

ABF NEWSLETTER

AUSTRALIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION INC.

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Australia at the APBF in Bangkok

by *Liam Milne*

Thailand is an excellent destination to travel to: friendly people, excellent hospitality, great food, cheap yet still well-developed, and close to Australia. Better yet, when Sydney sinks below 20 degrees, Thailand has beautiful weather climbing into the mid-thirties each day. Bangkok, the capital of Thailand and a sprawling metropolis of 8 million, was the host city of the 50th Asia Pacific Bridge Federation Championships. I know I speak for most of the representatives in saying that we were excited to have the chance to play for our country in such a fantastic location.

My partnership with Nye Griffiths, although having competed for Australia in several international tournaments including the Commonwealth Nations Bridge Championships last year, was

making its debut on the 'real' Australian Open Team as determined by the Open Playoffs. Fellow debutantes were Michael Courtney - Paul Wyer, while Michael Wilkinson - Griff Ware were making their second appearance on the Open Team, having represented Australia in the 2014 Asia Cup. Our non-playing captain was Paul Lavings.

Also representing Australia were the Ladies Team, (report in last issue) along with two Seniors teams, *BROWN* (the official team), Terry Brown - Avi Kanetkar, Peter Buchen - Henry Christie, Ron Klinger - Bill Haughie, npc Bruce Neill, and *BLOOM*, Martin Bloom (Playing Captain) - Nigel Rosendorf, Mike Hughes - Bob Sebesfi. The Under-25 Team, Ella Pattison - Renee Cooper, Maxim Henbest - Steven Harrison, Jamie Thompson - Justin Williams, npc Nye Griffiths had played in the Youth Series in April, the custom in recent years being to separate the events, and had finished with a creditable bronze medal.



The format in the Open series was a double round-robin: with 14 teams competing, we would play 26 matches of 20 boards each. There is no qualification for a knockout stage; the event finishes with the Zone 6 and 7 Playoffs.

Australia started off slowly, losing four of the first seven matches, but recovered with some big wins to be a match off second place halfway through the tournament. Meanwhile, a seasoned Japanese squad was running away with first place.

Halfway through the first round robin (Match 6), we faced an aggressive young Singaporean squad with several familiar faces. Wilkinson - Ware and

Nye and I had played against these guys in many prior Junior tournaments.

How would your partnership handle these EW hands below after East opens a strong 1NT and South overcalls 2♥?

Board 2, East deals, NS vulnerable

♠ 8 6 2
♥ 9
♦ Q 10 9 8 6 3
♣ 8 6 5

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

♠ Q 3
♥ K 10 8 6 3 2
♦ A J 5 4
♣ 3

West	North	East	South
Ware		Wilkinson	
2NT ¹	Pass	1NT	2♥
3♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
6♣	All Pass	4♦ ²	Pass

1. Transfer to clubs

2. Control

Wilkinson - Ware did well to get to slam despite the overcall.

6♠ is a better contract, with the long club suit furnishing discards for red-suit losers, but 6♣ is very playable. While playing in a 4-4 fit instead of a 5-3 fit is not always better, often it proves the case when trumps can be drawn and the five-card suit can be run for discards. No matter here, however, as our teammates guessed ♠Q and brought back a nice +920.

At our table, the opponents struggled after the same overcall, with the focus of the auction turning on the heart stopper issue. 3NT was the final resting place for 10 IMPs in.

Michael Courtney is known by many as a flair player, and this hand from Match 8, RR1, against New Caledonia, shows him at his best. Your opponents bid briskly to 7♥ after RHO opens 1♥, LHO bids diamonds, then supports hearts. This is followed by a cuebidding auction to the grand slam, where they show control in every suit and all the Key Cards. Put yourself in Courtney's shoes, on lead with ♠J964, ♥J104, ♦K42, ♣1082.

What's the best lead?

You and I both know that Courtney didn't go with the often incorrect 'textbook' trump. He led a diabolical low diamond! The full hand:

Board 13, North deals, all vulnerable

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

Declarer won, drew trumps, tested spades, and then ruffed the fourth round in dummy. He now belatedly ruffed a diamond to hand and took the club finesse for down one. Hard to blame declarer when he was 'sure' ♦K was offside, but there are better lines available.

This was worth a handy 30 IMP swing when Nye and I played a conservative ('U.S. Treasury bond conservative') 6♥ making seven in the other room.

In the 12th match of RR1, I was faced with this interesting technical play problem. I had the pleasant experience of taking an inferior line of play only to win 12

IMPs when my teammates did even better against the declarer in the other room:

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

♠ A 7
♥ K Q 7 2
♦ 8 6 5
♣ A Q 5 3

After a simple 1NT - 3NT auction, you face ♠9 (zero or two higher honours) lead. How do you play? Think before you read on – and plan ahead...

I won ♠Q, playing a heart to hand, and a diamond to the King which unsurprisingly won the trick. Now I finessed ♣Q, which lost, and the opponents returned a spade, setting up their suit.

I was lucky to make it from here: diamond to the 10 and Ace, and spades 4-4, meant I had nine tricks despite my inaccurate line of play.

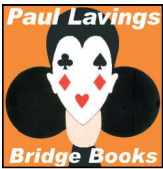
Did you find the play of winning the first trick with ♠A, keeping communications fluid whilst being in the right hand to lead a diamond up at trick two? Other improvements would've been crossing with a second heart to play a second diamond, or finessing ♦10 on the first round (a diamond to the King will almost always win, this being a textbook position where the opponent holding the Ace offside must hold up on the first round to give declarer a decision on the next round of the suit).

The full hand:

Board 12, West deals, NS vulnerable

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

At the other table, Ware found the same spade lead. The Thai declarer did even worse than me, winning ♠Q, crossing with a heart, playing a diamond to the King (and an evidently very smooth duck!), a heart to hand, and a diamond to the ... Queen and Ace. Now Wilkin-



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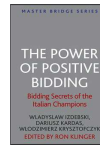
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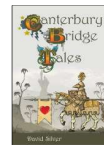
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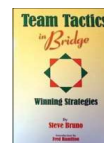


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son returned a spade to the Ace and, crucially, the other middle spade from Ware, preserving ♠6 (with Wilkinson not squandering ♠8 on a previous round).

Declarer played a third diamond now, establishing his eighth trick.

Ware won, cashed the defence's two spades ending in Wilkinson's hand, and a club through ended the hand. If Ware had been on lead after the fourth spade, he would only have had clubs left and would've been endplayed into leading away from the ♣K for declarer's ninth trick. A stunning technical display from our teammates.

The most amusing hand of the tournament was against Korea in the first round robin:

Board 7, South deals, all vulnerable

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

The usual contract on this misfit is 3NT. 11 out of 16 tables reached this contract, with 16 undertricks between them: three declarers brought home the contract. Michael Courtney tells the story of his table: "It is no great achievement to make 3NT with eight top tricks (play diamonds from the top as early as possible), especially when the defence's communications are poor.



Michael Courtney with Rose Don

North won the heart lead and tried ♠9, which held, then ♠Q, and that held. Why he would not try ♣K now eludes me. He exited with a heart. I won ♥10 and played a top spade, as North discarded a heart. So, I played ♥Q and another heart. North won and

finally played ♣K. I won ♣A, crossed to ♦K and the 13th heart squeezed South in spades and diamonds."

Too easy, right?

At our table, the bidding went a little awry:

<i>West</i>	<i>North Milne</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South Griffiths</i>
2♣ ¹	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♦	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	Pass
4♠	Dbl	4NT	Dbl
All Pass			

1. Fantunes-style, 10-13 unbalanced with 5+clubs

Nye led ♥7 against East's unhappy contract. I won ♥A and switched to ♣K to knock out the entry to the diamonds.

After much thought, declarer eventually won ♣A and played a diamond to ♦K, followed by an unfortunate diamond to ♦10.

I won ♦J and switched to ♠Q. Declarer won, cashed another top spade (discarding a club from dummy), ♥Q (discarding another club), and exited a spade to Nye (another club from dummy).

As Nye ran his spades, I discarded my low hearts, dummy discarded more clubs, and my hand was somehow high at the end for down five and +1400. Win 19. Can you imagine my surprise when Courtney read out the beautiful +600? Talk about compression!

It is worth pointing out that declarer can do much better by playing diamonds from the top and subsequently playing against my hand in clubs and hearts. That would only be -500 – a mere 1100 points worse than our teammates.

With five rounds to go, we were lying fourth, still within catching distance of both Singapore (third) and China (second). Japan remained well ahead, and were realistically going to win the event barring disasters. The way the event was structured meant that we would have our work cut out for us, however. After the first round robin, the draw for the second round robin is set up so that you play the teams that finished similarly to your own after RR1 nearer to the end of the event. In other words, we would have to beat up five teams vying for Bermuda Bowl qualification in order to finish on the podium.

In Match 10 of Round Robin 2, we played the leaders, Japan. Nye had to be on the ball here to avoid letting one of the stars of the tournament take all the glory.

If you would like a quiz, cover the West and North hands and follow along with the defence:

Board 8, West deals, nil vulnerable

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

Your opponents are Dawei Chen - Kazuo Furuta, who have played for Japan in the last five Bermuda Bowls. Chen opens 1♠ as West, Furuta bids 2NT (an invitational or better raise with three spades), and Chen bids 4♠, ending the auction.

