

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

February 2004

Editors: Ian McCance & Bill Jacobs

FROM THE COUNCIL

The VBA seeks nominations from interested parties for one of the two Victorian State Australian Bridge Federation Councillors' positions.

This position commences in March 2004 at the ABF's Annual General Meeting.

The successful nominee *must* be a member of the Australian Bridge Federation (i.e. a member of an affiliated club), and be available for two interstate meetings per year, for which travel is provided by the ABF.

This position is an important one, especially given the ANC is to be held in Victoria this year, and the nominee will be the direct liaison between the ABF and the VBA.

Nominations can be emailed to Jenny Thompson at jennyt@youngaustralians.org or sent to her at 19 Embling Road, Malvern 3144.

Applications close on February 18th 2004.



Comment from Bill Jacobs:

Having served several terms on the ABF Council, I can provide some insight to those thinking of expressing interest. A stint as an ABF councillor can be as fulfilling as you want it to be. At a minimum, you must attend the biannual meetings, and represent Victoria's interests in the process. However, the real value-add is in joining one or more of the ABF sub-committees. The strategic and operational aspects of the ABF is driven through its 22 committees, with responsibilities ranging from Marketing to Masterpoints, Technology to Tournaments. These committees meet at the convenience of their members, but can also do much of their business through email. The opportunity is there to make a significant contribution to the policies of the ABF in your areas of interest and expertise.

A further consideration of this position is that the term will encompass the Melbourne Commonwealth Games in March 2006, where it is expected that an associated Commonwealth bridge tournament will be conducted here in Melbourne.

In summary, this should not be a position to be applied for lightly, but if you do, you can expect to be at the forefront of bridge development in this country.



CHRISTMAS QUIZ

For the full hands, see the report of the 2003 VBA Christmas Teams (IMP scoring).

1. ♠ A4 ♥ KQ53 ♦ A8752 ♣ 62

You are South and vulnerable, they are not, and the auction proceeds:

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 1♥ | 2♠ | 3♠ |
| 4♠ | Pass | Pass | ? |

5♥ or double?

2. ♠ K93 ♥ K9652 ♦ 9764 ♣ 6

All vulnerable, playing Acol (or Standard if you like), partner opens 1♣, you respond 1♥ and partner reverses with 2♦. Your bid.

3. ♠ J52 ♥ K107 ♦ AK95 ♣ 964

Partner opens 2NT, 20-22. What is your plan?

4. ♠ AQ75 ♥ J653 ♦ J ♣ J942

Similar problem: partner opens 2NT, 20-22. Let's say you play Stayman, so you try 3♣ and partner bids 3♠. Now what?

5. All vulnerable, East deals and opens 1♥, West responds 2♣ and, leaving out the gory details, you overreach to 6♣.

| | |
|------------|----------|
| ♠ 6 | ♠ AQ82 |
| ♥ 9 | ♥ A10873 |
| ♦ A97 | ♦ Q104 |
| ♣ AQJ96543 | ♣ 2 |

North leads the heart six, you win ace, take a winning club finesse, and cash the club ace – sadly, North pitches a spade. South wins the next club (North throws another spade), and plays the heart king which you ruff, North following with the two.

It looks like down at least one, but you must go through the motions, so you play another round of clubs, on which North pitches a diamond, South pitches a heart. This is the position:

| | |
|-------|--------|
| ♠ 6 | ♠ AQ8 |
| ♥ | ♥ 10 |
| ♦ A97 | ♦ Q104 |
| ♣ 543 | ♣ |

Do you have a cunning plan?

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

| | | | |
|----------|---------|---------|--|
| Dealer E | ♠ QJ973 | | |
| Vul Both | ♥ J8 | | |
| | ♦ KJ7 | | |
| | ♣ J62 | | |
| | | ♠ A102 | |
| | | ♥ 3 | |
| | | ♦ Q9832 | |
| | | ♣ AQ105 | |

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | | 1♦ | 4♥ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

After a short auction, partner starts with ♠5. Declarer puts in ♠9 and you decide correctly that ♠5 is fourth best, and play ♠10. Declarer trumps this and starts with a low diamond. Partner's card shows three, and South evidently misguesses, playing ♦J to your ♦Q. How do you continue?

Problem 2:

| | | | |
|----------|--------|-----------|--|
| Dealer N | ♠ AKJ6 | | |
| Vul: Nil | ♥ AK9 | | |
| | ♦ J94 | | |
| | ♣ J53 | | |
| | | ♠ 9 | |
| | | ♥ J87 | |
| | | ♦ AQ10876 | |
| | | ♣ 982 | |

| | | | |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | 1♣ | 1♦ | 2♠ |
| 3♦ | 4♠ | All Pass | |

Partner leads ♦2 to your ♦A. You pause to take stock. Declarer holds at least six spades for his natural non-forcing jump to 2♠, and will have to have precious little else. What do you do now?

