



NEWSLETTER

AUSTRALIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION LTD.

Editor: Brad Coles (editor@abf.com.au)

No. 242 October 2026

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Coffs Coast Gold Congress

Nick Hughes



Coffs Coast Teams winners Justin Williams, James Coutts, Sam Coutts and Mike Doecke

The Coffs Coast Congress had another strong turnout, with a Swiss Pairs field of 113 in the Open and 66 in the Restricted, and a teams field of 58 Open teams and 29 Restricted.

The week began with a walk-in pairs on Tuesday night. Michael Courtney and Joan Butts won the NS field, with some help from this board:

Board 26. Dealer East. Both sides vulnerable.

♠ Q J 7		♠ 9 6 5	
♥ A 10 8 7 4		♥ K Q J 5	
♦ K 7 5		♦ A 10 9	
♣ A 7		♣ Q 6 5	
♠ 3 2			
♥ 9 6 3			
♦ Q J 8 6			
♣ K J 9 3			
♠ A K 10 8 4			
♥ 2			
♦ 4 3 2			
♣ 10 8 4 2			
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Courtney		Butts
pass	3NT!	1♣	1♠
		all pass	

When East led the king and queen of hearts, Michael followed with the eight and the seven. East continued with a third round, and Michael had three heart tricks for the contract!

This board is from Session 2 of the Pairs event:

Board 20. Dealer West. Both sides vulnerable.

♠ 8 5 4		♠ Q 10 9	
♥ A 8 4 3		♥ Q	
♦ Q 5 4		♦ A 9 7	
♣ 10 9 3		♣ Q J 8 7 6 2	
♠ K 7 6		♠ A J 3 2	
♥ K 9 7 6 5		♥ J 10 2	
♦ K J 10 8		♦ 6 3 2	
♣ A		♣ K 5 4	
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	pass	2♣	pass
2♦	pass	3♣	pass
3NT	all pass		

When North leads the ♠8, South must resist the temptation to play the jack on dummy's nine. If you err by playing the jack, declarer gets the extra entry needed to establish and cash the clubs.

When South plays low on the spade, declarer has to forget about clubs. With the ♥J10x falling, declarer can make four diamonds, two hearts, two spades and just one club for +600.

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Cover photo: Coffs Coast Open Teams winners: Justin Williams, James Coutts, Sam Coutts and Mike Doecke

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**IMPROVE
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Ron Klinger
Solution on page 29

Teams, dealer East, neither side vulnerable.

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



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

West led the ♥4: five - three - six. South played the ♠6: two - king - nine and the ♠4: eight - jack - ace. What next for West?



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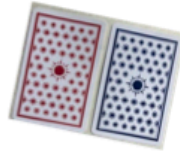
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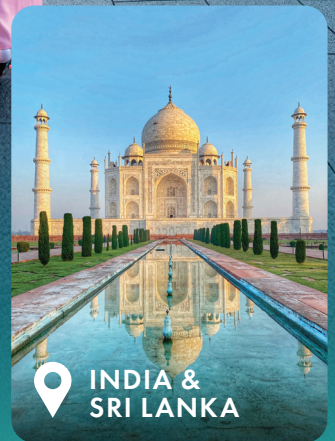
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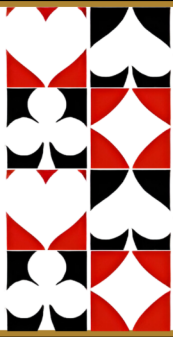


Stephen Fischer

President

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November 18-22 sees the inaugural Gold in the Goldfields tournament in Bendigo. The convenor Phil Young and his team from Bridge Victoria have been working hard to put it on and it should be an excellent event. The pairs competition is full but there are still a few places for teams, so if you are interested, grab three friends and head down to Bendigo for our final licensed gold point event of the year.

In August, the World Bridge Federation elected Ben Thompson to its Committee of Honour for his long-term service to the game of bridge throughout the world. This is an exceptional recognition since there can only be 13 living members of the Committee, and he joins some of the biggest names of the game. I would like to congratulate Ben Thompson on his election and thank him for his work in Australia, as President of Zone 7 and as 1st Vice-President of the WBF. Later in this issue Ben discusses the Committee of Honour and the work currently under way at the WBF. Be sure to check it out.

On a more sombre note, I am sure many of you have read of the recent passing of Keith McDonald. Keith was the ABF President for 18 years, from 1996 to 2014 – the longest-serving person in that office. During his time in office, he was a strong advocate for the growth of the grass-roots game and was recognised by being elected a member of the ABF Committee of Honour. My condolences to his friends and family.

Finally, I would like to welcome Wendy Wu Tours, who are the ABF's newest sponsor. They specialise in escorted tours throughout Asia, but also offer a wide range of options around the world and are well worth checking out at

<https://www.wendywutours.com.au/>

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David Fryda

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One of the pleasures of my role at the ABF is hearing directly from players and clubs. Sometimes the conversation is about a major event or a new idea. Just as often, it starts with a simple question: "Can I still get my ABF registration card?" or "Why isn't the ABF issuing promotion certificates anymore?" Those questions are useful. They tell me where I need to explain things better.

First, though, I would like to welcome Wendy Wu Tours, which has come on board as a new ABF sponsor recently. It's good to have their support. You can read more about them elsewhere in this newsletter, including a special discount offer available to all of us.

Now to those two questions. The ABF no longer sends out registration cards, but you can still get yours whenever you need it. If you are signed into My ABF then go to the Masterpoints tab and click the red **ABF CARD DOWNLOAD** button underneath the Summary table. You can then save or print your card. If you don't have a My ABF sign-in then you can still go to

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and you will see a **PRINT ABF REGISTRATION CARD** option on that page. You then enter your details and you will be able to download and print your card from there.

Promotion certificates are a little different. In 2025, we stopped sending them automatically to every club. We found that some certificates weren't making their way to the players who had earned them, so we decided to give clubs the choice to opt in and continue receiving them. Recently, a few players have told me they thought certificates had been discontinued altogether. Some clubs may have missed the message at the time, so I'm glad to have the chance to clear that up.

If you're a club masterpoint secretary and your club would like to receive promotion certificates, please email the Masterpoint Centre at

masterpoints@abf.com.au

and ask to be reinstated. Please remember to quote your club number in all correspondence. If you're a player and would like your club to receive them, have a word with your club manager, president or masterpoint secretary. The club's choice covers all its promotion certificates; we can't arrange to send just one.

Looking further ahead, our intention is that the integration of masterpoints with My ABF will allow players to download and print their own certificates. There is still work to do before that becomes available, but it's a good example of what we want the integration to achieve: giving players easier access to their own information while making the process simpler for clubs.

I'd also encourage all players and club officials to keep across the ABF's education and marketing resources on our website. There are lots of educational resources available to teachers and players at

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

And if you are a club administrator, take a look at all the material at

<https://www.abf.com.au/abf-marketing/>

I'm sure there are resources there that you could use to help your club to grow.

Please keep the questions and suggestions coming. My email address is at the top of the page.

The more you let me know what works well and what causes confusion, the better I can make things for everyone who plays and helps run bridge.



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WBF Committee of Honour

Ben Thompson

The Australian Bridge Federation is delighted to congratulate Ben Thompson on his election to the World Bridge Federation Committee of Honour – the first Australian to receive this distinction. We asked Ben to give us an overview of the background and purpose of the Committee.



The Committee of Honour has two important purposes – recognition of significant contribution to bridge, and retention of deep expertise in enhancing bridge. It's an exceptionally small club – only 36 people have been elected since it was formed in 1972, and there can only be 13 living members at a time (it's a lifetime appointment). For those familiar with bridge history, that list of 36 members reads like a who's who of people who have turned bridge into a truly global mind sport, with Olympic recognition – and still with a lot of potential growth.

I've been fortunate to have worked with nearly half of the 36, and all have been remarkable. Every one of us (it still feels strange to say "us") is quietly pleased to have been recognised, but what we're all more enthusiastic about is the future – and the opportunity to stay genuinely involved at the highest levels of bridge administration, ensuring our experience and insight is available to support everyone working on the future growth and success of bridge.

How does that work? Several ways.

- Members of the Honour Committee are entitled to attend Congress, which is the big meeting every two years where all national bridge organisations (NBOs) come together to discuss and vote on key topics, and express their views.
- The Executive Council (EC) holds nearly all executive and administrative powers of the WBF. Honour Committee members can attend EC meetings (and by convention, are always invited). In my experience, about half of the Honour Committee members attend the annual in-person meeting at the world championships, and about a quarter attend any given online meeting (we meet every 3-6 months depending on need). This is the forum where the combined experience of the Honour Committee is particularly valuable.
- One of the statutory committees of the WBF (literally required by the statutes) is the Advisory Committee. The membership is the Presidents Emeritus (many of whom also become members

of the Committee of Honour) and members of the Committee of Honour. This Committee's brief is to "make known its recommendations to the Executive Council". That's it. In other words and by design, the Advisory Committee's role is both proactive and reactive. If it sees an issue which it thinks should be addressed, it can and will raise it – with advice. If EC brings an issue to it, it can and will consider it – and provide advice.

Today, the WBF is very focussed on development – of tools to help people learn and grow the game, of ways to play bridge, of the profile and global presence of the game, and of support for NBOs trying to grow the game in their country ... we have big ambitions. This is something that Franck Riehm (the current President) and I are both very keen and working hard on.

A critical shortage right now in many places is of people who can teach bridge and run a simple duplicate. The WBF is helping with that! For example:

- We now have excellent materials for teachers, and are rapidly heading towards a certification program for teachers.
- We are working on a staged certification program for directors (all the way from club level to international / world championship level).

WBF certification for teachers and directors is very important in many NBOs. It gives bridge credibility with government bodies when there is an active world body with proper certification programs for officials. Government funding is often completely unavailable without this. With it, access to schools, funding and other official support opens up.

We're also engaging more and more with online bridge, including a growing panel of online championship-level events.

The world is changing around us but bridge is adapting and growing at the same time, respecting our history but embracing the future. I'm excited to be part of that, today and into the future!



