't play perfect bridge. In the end, it's about making fewer mistakes, and perhaps having a bit of luck.

Day 1, Stage 1, Match 5 of the Australian Open Team Playoffs and to date the event has been close.

None of your opponents have given away imps and when you do a clever thing that would normally earn you some IMPs, it turns out everyone has done that same clever thing and all you manage is not to lose any IMPs. Maybe it is just you, but it feels like the field is playing tight - "squirreling" - making some timid attempts to collect a few nuts but mostly making sure the nuts they have are well looked after. It's not really your game but so far you have been playing along, with adequate results.

As the first board of this match hits the table you can't see your right-hand opponent because of the big wooden screen that fits diagonally across the table but, having played him many times before, you know he is wearing his "Captain Serious" face. You don't know your screen-mate all that well and, as you smile and greet him, you get a short, polite response that indicates he is utterly focused on his nuts too.

West	North	East	South
1♠	Double	Pass	1♣
Pass	Pass	3NT	3♦
			All Pass

Because of the big wooden screen, a tray containing the bidding cards gets pushed back and forth under the screen to conduct the auction. When the tray gets pushed back under the screen with partner's 3♦ bid, your screen mate asks what the bid shows. You shrug and whisper, "Good hand, diamonds".

You are a bit shocked when your screen mate thinks for a really long time and then bids 3NT. The tray comes back and you ponder a double, but that just seems greedy so you pass. Partner leads the ♥4, and dummy reveals a fatuous 1♣ overcall. Life is pretty good but you have to work out the best way to capitalise. You are not too sure what is going on this hand, but eventually you decide that partner is maybe leading a singleton heart to get you on lead to put the fatal diamond switch through declarer. Following through with this plan you rise with the ♥A and try the ♦J. Declarer wins the ace of diamonds and then plays the king of clubs which partner wins and suddenly declarer is leaning forward showing you his cards and alleging he has 9 tricks.

You are confused. Partner is returning his cards to the board as are your opponents, a near certain sign that declarer has made a good claim, so you go along with it. As you sort your cards for the next hand, you recall declarer saying he had 6 diamond tricks for his 9 tricks but that can't be right because you are sure you had J-9-6-3. You feel confident enough to quiz your screen mate about the legitimacy of this statement. He looks at you blankly and explains that he started with A-K-Q-10-5-2 and you had played the Jack. You remember playing the Jack now so probably he is right.

Still unsure, you bother partner by asking, "You had diamonds, right?". Partner explains that he thought his 3♦ bid showed 0-1 diamonds and 4 hearts.

Board 11	♠ 9 6 5	
	♥ A 10 5 3	
	♦ J 9 6 3	
	♣ 10 3	
	♠ K Q J 8 2	♠ 10
	♥ 7 2	♥ K 9 6
	♦ 7 4	♦ A K Q 10 5 2
	♣ 9 6 5 4	♣ K Q J
	♠ A 7 4 3	
	♥ Q J 8 4	
	♦ 8	
	♣ A 8 7 2	

Next board. Maybe making 9 tricks in 3NT is just the usual thing but you have that uncomfortable feeling that someone has been at your nuts.

Day 2, Stage 1, Match 7

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

West	North	East	South
1♠	4♣	2NT (minors)	3♣
4♣	4♣	5♣	Double
All Pass			

You are North again and this match has been going well. Your opponents have been bullied on some of the early hands and eventually a big bag of nuts came your way. It is just a matter of finishing the job as you contemplate cheese and salami at the lunch break. This auction has a promising sound about it. If partner is doubling 5♣, then it is going off and they are vulnerable.

You start with a club and declarer wins and plays another club which partner wins with the ♣A to lead a spade. You win the spade and exit with a passive heart. Declarer wins the heart and plays another trump and then leads the ♦3 from hand as you play low. It has all happened in a rush. Declarer seems despondent and you are correspondingly happy.

Declarer stops for a while before choosing a diamond from dummy and it occurs to you that you could have afforded a bigger diamond. As this thought goes through your head,

declarer asks dummy to play the ♦6 and partner follows with the ♦5. This is bad. Declarer is showing you his cards and saying he has 11 tricks.

Sudden and severe pain, as you realise the score is -750. Your stock pile of nuts could have had an addition but, instead, hours of earnest foraging have been wasted. Partner wants to discuss the hand and you want to kill partner. You don't enjoy lunch.

Day 5, Stage 2, Match 7.

It is the home stretch on the final day and, although you try not to look at your nut pile, partner loves to contemplate his nuts. He tells you that, with just three matches remaining, your pile is the biggest with a few to spare. That feels good but inevitably just causes you anxiety about protecting your stash.

This match starts really well. These opponents are spewing nuts and you have collected a heap. Partner has done a dumb thing mid match but even that doesn't deflect you from the comforting thought that you will have plenty to last the winter. You want to just hang on to what you have, when this board hits the table.

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

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♦ (NF)	Pass
3NT	Pass	5♦	All Pass

You are East. You have an exciting sort of hand, but you know that partner's 2♣ rebid is bad news, so you slow down with a non-forcing 3♦. You congratulate yourself when the bidding tray comes back under the screen and partner has bid 3NT, because you had expected and planned for that. It can't be right to play 3NT with a void and so many diamonds, so you happily correct to 5♦, thinking this has been a good auction and at worst no nuts will be exchanging hands - you will be a step closer to registering a nut deposit.

You like to think that you are a great dummy. The plan is to be meticulous about arranging the dummy and the played cards so partner is never in doubt about the state of the contract. In addition, you have practised the art of not paying attention to what partner does. You are a dummy. Your job is not to mess with the vibe by worrying about what is happening.

Despite your efforts, you notice that the play of this hand is peculiar. Unfortunately, three tricks are pointing the opponents' way early so the contract is not making but it might still be fine because, as you previously figured, it is surely a normal no-nut exchange contract.

With about 8 tricks to go partner plays a trump for the first time and after two rounds of trumps your opponents don't have any left, but he continues to play a couple more rounds to check. Weirdly, more tricks get pointed towards your opponents and as trick 13 is played it is 8 tricks to you and 5 to them. You check the vulnerability and see that it is just 50s. Both you and your left-hand opponent say, "Three off?"

at the same time to confirm the score. Partner looks surprised and says, "No, one off!". A kerfuffle ensues. Partner is adamant that he is just one off and, being a great dummy, you remove yourself from the debate and just listen. Eventually left-hand opponent points out that the final contract was 5♦, to which partner responds "Ohhh, I thought I was playing 3NT".

This is more than your attempts at Zen perfection can tolerate. You regret partner's birth and wonder why you are so unlucky as to be inflicted with him. Partner is slowly understanding that he has simply failed to notice the correction to 5♦. How is that even possible? He unhelpfully observes that 5♦ was cold, as you see nuts flying everywhere. Partner calls the police, but they are uninterested in his being an idiot. You are going to say something you will regret - but you remember Hilda and Ellen just in time.

It was about the third or fourth time you ever played a session of competitive bridge and you had just finished a 3-board round against two pleasant elderly ladies. You had taken all the nuts. Your right-hand lady had been free and easy with her nuts but was at least good enough to know that she had been bad, and during the few minutes between rounds she was stating her sins and spiralling further and further into depression. "I am so sorry, Hilda, I can't believe I did that." Left-hand lady, Hilda, sympathised at first. Right-hand lady went on and on and was finishing with, "I am not sure why I play bridge, Hilda. I am just terrible at it. Maybe I should give it away?" Hilda had heard enough and impatiently responded, "Ellen, if you gave up bridge, what else would you do for misery?"

One advantage of playing behind screens is that you don't see partner and you are not supposed to talk to him. This brings you comfort during the last two matches. Between the finish of one match and the start of the next match, you rush outside the venue to walk and smoke and, surprisingly, partner sniffs the breeze and leaves you alone. Both the last two matches pass without serious incident. With two boards left you goose some part-score hand, probably because you are on your 17th coffee for the day and forgot to eat. Generally, you and partner do solid things and whilst the scoreboard later reveals you lost a couple of nuts nothing bad happens.

You finish the last board of the last match and know that you have a big pile of nuts, but you don't know if it is the biggest pile. You ask somebody and they say it is close. You see partner rushing about checking your nut pile with other players. It's close. You return to walking and smoking.

You ring she who must be obeyed in an effort to distract yourself. She answers, and you ask after the dog. She doesn't discuss Linguine but, instead, asks if you won. You tell her you've just finished and you don't know. She says, "You're an idiot, and you should find out." You obediently walk back into the venue and partner offers you a high five. Bridge buddies walk up to shake your hand. You have the biggest nut pile with no nuts to spare.

You hit the beers. Probably you will forgive partner. That is the usual thing, but you are not sure yet.

Phil Markey

Ed: Linguine is Phil's dog.