Solutions on page 7.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

DOUBLE DUMMY PROBLEM
Bill Jacobs

Double-dummy problems can sometimes be a real turn-off when they involve very complicated squeeze positions. Here's a setup where there is no squeeze involved, but the double dummy outcome is not entirely obvious!

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--|
| | ♠ 4 | | |
| | ♥ A5432 | | |
| | ♦ 10 | | |
| | ♣ KQ6542 | | |
| ♠ KQ10953 | | ♠ 2 | |
| ♥ J876 | | ♥ KQ10 | |
| ♦ Q6 | | ♦ 543 | |
| ♣ 3 | | ♣ J10987 | |
| | ♠ AJ876 | | |
| | ♥ - | | |
| | ♦ AKJ9872 | | |
| | ♣ A | | |

South plays 6♦ on the lead of the club three. The question is: on a double-dummy basis, who should prevail – declarer or defenders?

Solution on page 5.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

2003 CHRISTMAS TEAMS
Bill Jacobs

This was the final event of the 2003 calendar (I do not consider the Speedball Teams or Novelty Snail Pairs to be "events", more like "wastes of time" – the main effect of shortening the Christmas Teams from 4 weeks to 3 was to reduce the number of tables on the final Wednesday from 33 to 20). The Christmas Teams was won in fine style by Steffi Gerdan, Vivienne Goldberg, John Selwyn and Stephen Weisz. Daylight came second.

Here are some hands that caught my eye.

An Adventure

I have been following Ian McCance's Adventures at the Five Level with interest. Here was a chance to practise from Session 2:

Dealer: W ♠ 3
 Vul: N/S ♥ J10742
 ♦ KJ4
 ♣ KQJ8

| | |
|----------|----------|
| ♠ KJ109 | ♠ Q87652 |
| ♥ 98 | ♥ A6 |
| ♦ 96 | ♦ Q103 |
| ♣ A10943 | ♣ 75 |
| ♠ A4 | |
| ♥ KQ53 | |
| ♦ A8752 | |
| ♣ 62 | |

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | 1♥ | 2♠ | 3♠ |
| 4♠ | Pass | Pass | ? |

My guess is that most of the field faced this problem, or similar. So let's follow Ian's advice and count the total trumps – I will use the old-fashioned method. Partner probably has five hearts, so that gives us nine hearts. He should have one or two spades, so that gives them a nine or ten card fit, leading to a trumps total of 18 or 19.

Now we mentally picture the total tricks summary table: with 18 trumps, we do not proceed (if we can make 5♥, we should get 500 in 4♠X). With 19 trumps, the table says: "only go to 5 level if expect to make". Well, that is borderline here. So on the whole, it looks right to double.

A further complicating factor is partner's pass over 4♠. He would have been applying the Law himself, so his pass indicates uncertainty. With a dangerous doubleton spade, he might have doubled himself to warn South off, so I rate 19 trumps as more likely than 18.

Looking at the actual hand, there are 19 trumps, but only 18 tricks, because of the location of the diamond queen. Considering just the North-South hands and the vulnerability, you can see that it is a toss-up whether to bid on: you rate to get 300 against 4♠, with 650 in 5♥ a 50-50 proposition or slightly better.

Irrespective of what you bid, you can consider that you have answered the quiz question correctly if you remembered to try the Law of Total Tricks. *The most difficult aspect of the Law is thinking to apply it in the first place!*

Successful Operation

I doubt many pairs landed in the right contract with this setup:

| | |
|----------|---------|
| ♠ 1074 | ♠ K93 |
| ♥ A | ♥ K9652 |
| ♦ AKJ10 | ♦ 9764 |
| ♣ KQ1042 | ♣ 6 |

Playing a natural system, the auction starts 1♣ - 1♥ - 2♦. East cannot contemplate passing this forcing bid (game in diamonds, hearts or NT is still possible), but doesn't want to show any enthusiasm – he would like to end up in 3♦. But would a direct 3♦ be non-forcing here?

This problem can only be solved with system agreement. For several decades, the top Victorian pairs have played an excellent convention called "Blackout". After a one-over-one response and a reverse, the cheaper of fourth suit and 2NT shows an artificial minimum – all other rebids are game-forcing. After the blackout bid, opener makes a natural rebid, and responder can either pass, or show his minimum appropriately.

Charlie Snashall and Grant Kilvington play Blackout, and it worked a treat here. With the weak hand, Grant blacked out with 2♠,

Charlie bid 2NT, and Grant signed off in 3♦. Perfect!

Unfortunately, it turned out that diamonds were 5-0, so 3♦ was doomed. However, Dr Sam Arber misguessed the defence, and Charlie brought 3♦ home for a nice pickup. This was not particularly newsworthy, but I liked Grant Kilvington's quip: "the operation was successful, the patient was dying, but the Doctor came to the rescue".