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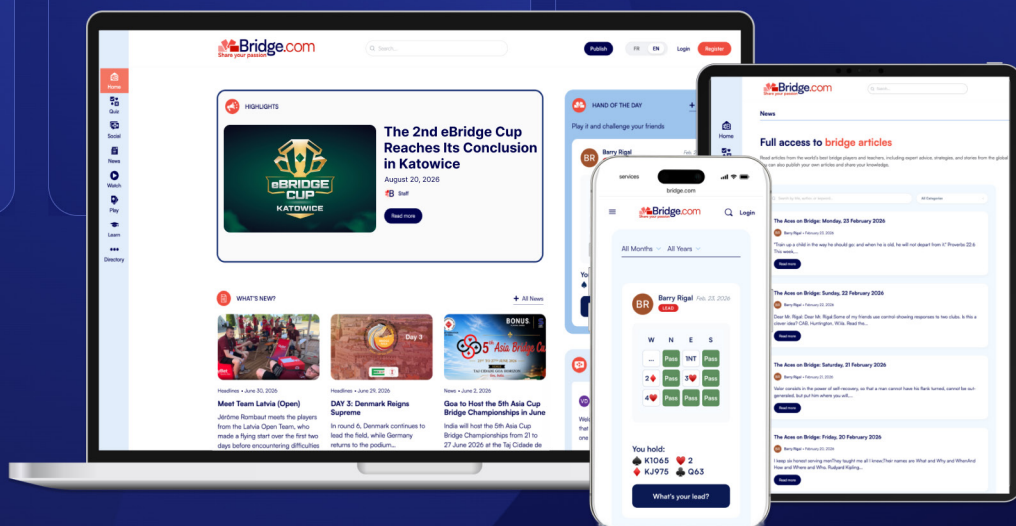
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Vale Keith McDonald

Keith McDonald came from a large family, four sisters and two brothers, all of whom played a variety of card games from an early age. He graduated from 'five hundred' to bridge in 1974 and was soon playing the new 'Precision' system competitively at the Queensland Contract Bridge Club, then located at Manning Street, South Brisbane. There he came in contact with some of the prominent names of Queensland bridge of the time including Denis Priest, Fay and Tom Landy, the Neill clan (Barbara, Warren, Don, Irma and youngsters Sue and Bruce) and Harold Hiley to name just a few.



In 1980 Keith became the QCBC delegate on the QBA Council and joined the board of the QCBC in 1983 where he served for many decades. In 1985 he replaced Jan Kirk as Vice President of the QBA and was elected President in 1986, taking over from Reg Busch. In 1994 he became one of the Queensland delegates for the Australian Bridge Federation and was appointed President in 1996. For many years, Keith held the dual roles of President of both the state and national bodies. He stepped down from the ABF in 2014 and from the QBA in 2017, the longest-serving in both, having provided outstanding service to bridge in Queensland and throughout Australia.

Since his formal retirement from bridge administration, Keith remained a voluntary member of the QBA Finance Committee until his passing on 13 September. He had every reason to be proud of his accomplishments with the ABF and QBA, which both prospered under his presidencies.

This was formally recognised by Honorary Life Membership of the Queensland Bridge Association and membership of the Australian Bridge Federation Committee of Honour. Keith's state representation includes:

- Australian National Championships – Queensland Open Team – NPC 2004, 1998, 1997, 1994, 1992
- ANC – Queensland Seniors' Team 2012, 1999 (NPC)
- ANC – Queensland Women's Team – NPC 1991, 1989
- ANC – Queensland Youth Team – NPC 2003, 2002, 2000, 1991, 1989, 1985, 1984, 1983.



Faifo Bar over-looking the Beach

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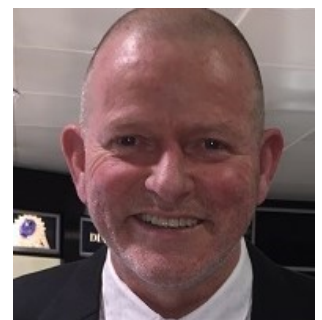
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Vale Stephen Lester

Stephen Lester passed away on 26 September, aged 75, after a long illness. Australian bridge has lost an outstanding player, an influential writer and editor, and a man whose contribution to the game extended over decades.

Stephen's introduction to bridge came at 19, when he filled in for a game with his father. They won, and he was hooked. He went on to represent New Zealand, travel the world through bridge, and compete among the best players of his generation.

His achievements at the table were substantial. Stephen won the Grand National Open Teams twice, as well as titles at the Gold Coast Congress, Barrier Reef Congress and Victor Champion Cup. Decades later, he was still competing at the highest level, winning the National Senior Teams in 2019. He was particularly proud of winning the Victorian Pennant with our Geelong team in 2022, and in 2024 he became a Gold Grand Master.

Stephen also helped shape how Australian bridge was reported and remembered. He edited Australian Bridge from 1989 to 2000 and later the ABF Newsletter. For many years he produced daily bulletins at major tournaments, including the Summer Festival of Bridge. He ran bridge clubs in Sydney and Melbourne, and more recently directed at Barwon Heads Golf Club. His contribution to the bridge world was considerable, both at the table and through the work he did for everyone who loved the game.

Stephen and Edwin moved to Geelong in 2014, and Stephen quickly became part of the local bridge community. His name features prominently on the Geelong honour boards, but his presence meant much more than his results. At Barwon Heads, he loved directing bridge, and that affection was certainly returned.

Away from bridge, Stephen was an accomplished classical pianist, with a grand piano that took pride of place in his home. He had no interest whatsoever in Aussie rules football or pop music. It was therefore entirely appropriate, in its own peculiar way, that he slipped away on Grand Final Saturday as Kylie was blasting out The Loco-Motion.

Stephen was brave – very brave – through the many health challenges he endured, and he never complained. He was a gentle man and a gentleman. He will be missed throughout the bridge world, and I will miss him as a close friend and bridge partner. It was a great honour to be both.

My love and sympathy go to Edwin.

Denny Newland

Some of Stephen's achievements:

NZ Open Team, with Malcolm Mayer, Michael Cornell, Lionel Wright, Bill Haughie, Alan Turner

Grand National Open Teams 1990, with Penny Crittle, George Bilski, Richard Brightling, Terry Brown, Ross Moore

Grand National Open Teams 1992, with John Roberts, Richard Brightling, Sue Snow, Matthew Thompson

Gold Coast Open Teams 1992, with Richard Brightling, Chris Quail, Ian Robinson, Sue Snow

Barrier Reef Open Pairs 1997, with Ishmael Del'Monte

Barrier Reef Open Teams 1997, with Val Cummings, Ishmael Del'Monte, Jim Wallis

Barrier Reef Open Teams 1998, with Jan Cormack, Ishmael Del'Monte, Jim Wallis

Victor Champion Cup 1998, with Jan Cormack, Kieran Dyke, Joe Haffer, Phil Markey

Spring National Open Teams 2018, with Simon Hinge, Nye Griffiths, Ella Patterson

National Senior Teams 2019, with Simon Hinge, David Lilley, Zoli Nagy, Nigel Rosendorff, George Smolanko

Victorian Pennant 2022, with Denny Newland, Doug Newlands, Arthur Robbins



Vale Jeff Travis

It is with a heavy heart that I report that the South Australian and indeed the Australian bridge community has lost one of its most loved and respected members. Jeff was probably the only person I have ever known about whom nobody had ever had anything bad to say. He was great company and incredibly quick-witted. I would love to recount some examples of that wit but I fear the editor would not be prepared to publish the ones that come to mind. He had a broad general knowledge and would be the first person you would pick if forming a team for a quiz night. As Phil Markey once commented, he was an A grader.

Jeff was introduced to bridge while still at high school by Tony Lusk, who was a teacher at the school. Another student at the school was Arjuna de Livera, with whom Jeff played until the mid-80s when Arjuna moved to Canberra. He formed a partnership with Zoli Nagy in 1986 and played with him until Jeff moved to Wollongong in 1992. His son James was born prior to the move in 1991 and his daughter Lauren was born in 1993.

In late 1995, Jeff returned to Adelaide and it was not long after that that we formed a bridge partnership which lasted more than 20 years. To put that in context, that is longer than my first two marriages put together. Jeff was the perfect partner, never critical, always understanding. The best illustration of that was an occasion when we were playing in the ANC Interstate Seniors Teams and I decided to leave our opponents in 1♣ redoubled which made five overtricks! Although Jeff was not as amused by this result as our opponent Bob Sebesfi was, not a cross word was spoken about it at the time or later.

We enjoyed more than just playing bridge together. We shared a love for cricket and AFL and in partic-



ular for the Port Adelaide Football Club whose only premiership we were there together to witness. We also shared a liking for a wine and a glass of tawny port or two (occasionally not just a glass or two). I think his former wife Barbara regarded me as a bad influence on Jeff. One year at the NOT she changed their accommodation when she learned Justin Williams and I had booked an apartment at the same complex!

Jeff played bridge for the love and enjoyment of the game. That said, he had plenty of success at the game along the way. He won the State Open Pairs Championship on two occasions, once with Barbara and once with me. He won the State Mixed Pairs Championship with Barbara on two occasions. He was a member of the team that won the State Teams Championship on ten occasions, six of those playing with me and the last playing with Justin Williams. He was a member of the State Open Team on seven occasions, the Seniors Team on three occasions and the Junior Team once. At national level, he reached finals without tasting the ultimate success.

In recent years following his retirement, Jeff has been giving bridge lessons at the South Australian Bridge Association and the Queen Adelaide Club. He was a well-liked and respected teacher and will no doubt be missed by his students.

In 2014, Jeff married Felicity Smyth. Jeff and Felicity had more than 12 wonderful years together and their happiness was obvious to all who knew them. Although we will all miss Jeff greatly, our loss does not compare to the loss felt by Felicity, Jeff's children James and Lauren and his step-children Brian, David, Libby and Katie.

I was overseas when Jeff's daughter Lauren rang to inform me that her dad had been diagnosed with leukaemia and was in hospital. I was horrified at this terrible news and resolved to visit Jeff as soon as possible after I returned. I did not get that opportunity. A week later I received the shocking news from Justin Williams that Jeff had died. Justin's subsequent message to me said it all. "Yeah it's devastating. Happened so quickly. So many great times with the bloke – both locally and on the many bridge and other trips."

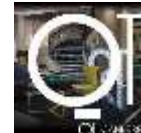
Felicity is supporting a medical research charity in Jeff's honour and would love others to join her in that support. You can make a donation at:

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FLAGSHIP EVENTS

National Women's Teams

Wed 13/1 – Fri 15/1.

Finals Sat 16/1– Sun 17/1

National Seniors' Teams

Wed 13/1 – Fri 15/1.

Finals Sat 16/1– Sun 16/1

TBIB Swiss Pairs

Sat 16/1 – Sun 17/1

South West Pacific Teams

Mon 18/1 – Thu 21/1

FESTIVAL FAVOURITES

Chris Diment Swiss Pairs

Wed 13/1 – Thu 14/1

Fixed Income Solutions Swiss Pairs

Fri 15/1

Mixed Swiss Pairs

Fri 22/1 – Sun 24/1

NEW! FRINGE FESTIVAL



2027 Canberra

SUMMER FESTIVAL

of Br♠dge

Wednesday January 13th – Sunday January 24th
QT Hotel Canberra

u500MP Chris Diment Swiss Pairs

u500 MP Fixed Income Solutions Swiss Pairs

u750/500 TBIB Swiss Pairs

u300/100 TBIB Swiss Pairs

u300 South West Pacific Teams

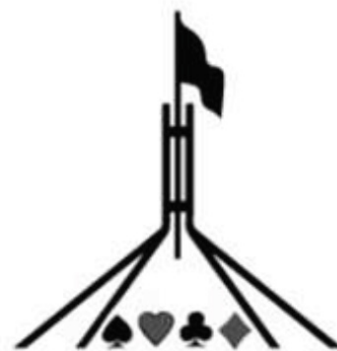
u5 Friday Fivers, FREE

u20 Fringe Festival

2027 Summer Festival of Bridge

Canberra is calling

Laura Ginnan



This month brings sad news with the loss of two longstanding friends of the Festival. Stephen Lester and Perelle Scales both passed away at the end of September.