Your partner leads ♣J to ♣3, your ♣A, and declarer's ♣5. You survive the first test by avoiding the trump return, opting for a heart (♥2, ♥K, ♥9, ♥4). Your partnership plays mostly reverse count signals against suit contracts.

After winning the heart switch, declarer rattles off the next five tricks: he ruffs ♣2 in dummy (partner playing ♣4), returns to ♥Q (partner playing ♥3), ruffs another club in dummy (partner following with ♣6) then cashes the now bare ♠K and then ♥A, discarding a low diamond. Now a low diamond off dummy goes to your ♦A, ♦J and ♦2.

There are five cards left. Which suit now?

Nye paused to put together all the pieces. Clubs looked as if they were 4-4-4-1 around the table, as I would probably not lead away from ♣KJ10xx at trick one, and I would have likely played

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

high - low in clubs as declarer was ruffing, to show an odd number. Hearts were known to be 5-3-3-2. Diamonds looked as if they were 5-4-2-2 (declarer and partner both having doubletons) as I would've led a singleton diamond, so declarer should be 5-2-2-4 exactly, with four trumps and a club left.

Look at what happens if Nye's hand plays a diamond now. Declarer ruffs from ♠A1098, cashes ♣K, and exits a low trump at the end to endplay me with ♠QJ4! Nye saw it all coming, and that regardless of how

good my trumps were, it could not be wrong to preserve my exit card - ♦Q.

After a club return, declarer tried a low trump, but I could get off play with a diamond and wait for my second trump trick. 6 IMPs in when teammates played 3♠ in the other room.

Well done if you found the same defence!

Sadly, we lost this match 38-49, and it didn't get any easier as we dropped off the pace towards the end. While it would be easy to write this off as mental fatigue, it didn't feel like that was the case. Playing two or rarely three matches a day (40/60 boards) shouldn't really be an issue for an experienced partnership - although strange things do happen towards the end of long tournaments, as anyone who has watched the final of the Bermuda Bowl can attest!

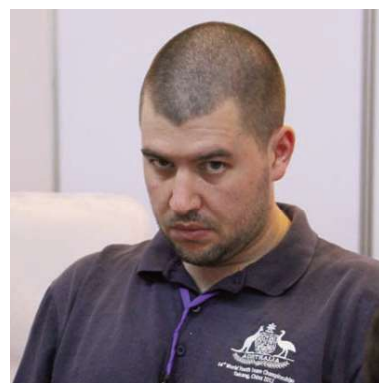
One of my personal favourite partnership hands was, in fact, this effort from near the end of the event. We faced Thailand in Match 11, RR2. Although our chances for a medal were quite low at this point, we still wanted to finish as high as possible, and we were running fifth while Thailand were sixth.

Board 8, North deals, EW vulnerable

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

I opened a Precision 1♦ as North, taking advantage of the favourable vulnerability to make a systemic ultra-light opening. Nye responded 1♥, West overcalled 1♠, and this was passed back to Nye in the South seat. One of the key pieces of preparation that Nye and I had done in the months leading up the event was to firm up our system notes; crucially, filling in the gaps in common competitive auctions.

In your partnership, what does 2♣ mean in this auction? What about double, then 2♥ or 3♥ over partner's 2♦ bid? Or double and a new suit, or cueing the opponent's suit? What about if opener makes a support double instead of passing?



Nye Griffiths

Because of our preparation, Nye and I had a clear agreement here: double and bid again by responder is forcing to game.

Here, Nye could double and, over my 2♦ bid, jump to 3♥. As 2♥ would have been game-forcing, 3♥ must be suit-setting. Now I could cuebid 3♠ (knowing Nye would not get carried away, having limited my hand), Nye bid 4♣, I bid 4♦, and Nye could Key Card to the laydown slam. Over half the field missed this 26 point slam (including our opponents), so chalk one up to preparation!

When the last dust had settled after 26 matches, the Australian Open team was sixth out of 14 – not an embarrassment, but we would be lying if we said we didn't have our eyes on the first three places. Japan finished first, having led most of the way, and Singapore and China rounded out the medal list. The same teams qualified for the Bermuda Bowl in September after the Zone 6 playoffs had concluded. We look forward to getting some revenge in a few months' time in Chennai.

By the end of the main event, we were exhausted. The APBF is a serious tournament, with nine days of play, and Nye and I were ready for a rest after 400 boards. Only one small matter remained: a test match against New Zealand, also known as the Zone 7 Playoffs – always a grudge match between neighbouring countries.

Michael Courtney and Paul Wyer had the eminently sensible idea of increasing the chance for Australian glory by playing in the APBF Open Pairs (held concurrently), so Nye and I would play four-handed all day with Wilkinson - Ware.

Australia won three sets out of four against New Zealand, running out winners 134-89. A massive final set from Wilkinson - Ware, where we picked up 33 IMPs, sealed the deal.

One interesting bidding hand from the test match was the following exhibit. What contract would you get to on the EW cards below?

Board 8, North deals, EW vulnerable

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

After three passes to West and a strong 2♣ opening, the hand is not trivial. Both sides have a huge fit, although that might not always be determined in the auction.

Our teammates did well, competing to 5♠ over 5♣, making five without a clairvoyant ♦A lead.

Meanwhile, at our table/asylum, with four... 'aggressive' players facing off:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
<i>Coutts</i>	<i>Milne</i>	<i>Jacob</i>	<i>Griffiths</i>
	2♣ ¹	Pass	2♦ ²
Dbl	3♣ ³	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	5♣
Pass ⁴	Pass	5♠	6♣
Pass ⁵	Pass	Dbl	All Pass

1. 6+ clubs, 11-15ish
2. Enquiry
3. Minimum - catching up?
4. Forcing
5. Still forcing

Although 5♠ was potentially going off, I had already detached ♣K from my hand before Nye bid 6♣. When we lost three tricks for -300, we had managed to pick up 8 IMPs.

Courtney - Wyer finished seventh in the Open Pairs, while the Ladies crushed their Kiwi counterparts 201-55 in their test match.

For reasons of brevity, I haven't covered any hands from the Ladies and two Seniors teams in this article. The Australian Ladies did very well, finishing with a silver medal behind the unstoppable Chinese, a laudable performance. Sue Lusk's account from Bangkok appears in the previous issue. Out of 14 teams, Australia Seniors 1 finished a heartbreaking 6.5 VPs behind third placed Japan, while Australia Seniors 2 finished eighth.

Although the players on this year's Australian Open team had little or no background on the top squad, experience was not the key issue on the team, with all three pairs having played in the 'big game' for many years. Many of the missteps of the team in Bangkok were easily remediable – for example, on one of our worst boards Nye and I played in Key Card down two with slam a good proposition, on a hand which would have been easily solved with an extra page of rules on the meaning of 4NT bids.

The Bermuda Bowl is still to come in Chennai in September and our team is looking forward to the most important tournament of our bridge careers to date. With everyone on the team committed to giving Australia the best chance of making a run at the biggest tournament in the bridge world, our hopes are high.

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ANC Open Teams

by *David Hoffman*



George Kozakos, Richard Brightling, Margaret Bourke (npc), David Appleton, David Hoffman, Arjuna DeLivera and Elizabeth Havas

The 2015 Australian National Championships were held at the Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle. The venue is arguably the best on the ANC cycle, with a range of accommodation either onsite, or within walking distance. More importantly there was a great range of eating facilities within five minutes walk.

Victoria was the prepost favourites for the Open event. The ACT, with three members defending their last year's win in Sydney, and South Australia and New South Wales all having a realistic chance of making the final.

Round 4, Board 9, North deals, EW vulnerable

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

The deal above produced a candidate for best lead of the event.

At most tables it started 1♥ – Pass – 2♦ – 3♠. Most Norths could now bid 4♣, safe in the knowledge that a playable contract existed, resulting in a contract of 5♣.

However, in the match between ACT and NSW, North cuebid in spades to show a void, eventually ending in 6♦. David Appleton led ♠Q, safe in the knowledge that South, with a potential trump loser, would have to ruff. This beat the contract since South was one entry short to both ruff spades and draw trumps.

After the first round robin the table read (with average being 245):

ACT	364.8
NSW	340.6
VIC	300
SA	254.1
QLD	246.1
TAS	210.5
WA1	169
WA2	64.6

With the requirement that WA1 play WA2 in the first match of the second round robin, this resulted in NSW playing ACT, winning by 5 IMPs and doing both no damage, and VIC playing SA, winning by 37 IMPs, which moved SA down to fifth, and dented their chances. This rearrangement of the traditional draw, where the top four teams play each other in the last three rounds was not desirable. I am informed it will not occur in future, when the ANC events will have byes rather than adding a second team from the host state if an odd number of states enter.

The first board of Round 12 created an interesting bidding problem for the field. The NS cards were:

♠ A 7 3
♥ Q 8 6 4
♦ 10
♣ K Q J 10 2

♠ 8 6
♥ A
♦ A 9 7 6 4 3
♣ A 9 7 5

Many sequences started 1♣ – 1♦ – 1♥, after which it generally led to 3NT, off one. However for many now playing transfer responses to 1♣, the bidding started 1♣ – 1♠ (diamonds) – 2♣ leading to 5♣, making. In the Open, four pairs were in 3NT, two in 5♣, and one in 6♣ going off. 6♣ should go off on a heart lead, prematurely removing an entry before the diamonds can be set up. However, East had a natural spade lead, so obviously this declarer misplayed it. In the Women's, two pairs bid 3NT, five pairs bid 5♣, and one pair bid 6♣, making. In the Seniors, five pairs played in game in clubs (one in 1♣ redoubled for 1230) while the other three pairs played in partscores. Finally, in the Youth four pairs played 3NT, one 5♣, and one 6♣.