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FROM LAST TO FIRST (Women's Playoffs) by Barbara Travis

Four years ago, at the last Butler Pairs selection for the Australian team, Candice Ginsberg and I finished Stage 1 of the qualifying in last place! This time round, we redeemed ourselves, and when the "nut-collecting" [see *Phil Markey's article*] stopped at the end of Stage 2, we were in first place.

I enjoyed using the 'power of the hidden hand' on this deal:

Dealer West ♠ A K Q 10 9 8 2
All Vul ♥ 9
 ♦ 8 5
 ♣ A 5 4

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

♠ J 5 3
♥ Q 10 8 3
♦ Q 6 4
♣ K 9 3

West	North	East	South
1♦	4♠	All Pass	

Against my 4♠ contract, East led the ♦2 and West hesitated before winning with her ♦K. She returned a spade, which I won in hand. The only legitimate chance seemed to be if West held the ♥A-K-J tripleton, but since she hadn't tried to cash a top heart at trick 2 that option seemed remote.

At trick 3, I crossed to dummy with the ♠J, and led a small diamond towards my hand. West shouldn't really fall for this ploy since, with the ♦J, I could just lead the card to make the ♦Q into a winner. However, the pressure of this slightly devious play got to West and she opted to win the ♦A and I had my tenth trick (the ♦Q now allowed me a discard).

I did wonder whether East could have discarded her ♦J on my second trump, but that would prove fatal if I'd held the ♦10!

The next hand is an everyday 4♠ contract.

Dealer West ♠ K 10 8 7
All Vul ♥ 6 3
 ♦ A J 8
 ♣ A K 6 3

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

♠ A J 5 2
♥ 10 9 4
♦ K 7 6 3
♣ J 9

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT (14-16)	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Some Easts led the ♦4, which should really simplify the hand. Our East led the ♥K, then the ♥Q and a third heart, ruffed in the North hand. There are two issues that need to be dealt with on this hand – the trump suit and the diamond finesse.

In such situations, you are best-served to test the diamond finesse first, because if it works you can cash the top two trumps then ruff clubs. On the other hand, if the diamond finesse fails, you know you must find the ♠Q to make your contract.

Cross to dummy by trumping a club, then finesse the diamond suit. The finesse works, so now you can cash the ♠A and ♠K, then take your second club ruff, to make your contract.

Stage 2 started with some high-level auctions, with the first being the biggest swing we gained during the tournament:

Dealer North ♠ Q
NS Vul ♥ 10 8 7
 ♦ A J 7 4 3
 ♣ A J 10 4

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

♠ A 8 4 3
♥ void
♦ Q 9 6
♣ K Q 9 8 6 2

West Ginsberg	North	East Travis	South
	1♦	2♦ (Majors)	3♣ (nat, F)
4♥	5♣	5♥ (1)	6♣
6♥ (2)	Double	All Pass	

(1) If partner bid 4♥ to make, then I'm happy to play 5♥. If she bid 4♥ as a pre-empt, then I'm happy to save.

(2) Candice felt sure that South (her screen-mate) was bidding 6♣ to make. 6♥ was going to be a cheap save against a making vulnerable slam.

In the Women's field, our unfortunate opponents were the only pair to suffer from an opposition save, so 6♥X, -100, was 16 IMPs our way. In the Seniors', only one pair played in 6♣, with two East-Wests being allowed to play in 5♥ - an undoubled 5♥ went down, whereas 5♥ X made!

Our win was based on steady play rather than spectacular bridge - minimising errors and trying to keep life easy for partner. The five days of bridge were not onerous, but events such as these require you to pace yourself so you have gas in the tank for Stage 2.

The top three pairs in the Women's have been ratified as the Australian Women's team for the Commonwealth Nations Bridge Championships, which will be held in the Gold Coast prior to the Gold Coast Congress in February 2018. Paula McLeish and Di Smart finished 2nd, with Kim Frazer and Anna St Clair in 3rd place.

Barbara Travis



Candice Ginsberg and Barbara Travis

THE GRAND NATIONAL OPEN TEAMS by Liam Milne

The end of another year rolls around, and with it, the last Open event on the Australian bridge calendar: the Grand National Open Teams. As in previous years, the 2017 GNOT National Final was held in Tweed Heads, NSW, and 60 teams from around Australia converged on the Tweed Ultima Conference Centre having qualified through regional events.

As per usual, the GNOT is run as a knockout event with a Swiss repechage for teams that are knocked out of the top bracket. Four knockout rounds reduce the field from sixty to four (with the top four seeds receiving byes in the first round to even up the brackets). The winners of the fifth KO round progress directly to the semi-final, while the losers play the top two teams clawing their way back in through the repechage.

This year's GNOT semi-finalists were:

- SYDNEY 1 (Liam Milne, Nye Griffiths, Sophie Ashton, Sartaj Hans, Adam Edgton, Nabil Edgton)
- ADELAIDE 2 (David Anderson, Roger Januszke, George Smolanko, John Zollo)
- ADELAIDE 1 (Russel Harms, Phil Markey, Zoli Nagy, Justin Williams)
- SYDNEY 3 (Michael Wilkinson, Shane Harrison, Matt Smith, Fraser Rew, David Wiltshire)

The first two teams had won their five knockout matches to qualify this far, while ADELAIDE 1 and SYDNEY 3 had won their repechage final matches against SYDNEY 2 and PERTH 2 respectively. ADELAIDE 1 had a nail-biter match against SYDNEY 2 which was decided on the last board, with ADELAIDE 1 winning by 2 IMPs.

In the semi-finals, SYDNEY 1 dominated against ADELAIDE 1, allowing them only 16 IMPs over the three sets played, while scoring 107 themselves. ADELAIDE 1 conceded before the fourth set.

One of the highlights was this display of excellent defensive technique by Nabil Edgton.

Dealer South ♠ 10 4 2
 Nil Vul ♥ K 10 7 5 2
 ♦ 7 6
 ♣ 9 5 4

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

♠ K 7 5
 ♥ Q J 3
 ♦ 10 9 4
 ♣ A J 8 6

West Williams	North N Edgton	East Nagy	South Milne
1NT	Pass	2♥ (spades)	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Against Justin Williams's 3NT, Nabil led his fourth highest ♥5 to the 4 – Jack - 6. When I continued with the ♥Q and declarer followed with the ♥8, Nabil realised that if I won and played a third heart, the defence would likely be dead; his hand with the long hearts had no prospects of winning the lead later. With two long suits in the dummy, active defence was required, and it was most likely our suit was clubs.

The club switch would need to come from the North side, so at trick two Nabil accurately overtook the ♥Q with the ♥K and led a low club! Declarer had no winning play, and when the ♠10 fetched the Jack and Queen, the best he could do was attempt to drop my ♠K. When I won my spade trick, I continued with the ♣A and another club to Nabil's beautiful ♣9 for one down.

At the other table, the auction was very different, starting with a Phil Markey-style 1NT (9-14 HCP) on the South hand. East (Adam Edgton) declared 3NT, and after the defence stated with three rounds of hearts he was not troubled taking nine tricks.

In the other semi-final, the margin was only 4 IMPs going into the last set, but the action in the fourth quarter mostly went the way of SYDNEY 3 who won their match 75-50. Thus, we were left with another all-Sydney GNOT final.

The final was a close-fought affair. After three of the four sets, 25 of the 42 boards had been flat, and the margin was insignificant going into the deciding set:

	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Cumulative
SYDNEY 1	15	13	25	53
SYDNEY 2	18	26	12	56

Not much had changed hands before this deal hit the table::

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

West N Edgton	North Rew	East Hans	South Wiltshire
1♥	2♦	1♦	Double
Pass	4♣	3♦	3♠
		All Pass	



SYDNEY 1: Sophie Ashton, Sartaj Hans, Adam Edgton, baby Rosie, Nabil Edgton, Nye Griffiths, Liam Milne

In the Closed Room, Nabil Edgtton's threadbare 1♥ response convinced Wiltshire to try to simplify the auction by bidding the remaining major suit. Rew had a difficult bid over 3♠, perhaps doubting whether 4♣ would be a cue or natural (and if the latter, whether forcing or not), and settled for game in the Moysian fit. 4♠ made; +620.

West	North	East	South
Wilkinson	Milne	Smith	Griffiths
		1♦	Double
Pass	2♦	3♦	4♦
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

With only diamonds having been bid at this table, Nye found an excellent second call. 4♦ not only showed a good hand, but it sounded like diamond shortage and genuine support for all the unbid suits. After long consideration, it looked to me like trying for 12 tricks in clubs was a good shot, and there didn't seem to be any way to investigate, so I put my chips into the middle. Nye's hand proved very suitable. 6♣ was worth +1370 and 13 IMPs to the good.

Now in the lead by 8 IMPs with 10 boards to play, SYDNEY 1 never looked back, winning the final quarter 44-11 IMPs, and the final by 30 IMPs. Four of the members of the victorious 2016 team defended their title (Milne, Griffiths, Ashton, Hans), while the Edgttons stepped up this year to replace Paul Gosney and Tony Nunn.