Stephen enjoyed the Festival as a player for many years and, for more than two decades, kept players and those at home entertained and informed through the Festival bulletin.

Perelle volunteered as partnership coordinator for around ten years. Her calm nature, good humour and remarkable book of contacts saved the day on numerous occasions.

Both will be sorely missed by the Summer Festival community, especially as we head back to Rydges.

The announcement that the 2027 Festival will return to QT Canberra (formerly Rydges & the Lakeside Hotel) has prompted a flood of memories. Over the past couple of months, I've heard stories of triumph, disappointment, fun and the odd scandal! That's perhaps to be expected from a venue that has been the home of "Canberra" since 1974.

One theme that I keep hearing is that, back in the day, an experienced club member would simply tell a newer player, "You're coming to Canberra." There didn't seem to be much room for argument, but there are plenty of good road trip stories.

It's a reminder of what a club can do for its players, and how much fun a national event can be when it becomes a group adventure. Coming to Canberra can feel like a big step, but it's much easier when someone invites you along, helps you find a partner or shows you the ropes. It's a chance to meet players from across Australia and beyond, make new friends, catch up with old ones and feel part of the wider bridge community.

Now is a great time to plan your adventure because the final early bird draw closes on 31 October. To be in the draw, simply book and pay for your entry by then.

Prizes vary by event but include:

- A four-night stay at QT Canberra, including breakfast
- Dinner with Andy Hung, and a chance to pick his brain
- Team dinners at Capitol Bar & Grill, with a combined value of more than \$1000
- International Bridge Press Association memberships

Perhaps there's someone at your club who just needs an invitation. You know what to tell them: "You're coming to Canberra."

Whether it's your first Festival or a homecoming, we look forward to seeing you there.

Entries and other information can be found [here](#), and you can contact the Tournament Organiser at:

not@abf.com.au

QT Hotel Discount codes:

To access your special festival rates, visit

www.qthotels.com

and:

1. Select QT Canberra, your dates (11–25 January 2027) and number of guests.
2. Click "I have a code". Enter the code in the BLOCK CODE section.
3. Enter one of the following block codes:
 - 2701ABFRMO – Room Only
 - 2701ABFBRI – Breakfast Included (be sure to adjust occupancy to one if only one breakfast is needed).
4. Click Update to view your discounted rates.

Alternatively, contact the QT Reservations Team by phone at +61 2 6247 6244, or email:

reservations_qtcanberra@evt.com

Coffs Coast Gold Congress

Nick Hughes

continued from page 1

If declarer unblocks the ♣A then leads the ♦8 towards dummy's nine, North can thwart this by playing the ♦Q! The Brilliancy Prize is in the mail.

Would you overcall with the West cards on this deal:

Board 23. Dealer South. Both sides vulnerable.

	♠ 9 2		
	♥ Q 6 4 3		
	♦ K Q 9 8 6		
	♣ K 6		
♠ J 7 4		♠ 10 6 3	
♥ A 9		♥ J 10 2	
♦ A J 10 7 5		♦ 4 3 2	
♣ A 10 5		♣ J 8 7 3	
	♠ A K Q 8 5		
	♥ K 8 7 5		
	♦ —		
	♣ Q 9 4 2		
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♦	pass	pass	1♠
all pass			dbl

Vulnerability and a balanced hand suggest passing, but the 2♦ overcall offered an 800-point penalty (1100 is possible if South switches to a club at trick two). There were 24 pairs doubled in 2♦, with two conceding 1100 (10 imps out), one escaping for 500 (4 imps in) and 21 losing 800 (5 imps out). The datum score was NS making game (630).

On this Round 3 deal, is North's hand suitable for a weak two? Or is it too good, with 6-4 and two aces?

Board 13. Dealer North. Both sides vulnerable.

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

There were ten EW pairs making slam, but if NS start with 2♥-4♥, West's 4♠ is likely to end the auction.

South faced a difficult lead problem on this deal from Round 5:

Board 1. Dealer North. Neither side vulnerable.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	pass	1♥	pass
2♠ ¹	pass	4♥	all pass
	♠ K 8 4 3		
	♥ Q 6 3		
	♦ 10 8 6		
	♣ K 9 7		
♠ 10 7		♠ A Q 2	
♥ A K 9		♥ J 10 8 4 2	
♦ A 7 5 3		♦ J	
♣ 8 6 4 3		♣ Q J 10 5	
	♠ J 9 6 5		
	♥ 7 5		
	♦ K Q 9 4 2		
	♣ A 2		

1. Criss-cross raise (three-card raise, invite or better).

Criss-cross major raises (1♥-2♠ and 1♠-3♥) are common in Australia, but rare elsewhere (the method has nothing to do with Bergen raises, although some people mistakenly refer to them by that name). Do you still play Bergen raises? They are largely out of favour overseas.

Anyway, should South lead the ♦K or the ♣A? The ♦K is safe enough but you won't get rich there. Of the twenty Open declarers in 4♥, eleven got a diamond lead, nine the ♣A. The defenders at the top of the field were preferring constructive safety, while those at the bottom tended to fling out the ace.

Modern analysis suggests that ace-doubleton leads are big winners but note that the analysis is based on double dummy results. For example:

	♥ K 6 5 4	
♥ A 7		♥ J 10 5
	♥ Q 9 8 2	

The ♥A lead "doesn't cost" because the Deep Finesse declarer will play the suit for one loser anyway. In real life, some players will not guess the suit on their own, so the ace lead does cost a trick.

The three money prizes in the Open Pairs went to the top three seeds, with George Kozakos and Hugh Grosvenor at the top. Here's a board from Round 6, one of their big wins:

Board 20. Dealer West. Both sides vulnerable.

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
George		Hugh	
pass	1♠	pass	3♣
dbl	3♠	5♣	dbl
all pass			

3♣ was a Bergen-style raise, letting West into the auction with a lead-directing double. 5♣x made on trumps 2-2 with hearts coming in.

NS played in 4♠ at 35 tables, and most Easts led a diamond rather than the killing club. 17 made it easily enough by managing diamonds for four tricks to pitch a club (winning the diamond in the South hand, drawing trumps, and finessing the ♦9).

While not wishing to cast aspersions, the declarers at the top tables generally made it, while those at the bottom often failed.

Here are some deals from the Teams event:

Board 1-11. Dealer South. Neither side vulnerable.

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

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

Or West might make a slam try, swiftly declined.

To do well at bridge it's important to play in the suit that breaks 3-2, not the one that breaks 4-1. The

twenty Open declarers in 4♠ had an easy ride but 19 of the 29 in 4♥ went off.

Should they have made it?

After the normal club lead to dummy's ace, cashing one top trump is okay. Then you need to cater for 4-1 trumps.

You can lead a diamond and play along cross ruff lines. Also fine is to lead a low trump of dummy at trick three. What you can't do is play a second top trump. Tough hand!

Board 2-15. Dealer South. North-South vulnerable.

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

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

This sensible auction was rare.

Plenty played 5♣, mostly failing on a red suit lead.

There were a few Norths making 3NT when East trusted partner's overcall. I bet there were some who opened 1♥ on the South cards.

Board 3-14. Dealer East. Neither side vulnerable.

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

After East opens 2♠ or 2♦, it's reasonable to bid slam. Seven Open pairs had a go. 6NT is best. One pair bid and made the hairy 6♦. In 6♣, Bilski won the second spade and played two rounds of clubs. When the ♣9 holds, and two rounds of hearts reveal the

♥Q, cashing the ♠Q can't hurt, though you still have to guess West's shape. The appearance of the ♣8 on the second trump might swing it.

Anyway, the trump coup is appealing because it's more elegant than finding trumps 3-3. George Bilski is always elegant.

Board 4-15. Dealer South. North-South vulnerable.

		♠ Q J 6 5 ♥ 8 ♦ A 9 7 6 5 ♣ 8 6 5	
♠ K 10 4 ♥ 9 7 ♦ 10 8 3 ♣ K J 10 7 2		♠ A 9 8 7 4 3 ♥ A 3 2 ♦ J 2 ♣ 9 3	
		♠ — ♥ K Q J 10 6 5 4 ♦ K Q 4 ♣ A Q 4	
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	2♦	2♠	2♣
3♠	3NT	pass	3♥
			?

Four Open declarers scored +1430 here. It would be good if 4♠ here is Exclusion Blackwood.

Board 4-16. Dealer West. East-West vulnerable.

		♠ K Q 8 ♥ Q 3 ♦ J 9 8 3 ♣ K J 10 9	
♠ 10 5 2 ♥ 8 5 ♦ Q 6 2 ♣ A Q 8 7 4		♠ A 9 7 4 3 ♥ 10 9 6 ♦ A 5 4 ♣ 3 2	
		♠ J 6 ♥ A K J 7 4 2 ♦ K 10 7 ♣ 6 5	
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	1♦	pass	1♥
pass	1NT	pass	4♥
all pass			

A diamond lead shoots this but North had bid them so a spade it was. When East switches to a low diamond, it's normal to fly king because a lead from ♦Qxx is most unattractive, when looking at that dummy.

It would be different if it were clear to everyone that the defence needed two tricks on the trot. Then it's a guess. Not the case here.

Board 4-28. Dealer West. North-South vulnerable.

		♠ K 9 8 4 ♥ 8 5 ♦ Q 3 2 ♣ Q 6 5 2	
♠ 6 3 2 ♥ 10 ♦ J 10 9 5 ♣ A 10 9 8 4		♠ J 5 ♥ A K Q 9 6 4 ♦ 8 4 ♣ K 7 3	
		♠ A Q 10 7 ♥ J 7 3 2 ♦ A K 7 6 ♣ J	
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Doecke	pass	S Coutts	all pass
3♣!		4♥	
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Morrison	Williams	Langton	J Coutts
pass	pass	1♥	1♠
pass	3♠ ^{mixed}	pass	4♠
all pass			

Aggressive bidding at both tables.

Repeated trump leads will shoot 4♠ but after two hearts and a trump switch, James Coutts was able to start a cross-ruff. Six trump tricks and three diamonds brought the trick total to nine and West was squeezed in the minors for +620.

Board 5-13. Dealer North. Both sides vulnerable.

		♠ A 5 ♥ A Q 9 8 6 5 ♦ A Q 3 ♣ Q 4	
♠ K ♥ 7 ♦ J 8 7 4 ♣ J 10 7 6 5 3 2		♠ Q J 8 3 2 ♥ K J 4 ♦ K 6 2 ♣ K 8	
		♠ 10 9 7 6 4 ♥ 10 3 2 ♦ 10 9 5 ♣ A 9	
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	1♥	1♠	2♥ !?
	4♥	all pass	

♠Q-4-K-A was a bad start for the defence. After ♥A, declarer can succeed by exiting the ♠5 but that's playing West for two singletons.