If you think 1230 is an unusual score, it was beaten in Round 14 by ACT Women's, who played in 1♥ redoubled for 2320. Interestingly when asked how you score 2320, only youth players were able to answer immediately.

After round 12 the position was:

VIC	622.1
ACT	600.8
NSW	583.6

In the 13th round, NSW beat VIC by 41 IMPs, while SA beat ACT by 8 IMPs, shuffling the top three to:

NSW	649.7
ACT	627.8
VIC	626

So, to the final round of the qualification, where ACT needed only to draw with VIC to make the final. As we leave our table I feel we may have done enough. However, on entry to the breakout room I observe that the current score shows VIC 46 – ACT 34! However, the others in our team eagerly ask what happened on our last board. I say “2♠ making nine tricks”. Much cheering from teammates, who inform us that the 6 IMP pickup gets us into the final. It transpires that SA has beaten NSW by 58 IMPs. The final round robin scores are VIC 667, ACT 656.8, NSW 651.9. Many free beers are extracted by the SA team members, but we do not care.

Thus, the final would be between two teams with a wealth of experience. VIC, Ben Thompson(c) - Bill Jacobs, Justin Howard - Peter Holland, Jamie Ebery - Leigh Gold, would start with a 1.1 IMP carryover over ACT, David Appleton - George Kozakos, Richard Brightling - David Hoffman, Arjuna De Livera - Elizabeth Havas, Margaret Bourke (npc).

However, the VIC lead did not survive the first board:

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

In the Closed Room, with North dealer it went Pass – 1♣ – 1♠ – 2♦ – Pass – 3♣ – All pass, making 10 tricks.

In the Open Room, Havas opened 2♥ as North. It then went 2♠ – 4♥ – 4♠. Arjuna De Livera doubled, collecting 500 and 12 IMPs.

Three boards later ACT played a partscore in both rooms, making, for another 6 IMPs, and three boards later ACT played in a superior partscore for another 6 IMPs, finally winning the 10 board set 26 - 2.

First board of the second set, the EW cards were:

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

Havas - De Livera, NS, “saved” in 6♦ for -1100. However, Appleton - Kozakos had an exclusion Blackwood sequence to 7♥, gaining 9 IMPs.

Then on Board 15, Havas - De Livera bid a vulnerable combined 24 count combination to 3NT making 10 tricks, missed in the other room, for another 10 IMPs. On Board 19, Appleton - Kozakos bid a vulnerable combined 24 count to 3NT making nine tricks, also missed in the other room, for another 10 IMPs. ACT won set two 37 - 3 to make the score 63 - 6.1.

Next morning disaster struck VIC again on the first board when I held ♠43, ♥J874, ♦K97432, ♣3

After two passes, I elected to open 3♦, not everyone’s choice. However, it caught West with a 24 count, and after a convoluted sequence they arrived in their 4-2 heart fit in slam, with two unavoidable losers. Appleton - Kozakos reached 6♣ making, for 14 IMPs.

Towards the end of the set VIC gained 7 IMPs by staying low, then 7 IMPs by buying the contract in both rooms, and finally 9 IMPs when ACT went -800 saving against 420. However, the set ended 24-24, meaning no recovery.

In the fourth set there were two major swings, both to ACT. On the first Brightling held ♠AK32, ♥AQ10, ♦K852, ♣K5

He opened 1♦, heard a 1♥ overcall, followed by partner’s 1♠ showing five spades. He elected to bid 3NT making, while the 4♠ in the other room had four unavoidable losers.

Finally on the last board of the set, VIC overbid to 4♠. De Livera with ♠KQJ10 doubled, extracting 500. The set went to ACT 23-8, making the score 110-38.1.

It is generally accepted that if you can keep opponents to under 1.5 IMPs per board it is a winning strategy. The ACT had kept VIC to under 1 IMP per board over the first 40 boards. While there were 20 boards to play, the final was all but over. VIC won the next set 23 - 19, but lost the last set 25 -31, making the final score 160 - 86.1.

It was a first ANC Open win for Elizabeth Havas and David Appleton, a second for Arjuna De Livera, and a third for the other three. The ACT will be looking forward to attempting to win it three years in a row when it is next held in Brisbane, something that has not been done since NSW won for the sixth straight time in 1980.

by Justin Howard

2015 started off very differently for me, being my first year out of youth. I decided that, unlike previous years, I would take the year to improve my own game and forget about making money.



I strived to play as many of the top events with people I have respected and admired since I started playing all those years ago in the mid 1990s.

At the top of my list have always been two players I have wanted to play with more than the rest, Ishmael Del'Monte and Tony Nunn. I was fortunate enough to have been asked for a game with Ishmael the previous year (winning the Bobby Richman Gold Coast Pairs), however, with that came another chance at the Victor Champion Cup. All I was missing was a game with Tony Nunn. This is where bar at Rydges Hotel in Canberra came in handy: I cunningly waited for Tony to be a few drinks in and seized my opportunity. After asking him for a game, we concluded that the best event would be the 2015 Butler in Perth.

While I was suckering Tony into a game, I also happened to be with Keiran Dyke (another player I have always wanted a game with), so I went with a good thing and - lo and behold - he agreed as well! The big issue here is that he lives in England, so that meant we would have to find something in Europe. Just our luck, the European Championships were open to all this year, so I had my winter sorted). The VCC with Ishmael, Norway with Keiran and then the ANC Butler with Tony! To top it all off, I qualified for the Victorian Open Team, playing with Peter Hollands (life was feeling pretty good!).

The VCC was the start of my winter, and it has been an event I have always enjoyed. I have had mixed emotions about the results, however, with two second places and one first in the last three years. I thought I had broken the run of second places.

Teaming up with Ishmael Del'Monte, Ross Harper and young superstars from New Zealand, Nick Jacobs - Glenn Coutts (these guys were simply amazing!), going into the last match, it was looking good for another

first place. If we won our match, we would almost certainly win, and even with a draw the team running third would need a big result to catch us.

As these things go, we had a draw, and my future sister in law was playing in the team running third and had a massive loss (thanks, sis!). But as expected, teammates were just the solid second on datums; sorry guys, that Ish and I could not do the business at the other table. So in the end, second for a third time!

I thought this was going to be the start of a really bad winter. In two weeks it was Norway for the European Open Championships where I was playing with Keiran Dyke, teaming up with two Norwegians who by the way came second in an open world championship. Keiran and I had never played live before, only late night online casual bridge, without any discussion.

This, however, didn't stop us qualifying for the round of 16, as well as another Australian team comprised of Gumby, Lazer, Robinson and Braithwaite (is there any event Gumby and Lazer won't win this year, winning Coffs Harbour only recently?). *Gumby* was to face No.1 qualifier *Netherlands*, while we got the lovely draw of the No. 1 team in the world, *Monaco*. *Gumby* fought well, but eventually suffered a small defeat to the eventual winners, whereas we pulled off the biggest upset I've been a part of, beating *Monaco*.

Here are a couple of hands from the match.

Set 1:

It is sometimes a bad thing to be better than everyone else! Here is an example of an expert lead gone wrong. You are on lead against 6♠ with ♠106, ♥AKQJ87, ♦----, ♣Q8762

You have shown your hearts and clubs and your opponents have shown a shortage in hearts in dummy and enough Key Cards for slam. There are two options:

1. You can lead ♥A and hope that you have another trick coming.
2. You can lead a small heart hoping partner has ♥10 and can then give you a diamond ruff.

Option 2 is the option Frank Multon tried. Sadly for him, I held ♥10. I also had an unavoidable diamond loser, meaning 14 IMPs to our team (with the eventual margin being 7 IMPs).

The second hand happened to be a flat board, but one of the most interesting hands from the event in showing what you can deduce, and the pressure you can put on even world class players.

You are playing again Fantoni - Nunes, who play a system called *Fantunes* (Bill Jacobs has written a

book about this system). In the system their two level openings are intermediate hands with 10-13 HCP and systemically deny 5-4-2-2 or 5-3-3-2 shapes. This made the following hand very interesting:

<i>West</i>	<i>North Keiran</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South Justin</i>
		2♥	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West leads ♥5, and you are faced with the following problem as South, declarer.

♠ A J 9
♥ 10 8 4 2
♦ K 7 5 2
♣ 8 7

♠ K 6 4
♥ A J 3
♦ A J 9 6 3
♣ A 10

Now obviously the first thing you are thinking is - lucky I didnt get a club lead! After that, you start to think about the hand. You know that East has exactly five hearts as you are looking at seven and the lead was ♥5. This means East has either a 5-4-3-1, 5-5-2-1 or 5-5-3-0 shape. Now if their shortage was in spades, that would give the player on lead six or seven spades, and they surely would have picked a spade rather than a heart to lead. Therefore their shortage must be in diamonds.

On the opening lead you take ♥Q with the Ace and play ♦A, hoping for a singleton ♦10 or ♦Q (♦10 would be better, as the other table won't have the same information you have, and a sure game swing will follow). But sadly, no luck, as East plays a small diamond. At this point you have two spades, one Heart, two Diamonds, and one club, and you can set up two more diamonds by conceding to ♦Q, leaving you with the spade finesse, which for a brief moment seemed like the best line.