For our team, the GNOC continues to be one of the most enjoyable events on the Australian calendar. Not only is the tournament held up on the sunny NSW/QLD border, but Tweed Heads is close to the ocean and next to an airport to which there are always cheap flights! The reduction in teams from 64 to 60 has also reduced the pressure on the playing area somewhat, giving players more room and comfort. Our congratulations go to Ray and Kim Ellaway for another smoothly run event, and we'll hope to see you again in Tweed Heads soon.

Liam Milne



Joy Bowman.

Congratulations on your 100th birthday.

I just received a telephone call out of the blue from David Anderson to inform me that my name appears in the November 2017 issue of the ABF Newsletter. I have since looked online and was delighted to see your name as the editor.

Anyway, the relevant article concerned the earliest Youth Championships in Canberra, immediately preceding the 1969 Australia Day Congress, when I was a 22-year old student. At my first attempt interstate, I was fortunate to win the Youth Pairs partnering Barry Burton, in a young field that comprised many of today's legends.

I have been trying to remember what else happened on that trip. My memory is a bit unclear. I know we stayed in student accommodation at Bruce Hall in the ANU, and I do remember Barry being apprehended for speeding near Wagga Wagga while we drove back to Adelaide afterwards.

But, more importantly, I reckon we also did quite well in the Open Pairs at the Australia Day Congress following the youth event. I was introduced to the names of several opponents such as Tim Seres, Dick Cummings, Roelof Smilde, Mary McMahon, Jim and Norma Borin, without fully appreciating at that time their historical achievements.

Barbara, are you able to determine the result of the Open Pairs that year?

Len Colgan, South Australia

Ed: When I moved to Adelaide in 1980, Len was one of our top players. He retired from competitive bridge around 2000, and we had lost contact. One of the benefits of being Editor is that I have received emails from people going back to my Uni days.

Anyway, a quick email to John Brockwell, who made enquiries of Keith Ogborn, the ABF's historian, and I had an answer for Len, plus a copy of the bridge column, courtesy of the National Library!

Len and Barry Burton completed the 'double' at Len's first attempt, winning both the Youth Pairs and the Open Pairs.

JOY BOWMAN TURNS 100

Community Bridge Club at Bateau Bay, NSW had a special day for a lovely lady who celebrated her 100th birthday on 10th December 2017.

Joy Bowman is an inspiration to everyone at our club and tells us that she intends to continue playing bridge with us each week for as long as possible.

This photo of Joy is from last year's birthday celebration at our club. Of course we had a much larger cake this year.

Molly O'Neill, CBC Vice President

HAWKESBURY BC CONGRESS

In recent years the Hawkesbury Bridge Club has conducted its annual congress in the month of April, however the 2018 congress will be held on the weekend of the 3rd and 4th February. Full details of the congress can be found on our website.

Entries via the NSWBA website: www.nswba.com.au.

Please note the congress is held at Panthers North Richmond.

Elaine Pugh, Convenor

HOW WOULD YOU PLAY?

HAND 1

♠ 8 3
♥ 3 2
♦ 8 7 6 5 3
♣ A K 7 4

♠ 6 2
♥ A J 10 9
♦ 9 4
♣ J 9 5 3 2

♠ A K J 10 9 4
♥ Q 6 4
♦ A K
♣ 8 6

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	1♣
Pass	4♣	All Pass	3♣

West led the ♦Q, taken by declarer with the ♦A.
What is your plan to make your game?

HAND 2

♠ 6 5
♥ K Q J 10 2
♦ 7 5 2
♣ 5 4 2

♠ 9 8 7 3 2
♥ A 9 8 4
♦ 3
♣ 8 7 3

♠ A K Q J 10 4
♥ 6 3
♦ A K 6
♣ A K

♠ void
♥ 7 5
♦ Q J 10 9 8 4
♣ Q J 10 9 6

West	North	East	South
2NT (minors)	3♥	Pass	4NT (RKCB)
Pass	5♣ (1 key card)	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

West led the ♦Q. Declarer could count 11 winners.
What is your plan to make your slam?

HAND 3

♠ Q 10 5 3
♥ 7 4
♦ A 10 7 6 4
♣ 9 4

♠ 8 6
♥ Q 9 8 5 2
♦ 5 3
♣ 7 5 3 2

♠ A J 9 7
♥ J 10 6
♦ K 9
♣ Q J 10 8

♠ K 4 2
♥ A K 3
♦ Q J 8 2
♣ A K 6

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	3♦

West led the ♥5, fourth-highest.
What is your plan to make your game?

Solutions on Page 20

ANDY HUNG BRIDGE HOLIDAYS

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THE ONLY HOPE

North
 ♠ A Q 10 5 4 2
 ♥ 8 7 2
 ♦ 3 2
 ♣ 9 3

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

	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2♦ (2)	Pass	2♣ (1)
Pass	2♠ (4)	Pass	2♥ (3)
Pass	3♠	Pass	3♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	4♦
Pass	5♦ (5)	Pass	4NT
All Pass			6♥

- (1) Artificial, game-force
- (2) Negative or waiting
- (3) 5+ hearts
- (4) 5+ spades
- (5) 1 key card for hearts (♠A)

West leads the ♣Q - 3 - Ace - 2.

What do you play at trick 2?

The answer to that question might become clear with the answers to other questions.

How many hearts does South have?

Given in the bidding, 5+ hearts. Since dummy has three hearts and you have five hearts, South has exactly five hearts.

What are they?

Answer: A-K-Q-J-9.

How many diamonds does South have?

South bid 3♦ (4 card suit) and repeated the diamonds with 4♦. Hence, South also started with five diamonds.

What did West's ♣Q lead tell you?

Partner has the ♣J as well as the ♣Q and does not have the ♣K.

What did declarer play at trick 1?

The ♣2.

What follows from that?

South has the ♣K left.

What is South's hand pattern?

It could be 1-5-5-2 or 0-5-5-3 or 0-5-6-2.

If South has a spade void, there is nothing you can do to change the likely outcome. You will almost certainly come to a trump trick whatever you do.

There is no benefit in switching to a diamond. If West has a diamond trick to come, you do not need to switch to a diamond to create that trick.

If South's pattern is 1-5-5-2, can you foresee South's probable play if you return a club?

Does that help you with your best play at trick 2?

Here is the complete deal:

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

If East returns a club at trick 2 or switches to a diamond, South wins and cashes a top heart. When that reveals the 5-0 break, South plays the ♠8 to the ♠A and finesses the ♥9. South draws trumps and has twelve tricks when diamonds behave.

What can East do about that?

After trick 1, East knows that South has at most one spade. East needs to disrupt declarer's communication with dummy by playing a spade, preferably the ♠9, at trick 2. That gives declarer a second spade trick, but South has no useful discard on that anyway.

When declarer wins the spade switch in dummy, declarer can in theory succeed by finessing the ♥9 at once but that is highly unlikely. South might be suspicious of the spade switch, but it would be extremely brave to take that first-round heart finesse. I would not expect one declarer in 200 to do that. How silly would you look if West wins with ♥10-x or ♥10-x-x?

If declarer wins the spade switch and plays a heart to the Ace, the slam is one down. The spade switch eliminated declarer's entry to dummy to take the heart finesse once the bad break has been revealed.

Ron Klinger

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COUP 6: THE MORTON'S FORK

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The Morton's Fork Coup is a play technique by which declarer offers a defender a choice of two losing options, usually those of taking a trick, or ducking to preserve an honour combination, either decision costing a trick. If the defender wins the trick, he sets up an extra winner for declarer, while if he ducks, his winner disappears because declarer has a discard available on another suit.

The coup is named after Cardinal Morton, Chancellor under England's King Henry VII, who collected taxes from wealthy London merchants for the royal treasury. His approach was that, if the merchants lived ostentatiously, they obviously had sufficient income to spare for the king. Alternatively, if they lived frugally, they must have substantial savings and could therefore afford to contribute to the king's coffers. In either case they were impaled on 'Morton's Fork.'

Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ A Q 8 7
♥ 5 4
♦ Q 3 2
♣ A 9 7 3

♠ 2
♥ K 10 9 8 3
♦ A J 8
♣ K Q 10 2

♠ void
♥ Q 7 6
♦ 10 9 6 5 4
♣ J 8 6 5 4

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

South plays in 6♠ after West has opened the bidding with 1♥. The opening lead is the ♠K. As South does not have a useful discard on the ♣A, he ruffs the first round, draws the outstanding trump, then leads a low diamond towards the Queen.

If West goes up with the ♦A, declarer subsequently discards two hearts on the ♦Q and ♣A, while if West ducks, declarer wins the ♦Q then discards his remaining diamond on the ♣A and loses only one heart trick.