So declarer continued trumps. After cashing ♥KJ East easily found the ♣K switch to kill dummy, a Merrimac Coup.

The Coutts team (pictured on Page 1) cruised to a comfortable win. Going into the last round they were a full match clear of the field.



2026 World Youth Transnational Championships, Hefei, China

The future of Australian bridge isn't coming tomorrow. It's here today!

In August, 35 young Australians braved the heat in Hefei, China, for the World Youth Transnational Championships. For the first time, Australia fielded teams in all five youth divisions.

Hefei was familiar territory for Australian bridge. At the same venue in 2025, our Seniors won Australia's first international gold medal since 2013, while the Open team took bronze. This year, the young guns added achievements of their own.

The Under 26 Women's team qualified for the teams finals. Our Under 21 team – Diya and Dev Shah, Jade Wilkinson and Taydon Gold, and Aadhi Hariharan and Remco Spencer, with non-playing captain Jess Brake – won gold in the Division D teams final. In the pairs, Natalie Newman and Ida Andersen took silver in the Under 26 Women's Category B final.

A special shout-out goes to Ada Sun and Alex Wu, who finished fifth on the U16 Butler list of 337 pair combinations. That ranking undersells their performance: Ada and Alex played 84 boards together, while each of the four combinations above them played only 14 or 28.

It takes a village

Fielding teams in all five divisions for the first time took a great deal of work long before anyone arrived in Hefei. Thank you to everyone who helped our players get there and supported them along the way.

Our 2026 ABF Youth Team Selection Panel was Phil Markey, Jenny Thompson and Peter Gill. The teams were supported by NPCs Sue Falkingham, Jess Brake, Renee Cooper, Mike Doecke and Peter Hollands, alongside the ABF Board, staff and volunteers.

David Appleton, Liam Milne, James Coutts, Paul Gosney, Andy Hung and many state/territory youth co-ordinators provided partnership coaching and mentoring. Andy also ran an Under 26 training weekend, with the support of the ABF, Friends of Youth Bridge and QCBC generously donating its clubrooms.

From April to July, the Sunday Development Squad drew on the expertise of Andy Hung, Liam Milne, Ben Thompson, Sartaj Hans, Keith Kat, Phil Markey, Anita Curtis, Renee Cooper, Peter Newman, Bill Jacobs, Allison Stralow, Tony Nunn, Adam Kaplan, Kim Frazer and Sandra Hardie.

Our Youth Pro-Am experts were Peter Gill, Matt Mullanphy, Marianne Bookallil, George Kozakos, Paul Gosney, Michael Ware, Paul Brayshaw, Leigh Matheson, Matt Brown, Bill Jacobs, Stephen Fischer, Phil Markey, Jodi Tutty, James Coutts, Pele Rankin and Maurits Van der Vlugt, with Renee Cooper, Susan Humphries and Paul Lavings on standby.

Thank you, too, to the friends and families who formed the players' support crews, especially the chaperones who travelled with our under-18s. More than \$15,000 was raised to support the teams, through sponsorship from Tony Bemrose Insurance Brokers and the Bridge Australia Foundation, donations and supporter-mug purchases. Ella Jacob also got out there and shook the tin, encouraging people to contribute. Canberra Bridge Club, Moonee Valley Bridge Club, Sale Bridge Club and the Tasmanian

Bridge Association bought mugs in large numbers for club use or congress prizes.

Finally, an extra special thank-you to TBIB Insurance and 360 Assist. They handled a large number of typhoon-related disruptions at the end of the tournament and helped ensure our players got home safely.

It takes a village to make all of this happen, and Australian youth bridge is lucky to have such a good one. Thank you to everyone who has given their time, expertise and encouragement. I'm sorry if I've missed anyone by name; your contribution is no less appreciated.

The Youth Triathlon returns

After a long period of dormancy, the Australian Youth Bridge Triathlon has returned! Bertie Morgan won the 2026 Bobby Richman Memorial Shield, honouring an exceptional player and much-loved figure in Australian bridge.



If you never had the chance to meet Bobby (or would enjoy reminiscing) [Michael Courtney's character-filled tribute](#) captures his extraordinary bridge achievements, humour, personality and distinctive approach to the game.

Thank you to the Bridge Australia Foundation, Friends of Youth Bridge, Bridge Gear and Paul Lavings, the Bridge Federation of the ACT and Canberra Bridge Club for sponsoring the event.

The Triathlon would not be happening without organisers Suz Wilkinson and Will Jenner-O'Shea, Tournament Director Leon Meier, and the fundraising efforts of Angeline Christie, the ANC organising team and everyone who bought a ticket in this year's ANC raffle. Laurie Kelso, Matthew McManus

and Bruce Crossman have also played a huge part behind the scenes.

Event and entry details can be found at [MyABF](#).

Nominate a young player for an ABF Youth Award

The annual Australian Youth Bridge Awards recognise excellence, commitment, sportsmanship and contributions to our bridge community.

There are four awards: the Helman-Klinger Achievement Award, Hills-Hurley Trophy, Helman-Klinger Masterpoint Award and the Andrew Reiner Trophy. Nominations are invited for the first two; the other awards are determined from results.

Nominations close at 5.00 pm AEDT on 15 November 2026 and the awards will be presented at Youth Week 2027. Submit a nomination [here](#).

Thank you, Mitch



Mitch Dowling has passed the NSW youth baton to Aaron Poon. Mitch has been instrumental in the success of youth bridge in NSW, and he and Hana are expecting their first child any day now. Thank you, Mitch, and good luck to you both!

Youth Week 2027

Youth Week runs from Saturday 9 to Friday 15 January 2027, with a Youth Directors Course on 8 January and Stage 2 of the Under 26 Butler on 16-17 January.

The Youth Week MyABF page will launch on 14/10/26.

Jeremy Reid is the Tournament Organiser. For enquiries, email

ausyouthbridgeweek2024@gmail.com



Many youth players are enjoying the bulletins and their membership of the IBPA thanks to a very generous contribution from the Association. If you're under 30 years of age, please contact me directly at

youth@abf.com.au

to find out about the options.

If you're over 30, you should still [join the IBPA](#) through their regular channels to support bridge journalism and enjoy material from leading bridge journalists, authors and editors.

Sunday Development Squad

The Sunday Development Squad restarts on 18 October and is open to Australian and New Zealand players aged 30 or younger. A one-off registration is essential.

Register [here](#) for the Sunday Development Squad.

2027 Australian Youth Teams Selection

Final details of the 2027 Australian Youth Teams selection process will be announced by 31 October

2026. The formats are expected to remain largely unchanged from 2026. The U26 team will be selected during Youth Week, with players qualifying through the Australian Youth Teams and then progressing through Stages 1 and 2 of the Butler.

The Australian U26 team will receive significant support to attend the World National Youth Team Championships in Herning, Denmark, 1-7 August 2027.

The ABF will support the ratification of representative teams in other divisions and provide financial support for uniforms and entry fees to an ABF-specified target event. The chosen event is to be advised and is likely to be an Australian National event, NZ Congress or APBF Championship.

Division	Applications close	Trials / selection interviews
U26 Women	23 January	30-31 January
U21	6 February	13-14 February
U16 and U31	27 February	6-7 March

Full details, including eligibility, and how to apply, will be available on the ABF website and emailed to Sunday Development Squad participants, 2026 and 2027 Youth Week participants and State/Territory Youth Coordinators.

What's happening next?

Behind the scenes, we've been looking at how youth bridge is governed and managed in Australia. This has included extensive conversations with current and former youth bridge stakeholders and the development of a draft ABF youth strategy.

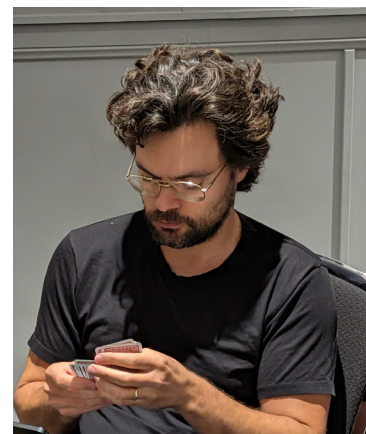
We plan to consult state and territory associations over the coming months, with changes expected to begin rolling out in 2027. There will be more to share as that work progresses.



Lessons and hands from the World Championships

Paul Dalley

from bridgechampions.com



Bid your hand, and go positive

Going positive should dominate your thinking when your side has the majority of points – don't over-reach, don't bid your hand twice, trust partner and be prepared to play in a partscore rather than game.

Sitting East, you hold

♠ J 9 5 ♥ A Q J 7 5 ♦ K 10 8 ♣ 6 5

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

On this hand East has already shown, say, 10+ points and a heart suit. His partner has heard his bid and clearly doesn't think their hands complement each other so well, and has suggested 3♣ as the final contract. East should trust partner.

The hands did not fit well; partner had a singleton spade – 3♣ was comfortable, 3NT had no chance. An 8-imp swing when one of the Easts decided to bid "aggressively" (often used instead of the more accurate word: badly), while the other table stopped in 3♣ making. 8 imps is like a game swing – awarded to the player who did not bid game.

Rule:

Describe your hand as best you can to partner, and then, once partner knows what you have, trust their judgment.

State of the game: 3NT is Klukowski's friend

Sitting West, you hold

♠ Q 10 4 2 ♥ Q 8 7 4 ♦ A Q ♣ 9 6 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	pass
?			

On this hand Michal Klukowski – perhaps the most successful player of the last five to ten years – just bid 3NT, and did not look for a major suit fit. He frequently does this. One of the key things he looks at is short suits.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
3NT	all pass	1NT	pass

Rule:

Points in your short suits indicate NT is likely, whereas singletons or doubletons without any points in them will often lean towards playing in a suit contract.

A time to bid less

Rule:

7222 and 6322 are balanced – do less with these shapes, they are filled with losers.

Sitting South, you hold

♠ 7 4 ♥ 7 4 2 ♦ A K J 4 3 2 ♣ Q 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
4♠	dbl	pass	1♦
			?

In this auction, double was takeout by partner. Do you defend or compete to 5♦? The significantly better choice is to defend; treat your hand like a 5332. The sixth diamond makes people do crazy things; one table defended, the other decided to bid 5♦ and lost a flurry of tricks for a big swing.

Rule:

Treat 6322 like a 5332 and you will get good results, similar idea for a 7222.

These ideas win so many imps even at the world-class level. They come up over and over.

Sitting North, you hold

♠ 9 6 ♥ K Q J 9 6 3 2 ♦ J 8 ♣ 9 2

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH

2♠ ?

Here you decide to bid hearts. Do you bid 3♥ or 4♥?

Hopefully it is obvious now: 3♥. Do less with these hands; do not get overconfident with a 7222 and bid 4♥. Again the difference was 8imps, another big swing that penalised overbidding on "flat" hands.

Bidding as a conversation

Try to communicate your hand to partner, tell partner as much as you can about your hand, put them in a position to make a decision for the partnership, and then trust it.