However, I gave myself an extra chance by now leading a heart off dummy. If the West player flies with ♥K and plays a club, you now have three heart tricks and are on the same spade finesse. However, East also knows that flying will give you a free trick. After a long hesitation, the East player played small, and then I had my ninth trick, reverting back to diamonds with ♣A still guarding the suit.

I was extremely sad to find ♠Q outside (I couldnt take the finesse, as when in with ♦Q they force out ♣A and you are now wide open in clubs). Sadly, our teammates made the very normal lead of their fourth highest,

which was a spade, so in the end a flat board (lots of work for a flat board).

The full hand:

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

Impossible to find the club lead unless partner shows clubs in the auction (or hearts and a minor – even then, you would most likely lead a diamond as you need less for that to be correct).

After beating the world's number one team in the Round of 16, we got another nice draw in the Swedish team that won the last world championships. We came through that match with another small win, and thus were winning at least a bronze medal! We were to face a very solid Norwegian team in the semi finals, who simply outplayed us all day, getting every decision correct, and playing amazingly well. Our team was still over the moon with the result, a bronze medal in one of the top events in the world (being the first Australians to win a medal at these championships). It was a real pleasure to meet and play with our teammates, and a great first hit out for Keiran and myself.

I sadly had to miss the final pairs, as I was due to be playing the ANC three days later in Perth, so took a long flight straight into Perth, where Peter Hollands and I were playing for the Victorian Open Team. We managed to come through the qualifying in first place, but were destroyed in the finals by a very classy ACT team. During the qualifying was a hand I simply loved playing.

You hold ♠987, ♥KQ953, ♦7, ♣AQ72

The auction is:

<i>West</i>	<i>North Justin</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South Peter</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣	1♥	Dbl ¹	1♠ ²
Pass	2♣ ³	2♦	3♣
All Pass			

1. 4+ spades
2. Transfer to 1NT, around 8 HCP
13. Natural

Continued on page 15

Australia congratulates Audrey Grant!

The Australian Bridge Federation congratulates Audrey on her induction to the American Contract Bridge League's Hall of Fame at a ceremony at the Chicago NABC on Thursday 6 August 2015.



News snippets from the Daily Chicago Bulletin, including 'GNT squads enter QF round' and 'Welcome to Chicago'.

Notice to players who live outside North America
Participation in the von Zeltroitz, Bruce or Young Life Master Pairs is limited to ACBL members who have achieved the rank of Life Master.

One good sport and new two Hall of Famers add up to a grand evening
The televised Republican debate had nothing on Thursday night's Hall of Fame dinner: The annual celebration recognizing the special accomplishments of the bridge community's elite players featured high art, scintillating comedy, heartfelt emotion and a rousing call to action on behalf of Justice for all.

Audrey's influence in bridge spreads across continents, and has shaped bridge teaching on a global stage for decades.

In Australia, we would not have the successful education program we enjoy today without her continuing help and encouragement for our National Teaching Coordinator, Joan Butts.



The ABF arranged for a beautiful bouquet of flowers to be presented to Audrey at the Chicago ceremony.



Bathurst & District Bridge Club
Invites you to the inaugural
Central West Novice Tournament
31 October & 1 November 2015
For players 0-35 MP's at 30 April 2015
Programme

Saturday: Pairs Sunday: Swiss Teams
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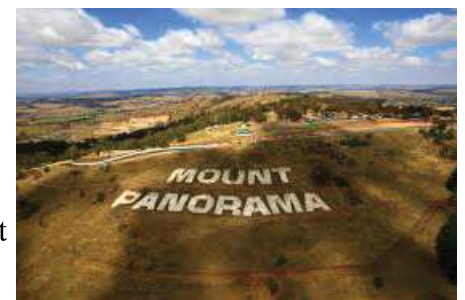
Good time to visit Bathurst

A bridge tournament for players with less than 35 Masterpoints will be held at the clubrooms of the Bathurst Bridge Club over the weekend of 31 October/1 November, 2015.

A pairs event will be held on Saturday, and a teams tournament will be held on Sunday. There will be sub-events for players with 0 - 10, and 10 - 35 Masterpoints. Prizes valued at over \$2000.00 will be awarded.

The cost is \$35 each day, covering table fees, lunch, morning and afternoon teas.

Bathurst is a stunning three hour drive from Sydney. Non playing partners will be interested in seeing Bathurst at its best time of the year.



On this weekend the Bathurst Fishing Club is having the annual Carp Blitz, the Bathurst Spring Spectacular will showcase 10 magnificent gardens for visiting, and the Central Tablelands Art and Craft show is to be held.

Bathurst's attractions include a very fine regional art gallery, the world famous Sommerville Collection natural history museum, Chifley Cottage, the Mount Panorama racing track and museum, and many exquisite examples of colonial and Victorian buildings.

Many accommodation options are available.

In the last Newsletter, we featured an article on the ABF Teacher Accreditation Program, launched at the 2014 Summer Festival of Bridge. This page completes the story of the six teachers accredited.



Trish Thatcher, Port Stephens Bridge Club
(with Joan Butts, the ABF Teaching
Coordinator).

As an example of approaches being adopted in these Clubs the following two profiles provide some indication of education programs which have been introduced.

The Bridge Education Program at **Peninsula Bridge Club** is credited with having brought in over **100** new members, resulting in revitalised duplicate sessions and workshops. The program has introduced four supervised sessions, extra duplicate sessions, teams of three events, novice congress players, pro-ams and friendly inter-club competitions.

Many members of Peninsula Bridge Club were delighted to receive personal thanks and formal recognition, from the ABF and its President, for their commitment to promoting the game of bridge (*some as captains of inexperienced, first time team players; others partnering newbies at their first duplicate game etc*).

A special congratulation to their Director of Bridge Education, Cath Whiddon, for implementing a structured, innovative bridge education program at the club and also for creating a trained, dedicated team to encourage and support new members while they develop their bridge skills and knowledge.

The **Toowong Bridge Club** endorsed a Club Education Policy in 2014. This policy was designed to identify and meet the educational needs of both existing and potential members.

Over the last 11 months, the Club has:

- seen its Education Officer (*Sandra Mulcahy*) become an ABF Accredited Teacher
- commenced provision of regular 4 week beginner classes at times to suit both retirees and pre-retirees
- introduced an additional two supervised play sessions (*at different times to cater for workers*) - making a total of 3 sessions weekly
- introduced a beginner row at one of its regular sessions (*for people with 0-5 masterpoints*)
- conducted a membership survey to identify the learning needs of all its members
- organised a series of workshops by guest speakers to meet the identified needs
- provided members with regular tutorials by one of its most experienced players (**free**)
- introduced a mentoring program for beginners (*to help transition from supervised play to session bridge*).

As part of its Education program, the club will soon be implementing a mentoring program for all 'novice' members (*0-100 masterpoints*).

Everyone involved in the teaching program at the club is working towards their ABF Teacher Accreditation (*this is a pre-requisite*).

The **ABF National Teaching Coordinator**, Joan Butts, has been providing both of these clubs with teacher training and development, advice and most importantly, support. Joan has also conducted many successful workshops for members of these clubs.

This support and guidance from the ABF is helping both these clubs to:

- create a learning environment for both new and existing players
- to develop a cooperative culture in the clubs as members help each other – it makes for a happy club with a sense of *'things are happening'*
- develop the skills and knowledge of their bridge teachers (*and supervised play session providers*); and
- to grow their clubs by attracting new members.

Restricted Butler event huge success

For the 2015 ANC, the ABF decided to provide a subsidy for eligible pairs from each state/territory to play in the Restricted Butler event. The subsidy was \$2,000 per pair, plus entry fee into the event. The players must have had less than 300 masterpoints on 1 January, 2015. Total funding allocated was \$23,000. States and Territories were encouraged to run qualifying events, including for people in their regions, to identify their representatives for the event. A total of 48 pairs played in the Restricted Butler event. This was a very pleasing outcome!

First and second place were taken by parent/son partnerships from New South Wales (Lavy and Tomer Libman) and Queensland (Nanette and Brodie Loxton). Both partnerships were appreciative of the ABF subsidy to compete in the event.

"Tomer and I would like to express our thanks to the ABF for the generous travel subsidy scheme for this event which, without doubt, made a big difference to its size and overall quality, and we certainly hope that this become a regular tradition for future ANCs."

Lavy Libman

"My son, Brodie, and I were jubilant having come second in the Restricted Butler Pairs in the Perth ANC. We would not have ventured so far without the very encouraging and generous support of the ABF. We have nothing but praise for the professional management of the competition, but more overwhelmingly was the friendliness shown by the organisers and players alike. It really was just like going to your local club for a friendly mid-week game."

Nanette Loxton

Board 10, East deals, all vulnerable

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

From Lavy Libman:

"We were content to settle for 2♥, but after the opponents bid and raised clubs, both East and West judged to upgrade their holdings (seeing that there would be no wastage in the suit) to reach a good

contract of 4♥ on a combined 21-count.

North, understandably, led a top club, after which the contract cannot be beaten: for example, on a trump switch, declarer rises with the ace and simply ruffs two clubs (entering the hand twice with ♦K and ♠K), before cashing ♦A and playing a diamond from the table to ensure a fourth trump trick. (Note the importance of the order of plays: if declarer ruffs just one club and tries to get back to hand via a diamond ruff prematurely, South will discard his last club and declarer cannot score a second club ruff, and does not have enough entries to set up the long diamond instead.)