Alternatively, if declarer judges that East holds the ♦A, perhaps because it is East who has opened the bidding, he can coup that defender by leading towards the ♦K instead of the Queen.

Brian Senior



Central West Novice Pairs: Karin leRoux (Convenor), Chris Rosevear (President) with the 1st placed pair in the 10-30 MP category: Graham Jones and Conny Szczyzy

WELL AND TRULY FORKED

This hand, written up by Ron Klinger, appeared in the IBPA Bulletin, May 2016.

This was a rather unusual deal from the Summer Swiss Pairs event held at the NSW Bridge Association, offering declarer a choice of plays, 3-3 diamonds being one:

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

South, in 3NT, received a low heart lead. How would you play it?

David Beauchamp spotted that the situation provided declarer with an opportunity for a Morton's Fork. This is very rare at trick 2 and almost never seen in no trumps.

After taking the ♥A, declarer plays a low club and East is fixed. If East rises with the ♣A, declarer has five club tricks and 10 or 11 tricks. If East ducks, South wins the ♣Q and switches to spades, making nine tricks.

Ron Klinger

A VARIANT OF A MORTON'S FORK

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

West	North	East	South
S. Lusk	S. Burgess	B. Travis	P. Marston
Pass	1NT (10-14)	2♣ (diamonds)	Double
All Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT

Keith McNeil reported this hand:

"Travis found the expert lead of the ♦K, hoping to find a singleton ♦Q or ♦10-x, and Burgess ducked. A second diamond was taken and the ♣Q overtaken, all following.

With seven tricks in the bag, Burgess set about making two more. The ♠4 was led, and a poor Barbara was well and truly forked. Had she ducked, Burgess would have cashed out the clubs and led a heart, so she (forlornly) played partner for the ♠Q [impossible on HCP], and won the ♠A to continue the diamonds. Burgess now had two spade tricks for the contract."



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HAND 1

	♠ 8 3 ♥ 3 2 ♦ 8 7 6 5 3 ♣ A K 7 4		♠ 6 2 ♥ A J 10 9 ♦ 9 4 ♣ J 9 5 3 2
	♠ A K J 10 9 4 ♥ Q 6 4 ♦ A K ♣ 8 6		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	1♠
Pass	4♣	All Pass	3♠

West led the ♦Q, taken by declarer with the ♦A. There are 9 top winners – 5 spades and 4 minor winners.

One option for the tenth trick is the trump finesse, hoping East holds the ♠Q. This is a 50% prospect. A superior option is to try to ruff a heart loser in dummy.

However, leading a heart from hand will not succeed because East will gain the lead twice and should lead trumps each time, leaving dummy without any trumps and declarer without a tenth trick.

Therefore, at trick 2, cross to dummy with a club to lead a heart towards hand. At the table, East rose with the ♥A and played a low trump. Declarer must win this spade switch, to ensure there is still a trump in dummy. Now he crosses to dummy again with a top club to lead the second heart. This succeeds if East has both top hearts, because the ♥Q becomes a winner. When East plays the ♥9, declarer should cover, forcing West to win. West cannot continue trumps without conceding his trump trick, so declarer will win the diamond return and take his heart ruff.

HAND 2

	♠ 6 5 ♥ K Q J 10 2 ♦ 7 5 2 ♣ 5 4 2		♠ 9 8 7 3 2 ♥ A 9 8 4 ♦ 3 ♣ 8 7 3
	♠ A K Q J 10 4 ♥ 6 3 ♦ A K 6 ♣ A K		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2NT (minors)	3♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	5♣ (1 key card)	Pass	4NT (RKCB)
All Pass			6♣

West led the ♦Q. Declarer could count 11 winners. He saw that the only chance for the contract was for East to hold the ♥A and at most two diamonds and three clubs, which was almost certain given the 2NT overcall.

After winning the first trick with the ♦K, declarer drew five rounds of trumps, discarding one diamond and two hearts from dummy. (and keeping all dummy's clubs). Next, he cashed the ♠A and ♣K, before leading a heart to dummy's suit.

East correctly ducked the heart lead, and now the importance of keeping the club in dummy became clear. Declarer ruffed the club, removing East's last minor card (or exit card).

Declarer now cashed the ♦K, in case East held a second diamond (and West a 0-3-5-5 shape), reducing everyone to two cards. Dummy held the ♥K-Q, and East held the ♥A-9. When declarer led his last heart, East could win the ♥A, but had to give declarer the last trick with his heart.

West spoke up quickly: "I shouldn't have bid on my hand, since there was little chance that we would be playing the hand. All it did was give declarer a clear picture of how to make 12 tricks." Good advice!

HAND 3

	♠ Q 10 5 3 ♥ 7 4 ♦ A 10 7 6 4 ♣ 9 4		♠ A J 9 7 ♥ J 10 6 ♦ K 9 ♣ Q J 10 8
	♠ 8 6 ♥ Q 9 8 5 2 ♦ 5 3 ♣ 7 5 3 2		
	♠ K 4 2 ♥ A K 3 ♦ Q J 8 2 ♣ A K 6		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	3♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	3♦

West led the ♥5, fourth-highest.

At the table, declarer saw the danger of the club shift if he ducked the first trick, so he won his ♥K. At trick 2, he led the ♠K. East could do no better than win the ♠A and continue the ♥J, hoping his partner held a 6-card suit. Declarer ducked this, to separate the two hands (hearts being 5-3). West knew that hearts were not worth continuing, so overtook the heart to lead a spade through for his partner.

Declarer rose with the ♠Q, to restrict the defence's spade winners, because he would be taking the diamond finesse towards East (so the ♠10-5 would be safe if the finesse failed, or East would be leading spades around to dummy). He crossed to hand with a club, then took the diamond finesse, leading the ♦Q to East's ♦K. Declarer now had 1 spade, 2 hearts, 4 diamonds, 2 clubs, for his contract.

This hand combines winning, rather than ducking, for fear of a switch, then creating the extra trick in spades (in case West held the ♠A), and finally taking the diamond finesse when it was safe to do so.

EVEN THE HIDEOUS HOG COULDN'T HAVE PLAYED BETTER

This hand comes from the European Open championships, and was written up in the IBPA Bulletin, June 2017.

The Open Teams quarter-final between LAVAZZA and GREECE featured a wonderful deal where declarer had to find a number of elegant moves in order to bring home his contract.

Dealer East ♠ K Q J 2
 Nil Vul ♥ 9 8 3
 ♦ 6
 ♣ K J 9 8 2

♠ 7 5 4
 ♥ A 10 7 5 4
 ♦ A Q 10
 ♣ 10 3

♠ 6
 ♥ Q J
 ♦ K 9 7 3 2
 ♣ A Q 7 5 4

♠ A 10 9 8 3
 ♥ K 6 2
 ♦ J 8 5 4
 ♣ 6

<i>West</i> <i>Filiis</i>	<i>North</i> <i>Bilde</i>	<i>East</i> <i>Papakyriak</i>	<i>South</i> <i>Duboin</i>
Double	2NT (spades)	1♦	1♠
3♠	4♠	3♣	3♦
5♦	Pass	Pass	Pass
All Pass	Pass	Pass	Double

In the other room, Sementa and Bocchi had stopped in 4♦, so a swing was inevitable. South cashed the ♠A and, when North followed with the ♠K, he continued with the ♠9. Declarer ruffed and played the ♥J, covered by the ♥K and ♥A.

Declarer cashed the ♦A, returned to hand with a heart to the ♥Q, and played a diamond to the ♦10. When that held, he cashed the ♥10, pitching a club and continued with the ♥7, discarding another club. South ruffed and exited with the ♠10. Declarer ruffed, but with the ♦K, so that he could cross to dummy with a diamond, cash the last heart (throwing a third club) and, only then, take the club finesse to land his contract. "Impressive. Even the Hideous Hog couldn't have played it better," noted Michael Rosenberg.



Peter Buchen and Terry Brown, winners of the Seniors' Playoffs

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GREG EUSTICE and GAYE ALLEN

From the 2012 Summer Festival of Bridge Celebrity Bridge Speaker series.

To be successful at bridge you need to establish a good partnership, and yet the care and nurturing of partners is one of the least studied subjects in the game. Encouraging and allowing your partner to play as well as they can is one of the simplest ways to improve your results. *[Ed: as noted by John Newman in his article about the Spring National Open Teams]*

BEING SUPPORTIVE

Your partner is the only person in the room who is on your side (with the possible exception of your team-mates). It is surprising how often people seem to enlist the opponents' help in ganging up on their partner. Very few people play better when being criticised by anyone, least of all the person who is supposed to be part of their 'team'. If you want partner to play as well as they can, try being pleasant and supportive.