Sitting South, you hold

♠ K J 9 8 5 2 ♥ A K 8 ♦ A 7 5 ♣ 3

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH

pass 1♣ pass 1♠
pass 2♠ pass ?

At one table, in the quarter-finals, they just gambled 6♠. At the other table, the correct bid was found – a splinter of 4♣. That showed 0-1 clubs, and a hand interested in slam. When partner bid 4♠, saying absolutely no interest (could have cue bid 4♦ or 4♥ with a hand that is non-committal but not terrible), his partner trusted him and played in game.

Ten tricks was the maximum when partner had a bad hand with king-queen of clubs.

Rule:

Points opposite shortage = misfit = bad.
Keep the contract low when you have points opposite your partner's shortage.

Gadgets that are in fashion

The Mexican 2♦ bid (check my [website](#) for the article) is a bid that I incorporated into my system about a year or two ago.

I love it, and strongly recommend it – it has multiple benefits (see the article).

How it works: an opening bid of 2♦ shows 18-19 points balanced.

It is hugely in fashion with many of the best-performing pairs in the world.

One of the many advantages was shown here in the Finals:

♠ A 7 5 3
♥ 7 2
♦ 9 6 5 2
♣ K 7 5

♠ Q 2
♥ Q 8 5 4 3
♦ 4 3
♣ J 10 9 2

♠ K 10 9 8
♥ A K J 10
♦ A Q 10
♣ 8 6

♠ J 6 4
♥ 9 6
♦ K J 8 7
♣ A Q 4 3

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

Opening Mexican 2♦ will almost always lead to the 2♦ opener declaring the hand – often a big advantage. Here it was a decisive advantage when Bessis opened 2♦. The other table opened 1♣-1♥, and the hand was over.

bridgechampions.com

BY PAUL DALLEY

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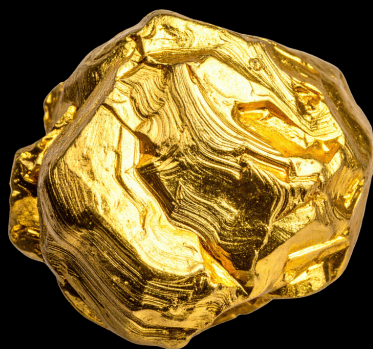
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BRIDGE INTO THE 21st CENTURY

Paul Lavings, plavings@gmail.com



UPGRADING AND DOWNGRADING (WITH 1NT=15-17)

What would you call on the following hands in first seat, nil vulnerable?

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

SOLUTIONS

1. 1NT. Many things point to an upgrade. The intermediates, tens and nines in the long suits, add to the trick-taking potential. Compare A1098 opposite J53 to A642 opposite J53. With A1098 the probability is three tricks, while A642 would be lucky to make two tricks. Then there is shape, 4-4-3-2 with two suits for tricks is better than 4-3-3-3.

And what about the weak doubleton? I see many players who won't open 1NT without a stopper in every suit. Would you prefer xx opposite KQxx, or Qx opposite Kxxx? Two small is two tricks half the time, while the second combination is most unlikely to take two tricks.

2. 1NT. Another upgrade to 1NT. The five-card suit is a good start but the inner strength of the suit, J109, is the key. Imagine you have ♠Qx opposite ♠AJ1092, and then imagine you have ♠Qx opposite ♠AJ642 where you must lose at least one trick, often two.

3. 1♦. 17 HCP but too strong for 1NT with all your intermediates and with cards working together so well. Imagine your ♥J1093 opposite ♥Q and then imagine ♥J642 opposite ♥Q. What a difference.

4. 1NT. It's not easy to construct a 13 HCP balanced hand with no five-card suit that is good enough for a 1NT opening. A suit like A1098 only counts as four points but has the potential to take extra tricks. Upgrading your hand is all part of good judgement and this hand is like a fortress and certainly worth 15 HCP and not 13.

5. 1♣. This revolting hand came up in a session at the local club two weeks ago. Despite the 4-3-3-3 shape and the lack of intermediates, there are cards working together in every suit and it is rare in this day and age to pass 12 HCP.

6. Pass. This hand dates back to 1970. The partner of this hand picked up a 4-3-3-3 shape with four ace-kings, that's 28 HCP. When their partner opened 1♣, they added their points for the two hands and it came to 40. Without further ado, they bid 7NT. However, the opening bidder had a balanced Yarborough and decided to psych a 1♣ opening.

In those days, people frequently passed 12 HCP, even 13 or 14, calling the hand "tram tickets". It was impossible that her partner would have opened this hand all those years ago with four queen-jacks.

7. Pass. This hand is from an article named "Don't Change Your Mind".

Have you ever seen such an ugly 12-count, and it even has a five-card suit? My dear partner passed in first seat. Bravo, it takes courage to pass a 12-count because if you're wrong everybody will laugh at you. The bidding then proceeded: 1♣-1♥-1NT-3NT.

It was good judgment to pass these tram tickets in first seat, but nothing had happened to improve the hand. It was still bad news. Since the hopeless 3NT went two down, the winning action was to pass 1NT.

If you say an ace = two points and a king = one point, then there are 12 control points in the pack that rule the suits, and are likely to take tricks. Your hand contains only one of these 12 control points. It's not surprising that partner's 12-count opposite was not up to the task: ♠A87 ♥K10 ♦9632 ♣AJ82

8. 1NT. You are too strong to open 1♦ and bid 2♦ and not strong enough to open 1♦ and rebid 3♦. You should have 3NT strongly in mind and open 1NT.

9. 1♦. If you are planning to open 1NT and steal the pot in 3NT, you need to run your suit and have quick tricks on the side. On this hand your values are too slow, and you should downgrade your hand and open 1♦ and rebid 2♦.

For magazines from the 1970s and 1980s for only the postage cost, contact Paul at plavings@gmail.com or phone 0408 888 085



A GAME AT THE CLUB

Barbara Travis

www.bridgeatbeaumont.com

You hear this auction:

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

Partner, South, leads the ♣5:

You
 ♠ A K 6 4
 ♥ 10 8 6 3
 ♦ 6 3
 ♣ A 4 3

Dummy
 ♠ J 8 5 3 2
 ♥ A Q 4 2
 ♦ Q 8
 ♣ 10 8



You win the ♣A, declarer playing the jack, and ...? Before you mechanically return a club to partner, think about the points around the table. East has shown 18-19, dummy has nine and you have eleven. What can you expect from partner? If you stop and think about such things at trick one (ideally before you play to trick one), you will defend far better.

On this hand you are best served to cash your winners, which you are likely to do if you count the points. In fact, you should know that declarer has three clubs – partner's fourth highest was the five, so there is only the ♣2 which is lower – meaning declarer even holds ♣K-Q-J.

If you cash your winners, declarer makes ten tricks. If you return a club, declarer can make twelve tricks – four hearts, six diamonds and two clubs! Whoops! Declarer held:

♠ Q 7 ♥ K J ♦ A K 9 7 5 2 ♣ K Q J

How would you bid this hand?

♠ K 10 8 7 ♥ 10 2 ♦ A ♣ A K J 7 3 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	2♣	pass	3♣
pass	?		

If you are tempted to bid 4♣, you should consider bidding 3♠ instead. Bidding 3♠ suggests you have four spades and six clubs (you didn't use a two-suited Michaels Cuebid), and shows some game interest. Partner can rebid 4♣, but they should also bid 4♠ if they hold four-card spade support. It's one of those less-common ways to find your 4-4 spade fit.

Partner held:

♠ Q J 9 2 ♥ 9 7 ♦ K J 6 ♣ Q 10 9 4

Partner opens 1♠ and your RHO overcalls 2♣. What would you bid holding:

♠ 10 9 5 2 ♥ A J 7 3 ♦ A 6 5 4 ♣ 5

This hand is worth a splinter bid. Aces are undervalued. Bid 4♣, which is still a splinter, since 3♣ is the cue raise. Partner, holding:

♠ A Q J 6 3 ♥ K 6 2 ♦ K J 9 8 3 ♣ —

despite their void opposite your singleton, can now place you with red values – aces – and should just bid 6♠, which makes 13 tricks with all the finesses working (and diamonds 2-2).

Here's another auction and your hand:

♠ K Q J 9 7 5 2 ♥ — ♦ A 9 4 ♣ 8 7 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♥	?	1♥	2♣

I would simply bid 4♠. That's where I want to play. Partner's 2♣ overcall has improved your hand, since

they have decent clubs. As it happens, with clubs 2-2, you make 12 tricks, just losing to the ♠A. Partner:

♠ 10 6 ♥ 5 4 3 ♦ K 3 ♣ A K 10 9 5 2

I am currently keen on having players ‘picture their partner’s hand’, and the next hand falls straight into that category. You are West and hold:

♠ A 7 5 ♥ Q 10 8 5 ♦ A J 10 ♣ Q J 6

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♣	pass	1♦	2♣
pass	pass	3♦	pass
?			

Partner rebid 3♦, not 2♦ – an invitational bid. She must have at least six diamonds and, given the quality of your own diamonds, they are likely to be K-Q-x-x-x (or more). So you are looking at 6+ diamond tricks, one spade trick and a club stopper. Where are partner’s other values? They will definitely be in one of the majors – ♥A gives partner 9 HCP, ♥K and a spade honour give them ten or eleven HCP.

It seems a good time to try 3NT, but only if you stop to analyse partner’s bid and hand:

♠ 9 6 ♥ A 6 2 ♦ K Q 6 5 4 3 2 ♣ 5

There are nine top tricks and ten if the defence persists with clubs. Keep thinking about what partner can hold for their bidding. Don’t just think in terms of HCP.

I think we need at least one hand that is played out:

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

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

Poor partner was a little stuck for a rebid because she really did not like her points in diamonds. Since I would make a negative double of 1♦ to show 4-4 in the majors, she knew I did not have four spades, so raised to 2♥. I must admit to seeing dummy and thinking it was a gruesome hand!

West led the ♦A and another diamond to East’s king. I’d have continued diamonds with East’s hand, but he chose to switch to the ♣K, which I won with the

ace. Given the riskiness of the switch, it felt like the ♠K was offside, but I still needed to reach dummy so had to try the spade finesse. A small spade to the queen held.

I didn’t think it likely that West held the ♦A, ♠K and the ♥A and passed (would you?), so I led a heart to my king, with the simple objective of removing two opposition trumps. When that held, the hand now played itself. I led a small diamond, which West ruffed with his ♥Q. He continued with a club, the queen winning. Now I could continue with the ♣J – if East ruffed with the ♥9, I could over-trump to lead/trump my last diamond; if he discarded, I could throw my losing diamond then lead a trump towards my hand. Making nine tricks on a very murky hand. (Note that East’s overcall ensured we did not play in 1NT, which went down several tricks at some tables.)

How do you deal with Michaels Cuebids? My personal view is that a double of a Michaels Cuebid should show interest in penalising the opponents (after all, three suits have been ‘shown’). We had this auction:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	2♦ ¹	dbl	2♥
pass	3♥	dbl	all pass

1. Alerted as at least 5-4 majors.

On such an auction, South has shown preference for hearts, so it should be automatic to lead a trump, especially when you are leading ‘through’ the long hearts.