As the cards lie, it takes an initial trump lead to beat 4♥; this destroys the timing for the club ruffs, and, in fact, declarer will go down two if he rises with the ace (rather, he must duck the first round and later play to set up the long diamond to hold the loss to down one).

Nevertheless, 4♥ is a good contract on the EW cards, unbeatable if diamonds divide 3-3, or if the heart king is onside (likely considering North's overcall).

Tomer was one of only two declarers bidding and making 4♥ in the Restricted field (and only four more tables in the Open and Women's fields combined)."

From Nanette Loxton:

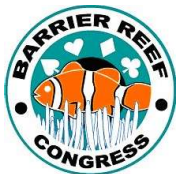
"I would like to demonstrate a hand where there is only one lead to take down the contract. My lead was based on the many examples Ron Klinger gives in his book, *"Improve your opening leads"*. Basically ringing in my ears was, "It is better to lead from a suit headed by two honours and rarely a good idea to lead away from a suit headed by one honour". Consequently, on the West hand below I led a small club - victory, down two!

I use this book to quiz my husband on long road trips. He is a budding new bridge player."

Board 16, West deals, EW vulnerable

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

Mark your diary now : the 2016 ANC will be held in Brisbane from 25 June – 7 July.



21ST Barrier Reef Congress

May Day Long Weekend

April 29TH, 30TH May 1ST, 2ND

Venue – Mackay Senior Citizen’s Club

Macalister Street

Mackay Q 4740

Chief Director – Sean Mullanphy

Organiser – Janet Hansen 07 4954 6844

President – Janelle Conroy 07 4955 5025

Website: www.qldbridge.com/brc

Bairnsdale 13th Annual Congress

5 - 6 September, 2015

Convener: John Brazier Phone: (03) 5152 3494

Email: johnbrazier4@gmail.com

Tumbarumba Congress

31 October - 1 November

Convener: Marg Wittich Phone: 0428 273 402

Email: margaretwittich@bigpond.com

Living the dream continued from p. 11

Your hand is:

♠ 9 8 7
♥ K Q 9 5 3
♦ 7
♣ A Q 7 2

You get ♦2 lead against your 3♣ contract, which shows five (they lead thirds and fifths, and have shown the suit so it can’t be three) and dummy puts down:

♠ A J 4
♥ 10 7
♦ Q 9 6 3
♣ K 10 5 4

You play low and West wins ♦10 and quickly switches to ♥4. This is a very interesting card, as he would never switch from three of the suit as it is just setting up your hearts, so therefore he must have four. However, if he had ♥AJxx he would never switch as it would be pointless. He either has ♥Axxx or ♥xxxx, so I flew ♥Q, which won, and came out ♥K which crushed ♥J just as I had suspected.

This was won by West’s ace. He now played ♦A which I trumped in hand. I was now was in a very good position as I could draw one round of trumps with the Queen, trump a heart in dummy, trump a diamond in hand, and cash the established ♥9, discarding a spade

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from dummy. This is the end position:

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

With the lead in my hand, I could now play a spade to the ace then ♦Q, trumping with ♣A. Now the winning heart, discarding my final spade, which West has to trump. West is then on lead to trick 12 holding ♣J8 of clubs and has to lead into dummy’s tenace.

The final event of the marathon was the Butler with Tony. We didnt lose a match during the qualifying (10/10) and then managed to win 16/19 of our matches in the finals to end up two entire matches ahead of second place, Ron Klinger - Terry Brown.

All in all, incredibly lucky with my chances this year, thanks to the delight of playing with quality players I have looked up to my whole life. Next on the list is Coaching the U16 team in Croatia (which is where I am writing this from) and then to Lithuania to play with another superstar of the world, Frances Thomas Bessis (the only player I’ve heard Ishmael say plays better than he does). A huge thank you to all my partners for putting up with me. Another article will follow with an update on the U16 kids.

- Silver VCC
- Bronze European Open Championships
- Silver ANC Interstate Team (winning datums by 100 IMPs)
- Gold ANC Butler

All in all not a bad winter!

by George Cuppaige

Ed: Recent articles have featured radical departures from the norm in opening point count requirements (the Crunch system employed by Matthew McManus - Michael Ware and featured in Warren Lazer's NOT articles, for example). Readers are invited to come to the defence of time honoured methods, speak out in support of opening with weaker hands, or make suggestions inspired (or provoked) by the proposition George espouses.

This article sets out to demonstrate that the most important thing you can do in bridge is to announce that you hold 10 points. The slogan from bridge's earliest days was, "An opening bid opposite an opening bid produces game." To bid game required 26 points and 13 points were needed to open. Today the numbers are 25 and 12.

How often is game on for both sides? What does that say about the need for 25/6 points combined? In order to bid one of those sub-26 point games, or sub-20 point games for that matter, you must be in the bidding. It follows indisputably that the more often you open, the more likely you are to find one. You will hold 10+ points far more frequently than you will hold 12+, so you will be in the action more often. To pass and then try to come in later is losing strategy, it is all downside. To open first is all upside. It is safe, constructive and obstructive. Too often you will simply be shut out if you do not.

Bidding may once have been all about bidding game. No more. Most auctions are contested. It is so obvious that to land the first blow, the first bid, is advantageous that one can only wonder at those who stoically pass 12 counts and allow their opponents to land it. Points are not important at low levels, the law of total tricks will look after you. It is a very unrewarding exercise for opponents to try to extract penalties from a pair who have settled in the contract of their choice at the two-level, albeit with a combined 15 points. Practically, it is virtually impossible to double these contracts for penalty. When partner's opening bid is doubled, don't bid if you don't want to, especially if a misfit looms.

Balance of power is the vital factor in bidding. The hand will usually belong to the partnership that holds it. You must be in the bidding when you have it and you must know when you have it. If you wait until you hold 12 points, before you open, double, or overcall you may never find out.

A simple overcall must show values. It is not its upper

limit that is important it is its lower limit. Unless you can rely upon finding useful values opposite you will find yourself bidding a hopeless game opposite junk. Lacking 10 points including distribution, or the suit to justify a pre-emptive bid, pass.

Pass is an opening bid too. If your pass might include 11 or 12 points, its range is too wide. Decisions by the partner of a wide range passer are often impossibly difficult. To open or to pass out in fourth seat is one of them, whether or not to act over an opponent's opening is another. Simply knowing that partner's strength is limited to nine points is powerful. A creative action in third seat will not be brought undone by a 12 point passer who now feels he must "catch up." When your pass limits your hand to nine points, you can confidently and constructively respond two over one in reply to a third or fourth hand opener. It shows 5+ cards in a 6-9 point hand. You will often play there. A passed hand 1NT reply will not contain a five-card suit.

The proposition that an opening one-bid must promise some number of "defensive tricks" is of no value. There are so many hands which are far too good to pass or to open with a pre-emptive bid that lack this requirement. Forget it. You cannot know, in advance, what is a defensive trick. AKQ may turn out to be none. You can do no better in bidding than to try to bid your own cards to perfection. This must be your objective and the sooner you start the better. It does not take the brain of Einstein to adjust when partner's opening bid promises a little less than you are used to. Only if the meddling opponents give you a clear opportunity to double them should you aim to do anything else. It bears repeating that point-count-only penalty doubles are beginner-bridge, you cannot see your opponents' hands.

Strong pass systems offer another means of showing strength. Reasonably enough, pass might be used to show 10+ points while using your one-bids to simultaneously show your longest suit and to make first use of the bidding space. It may be your only chance. There is safety in the first two levels and merely announcing length in a suit is often a powerful thing to do. Pairs that open these hands often find themselves bidding and making games that no one else thought of until the post-mortem. The all-important thing, whatever form of system you play, is to be able to announce that you hold the magic number.

Assuming you do not wish to depart from your existing methods significantly, and you see the value of getting into the bidding with 10, can you do it? The answer is a resounding yes. As desirable as it may be to do so, accommodating even lighter opening bids requires a complete re-work of standard bidding.

Using the familiar five-card majors and 15-17 notrump, the following scheme accommodates 10-point openers comfortably.

An opening bid of one-of-a-suit shows 10-19 points including distribution. One point is counted for each card over four in a suit headed by an ace or a king. Your minimum rebids show 10-14 points.

All hands with 20+ points, except the balanced 20-22 points which is opened 2NT, are opened 2♣. Getting occasionally too high is counter-balanced by not missing game when opener is super over-strong. You can confidently pass opening bids with sub six-point hands. A simple overcall promises 10+ points. Treat it exactly the same as an opening bid. Double is made on 10+ points, but only on three-suiters and balanced shapes. Honour values, even the ace, in an opponent's suit, are discounted. Weak-twos and other pre-emptive actions deny the holding of a hand strong enough to make a lower-level bid.

Abandon "invitations." This will keep you within the safety zone of the first two levels when you do not see game. Pass or correct with an "invitational" hand. Bid the clear-cut games. The first round of bidding will often tell you not to insist on game holding 12 points opposite an opening bid. Bid to game holding 13 points or more. You will bid some "thin" games but you will never telegraph the fact to your opponents. 23-point games often make, especially when the bidding has not alerted your opponents to the situation.

Nor do you deter a prospective balancer by announcing, always, that you have something in reserve, akin to sandbagging in poker.