MOVING ON

One of the most important tests for a partnership is how it reacts to a disaster at the table. What you need to be able to do is get over it, and move on to the next board. You cannot fix the past – concentrate on the future. There are different approaches that suit different partnerships, so you need to work out a strategy that will work for you and your partner. Some partnerships choose to say nothing, some try to use humour; personally, I like to apologise. In general, the main problem that needs to be resolved when something has gone wrong revolves around trying to apportion or assign the blame. I have found that apologising gets over this problem quickly, and tends to end the discussion. If you are prepared to say sorry, partner will have trouble arguing with you.

The end of the day is the best time to work out whose fault the disaster really was. *[Ed: the end of the day or never]*

SYSTEM SIMPLICITY

If some part of your system is causing problems for either you or your partner, consider ditching it. The marginal benefit of playing any particular convention or gadget is fairly small. Firstly, the situation has to come up; secondly both you and your partner need to remember the convention; and finally it needs to result in a good score that you would not have got using natural bidding. If partner expresses doubt or concern about any particular agreement, it is almost always best to get rid of it.

SYSTEM DOCUMENTATION

Whatever the level of experience of your partnership, some amount of system documentation is a good idea. This does not need to be complicated or long-winded; a simple list of agreements you have made is enough. This helps resolve a lot of arguments that otherwise come up. If it is on the list, we play it; if it is not, then we do not play it. If we talk about adding something to the system, then it needs to be added to the notes before it is part of the system. Both players should have identical copies of the system notes.

CHOICES IN THE BIDDING

Try to choose bids that you are confident that your partner will understand. This seems like self-evident advice, however I sometimes get the impression that people like to set tests or traps for their partner. If you have the choice between making what you think is the technically perfect bid that your partner may not understand, and a more obvious bid that is slightly inferior, consider carefully. The 'best' bid in any particular situation can be judged in a number of different ways – for me, the one that is practical and less likely to cause trouble is often superior to the one that demonstrates my cleverness at the risk of making partner look stupid.

BEING A GOOD DUMMY

When you are dummy, your only job is to try to help partner avoid revoking [or leading from the wrong hand]. Otherwise, this is the time to relax and save your energies for things that are your business. Keeping an eagle eye on partner's declarer play is counter-productive, and will not improve their performance on this hand or subsequent ones.

SIGNALLING AGREEMENTS

There are all sorts of different carding agreements that you could agree to play. Choose ones that you are both comfortable with. Try to come up with relatively simple rules to determine what each particular card means. It is better to know what a signal means than for the meaning to be perfect in every situation. As in many areas of bridge, this is a difficult balancing act between making the agreements simple and bullet-proof, and maximising efficiency. I would suggest that you err in the direction of simplicity.

CHOICES IN SIGNALLING

Make the clearest signals that you can. Avoid trying to give two messages with one signal. If you have a choice between a simple, clear signal and a subtle one, I would suggest simplicity.

HELPING PARTNER IN DEFENCE

While defending, be on the lookout for any opportunity to help partner. If partner needs to keep a suit because you cannot hold it, try to discard it early so that they will know. If something goes wrong while defending, resist the temptation to blame partner. Consider whether you could have helped more. There is usually plenty of blame to go around.

THE COMFORT ZONE

Very few people play better while being criticised or pressured by partner. There is enough pressure inherent in the game without partner adding to it. If you can help partner to stay in their comfort zone, they will make fewer errors, and your partnership (and team) results will improve. Incidentally, you will probably have a more pleasant time too.

Hugh Grosvenor

A SLAM WITH THE LOT!

CHRIS DEPASQUALE (Darwin)

♠ A K J 9
♥ A 10 3 2
♦ 9 7 6 5 3
♣ void

♠ Q 4 2
♥ Q 9 6 5 4
♦ A J
♣ K 5 2

West	North	East	South
Pass	4♣ (1)	Pass	1♥
Pass	4♣ (3)	Pass	4♦ (2)
Pass	5♥ (4)	Pass	4NT
All Pass			6♥ (5)

- (1) Splinter: heart support and a club void
- (2) ♦A
- (3) ♠A
- (4) 2 of the 5 key cards, no ♥Q
- (5) Ambitious, since either the ♥A or ♥K is missing (together with other honours)

With only East-West vulnerable, you end up 6♥ on the lead of the ♦K.

With such a lousy trump suit and a minimum opening hand South could be excused for signing off in 4♥, but it is a mistake to deny the ♦A, because there are many hands that North could have where even 7♥ is cold if you have that card. There is no reason why North cannot have ♠Axx ♥AKJx ♦KQxxxx ♣void, and 7♥ would be a laydown. In the apparent absence of the ♦A, North will not even investigate slam with that hand, because if you opened 1♥ with club values (e.g. ♣AK) making more than 10 tricks is not guaranteed, and 12 is extremely unlikely. Once South owns up to the ♦A, North is happy to go beyond 4♥, so shows his spade values. South tries the slam because it will often be cold, and when it is not cold it should have some play.

Enough of trying to justify the terrible bidding that got you into this 24-point slam – how are you going to make it? The textbooks tell you to count your losers first, but here that is way too depressing, so let's count our winners instead! We can win 4 spade tricks and 1 diamond trick, so that means we need 7 tricks from the trump suit. One of the most important things about bridge is "right-siding" the contract. Had partner

been playing this contract hearts would have broken 2-2 and the contract would have no hope. But, as you have no doubt noticed, when I am at the wheel in a suit contract the trumps never break down the middle!

So, if West has the singleton ♥K, the hand will be a doddle(!), whereas if West has a small singleton trump and East has ♠xxxx ♥KJ8 ♦xxx ♣xxx you can still get home. In either case, the play to the first four tricks is the same: (1) Win the ♦A, (2) Ruff a club in dummy, (3) Cash the ♥A, drawing/seeing West's singleton trump, and (4) Cross back to the ♠Q. Only now does the play diverge.

If West's trump was the ♥K, then one careful play is required: ruff a club with the ♥10 (to avoid blocking the suit) and then draw trumps by leading through East's ♥J-x to the ♥Q-9. The spades then cash for 12 tricks: 4 spades, 5 trump tricks, the ♦A and two club ruffs in dummy.

If West's trump was a small one (I hope you were paying attention!) then you must find East with precisely the 4-3-3-3 hand. At trick 5, you continue with three more rounds of spades on which you discard the ♦J. Now you ruff a diamond in hand, ruff a club in dummy, ruff another diamond in hand and ruff your last club in dummy. In the two-card ending dummy has two small diamonds, East (who has had to follow suit every card) has the ♥K-J and South has the ♥Q-9. With the lead in dummy the ♥Q will be declarer's 12th trick; a "coup en passant".

I played this hand at the 2013 GNOT finals, and was one of only two successful declarers in the 6♥ contract. (West's singleton heart was the King.)

Solving such a difficult hand at the table is one reason for this to be in my favourite hands. The main reason, though, is how instructive it is. It requires many of the tools the able declarer needs to identify and utilise on a regular basis, including:

1. Identify the distribution(s) you can succeed against, and plan the play accordingly;
2. Increase total tricks by taking ruffs in the short trump hand;
3. Unblocking the heart suit by ruffing the second club with the ♥10 (in the line where West's heart was the King). If you ruff the second club low East can refuse to cover the ten when you lead it and you are unable to return to hand to draw the last trump before cashing out.
4. Timing the hand. If you fail to ruff a club at trick 2 (playing a trump immediately) you cannot organize all the ruffs you need to succeed against either distribution; and
5. The "coup en passant".

It is a rare hand where all those things appear at once!

Chris Depasquale



Winning team from the Central West Novice Teams: Karin leRoux (Convenor), Sue Stacey, Jim Driscoll, Chris Rosevear (President Bathurst & District BC), Alan Adcroft, Peter Horwood

This article, written by Jeff Rubens (USA), appeared in Australian Bridge (magazine), June 1972 (before my time!). It came to my attention when Stephen Lester, the previous ABF Newsletter Editor, mentioned it as his favourite article. I hope you enjoy reading this clever story!

Four minutes after the announced starting time, the Monday night duplicate game at the Club Bridge Studio got off to its usual smooth start. No sooner had Charlie Club finished collecting the entry tickets than a slight difficulty arose.

"Director!" called Alfred Snoyd, a small crinkly man with steel-rimmed bifocals.

"Oh dear," muttered Miss Reeves, his right-hand opponent.

Charlie walked briskly to their table, where this situation awaited him:

♠ Q 6 4 3
♥ Q J 4 2
♦ 10 6 4
♣ 6 3

Miss Reeves

♠ J 10 8 5
♥ A 10 9 8
♦ J 9 8 3
♣ 5

Alfred Snoyd

♠ A 9
♥ K 5 3
♦ A
♣ A K Q J 10 9 2

♠ K 7 2
♥ 7 6
♦ K Q 7 5 2
♣ 8 7 4

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	5♣	Pass	4NT
All Pass			6♣

Having heard the bidding repeated and seeing Miss Reeves' ♠J on the table, Charlie surmised the cause of the disturbance, but he let Miss Reeves unwind herself by telling him.