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

The heart lead is won in dummy and the ♣2 is led. Don’t fixate on trying to make your hearts into winners; return another trump, taking out ‘2 for 1’. Declarer held a 1-3-4-5 hand shape, so you simply want to restrict their ability to ruff.

Of course, the other thing is to think about partner’s hand (picture their hand – again). They will hold the minors, obviously. You are not under any pressure. A trump return ensures two off, doubled – no matter whether it is 300 or 500, it’s a good score.

Speaking of scoring, if you rely on Bridgemates for your scores, then you need to learn how the scoring works. Otherwise you are missing out on competing (partscores) and sacrificing (games).



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The Earworm Coup

Chris Depasquale

You all know what an “Earworm” is – a catchy, repetitive musical snippet that plays uncontrollably in a person’s mind.

On day 2 of the 2025 GNOT finals in Sydney, I found myself afflicted by an earworm. The song I had got stuck on was the 2014 Meghan Trainor hit All About That Bass. You know the one. The chorus goes:

You know I’m all about that bass, ‘bout that bass, no treble

I’m all about that bass, ‘bout that bass, no treble

I’m all about that bass, ‘bout that bass, no treble

I’m all about that bass, ‘bout that bass (bass, bass, bass, bass)

In our match against Capricornia, I picked up this hand:

♠ A K 9 6 2 ♥ 5 4 ♦ A 7 5 4 3 ♣ J

Partner was the dealer and both he and my RHO passed. I opened 1♠, LHO passed, partner bid 2♠ and that was passed back to me. We play that raise to show 3-card support and 7-11 HCP. What to do? Pass? Make a game try?

The Meghan Trainor hand

There are plenty of hands partner can have where 4♠ has no hope:

♠ Q J 10 ♥ Q J 10 9 ♦ x x x ♣ K Q x

is a maximum where there are simply too many losers.

At this point the Earworm got to the part where Meghan sings, “All the right junk in all the right places”. That’s it, I thought, that is what partner will have, a Meghan Trainor hand with all the right junk in all the right places.

♠ Q x x ♥ x x x ♦ K Q x x ♣ x x x

This, for example, just needs 3-2 spades (68%) and diamonds not 4-0 (around 90%); game will make more often than not if that is partner’s hand. So, I bid 4♠ directly. The ♥6 was led and down came dummy.

♠ 7 5 3

♥ A J 9 8

♦ Q J 8 6

♣ Q 9

♠ A K 9 6 2

♥ 5 4

♦ A 7 5 4 3

♣ J

Not ideal, as I am in danger of losing a trick in each suit, but not hopeless either. If RHO began with exactly Kx in diamonds, there is a way home.

For now, I played the ♥8 from dummy and RHO won the king. It looks as if the opening lead was fourth highest from Q1076. Now a heart finesse might enable me to get rid of my club loser.

No sooner had this thought crossed my mind than RHO led the ♣A. So much for that plan! His partner encouraged the club, so he continued with a low one, which I ruffed. Two rounds of trumps were played, drawing the four then eight on my left, and the ten and jack on my right. Now it was time to cross to dummy to take that diamond finesse.

The practice finesse

Although I expect the heart queen to be on my left, playing a heart to the jack would be nothing more than a “practice finesse” at this stage of the hand. By definition, a “practice finesse” is one which, should it succeed, does NOT increase the number of tricks that you take but, should it fail, reduces your tricks. Getting one diamond discard from my hand does not make it any easier to play the suit for no losers, so I went up with the ace, preparing to take the necessary diamond finesse.

Surprise!

RHO ruffed the ace of hearts and put the 2♦ on the table! When something unexpected happens at the bridge table it is important to react in a calm, rational, professional manner. My two-step reaction was the epitome of that.

1. I picked myself up off the floor, dusted myself down, and sat back in the chair I had fallen out of; and

2. I tried to work out what this latest development meant for my contract.

RHO had shown up with the QJ10 of spades, the king of hearts and the ace of clubs. He couldn’t really have the king of diamonds as well, as that would give him 13 HCP, and he passed in second seat. So, the diamond finesse will fail. With only four cards in the majors RHO must have been dealt nine cards in the minors. If seven of them were clubs he had a normal 3♣ opening, but that didn’t happen. I reached the conclusion that he had 3-1-3-6 shape, and the diamond king was singleton on my left. I rose ace of diamonds, dropped the singleton king, and claimed ten tricks for the contract.

Coda

After that match, anyone within cooee could hear me singing, “Because you know I’m all about that ace, ‘bout that ace, no trouble...”.

Australia's Bridge Day Out

Australia's Bridge Day Out is the Bridge Australia Foundation's major fundraiser. On or around Tuesday 13 October, clubs across the country will play the same deals, bringing players together while raising funds to support the future of bridge. The Foundation supports a range of activities to further the game and ensure its future for players of all ages, skill levels and locations.

Thank you to everyone behind the scenes at the clubs already registered. Bridge Day Out only happens because of the wonderful work of our local champions, who bring their clubs together to support the future of bridge.

NSW: Orange, North Shore, Muswellbrook, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie Hastings

Queensland: Kenmore, Toowong and Malanda

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Western Australia: West Coast Bridge Club and Mandurah

There's just still time to involve your club, but please act fast.

[Register your club here.](#)

Key dates

Friday 2 October: Deal files and hand records emailed to clubs

Friday 9 October: Prizes and certificates due to arrive

On or around Tuesday 13 October: Club sessions take place

Players will receive a hand analysis video, generously provided by Pete Hollands and Mike Doecke. Winners' prizes include scorebooks and an online seminar donated by Andy Hung.

Not playing on the day or want to make an additional contribution?

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North Shore Bridge Club and Will Jenner O'Shea have also donated 10 lesson vouchers as lucky draw prizes for people making a contribution between 1/10/26 and 31/10/26!

Find out more on the [Bridge Australia Foundation website](#)

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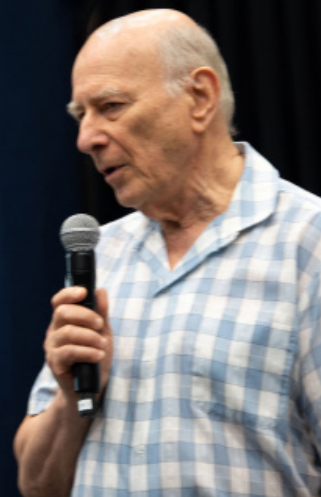
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For more information about the online games see [CLICK HERE](#)

IMPROVE YOUR DEFENCE

with Ron Klinger

Solution to problem on page 2



WATCH FOR THE CLUE

Teams, dealer East, neither side vulnerable.

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

West led the ♥4: five - three - six. South played the ♠6: two - king - nine and the ♠4: eight - jack - ace. What next for West?

The deal comes from the final of the 2024 USA Grand National Teams:

Board 27, dealer East, neither side vulnerable.

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

Reading East's ♠9 at Trick 2 and the ♠8 at Trick 3 as suit-preference for diamonds, Harrison Luba (West) switched to the ♦2. Cenk Tuncok (East) took the ♦A and returned the ♦3. West took two diamonds and 4♥ was one down, East-West +50.

At the other table, Emma Kolesnik (South) was also in 4♥ after West had overcalled 1♠ and East raised to 2♠. West led the ♣Q. South won, drew trumps with ♥A and ♥Q and played ♠K. West won and returned the ♠2. South won with the ♠Q and cashed the ♠J, discarding a diamond from dummy, to make ten tricks, +420, +10 imps.

Given declarer's winners, West might have found the diamond switch. Where else could the defence find three tricks?

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Book reviews

PLAYING AND DEFENDING SLAMS

by David Bird (Master Point Press, Canada, 2026, soft cover, 202 pages) \$39.95 postfree from Paul Lavings Bridge Books & Supplies.

David Bird has produced yet another brilliant book, his 170th. Highly instructional and entertaining, Bird is also a master of humour. The first part of the book is on playing slams, and the second part on defending them.

There are many points of technique discussed in the more than 150 hands. I was new to many of them and I found this hand amazing.

Dealer South. North-South vulnerable.

	♠ Q 8 5		
	♥ K 10 9 6		
	♦ A Q 5		
	♣ Q 9 6		
♠ A 10 9 3 2		♠ 7 4	
♥ Q 8 5		♥ 7 6 2	
♦ J 2		♦ 10 9 7 6 4	
♣ 8 7 5		♣ 10 3 2	
	♠ K J 6		
	♥ A J 4		
	♦ K 8 3		
	♣ A K J 4		
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			2NT
pass	6NT	all pass	

West leads the ♣8 and you count eleven top tricks, once you clear the spades. You win the club in dummy and play to ♠K. West wins ♠A and returns a second club.

There are several 6NT contracts in the book where you play off your side suits to get a count on the hand before taking the critical finesse. So you cash all of your winners outside hearts. If one defender holds four or more hearts they will be a favourite to hold the queen.

You see West is 5-3-2-3 and East is 2-3-5-3, so both opponents have three hearts and it appears to be a complete guess. At the table South led ♥A and ♥J, making the contract. Can you believe finessing this way is a 2-1 favourite? Assuming you want to lead from nothing against 6NT, if West held three low hearts as well they might have led a heart, but if they held ♥Q they wouldn't lead the suit. So the odds were two to one that West would hold ♥Q.

For intermediate players wishing to improve their game this book is a must.

IMPROVE YOUR SLAM BIDDING

by Marc Smith (Master Point Press, Canada, 2026, soft cover, 155 pages) \$36.95 postfree from Paul Lavings Bridge Books & Supplies.

Marc Smith is a famous player, commentator, online teacher and co-author, with Barbara Seagram, of the world's best-selling bridge book 25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know.

The author tells you when to investigate slam and when to stop in game: whether partner has the right 12 points, how to choose which suit to play in, how to cope with preemptive bidding by both partner and opponents, and when it is right to double or bid on.

One of the many areas fully explored is the Lightner Double. Where applicable, the author names the players involved. You will recognise the local stars in this hand from the New Zealand National Congress:

Dealer East. Both sides vulnerable.

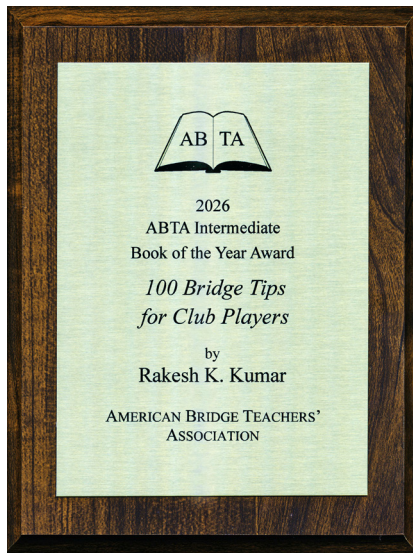
	♠ A Q 8 4 3 2		
	♥ —		
	♦ Q 10 4 2		
	♣ J 6 5		
♠ J 9 7		♠ 10 6	
♥ A Q 9 8 4		♥ K J 10 7 5 2	
♦ 6		♦ 5	
♣ K 10 8 4		♣ A Q 9 7	
	♠ K 5		
	♥ 6 3		
	♦ A K J 9 8 7 3		
	♣ 3 2		
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Tomlin	Tislovell	Gill	Meier
4♦	4♠	1♥	2♦
pass	6♦	5♥	pass
		dbl	all pass

The auction was duplicated at a number of tables, with or without East's final double. At the tables where East did double, only Josh Tomlin understood that his partner wanted a club lead and the defenders quickly took their two tricks. At other tables where West led the ♥A, declarer was soon claiming 13 tricks.