Follow the philosophy, "Do not venture beyond two-of-a-suit unless you are going to play game or have a big fit. Never play in 2NT." (The only 2NT bid that can be passed is the opening bid.)

Good bidding is not an exercise in arithmetic. There are means of distinguishing between the 6-9 point and the 10-12 point raise, below the level of two of the suit. This scheme is adopted, when opponents enter, in either seat, after a simple raise to two.

- To bid one more shows no more than a desire to compete, usually an extra trump.
- A new suit, invites partner to re-consider bidding game. The opposing bid may have improved your hand.
- Double is penalty, but may be made on flat hands with high-card strength to spare and three small trumps. Partner should remove with extreme shortage or an extra card in the partnership suit. Hands with no big fit will rarely make nine tricks on a combined 15-18 points.
- Redouble announces a maximum and a desire to play for penalties.
- Pass, you may have already done the damage. It is futile simply to bid one more.

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by Keith Ogborn

When looking at overall contribution to bridge, as a player, director, team captain, system theorist, teacher, mentor and administrator, there is no doubt that Bill Schaufelberger (1902 - 1972) was the dominant figure in bridge in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s. As a player, Bill first began to rise to prominence in 1936, when he was also captain of the winning team in the New South Wales teams championships.

TRICKY BRIDGE HAND



Captain of the N.S.W. team Mr. W. Schaufelberger concentrates on a tricky hand during the game against Victoria, the title-holders, on the opening day of the Australian contract bridge championships at the Brisbane Town Hall on Monday.

In 1937 he and his partner, E.O. Harris dominated the major NSW pairs events. When Les Longhurst was unavailable, he became part of the NSW team, playing with Frank Cayley, and they beat New Zealand in the 1937 Challenge Match.

He was again a member of the NSW team in 1946, when the national championships resumed after WWII, and from that point he was captain of the NSW team at the ANC every year (except 1953, when he was asked but unavailable) between 1947 and 1957, and again in 1961.

On nine of the 11 years in which he captained the team, NSW won the interstate – a record that is unlikely to be bettered. He twice won the Australian Open Pairs – the inaugural event in 1954 with Tim Seres and in 1958 with Frank Cayley. He was captain of the first Australian international team that competed at the Olympiad in Turin.

Partly for health reasons, Bill played relatively little competitive bridge from the 1960s onwards, but at the time of his death, he still had the third highest number of masterpoints of Australian players.

In 1948, Bill was the highest ranked NSW player by a considerable margin. The hands that survive seem to show that he was an absolute master of the art of playing as if double dummy – identifying possible distributions and using them to his advantage. As with many great players, a distinguishing feature of his play was to eschew finesses that nine out of ten players would take without a thought.

In the 1949 national championships, Bill, from the North seat, gave NSW a big swing against Queensland on the following hand:

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

Playing in 4♠, Bill won ♥K lead, played two rounds of trumps and then exited a heart to West. West returned a club, and after taking ♣K and ♣A, Bill threw East in with his third club. East is now endplayed. A club return gives a ruff and discard and a diamond lead sets up two diamond tricks.

Bill was a very strong proponent of the importance of thought at tricks one and two. In this hand from the 1950s, Bill, playing rubber bridge was dealt ♠AKQ10987, ♥A43, ♦AK, ♣A

Bill, with visions of a grand slam, opened what was in his system a forcing strong 2♠. His left hand opponent overcalled 4♥, and the rest of the auction having not really clarified to his satisfaction what could be done about the heart losers, Bill, feeling he was being a bit timid, settled in 6♠.

The lead was ♣K and dummy was ♠J2, ♥2, ♦6543, ♣765432

Fortunately, West had no trumps to lead. However, there is still a chance for declarer to go wrong. After winning with ♣A, many players will play ♥A, hoping to follow with a small heart ruffed by the Jack. However, on this hand, West had overcalled with nine hearts, and ♥A would have been ruffed, a spade would



The Australian team at the 1960 Turin Olympiad. From left: Dick Cummings, Bob Williams, Sam Bridgeman, Bill Schaufelberger, MJ Sullivan, Hal Oddie, Tim Seres.

have been returned and the contract would go one down as declarer will be stranded with a second heart loser. Bill saw this possibility and made the counter-intuitive but fool-proof lead of ♥3 hearts at trick two. After giving up this trick, nothing can touch the contract. His remaining small heart can be ruffed with ♠J and the ace can be played after trumps have been cleared.

Another par point competition hand from the early 1950s showed the same sure hand.

♠ Q 3
♥ A K Q 9 7
♦ A 4 3 2
♣ 4 3

♠ A 4
♥ J 10 8 4 3 2
♦ 5
♣ A K 10 2

The challenge given was to make 7♥ from the South seat on the lead of ♣Q by West. Bill's commentary was that "all that was needed was correct timing, and not to play a trump at trick two, but play a dummy reversal by ruffing diamonds immediately. Not forgetting to cash your ♠A to make ♠Q the threat card. After ruffing three diamonds and crossing three times to the big trumps in dummy, the final position is:"

♠ Q
♥ 9 7
♦ ---
♣ 4

♠ K J
♥ ---
♦ ---
♣ J 9

immaterial

♠ 4
♥ ---
♦ ---
♣ A 10 2

On the last two trumps from dummy, ♠4 and ♣2 were discarded. West was thus hopelessly squeezed.

As a player Bill was renowned for his concentration, and at times associated obliviousness to his surroundings, much like Terence Reese. His wife Greta recalled that "one evening I went to the club to speak to him. He got up from the table, but walked straight past! I had to stop him and say - "May I introduce myself, I am Mrs Schaufelberger."

His intense concentration at the bridge table was accompanied by a correspondingly high level of absent-mindedness in other matters. Cathy Chua relates an anecdote from Maurice Goldstein, the top English

chess player and later NSW bridge representative, who recalled Bill gratefully accepting a lift home, only to remember on arrival that he had parked his car outside the Sydney Bridge Club.

Bill's contribution to bridge went well beyond his own play. Crucially, he was responsible for bringing along a number of the players who dominated Australian bridge in the 1960s and 1970s and beyond – including Tim Seres, Denis Howard, Dick Cummings and Roelof Smilde – who were often invited to Bill's home. He immediately spotted the talent of Tim Seres when he first turned up at the Sydney Bridge Club, observing that while he knew next to nothing about bidding but was a genius at card play. The two played extensively as a pair from 1948 to 1960.

Led bridge win 5 times



MEL AW. SCHAUFELBERGER. BILL'S (above) who has led his side to victory five times, will captain the New South Wales bridge team in the 1960's to obtain trophies in Brisbane.

Seres always acknowledged his debt for the early lessons he got from Bill and wrote in tribute: "I could not have asked for a better partner. Our styles blended perfectly; he was unruffled by my vagaries, but sound as a rock himself, with a card-playing technique that one could only envy. One of the richest rewards in bridge is to have a long-standing partnership with a really good player. On that account I will always be in Bill's debt.

Seres often spoke in later years of Bill's unruffled nature and his wizardry in playing 1NT contracts.

Unlike many players of the era, who had little interest in bidding as opposed to the play of the cards, Bill was interested in innovation and international developments in bidding. He made substantial contribution to theory, in particular the development of the New South Wales System. This was first published in 1948, with the proceeds going to the NSWBA.

In his introduction to the second edition of The New South Wales System (1970), editor Denis Howard wrote 'Historically, the System has been moulded by two groups. Originally devised by Longhurst, Makai, Schaufelberger, Verne and Williams, the System was virtually unchanged until the late 1950s. From that point onwards custody passed to the second group, Cummings, Howard, Seres and Smilde, with Schaufelberger as the unifying link'.

The system was based on a mixture of different systems that appealed to Bill and the others involved, including both Culbertson and the Vienna System that had been invented by Paul Stern of the Austrian team before WWII. When first played in 1947, it included the short

club, showing hands lacking a five-card suit other than clubs and 1NT, which showed a strong hand of any distribution. Opening values were based on Culbertson honour trick counts and the system included low level asking bids. After 1947, the 1NT bid was abandoned in favour of the normal balanced 16-18 opening and a 1♦ bid could show four of the suit. In its mature form, the two level bids were as follows: 2♣ = 23+ game force any shape, 2♦ = 21-22 balanced, 2H/S were weak and 2NT was 15+ with both minors.

As a mentor and a captain, Bill's concerns went beyond technique. Bill was used to being in charge, did not have, either as Director or Captain, what might be called a sunny personality, and was not afraid to lay down the law to his teammates. Les Longhurst recalled, for example, being told that there was to be no gloating over opponents and that any player found doing this would be benched. He was averse to anything that might seem self-congratulatory and not afraid to dish out some tough love in this regard if he thought the person could take it. Paul Lavings remembers a story from Bill's later years as Chief Director of the NSWBA in the late 1960s, when it was on the corner of George and Grosvenor Streets near Circular Quay. Paul proudly approached Bill and told him that he had just successfully pulled off a triple squeeze – “so what?”, came the dry response.

Although great rivals, relations between Bill and Victor Champion were characterised by great mutual respect. When NSW won their first championship, Bill commented to Les Longhurst that he was glad that Champion had been playing for Victoria, as otherwise they would not really have proved that they were the best. When Victoria finally won back the Championships in 1951, the *History of Australian Bridge* records that Bill presented the cup to the Victorian team, joking that it ‘had been left in his care (temporarily) by Mr Champion in Sydney in 1947, with strict instructions to guard it carefully, not parting with it to anyone until required again by Mr Champion himself.’