"The 2♣ was artificial," explained Miss Reeves nervously. "I thought this hand (she gestured to her right) bid clubs first and I'm afraid I've led out of turn." Miss Reeves did not care about the penalty. She only hoped the director would not be angry with her for her transgression.

"Well, these things will happen," said Charlie cheerfully. Taking a Rule Book out of his pocket, he turned to Snoyd. "The new rules give your four options," he announced. Charlie knew the rules well, but holding the Rule Book lent authority to his statements.

"Four?" queried Snoyd. "I thought there were only three." Snoyd nodded knowingly as Charlie reeled off the three older options. "Finally," the director concluded, "you may ask the correct leader to lead a spade, in which case Miss Reeves may pick up her ♠J and there is no further penalty."

Snoyd thought for a while and finally decided that he wanted West to lead a spade. West promptly underled the ♠K, allowing Snoyd's ♠Q to win in dummy. Snoyd then drew trumps, knocked out the ♥A and made his contract easily.

As Charlie walked away from the table, he remarked to himself how happy Alfred Snoyd had been to make his slam with the aid of the new penalty.

"Like a child with a new toy," Charlie mused. "I wonder what

things give people the most pleasure. Would everyone get the same enjoyment from a clever choice of penalty? Or would they prefer to make it under their own steam?"

Charlie's thoughts kept wandering on until he decided on a strange experiment. He saw South's 6♣ contract as a tree. The tree had many branches. Charlie wanted the different Souths to see different branches. So, when he helped move the hands between the rounds, he surreptitiously changed the East-West cards around to suit the temperament of the declarer.

At the next table, the South player was Mrs Lansing. Charlie recalled that she had just graduated into his advanced bridge classes. The first lecture had been on throw-in play, and Charlie had prepared a brief examination for his pupil.

♠ Q 6 4 3
♥ Q J 4 2
♦ 10 6 4
♣ 6 3

♠ K 7 2
♥ A 7 6
♦ K Q 7 5
♣ 8 7 4

♠ J 10 8 5
♥ 10 9 8
♦ J 9 8 3 2
♣ 5

♠ A 9
♥ K 5 3
♦ A
♣ A K Q J 10 9 2

Against Mrs Lansing's 6♣ contract, West led the ♦K. Mrs Lansing won the ♦A, drew three rounds of trumps and led a heart to the ♥Q. When this held the trick, she returned a heart to her own ♥K. West had been watching the cards carefully and, having seen his partner play the spots upwards, ducked this also.

Mrs Lansing now thought hard. From his remote position, Charlie thought he saw a gleam in her eye. She ran off all the trumps. For his last three cards, West had to keep two spades and the ♥A. Mrs Lansing then kept two spades and one heart in dummy and led a heart, forcing West to lead from his guarded ♠K.

"Very nice," complimented Charlie as he picked up the boards a little before the move was called. Mrs Lansing was pink with pleasure.

Charlie had scouted the next table, where South was Bill Flaherty, a big and jovial man. His greatest joy was fooling the opponents out of something they rightly owned. Charlie did not disappoint him.

♠ Q 6 4 3
♥ Q J 4 2
♦ 10 6 4
♣ 6 3

♠ J 10 8 5
♥ A 7 6
♦ K Q 9 3
♣ 5 4

♠ K 7 2
♥ 10 9 8
♦ J 8 7 5 2
♣ 8 7

♠ A 9
♥ K 5 3
♦ A
♣ A K Q J 10 9 2

Whenever Bill saw a long, solid suit, he knew it meant he could make the opponents discard a lot, so he reached 6♣ quick-as-a-flash.

West led the ♦K and Bill's ♦A won. He promptly rattled off a few trumps. On the third and fourth rounds of clubs, each of the other players threw diamonds. As Bill led the fifth round of trumps, the position was:

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

When Bill led the ♣10, West huddled. Charlie grew anxious, but he knew his customers! West thought vaguely about the diamond position. His partner had dropped the ♦8 under the ♦K. Surely he had the ♦J. No, maybe he was just trying to show four diamonds. If he discarded the ♦Q and declarer held the ♦J, his partner would surely yell at him. And a spade discard wasn't appealing, as declarer had kept all the spades in dummy and probably held the Ace and King three or four times himself. So, West discarded a heart, and Bill Flaherty scored both a small slam and a big chuckle.

And so it went throughout the evening, with Charlie Club allowing each South player to break his or her own limb off the tree of happiness.

On the last round, the board reached the table at which Professor Amesbury was South. The Professor held an important chair at the college nearby and often dropped in for a relaxing evening of bridge. His bidding was unpolished, Charlie had noted, but his play of the cards often approached the expert level. Technical play gave him the most pleasure and, on the last round, the Professor declared the following deal in 6♣:

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

West led the ♦K to the Professor's ♦A. After a longer huddle than any of the other South players had found necessary, the Professor drew trumps (throwing a **spade** from dummy) and played the ♥K from his hand.

West played the ♥8 and East won with the ♥A. East returned a diamond which declarer ruffed. On the next trump, dummy threw another spade, leaving this position:

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

Declarer led the ♣9 and it was West's turn to trance. That defender saw that a heart discard would set up dummy's hearts, and a diamond discard would later expose East to a spade-diamond squeeze. So West threw the ♠10.

Rising to the occasion, Professor Amesbury discarded the ♠Q from dummy. On the next trump lead, West was forced to throw his ♠J. After cashing two hearts in dummy, the Professor finessed the ♠9, thus equalling the scores of all the other North-South pairs on this board.

Charlie Club was a little cheerier than usual at the end of the evening. As he flipped out the lights and closed the door behind him, he wondered which branch of the tree was his own.

"I think I would take the West cards," he said to himself. "I'd give myself the ♠K, four hearts to the Ace, and an opposing South who would lead a heart to the Queen and a heart back to the King. I'd capture the ♥K with the ♥A and play a third round of hearts, destroying all the possible end-positions."

In the same edition of Australian Bridge, there was a "Junior Challenge" between Tony Hancock – David Hoffman, Peter Fordham – David Lilley and Bobby Evans – George Havas.

The article starts:

"Juniors! Some of these guys have been around longer than Mickey Rooney. Anyway, the Editor claims they are all under 30, except Bob Evans who admits to 31.

Tony Hancock and David Hoffman, the pride of the ACT, are playing for Australia at the Miami Olympiad and are the youngest players ever to do so. Their system is High-Church Acol, including (dare I say it) weak twos in the Majors!"
[Yes, weak two opening bids were 'new' 45 years ago. Ed.]

45 years later, I would have to say that most of them really have been around a long time!



(Left) Peter Horwood - Alan Adcroft, 1st place in the 0-10 MP category of the Central West Novice Pairs

PROTECTING YOUR HONOUR

Dearest Fossil,

As usual, I seek your comments on a couple of (mis)plays of mine from recent excursions at the bridge table. As ever, I am keen to improve my game, regardless of whatever evidence says that I can't! So here goes:

(MIS)PLAY #1

♠ K 6 5
♥ Q J 4
♦ A 9 3
♣ A K 2

♠ Q J 10 9 7 3
♥ 6
♦ J 6 2
♣ Q 5 4

♠ 8 4
♥ K 10 9 8 7 2
♦ K 4
♣ J 8 7

♠ A 2
♥ A 5 3
♦ Q 10 8 7 5
♣ 10 9 6 3

West opened a weak 2♣ and Glenda bid 2NT. Sitting South, I just bid 4♥ over that and West led the ♠Q. Naturally, I put the ♠K on that and East won. Now I couldn't make the contract. Apparently I can get the ♠K as a trick if I don't play it. That is a bit weird but should I have known?

(MIS)PLAY#2

♠ 7 6
♥ Q 6 5 4
♦ A K 3
♣ A J 10 5

♠ 10 8 4
♥ J 10 9 2
♦ 9 6 2
♣ Q 4 3

♠ K Q J 5
♥ A 3
♦ Q J 5 4
♣ 8 7 6

♠ A 9 3 2
♥ K 8 7
♦ 10 8 7
♣ K 9 2

We reached 3NT and West led the ♥J. I played my ♥Q and East put on the ♥K. (Unlucky?) After that I had to lose one club, a spade and three hearts.

I guess I would have done better if I hadn't played my ♥Q at trick one. What guiding principle exists here?

Lots of hugs,
Cathy



Playing behind screens at the Playoffs.

Dear Miss Play,

There is a guiding principle that may help here. The more cards you have with an honour card, the better protection it has. So, in Hand #1, you need your ♠K as a trick. You are in no hurry for it as you have lots of guards in the other suits. Unless West is being particularly clever, he or she doesn't have the ♠A. With the weak 2 opening to guide you, the spade suit looks to be an open book. So, not only does a full view of the hand tell you that the ♠A will fall of its own accord, you could have worked that out at the time. If you play low twice on the spades, your ♠K will become a tenth trick. If West has been smart enough to lead from ♠A-Q-J-10-x-x, then good luck to them.