Buy both books for \$75 postfree. Phone or email welcome.

Reviews by Paul Lavings
Paul Lavings Bridge Books & Supplies

For magazines from the 1970s and 1980s for only the postage cost, contact Paul at plavings@gmail.com or phone 0408 888 085



ABTA Book of the Year

**100 Bridge Tips for Club Players
by Rakesh Kumar**



Congratulations to Rakesh Kumar whose book 100 Bridge Tips for Club Players was a winner in the American Bridge Teachers' Association annual Book of the Year contest, in the Intermediate category. The awards are in their 45th year, and they recognise excellence in instructional resources for players of all levels. The awards were presented at the ABTA national convention in Minneapolis on 9 July.



100 Bridge Tips for Club Players focuses on practical advice on bidding, play and defence, presented as at-the-table problems to improve results in duplicate pair and team events.

The book has also been short-listed for the International Bridge Press Association's Book of the Year award, which will be judged later this year.

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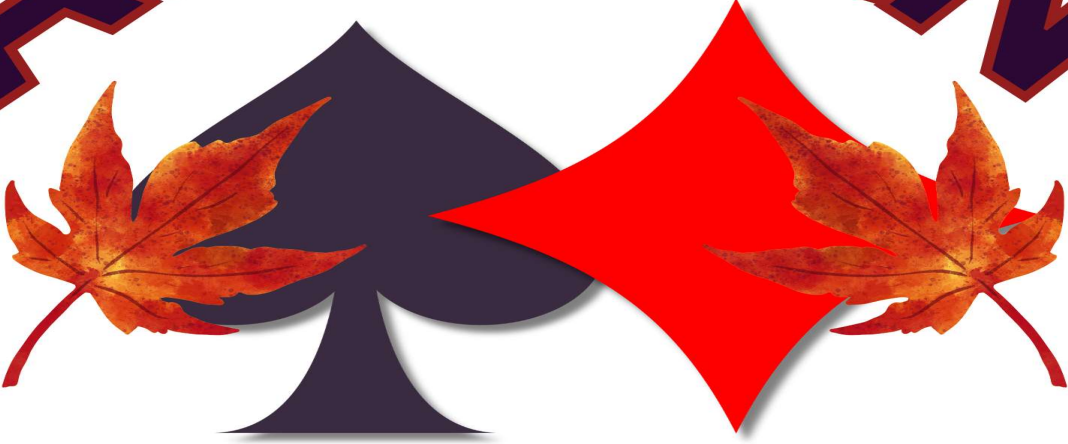
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**Under Life Master events restricted to Under Life Masters only (capped at 400 masterpoints), Under Grand Master events restricted to Under Grand Masters only (capped at 1100 masterpoints)
New Zealand restricted players please check your MP conversion.**

Chief Director:	Laurie Kelso
Scorer:	Matthew McManus
Organiser:	Barbara Travis

EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT OF \$50/PAIR, \$100/TEAM CLOSING ON 24TH MARCH





WORKSHOPS WITH WILL

with Will Jenner-O'Shea

BIDDING AFTER A 1NT REBID

In this month's Workshop, we looked at a situation that many newer players were not familiar with. In an uncontested auction, if opener bids a suit and then rebids 1NT it shows 12-14 points and a balanced hand. That point range depends on your 1NT opening. If you play a different system, then the exact point range of your 1NT rebid will be different, but the follow-ups are the same.

Most people also know that playing in 1NT is often not the best option. Informally, 1NT is known as most people's least favourite contract. There is something that responder can do to potentially improve the situation.

If responder has a balanced hand of 6-10 points, then there is nothing to be done, and they should pass. With 11-12 points, responder can invite game by bidding 2NT, and with 13+ they can bid game.

The useful tip is that with an unbalanced hand, responder is allowed to bid over 1NT, even with a minimum hand. Bidding a new suit after a 1NT rebid is not forcing, and usually just shows 6-10 points. Here is an example auction. Opener bids 1♦, responder starts with 1♠, opener now rebids 1NT. If responder bids 2♥ it implies 5+ spades, 4+ hearts and a weak hand. Opener should pass if they prefer hearts, or go back to 2♠ if they prefer spades. They shouldn't bid 2NT, since responder just tried to rescue you from notrumps. If responder instead bids 2♠, that would show six+ spades, but again a weak hand with no game interest.

With an unbalanced hand opposite a balanced minimum hand, getting out of 1NT and playing in a suit contract will usually be a better option.

If responder has a stronger hand with a second suit, or a single suit, then they can't bid at the two-level. One simple solution would be to jump to the three-level. A 3♥ or 3♠ bid would be game forcing and give the opener a choice of games.



A very common and useful solution to finding the best game is a convention called Checkback. In simple Checkback, a 2♣ bid after the 1NT rebid is asking opener for more information about their suits and is at least invitational. Opener offers another suit, or shows three cards in responder's suit in case there is a fit there. Both players look for the best fit and game.

Most players these days use a slightly more advanced version called Two-Way Checkback, where both a 2♣ and a 2♦ bid are Checkback and differentiate invites and game-forcing hands.

However you and your partner agree to play it, escaping from 1NT and playing in a suit at the two-level after a 1NT rebid is a common, useful and easy strategy to use. Repeating responder's suit, or a new suit after a 1NT rebid, shows 6-10 points. Exactly how you and your partner show a stronger hand could be as simple as jumping, or some form of Checkback. Getting to the best game is great, but getting to the best partscore is just as important and comes up regularly.

Will is doing Online Lessons on Thursdays at 9:30am AEDT or you can receive the recordings and notes to watch at any time. Check out willjenneroshea.com and click on Online Lessons for the dates, topics and back catalogue of previous lessons.



Youth Bridge Triathlon Raffle

Suz Wilkinson

At this year's ANC, Youth Bridge players could be seen hanging out in the Fred Daly room fundraising for upcoming events.

There was a raffle to subsidise the Youth Triathlon:

[www.myabf.com.au/
events/congress/view/4454](http://www.myabf.com.au/events/congress/view/4454)

We are grateful to Lyn and Cathy, ANC Convenors, for allowing us to set up a table and to our generous raffle prize sponsors: ABF, Canberra Labor Club, Abode Hotel, Belconnen, Paul Lavings, Angeline Christie, Andy Hung, Justin Mill, The Lighthouse Pub Belconnen, Drummond Golf, Fyshwick, TBIB.

We also sold fundraising mugs to subsidise accommodation for the 30 International Youth Representatives. You can still purchase mugs which come in four designs to help support future international youth players. Email

youth@abf.com.au

if you'd like to add some to your (or your club's) cupboard.

We're extremely grateful to Will Jenner-O'Shea for donating his time to run development and training on the first day of the Triathlon. It is being held at the time of printing, so you'll hear more about the results and hands in the December issue.

The yellow jersey

Raelene Clark

Every bridge club has its superstars, and at 91, Margaret Millar is certainly one of ours. Margaret is less than 20 Masterpoints away from becoming a Gold Grand Master – which, given the way she still plays, seems almost inevitable. She has a regular partner, but Margaret is nothing if not dedicated to her bridge. Missing a regular session is simply not an option! So, when her regular partner is unavailable, I occasionally get to pull on the yellow jersey and take a seat opposite her. I have been doing this for about 18 months, and it is both a privilege and, at times, a slightly nerve-wracking experience!

Margaret's card play and defence are quite extraordinary. She has an uncanny ability to see where the cards are, often arriving at the right conclusion long before the rest of us have even worked out what is happening. Her defence in particular is a joy to watch – although I suspect she sometimes wishes she could play both hands herself! The only occasional difficulty is when I make one of those bids that seems perfectly sensible in my head but leaves Margaret looking across the table in complete bewilderment. There can be a moment of silence, a raised eyebrow, but always, "Thank you, partner". Fortunately, her ability to recover from my bidding misadventures is considerably better than my ability to explain them.

Our recent adventure was in the Australia-Wide Open Pairs, where, to my considerable delight, we finished ranked 25th. Playing with Margaret is a wonderful reminder that bridge really is a game for life. At 91, she still has the competitive spirit, the sharp card sense and, most importantly, an enormous love of the game. As for me, I'll happily keep wearing the yellow jersey whenever Margaret needs a partner.

Board 24. Dealer West. Neither side vulnerable.

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



Margaret opened 2♣ with the East cards, and I responded 2NT. Margaret looked perplexed, as my 2NT systemically showed five or more clubs and 7-8 HCP. Her next bid was 4♣, and now I was perplexed; I thought it was surely Minorwood but why was she asking in clubs? I thought I'd best answer regardless, and we found ourselves in 6♣. I did have a moment where I thought, "Should I pull it to diamonds?" but then I thought I'd probably be digging a bigger hole.

There was an audible exhale from Margaret when dummy went down, and my stomach lurched, but gracious as ever she said, "Thank you, partner".

The ♥K was led and Margaret let this win, then won the second heart. She drew trumps and played the ♦K from hand, overtaking with the ace, and next played the ♠J. Thankfully North didn't cover, and this was won in dummy, making twelve tricks.

Final results of the Australia-Wide Open Pairs:

1 Trevor Dunn & Jeffrey Hodges <i>Maleny</i>	73.2
2 Terry Bodycote & Sue Eishauer <i>Taree</i>	72.8
3 David Yoffa & David Happell <i>KLTC</i>	71.7
4 Tony Berger & David Smith <i>Gold Coast</i>	71.1
5 Peter Tarlinton & Sanjay Sinha <i>Dubbo</i>	69.6
6 Robin Pellen & Henry Dyall <i>Blue Lake</i>	69.0
7 J Szyszkowski & W Przewozniak <i>Strathfield</i>	68.8
8 Graham Evans & John Reid <i>Mollymook</i>	68.6
9 Val Hay & Beryl Liebelt <i>SABA</i>	68.3
10 Janet Strzelecki & Ian Wheeldon <i>Monaro</i>	68.2



AVOIDING DANGERMAN

When playing in 3NT, you often have to lose the lead to establish your 'work suit'. Your concern is that when the opponents get in, they will run their long suit and defeat you. Sometimes, one opponent is safe and the other is dangerous so you need to establish your work suit in such a way that you lose to the 'safe hand'. This is called an avoidance play. Here are some examples.

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	3NT	all pass	1NT

South to make 3NT, ♠J lead.

You have five tricks from your short suits (one spade, two hearts and two diamonds) and clubs will provide at least four more tricks.