Personal Life

Bill, full name, Willy Karl Arthur Shaufelberger, was born in Zurich, Switzerland, on 25 October 1902, into a wealthy business family. We have no information on his early life other than that he qualified in Zurich as an accountant, did his army service in Switzerland and was enlisted in the reserves as a machine gunner. He came to Australia in August 1925, apparently on the recommendation of a friend who operated a sporting goods business. His first home in Australia was (ironically, given his later role in ending Victorian dominance) in Melbourne. His passport listed his occupation as businessman, and he had a share in the

friend's sporting goods business, but in this first period he also worked as Secretary to the Swiss Consul and Nestlé as an accountant.

While in Melbourne he married Phyllis Jean Cattanach of South Yarra, whose father, A.R. Cattanach was Principal of the Prahran Technical College, and a leading figure and innovator in the fields of adult and technical education.

In April 1928, he and Phyllis visited Switzerland for a year, probably associated with Bill's involvement in family business, and after returning briefly to Australia, moved to England in July 1930.

They did not come back to Australia until February 1934. We do not know anything about their time away, except that it was longer than they wanted. Bill had not previously arranged a re-entry permit and this had never been a problem before – but the tighter conditions of the early 1930s meant years of lobbying before he and Phyllis could get back in. Phyllis was Australian-born and had been an Australian citizen at the time of her marriage. However, under the law of the time, she lost her Australian citizenship on marriage and was also unable to return.

Loss of citizenship by women on marriage was an issue of concern to many in the 20s and 30s. It was common practice internationally for a woman to lose her citizenship when marrying a foreigner. Sometimes, depending on local law, this meant that she gained citizenship of her husband's country but not infrequently, the woman became stateless. At the instigation of activists on the issue, it was discussed at a number of international forums. In general, Australia's approach before and immediately after WWII tended to be somewhat two-faced – voting for reform at international meetings but leaving its own legislation unchanged.

After the war, the situation in Europe and potential loss of citizenship, became a major issue for women considering marrying men whose home countries were in a very bad situation or under communist control. The fiancée of the Victorian state representative, Edgar Mohl, faced a similar situation.

Australia finally changed the law to allow women marrying foreigners to retain citizenship in 1946, and in 1948 created full gender equality in the law.

Bill and Phyllis returned to Australia in 1934, but this time to Sydney. It is likely that Bill's father had died and, having been quaintly described in the visa applications as having ‘great expectations’ he was now recorded to be of ‘independent means’. He is first recorded as playing bridge in 1935 with his brother-in-law, Alan Cattanach, who was a very capable player and winner, with his wife, of the 1935 Australia and

New Zealand Olympic Competition. In Sydney, he invested in Paramount Studios – not the Hollywood variety, but a chain of photographic studios. Bill seems to have been an astute businessman and, in a time when camera ownership was not so widespread and demand for formal photos high, these flourished with the help of aggressive advertising and special offers.

Bill was one of the pioneers of the cross-advertising gimmick. In one campaign, which is a tribute to the state of the Australian diet of the time, parents who had their children's photos taken were offered the opportunity to win £100 and have their child be the poster boy or girl for advertising the popular laxative, *Calific*.

Phyllis Schaufelberger died in 1937 and Bill, probably for a combination of personal and business reasons, returned to Europe between April and November, 1938. Bill became a citizen in 1939. Foreign residents were not encouraged to take up citizenship as is the case now, and the process required Bill to place an advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* so that any objections could be recorded, and he was vetted by a team of two officials who interviewed referees. The elite nature of the bridge world meant that Bill was not short of prominent advocates. His main referees were the Parliamentary Draftsman, Edward Cahalan and Hubert Millingen, a prominent businessman and husband of the pioneering bridge author, player and teacher, Myra Millingen, who had died in 1936. The officials' final verdict was that Bill 'seems a good sort' and his citizenship was approved.

His immigration worries were therefore over but his family and personal life continued to be something of a window into the murky state of immigration requirements in the 1940s and early 1950s. During his return to Europe after his first wife's death, he met Margaret (Greta) Schaffer in Vienna and in 1939, narrowly before the beginning of war, brought her back to Australia. They married in July, 1939. It is clear that Bill assumed that Greta automatically gained citizenship by marrying him, in the same way that she automatically lost her German citizenship. However, the rules were that she was required to apply, and there was a small time window for the citizenship to be granted more or

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SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN

CALIFIG CALIFORNIA SYRUP OF FIGS

less automatically because of marriage. Otherwise the normal lengthy process applied. The fact that Greta was not a citizen was discovered later. Lobbying and legal intervention got a waiver of the requirements, but it was again a reminder of the fragile position of married women.

Bill's history also brought to light another little known aspect of Australia's past immigration policy. After the war, he also applied for an entry permit for Jeanette Beer, a former Viennese who had been living in Switzerland since 1938. Jeanette had secretarial qualifications, and Bill guaranteed that he would employ her and ensure that she was not a charge on the state after her arrival.

Normally, such an application would have a reasonable chance of success, as Australia had embarked on a massive immigration program. However, there was a problem with Jeanette's application – she was a Jew. It is not widely known, but from mid-1946, Australia had a quota for Jewish immigrants. In any passenger ship bringing migrants, no more than 25% could be Jews. In 1948, the quota was extended to planes. The definition used was a racial not religious one. The NSW representative player, John Makai, for example, came from a Hungarian family with Jewish origins that had been Catholics for some generations. However, when he tried to bring his brother over after the war, he was classified as a Jew for quota purposes.

There were a number of other restrictions on Jewish immigration in the post-war period, driven in large part by Government concern that public opposition to Jewish immigration would bring down its broader immigration reform of bringing in large numbers of non-English speakers and displaced persons from Europe, which was already trading on thin ice in terms of public acceptance. In Jeanette's case, it was noted that she was a refugee from Austria, the current and future status of which was still very uncertain, being then under Soviet occupation. It was agreed that processing of her application would be deferred until peace treaties had been completed that would clarify whether Austria had obligations to take back its Jewish refugees from the Nazi era. There is no record of the application ever being processed again.

After Competitive Bridge

Perhaps, due to the influence of Tim Seres, Bill owned a racehorse that had some success at Randwick, but, outside of work, it does not appear that there was much time for anything but bridge. When he stopped playing competitively, he moved his energy to administration, teaching and directing.

He ran the NSWBA, as Mike Hughes recalls, with an iron hand. You needed permission from him to progress from other week nights to the Monday night field. He also allocated seating.

One strong player was believed to give himself an edge by listening and perhaps looking at the table behind him, where his boards were coming from. In Grosvenor St. premises, players moved between rooms – so he always allocated the player in question a table that got its boards from a different room, well out of earshot.

He had been involved in the committee of the NSW BA since 1946, but when the administrative system of the ABF changed in 1961, he became Treasurer. (Previously, each state ‘hosted’ the ABF for a year, and the office holders changed every year with the host state.) He was Treasurer from 1961 - 1968. He promoted bridge lessons, taking out advertisements in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, did the directing at the Sydney Bridge Club and directed and supported regional congresses in NSW in other ways. He donated the Schaufelberger Cup.

He died in September 1972, perhaps fittingly while conducting a bridge cruise on the *Oriana*. Following his death, the NSWBA organised as a tribute, an exhibition match between a team of international representative players – Tim Seres, Roelof Smilde, Winsome Lipscombe, Dick Cummings and Mary McMahon – and a youth team composed of Bobby Richman - Di Leathart (Smart) of Melbourne and Ted Griffin - Alan Walsh of Sydney. One of the great attractions was the use of *Bridgerama* – then a major novelty, with only a few sets existing in the world.

Bill had no children but, as he had all his life, his mentoring ensured that there were plenty to follow and remember him. The players he had brought along dominated Australian bridge for some time to come. He had for some time been supporting and encouraging Ian McKinnon to take over as Director of the NSW Bridge Club. His wife Greta continued to work with the NSWBA as de facto manager of the club’s Elizabeth Street premises. She collected table fees, did the secretarial work and organised events. His teaching and mentoring legacy was to be found in Australian teams for many years later.

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Many thanks

by David Lusk

It came as a bit of a shock when I was advised that I was in line to receive an Order of Australia Medal. Probably my first reaction was “What for?”

My next reaction was that there must be many people who have devoted their lives to bridge and received little recognition.

So it has been reaffirming to have so many bridge identities send me emails, and also approach me at the recent ANC to offer their congratulations I wish to thank all of these plus the club members at the South Australian Bridge Association who have embraced the notion that one of their own has received such an honour.

It would also be remiss of me not to thank the various members of the Youth Committee, who served with me during my tenure as National Youth Co-ordinator from 1999 to 2005. Without the ideas and efforts put in by so many, the sub-committee’s outcomes would have been significantly diminished. There are also many South Australians who have worked on committees and in classes with me who have already been thanked in the SABA newsletter.

It must be good for bridge that people who honour the game receive this kind of recognition. My hope is that there are many workers, teachers, administrators and players who may in future be nominated by their club or by any individual who can push a compelling argument for their addition to the list of those to be considered for honours.

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by Paul Lavings



KICKBACK

Kickback was first introduced by Jeff Rubens in a series of articles in the US *Bridge World* in 1980-81. In Kickback, the Key Card ask is the suit above the trump suit at the four level: 4♦ is Keycard for clubs, 4♥ is Keycard for diamonds, 4♠ is Keycard for hearts and 4NT is Keycard for spades (as normal).