The same principle applies on Hand #2. Had you held ♥Q-x in dummy and ♥A-x-x-x in hand, then the ♥Q will lose all her protection after one trick. So, in that case, just play it and hope for the best. In this case, the ♥Q is protected by all the small cards that go with it. It looks unlikely that you desperately need the ♥Q as a trick but you do need it to make three or more tricks as difficult as possible for the opponents, so play low, take the ♥A, and hope that the spot cards can protect the ♥Q for long enough. As the cards lie, West is never on lead again to put that ♥Q under further pressure, so any sensible line of play will see you home.

One other common holding is

Q x

opposite

A 10 x

Here if they lead small, you only ever want to play the Queen if you are desperate for two quick tricks. Otherwise, just play low and capture an honour with your Ace. If the honour card is the King, your Queen is promoted but even if it is the Jack, your Queen and 10 stand as equals against the King.

Ignore that evidence, everyone can improve.

Your calcified uncle,
David

David Lusk

COINCIDENCE?

During the Spring National Women's and Seniors' Teams in 2016 the East players picked up the following hand:

♠ A
♥ A K Q 6 3
♦ A
♣ A K Q J 10 8

At our table, we had started the bidding pre-emptively, so after some huffing and puffing, our East simply bid 7♣. Her partner held five hearts, so 13 tricks were easy.

This year, during the Spring National Open Teams, East picked up this hand:

♠ A
♥ A K Q J 8
♦ 9
♣ A K Q 10 6 4

Is this a coincidence, or a flaw in the dealing program? Personally, I suspect it's more likely a flaw in the dealing program!

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A RARE TREE IN THE WOODS by Nick Hughes

This article, written by Nick Hughes, appeared in Australian Bridge, June 1997 (20 years ago). It's all about over-complicating the plan for the play of a hand.

The computer dealt a wild set of boards for the set that would decide the Semi-Finalists of the Gold Coast Teams (1997). We lost our match against SENIOR 72-53 – that's 125 IMPs over 14 boards.

This was the first of many slam swings:

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

Brian Senior opened the East hand with a Multi 2♦, which meant that his partner Geoffrey Wolfarth ended up declarer in 6♥. Bobby Evans chose an aggressive diamond lead, which he regretted when dummy's ♦J held the first trick. That was -17 IMPs when my partner, Nicoleta Giura, went down in 6♥ on a club lead from South.

We came up with the winning line at a party later that night. South can be squeezed in the black suits, but the club lead appears to mess up the entries.... [Ed: He then outlines a complicated line of play to make the squeeze work.]

We had discovered a Wollemi pine in the deep woods. Flushed with pride, someone showed the hand to Tim Seres the next day. He was not impressed. "Yes, you can do that if you wish, but it's much easier just to ruff everything, making all your trumps." Like many players, we had focused on avoiding a club loser rather than building winners.

Back to the drawing board for the easy plan. The early play is the same – club lead, heart to the ♥A, ♠A, ♠K and a spade ruff, then a club to the ♣K for another spade ruff. If North ruffs this, just discard the losing club and claim (with the heart finesse). When North discards instead, ruff and play a diamond to the ♦A for a trump finesse, then a diamond to the ♦K for a diamond ruff. Cash the ♥K, and see North ruff South's winning club at trick 13. You make six trumps and three Ace-Kings.

A case of not seeing the wood for the trees.

Nick Hughes

MIS-USING THE 'BIG DOUBLE'

There is a misconception in Australia, in particular, that overcalls should be around 8-15 HCP and that you should double then bid, showing a big hand, when holding 16+ HCP. The 'big double', where you double then bid again, should be used on hands where you would feel that you may miss game if you make a simple overcall and your partner passes.

Let's look at three hypothetical hands where your RHO has opened 1♥:

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

Those who believe in doubling with 16+ HCP would start with a double, then bid their spade suit (or perhaps on Hand 3 double then rebid 1NT). Do all three hands make you feel that you might miss game if your partner passes your 1♠ overcall?

On Hand 1, I agree that you should double then introduce your spade suit. This hand has 8 to 8½ playing tricks, and you would belong in game even with quite weak values opposite.

However, on Hand 2, there are two issues that need to be considered. Firstly, if partner cannot bid opposite a 1♠ overcall, you probably do not belong in game as you don't have enough tricks (too many losers). Secondly, your spade suit is not a feature of your hand, given its lack of texture. Most of your values are in your short suits so, despite your 17 HCP, this hand is nowhere near as strong in playing trick strength as Hand 1. You should just overcall 1♠, planning to bid strongly should partner support you.

Finally, on Hand 3, you should certainly not plan to double then bid spades. The spade suit is way too weak for that sort of bidding. I would tend to overcall 1NT, which can include 18 point hands.

There are many hands which qualify for an overcall first, then further action if the opponents keep bidding and partner passes. Here are two examples:

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

Your RHO has opened the bidding with 1♣.

On Hand 4, you should simply overcall 2♣.

If LHO (or RHO) bids 2♠, on the next round you double. This double is still a take-out double, indicating an obvious club suit for overcalling, but support for the other two suits; typically you hold a 1-3-3-6 hand shape. It also indicates a hand in the 15-18 HCP range. As you can see, you don't need to double on all hands of 16+ HCP if you take this approach.

Should your partner may make some bid, and then you can explore for game – perhaps by cue-bidding spades to ask for a stopper for 3NT.

On Hand 5, again, you just overcall 2♣, planning to bid 3♣ on the next round. If you double, what will you do if your partner makes some jump bid in hearts?

Barbara Travis

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SMOLEN EXTENDED

In the previous issue, we looked at how to show 5-4 Majors with game-forcing values opposite a 1NT (15-17 HCP) opening. This was via 3-Major Smolen bids, as shown below:

1NT	2♣	Simple Stayman (initially)
2♦ (no Major)		
then:	3♥	5 spades + 4 hearts, game force
	3♠	5 hearts + 4 spades, game force

We can now extend this even further. Instead of bidding 3♥ or 3♠, what does it mean if responder jumps to 4♣, 4♦, 4♥, 4♠?

Both 4♥ and 4♠ look like they are natural bids to play and, because they bypass 3NT, they should therefore promise a 6-card major. Also, because responder went via 2♣ Stayman, this must imply that responder is 6-4 in the Majors. In other words, bidding 4♥ shows 6 hearts + 4 spades, and bidding 4♠ shows 6 spades + 4 hearts.

What is the point of this? Imagine that, as responder, you hold ♠J97652 ♥AK72 ♦Q4 ♣4. Rather than committing yourself to 4♣ (via a transfer) with such weak spades, it is better to look for a 4-4 fit in hearts first, by using Stayman. If opener bids 2♦ (no 4-card major), you can now jump to 4♠.

What about if responder jumps to 4♣ or 4♦ in this sequence:

1NT	2♣	
2♦	4♣ / 4♦	

In a similar fashion as the 4♥ and 4♠ bids, 4♣ and 4♦ can be used as *delayed Texas transfers*, also showing 6-4 in the Majors. That is, 4♣ shows 6 hearts + 4 spades, and 4♦ shows 6 spades + 4 hearts. Since there is an overlap between the 4♣/4♦ and 4♥/♠ bids, you can now split your point ranges.

Here is the structure:

1NT	2♣	Simple Stayman (initially)
2♦ (no Major)		
then:	3♥	5 spades + 4 hearts, game force
	3♠	5 hearts + 4 spades, game force
	4♣	6 hearts + 4 spades, slam try
	4♦	6 spades + 4 hearts, slam try
	4♥	6 hearts + 4 spades, to play
	4♠	6 spades + 4 hearts, to play

It is logical for the slam try hands to be placed in the 4♣ and 4♦ bids, because it allows that extra space for opener to make a 'noise' to suggest a bit of interest – i.e. over 4♣ opener can bid 4♦, and over 4♦ opener can bid 4♥ to confirm slam interest. (Rule: the "in-between" bid shows slam interest.)

So, what is the purpose of the delayed Texas Transfer bids? Say you hold

♠ A K 10 4
♥ K J 7 6 4 2
♦ 5 2
♣ 8

It is not hard to imagine for opener to have, say,

♠ Q J 9 2
♥ A 8
♦ A Q 7 3
♣ A 7 5

where 6♠ is a decent contract but 4♥ may fail from a 4-1 break in hearts!

The main advantage is for you to find your 4-4 fit first, before committing to your 6-card Major. Playing in a 4-4 fit, as we all know, is often better since you can generate additional tricks from your long suit (providing discards).