The spade suit is the danger. You should play the ♠K at trick one hoping West has the ♠A, thus making your ♠Q6 a partial stopper.

However, East wins with the ♠A and returns a spade, so you hold up the ♠Q until the third round of the suit and take stock.

If the spades are 4-4, there is no problem as you lose only three spades and maybe a club. The danger is that spades are 5-3, in which case West should have the remaining spades, having led his longest suit. West is **the danger hand**, and must be kept off the lead. Therefore, you play the ♣A then run the ♣10, and you don't mind if it wins or loses. In fact, it wins and you make ten tricks. Had it lost, East can't hurt you.

You will note that I put a red flag beside the danger hand in the diagram above.



Ian Dalziel is a teacher and regular columnist for "Mr Bridge" magazine in the UK, where this column was originally published.

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT

pass	3NT	all pass
------	-----	----------

South to make 3NT, ♠J lead.

You have the same North-South cards as the previous deal, but the East-West cards lie differently. You play the ♠K as before, but this time it holds the trick.

Your ♠Q6 is now a partial stopper. It will make a trick if West leads a spade, but not if East leads a spade.

East is the danger hand, and must be kept off the lead.

Hence you play the ♣K and when both follow, you lead towards the ♣10 and you don't mind if it wins or loses. In fact, it wins and you make ten tricks. Had it lost, West can't hurt you.

No doubt, you have heard of the 'Eight Ever, Nine Never' rule. This means that with nine cards missing the queen, playing for the drop is slightly better than finessing. That rule, however, presumes that 'all other things are equal', and this is not true here.

Sometimes you can choose who will be the danger hand and who will be the safe hand.

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣

pass	1♥	pass	1NT
pass	3NT	all pass	

South to make 3NT, ♦6 lead.

You have six top tricks and three or four more will come from clubs.

The danger suit is diamonds and you have a choice at trick one when East plays the ♦Q.

If you win the ♦A immediately, your ♦J2 is now a partial stopper. It will make a trick if West leads a diamond but not if East leads one. Hence East would become the danger hand.

If you hold up the ♦A until the third round, West becomes the danger hand because, if diamonds are 5-3, East has none left – but West, who led the suit, has two.

You look at your club suit to decide what to do. If East has the ♣K, you can catch it by repeated finessing; but if West has the ♣K, you must lose it. So, make West the safe hand by winning the ♦A at trick one. Enter dummy with the ♠A, run the ♣Q, West wins but can't do any harm and you make nine tricks when you get back in. If West continues diamonds, you make ten tricks.

When I teach this topic in class, I use 15 prepared hands where declarer has to make 3NT. There is no bidding, so they work in threes with declarer and dummy's hands face up on the table as I explained in the June 2024 issue.

Declarer has a little red flag (as shown) and, when he gains the lead, he must place the flag beside the player he thinks is the danger hand before he (declarer) plays to the next trick. Defenders remind him if he forgets. He must then choose a work suit and establish it in such a way that 'Dangerman' can't win a trick. Of course, he may place the flag beside the wrong person, but defenders should say nothing as declarer will soon find out if he is right or wrong.



The flagpole is made from a cocktail stick, the base is a rubber and the flag is cut from a self-adhesive label coloured red. You need one per table.

This simple device will aid your teaching and make the lesson fun for the students. I guarantee you will get lots of laughter in your class. Once the students have a good grasp of this lesson, they will look forward to being declarer at no-trumps instead of dreading it.

If you are a teacher (or learner) and would like a free PDF and/or Publisher copy of my hands, then email

ildalziel@gmail.com

MYABF UPDATE

with Julian Foster

Updating card details

Lately I have had a spate of help desk tickets asking how to do this. It seems to be a real blind spot amongst players but I'm at a loss as to how it can be made any clearer. Does anyone look at their bridge credits statement?!

Two things:

1. Updating a card is only relevant if you have Auto Top-Up switched on. That's the only time Stripe saves any card details at all. If you don't have Auto Top-Up switched on, simply use the new card details next time you make a payment. Your WEB BROWSER might offer to save the card details – but that's nothing to do with My ABF.

2. If you do have Auto Top-Up switched on, it's shown in the header of your Bridge Credits statement. Click the green "Change Card or Top Up Amount" button to make any changes (either to the card or to the amount you want My ABF to top-up when your balance drops below \$20).

Full details are here:

www.abf.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/MY-ABF-HOW-TO-UPDATE-YOUR-CARD-DETAILS.pdf

Latest My ABF update

Assorted updates were released in September. A lot is behind the scenes but there are some small enhancements and bug fixes for clubs and tournament organisers. The main things include:

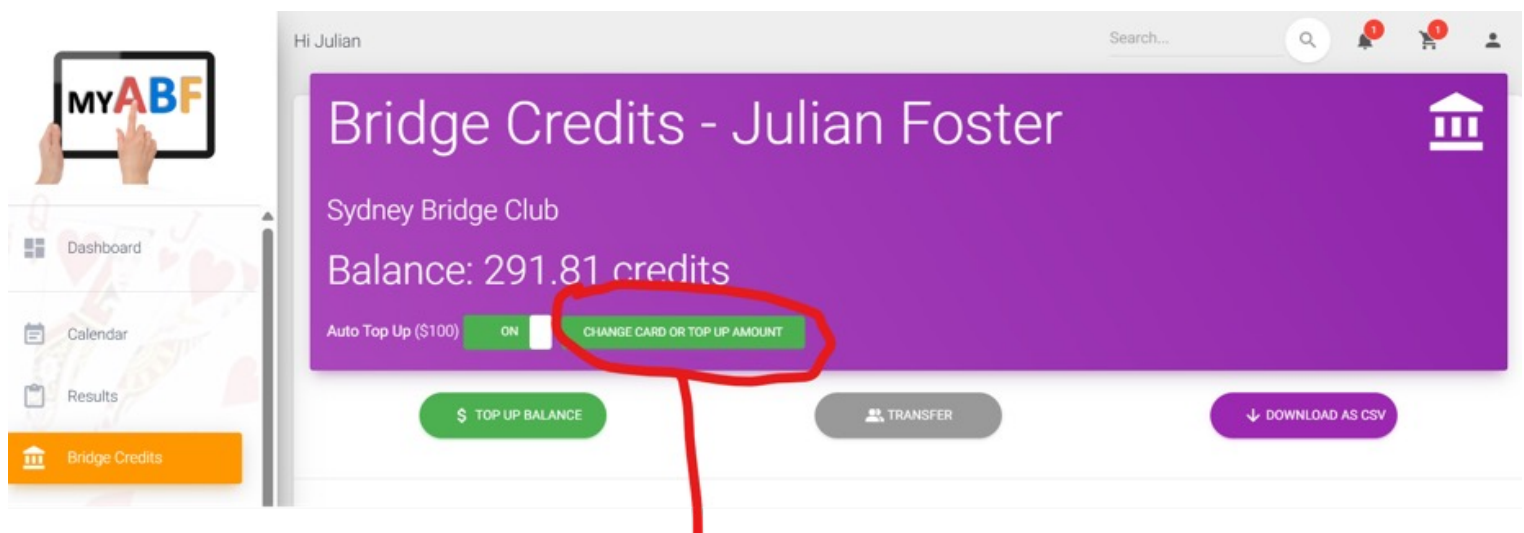


Calendar listing of events

- Order of names shown in an entry is now consistent on screen and in exported lists
- No longer possible to individually withdraw a player and get a refund after the "Last date for automatic refunds" date has passed – in exceptional circumstances contact the Tournament Organiser
- The congress name for each event in a series is now visible in the listing for that series
- Warnings about venues no longer appear where the event is online

Club membership (in club administration)

- Pie chart of members now reflects only current members
- Numbers of each member type in Settings are now up to date



- A member export list now indicates which members have elected to share personal data from their own profiles to their club record(s)

Club sessions (i.e. players paying table fees with bridge credits)

- Payment methods that are not bridge credits are now highlighted in a different colour to make it easier to identify them
- Charging an Extra to a player individually now works again (previously you needed to use the Process Bridge Credits button to charge them all together)

Masterpoint Centre Integration

A lot of the My ABF team’s time in recent months has been spent on this. Assorted workshops have been held with club and state masterpoint secretaries and other relevant parties, initially to gain a clearer understanding of what’s actually happening today and also with a view to finalising what changes will be made in future.

At the time of writing this process is not yet complete so I can’t yet provide an exact timeframe or exact details of what things will look like. However, the broad direction is:

- Ability to upload results directly from a scoring program to My ABF.
- Calculating masterpoints internally within My ABF (today that’s done in each scoring program).
- Automatic processing of a lot more files (e.g. club green points) which currently require manual handling.

- The extent of manual checking is still being resolved. This currently varies widely – both by type of red points, and by state.
- It will still be possible to manually upload points – although over time it is hoped that the need for this will be diminished.
- Consideration is being given to simplifying the overall masterpoint scheme.

All of this is designed to make the processing of masterpoints much smoother and more automatic, removing the need for manual effort at all levels – club, state and Masterpoint Centre.

It’s worth noting that this approach has been operating successfully in New Zealand since around 2018.

Bridge scoring programs in use in Australia?

As part of work on the Masterpoint Centre integration we will be working with scoring programs that currently generate masterpoint files. We don’t see these programs directly; we just receive the masterpoint files submitted by clubs. Therefore, we want to ensure we know of all scoring programs used by clubs in Australia.

We are aware of the list in the table at the bottom of this page, but it’s possible there are others.

If your club uses something else, or you know of another one being used, please let us know!

*My ABF Product Manager Julian Foster
julian.foster@abf.com.au*

BRIDGE SCORING PROGRAMS IN USE IN AUSTRALIA

Program	Country	Developer
Compscore 2/3	Australia	Altosoft / Peter Busch
ASE Scorer 9	Australia	ASE Computing / Ian McKinnon
Scorebridge	UK	Stephen Bligh
Bridge Master	Australia	Software Objectives / Geoff Schaller
BridgeUnlimited	Australia	Martin Willcox
BridgeScore	UK	Chislehurst Bridge Club / Mirna Goacher
[Unnamed – Excel]	Australia	Matt McManus

1st BRISBANE GOLD CONGRESS

30th January – 6th February 2027

VOCO Brisbane City Centre - 85-87 North Quay



NEW
EVENT

ROOKIE

MATCHPOINT PAIRS

Under 20 mps at 30/9/26

Saturday Morning 6th February

ALMOST
FULL

NOVICE MATCHPOINT PAIRS CHAMPIONSHIP

Under 100 mps at 30/9/26

3 Days / 6 Sessions

Gold Points



Places Available in the U500 Teams and Open Cross-Imp Pairs



No Frills Walk-In - 5pm Friday 29th January

Please Replace TBAs with Real People ASAP
Especially where there are Waiting Lists

Chief Director: Laurie Kelso

Chief Scorer: Peter Busch

Tournament Organisers: Jan Peach janpeach8@bigpond.com 0487 466 109

Tony Treloar brisbanegoldto.tony@qldbridge.com.au 0468 398 843