All these sequences are Kickback:

1♣ - 1♥	1♦ - 1♠	1♥ - 2♣	1♠ - 3♠
1♠ - 3♣	3♦ - 4♥	2♥ - 3♥	4NT
4♦		4♠	

One advantage of Kickback is that the space saved may allow the partnership to bid a good slam:

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

1. Kickback for hearts
2. 2 Key Cards + Q of trumps
3. Asking for specific kings
4. ♠K

In normal Key Card, 5NT after 4NT by the asker shows all the Key Cards and the trump queen are held, and asks for specific kings. On this deal, over 5NT the responder would not be able to show ♠K without going above 6♥, which might take the partnership too high.

In Kickback the asker repeats the Kickback suit to ask for specific kings.

The extra step gained by Kickback allows opener to show the king above the trump suit (the Kickback suit) with 5NT. This would make all the difference if responder held instead ♠A74, ♥KJ1042, ♦A3, ♣Q74.

On this hand you need opener to hold ♣K and not ♠K so it is dangerous to bid 5NT in case opener bids 6♠ and not 6♣. In Kickback you can repeat ask with 5♠ on both responding hands.

Sometimes the Kickback suit would have a natural meaning so you need to bid one step higher:

1♦ - 1♥	1♥ - 2♦
3♦	3♦

In both these sequences responder's 4♥ would have the natural meaning of showing hearts, so Kickback would be 4♠:

1♦ - 1♥	1♥ - 2♦
3♦ - 4♠	3♦ - 4♠

Then again you could agree that the jump to 4♥ is Kickback in both auctions, and bid 3♥ then 4♥ on both to get to 4♥.

When a minor is agreed in Kickback the partnership is able to sign off in 4NT:

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

1. Strong preference but not forcing
2. Kickback
3. 1 Key Card
4. Signoff

The Kickback book I refer to (*Kickback, Slam Bidding at Bridge* by Robert Munger, \$14.95) prefers 0-3-1-4 as the responses to Kickback, so 4♠ shows 1 Key Card and opener signs off in 4NT. To ask for specific kings, responder would continue with 5♦, the original Kickback suit.

Kickback takes a bit of getting used to, and there are quite a few new rules to learn. Also, you need to double check when you make a bid. At the recent Coffs Congress I held ♠AK97652, ♥3, ♦A1072, ♣9, my LHO opened 1♣ and partner overcalled 1♥, so without a care in the world I bid 4♠.

Yipes, when partner started to think I had the sinking feeling that partner had taken my 4♠ as Kickback. Partner replied 5♣, 1 Key Card, and I bid 5♠.

Partner passed, but spades were 5-0 and 5♠ failed by a trick. We later agreed that leaps to game like this were to play. Even so, 1♠ by me would have been forcing over partner's 1♥, overcall so next time I will bid 1♠.

You can expect quite a few hiccups and a few disasters, but Kickback will add a significant edge to your game with the extra room to ask for specific kings and even third round controls. Plus it's a lot of fun.

Paul Lavings
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The Mental Game - performance evaluation

by Kim Frazer

In a previous article on Goal Setting, I covered the basic fundamentals of goal setting and performance evaluation for competitors. Achieving improvement in the early stages of your bridge career, as in all competition for most competitors, is relatively straightforward.

It is easy to make progress when there are a lot of areas that need improvement and you will find that progress is rapid. The difficulty occurs when you become a more experienced player, and you have achieved a reasonable level of competence. Now improvement comes more slowly and is focussed in three primary areas:

- continued development of your skill as a player;
- incremental improvements to your system with your partner; and,
- development of your partnership harmony and understanding.

Elite athletes adopt a very structured and systematic approach to changes to “system” changes & improvements. For example an athlete may decide that they have maximised their skill level using a particular technical skill, and that to achieve improvement a change is required to a technical aspect of their sport. The implementation of the technical skill change is extremely well planned. Key characteristics of change are:

- the change happens in the off season;
- the athlete spends hours of practice to learn the change before it is used in an important competition; and,
- the athlete is usually confident that a change is required to achieve improvement - ie. their current technique is sub-optimal.

The reason for the highly structured approach to changes is that it is important athletes head into competition feeling confident that their technical skills are robust and will withstand the pressure of competition. This mental confidence in your skills is vital as any doubts in the mind will translate to “fear” in execution, and an increased likelihood of mistakes.

Similarly, in bridge, analysis of your existing system and skill level is necessary before you decide to make any changes. A key question to examine is whether the weaker performance is due to judgement errors or a deficiency in skill or a sub-optimal system or method. Just like tennis players often choose a highly risky shot at the wrong point in a match, rather than waiting for



the correct moment, often bridge players will bid for a wildly optimistic game or slam when a part score or game is enough. If this is happening with you and your partner, then changing your methods or conventions will not really enable the performance improvement you are seeking. Similarly if your deficiencies are due to a lack of knowledge on card play techniques such as squeezes, finesses, or card combinations, then work in this area might be prudent before system changes are made.

If, after analysis, you decide that a change to your current methods is necessary, then you need to follow a very structured process to implementing that change. As an example:

- identify the “one” convention or method you want to change - for example changing from weak jump overcalls to intermediate jump overcalls;
- assess the frequency with which the “new” convention would be used, compared with your current convention or method;
- assess which convention or method will deliver the most consistent results, and so on.

You might decide to make the change and then you should do further analysis to see if the change makes you and your partner stronger or weaker as a pair by assessing your results on the hands where the method or convention applied compared with the result you probably would have achieved using a natural method and/or your old convention. With the availability of hand records for each session, and with some of the modern scoring programs to provide data, analysis of hands is relatively easy for you to perform, provided you are willing to spend the time. Using a data-based approach when making changes to your system or play will give you the confidence to believe in yourself when using those changes in competition.

When I gave this article to David Morgan for comment, he rightly identified the third aspect - building partnership understanding and harmony. This is something I really need to work on, so I am going to use David’s comments:

“Working to get the best out of each other is an important goal for any serious partnership to have. There may be some people who respond well to being criticised after a hand but I don’t think I’ve ever seen that happen at the table. Beyond working out when and how to discuss what happens when things go wrong, it’s worthwhile to work on helping partner to play better. Maybe partner likes to be complimented after doing something well, even if it is routine: if so, compliment them. Maybe partner plays better when there’s little discussion: save the chat for after play finishes. Maybe

partner likes a smile to reassure them after they've made a mistake: smile. Maybe partner likes the suits laid out in a particular way when you're dummy: do it! Maybe partner really doesn't like it when you leave the table when you're dummy, except in an emergency: respect their wishes".

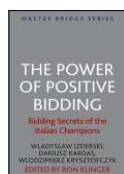
To some this might seem like a lot of work, but gaining incremental improvement is hard once the basics are understood and learned. Like champion sportspeople, the players who are the most successful, are those who make the fewest errors, and who also work the hardest at improving their game. However most importantly, the best competitors are those who believe in their own ability, and techniques.

Book reviews

by Paul Lavings

The Power of Positive Bidding by Wladyslaw Izdebski, Dariusz Kardas, Wlodzimierz Kryzstofczyk

Edited by Ron Klinger (Master Bridge Series, Canada, 2015, soft cover, 239 pages) \$34.95 postfree from Paul Lavings Bridge Books



Why do the Italian champions win so many events? It's not their card play since the card play of the other top European and US players is also very strong. A group of Polish experts followed the Italians on BBO and pieced together their methods. It was up to our own Ron Klinger to convert this information into a most amazing book.

The basis of the Italian bidding is the "Power Double":

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♦	1♥	Dbl	3♥
Pass	Pass	?	

What would you bid holding ♠AQ75, ♥94, ♦AKQ82, ♣32. You and I might bid 5♦ but in the Italian methods double was a Power Double and confirmed their side had the balance of power and was forcing to game. When West replied 4♣ East's 4♦ was now forcing and this created space for West to cuebid his singleton heart and reach a cold 6♦.

The book goes on to discuss how most doubles which were once penalties are now takeout, wide range pre-empts, aggressive third seat openings and double vs overcall. There is much information for two-over-one enthusiasts, non-serious 3NT, last train and a discussion of all the basic 2/1 sequences starting at the two level. And there are many new ideas.

Four large chapters are devoted to slam bidding combining cue bidding, kickback, turbo and various new meanings for 4NT into a cohesive approach. High

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level competitive auctions are thoroughly dissected and examined. This deal combines some of the many new concepts:

South deals, all vulnerable

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
<i>Pauncz</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Fossi</i>	<i>Versace</i>
Pass	2♥	2♠	1♥
3♠	4♦	4♠	3♦
Pass	5♣	Pass	4NT
All Pass			6♦

Versace preferred to open 1♥ and not 2♣ to give himself space to develop the auction. When opener makes a game try the partnership allows the possibility that partner is also looking for slam so on his meagre six-count Lauria raised to 4♦. 4NT was a "substitute cuebid" showing spade control and 5♣ was "last train". That was all Versace needed to bid the slam.

The book is a blockbuster. On every page there are examples from championship play, mostly Lauria-Versace, and Ron Klinger's explains every situation simply and clearly. There are so many revolutionary ideas and treatments in the book, it will change the way the game is played.



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21 – 23 October

Spring Nationals Open Teams

21 – 22 October

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26 – 28 October

Bobby Evans Seniors' Teams

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