Again, like all conventions, do not forget to use your judgement. If your 4-card Major suit is quite weak, it might be better to play in your 6-card suit (i.e. don't bother with 2♣ to find that 4-4 fit): a weak 4-4 trump fit may prove to be difficult to play in when faced with a bad trump break. For example, if, as responder you held ♠AQ9862 ♥Q652 ♦4 ♣K4, do not bother with the hearts because if partner's hearts are ♥J743, a 4♥ contract may be quite a struggle, but 4♠ should be comfortable.

Andy Hung

DRAWING THE RIGHT INFERENCE

From the IBPA Bulletin, November 2017

The Beijing Hua Yuan Cup World Women Elite Bridge Tournament is held in China each year, with eight invited teams. The USA players won both the Pairs and Teams. This hand from the Teams, played by Sylvia Shi, was a class display of drawing inferences from the opening lead.

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

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♥	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West led the ♠2 against Shi's 3NT, which went 6 – 8 – 3. Shi won the return of the ♠J, and took stock. Her LHO was known to have led from a suit that was only four cards long, and was also known to have at most one heart. It made sense, therefore, that West's distribution was exactly 4-1-4-4. So, Shi cashed the ♦A, and finessed the ♦10. Well done!

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During the regular social drink and discussion after the Thursday night bridge session, Sarah came over with a frown on her face, saying it was all to do with Board 17. Without giving me a chance to say anything, she said that she was sitting South and was playing with a new partner, a good friend named Sylvia. "Sylvia," she continued, "is very pleasant company and a competent bridge player."

"Sylvia was dealer and opened 1♠. The opponents were silent throughout. I bid 2♥ and Sylvia raised to 3♥. I cue bid 4♣ and Sylvia cue bid 4♦. After Blackwood and some thought, I eventually bid 7♥. You knew this, of course, because you were sitting West."

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

"You, as West, led a card and I looked at dummy. As you had mentioned before, I counted my winners – 6 heart tricks, 5 spade tricks, 1 diamond and 1 club. I double checked but it still came to 13. All I needed to do was pull trumps first. "This will be easy," I thought to myself. I could not recall the last time I used 'easy' and 'bridge' in the same sentence unless 'not' was also included.

"I then looked at your lead and it was the ♠10. Naturally, I played the A♥. With hearts 2 – 2, I could have played the ♥A, ♥Q and then cashed the ♠K-Q. I could then go to dummy with the ♥K and cash my spade winners. However, you showed out on the ♥Q so that meant that I needed to play the third heart to the ♥K before cashing the ♠K-Q. Therefore, I cashed the ♠K and then at trick 6 overtook the ♠Q with the ♠A as I had no further entries to the spades, but East discarded a diamond.

"You had 5 spades to the 9 and my 13 tricks had disappeared! After cashing the spade tricks, I lost a club trick and went one down. What was the chance of one hand having 5 spades to the 9?"

I answered, "Just over 12%, with a further 1.5% that one hand held all six spades. On any lead but a diamond, you could have pulled all the trumps, cashed the ♠K-Q and had the ♦A as an entry to dummy. Even with a diamond lead and each opponent not having two hearts, it is still a fantastic grand slam.

"However, let us start from the beginning, Sylvia and you did awfully well to appreciate the spade pips and get to the grand slam. On any lead but a diamond (assuming nobody ruffed the opening lead), you had a sure-fire 13 tricks, as you outlined before."

Sarah said that she could have made the slam by ducking the diamond lead around to her ♦Q at trick 1. "Should I have done this," she asked?

"Of course not," I said. "As you previously pointed out, 13 tricks are still an excellent bet without potentially losing the first trick in diamonds if East had the ♦K.

Sylvia asked why I led a diamond away from my ♠K against a grand slam. I replied, "Since Sylvia had cue bid diamonds, I assumed that she held the ♠A and that you would be not willing to finesse at trick 1 in a grand slam, when you had other alternatives. I got very lucky on the exact layout.

"However, let us proceed as you did for the first 5 tricks (♦A, 3 hearts and ♠K). You wanted to overtake the ♠Q now and claim when spades broke no worse than 4 2. You should have considered, if your plan was to play this way, that you could cash all the winners in your hand first, then overtake the ♠Q."

Sarah stated that she would just have seen the unfortunate spade break later in the hand. "At least the way I played it, I got the bad spade news early."

"There's no prize for going down quickly," I continued. "When you run off winners, sometimes opponents may throw the 'wrong' cards. Therefore, if you had played all your remaining winners in your hand, keeping all the spades in dummy (since you were planning to overtake the ♠Q as before), then something might have developed."

Sarah stated, "Nobody was going to throw a spade away, especially a good defender, so what was the point?"

The cards left after 8 cards were played would have been as follows

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

I said, "The cards left may have been slightly different (as various squeeze possibilities existed) but this was basically the position with South to lead at trick 9. Now, if you had led your last winner in your hand, the ♠A, what should I have done as West?"

Sarah thought about it and realised that I could not discard a spade because then she could overtake the ♠Q, as planned. "Therefore, you would have thrown the ♦K."

"Now you have another winner, the ♦Q, so you would have led this. I would have been forced into playing a spade, as would dummy. Voila!"

There was no hocus pocus here. Sometimes playing your winners before making a critical play can result in a beneficial outcome.

Chris Hughes

ACTION WHEN AN OPPONENT OVERCALLS 1♣ OVER YOUR 1♥ OPENING BID

What would you call on the following hands, Nil Vulnerable:

1♥ (1♠) ?

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

1. Double. Partnerships should decide if their negative doubles of 1♥ (1♠ and higher) show the unbid suits or whether they are catch-all bids. My strong preference is that they show the two unbid suits so that opener can compete freely at all levels.

It would be nice to have two of opener's suit but you have both unbid suits and want to compete. Opener should be aware you might have a singleton heart in these situations.

2. Pass. Assuming that you need both unbid suits to double your choice is to Pass or bid 2♦. When opponents enter the bidding, you need less to compete and, even in 2/1 Game Forcing, your 2-level bid is only forcing for one round.

With only 7 HCP and a singleton in opener's suit pass seems indicated. If opener has three or four spades and a likely shortage in diamonds defending 1♠ will be your best option.

3. Pass. And hope partner re-opens with a double so you can pass for penalties. You are sitting over the spades so in theory you have five tricks in spades while the spade bidder will take zero spade tricks.

Also, you have two or three tricks on the side. Add that to what partner will provide for their opening bid and declarer will be lucky to make one or two tricks, a penalty of 1400 or 1100, and if the overcaller were vulnerable the penalty would be 1700 or 1400. Top players are always on the lookout for low level penalties.

Because responder must pass an overcall holding a penalty double hand the opener is expected to re-open on all hands (even absolute minimums) with 0, 1 or 2 in the overcalled suit, hopefully with a double if at all possible up to overcalls of 2♥.

4. Double. Such hands actually do come up. You are too weak to volunteer 2♦ but you might be able to manage if you double showing the other two suits - no guarantees. Double should lead to a better outcome than pass but on a bad day your partner might, for instance, jump to 4♥. In other words, double is a good gamble but not necessarily a winning bet.

5. Pass. You don't want a heart lead and you don't want partner to bid too much in hearts, so pass. Two things are sure if you raise to 2♥ - the bidding won't finish there and your partner will end up bidding too much, hoping you have a reasonable hand.

6. 2♦. You are strong enough to bid 2♦ and then 3♣, then continue to game, so keep things simple by making two natural bids.

7. 2♣. A cue raise showing heart support plus at least invitational values.

Unfortunately, you may end up too high and fail in 3♥.

8. 3♦. When the interpose is 1♠ over 1♥ you can still play Bergen Raises - 2NT, 3♣, 3♦ and 3♥ as usual. This is quite useful as your hand would otherwise be a 2♣ cue raise, BUT with 4-card support this is quite a different hand to the cue raise hand in question 7.

9. 3♣. A splinter raise showing roughly 9-12 HCP with 4 or 5 card heart support. By showing your shortage, you will make it easier for your side to judge whether to carry on to 5♥ if the opponents compete to 4♠.

If the opponents do bid 4♠ and your partner doubles then you will pass and defend.

10. 2NT. A Jacoby Raise showing game force with 4+ card heart support. Now if opponents compete to 4♠, your side has to either double the 4♠ or bid on to 5♥. You cannot defend 4♠ undoubled.

Paul Lavings

PLAYING BEHIND SCREENS

National semi-finals and finals, international team Playoffs, and all matches in international events are all played behind screens. A screen divides the table diagonally, pairing North and East on one side of the screen, South and West on the other side. A tray is used to hold the board and the bids, and is slid to the other side of the screen by North or South. Once the auction has finished, the screen is opened, and players can see dummy and the opposition's cards, but not their partner.

Alerts must be given for both your partner's and your own bids.

This may sound 'weird' but most players really enjoy the freedom from seeing any facial expressions by partner, and it is more difficult to know exactly who has hesitated during an auction. In all other ways, the game is still identical to what you are used to at your normal club session.



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