How the Winners Win

In a key match between the eventual winners and the top-seeded Jacobs team (how I hate being the captain of a rated team that underperforms!), two 2NT auctions swung the match result.

| | |
|---------|--------|
| ♠ AKQ | ♠ J52 |
| ♥ A95 | ♥ K107 |
| ♦ QJ843 | ♦ AK95 |
| ♣ AJ | ♣ 964 |

Stephen Weisz held the East cards, and I think he evaluated brilliantly to simply bid 3NT over 2NT. Even though West's hand was well above minimum (21 points and a 5-card suit), 6NT had little play, and he deserved his 11 imp pickup.

Perhaps Stephen was using the little known "Law of Total Points". He was on a 31-33 point range, and this was insufficient to make slam a good bet. Even 33 points wasn't necessarily going to be enough, what with his sterile distribution. Strolling around the room after the match, I couldn't find a single plus score on this hand – everyone was in slam.

Next, there was:

| | |
|--------|--------|
| ♠ KJ64 | ♠ AQ75 |
| ♥ AK | ♥ J653 |
| ♦ A76 | ♦ J |
| ♣ KQ86 | ♣ J942 |

Steffi Gerdan (West) and Vivi Goldberg (East) bid:

| | |
|-----|------------|
| 2NT | 3♣ |
| 3♠ | 4NT (RKCB) |
| 5♣ | 6♠ |

This contract rolled for another big swing. Vivian's bidding was *very* aggressive (switch West's minors to see why), but just bidding 4♠ would have been equally timid.

A solution, if your partnership is up to it, is for East to bid 5♦ over 3♠, a splinter bid. This allows West to evaluate his hand accordingly.

Never Give Up

How did you go with that 6♣ contract?

| | |
|------------|----------|
| ♠ 6 | ♠ AQ82 |
| ♥ 9 | ♥ A10873 |
| ♦ A97 | ♦ Q104 |
| ♣ AQJ96543 | ♣ 2 |

North leads the heart six, you win ace, take a winning club finesse, and cash the club ace – North pitches a spade. South wins the next club (North throws another spade), and plays the heart king which you ruff, North following with the two.

You play another round of clubs, on which North pitches a a diamond, South a heart. This is now the position:

| | |
|-------|--------|
| ♠ 6 | ♠ AQ8 |
| ♥ | ♥ 10 |
| ♦ A97 | ♦ Q104 |
| ♣ 543 | ♣ |

It's counting time: South has three clubs and it looks like ♥KQJxx, from North's heart plays. There are at least two distinct ways to proceed now:

1. You can play for South to have the stiff king of diamonds by cashing the diamond ace. Whilst not a likely prospect, there is a major secondary chance that North has 6+ spades to the king, and the diamond king, in which case he will be positionally squeezed by the subsequent run of the clubs (he cannot keep both the diamond king and the spade guard).

2. Alternatively, you can run clubs and abandon the diamonds from dummy in order to maintain both heart and spade threats, hoping North has the sole spade guard.

To see how this plays out, you run all the remaining clubs to reach this position:

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| ♠ 6 ♥ ♦ A97 ♣ 3 | ♠ KJx ♥ ♦ ?x ♣ |
| ♠ xx ♥ Q ♦ ?x ♣ | ♠ AQ8 ♥ 10 ♦ Q ♣ |

When you lead the last trump, North must throw a diamond to keep the spades protected. You pitch a spade from dummy, South throws a spade, and next you cash two spades with a finesse. Now South must also throw a diamond to keep the hearts protected, so your A9 of diamonds take the last two tricks, irrespective of what those ?s are (this is a double squeeze with the squeeze against the opponents operating two tricks apart). Finally, you contact Ian McCance to ensure that this gets into next Saturday's Age.

This line might also work if South has the diamond king-jack, irrespective of the spade distribution, although you will have to guess your way through the ending.

Line 2 would have worked at the table (North held ♠ KJ10975 ♥ 62 ♦ J862 ♣ 10). If you bid and made 6♣ in real life, contact me with the necessary affidavits and witnesses and it will be duly acknowledged!

If you look even deeper into the hand, you will find that there was yet another way to make 6♣, but I will leave that to the double dummy fiends.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

You hold: ♠ A10 ♥ AJ985 ♦ KQ3 ♣ 982

Nil vul at IMPs, RHO opens 1NT (11-14). Do you bid? Suppose you pass. LHO bids 2♥ (transfer), pass by partner, 2♠ accepting the transfer on your right. Do you bid now?

Outcome on Page 8.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

DOUBLE DUMMY SOLUTION

Here is the layout again:

| | |
|--|--|
| ♠ 4 ♥ A5432 ♦ 10 ♣ KQ6542 ♠ KQ10953 ♥ J876 ♦ Q6 ♣ 3 | ♠ 2 ♥ KQ10 ♦ 543 ♣ J10987 ♠ AJ876 ♥ - ♦ AKJ9872 ♣ A |
|--|--|

In an internet bridge match, Benito Garozzo played 6♦ on the lead of the club three.

No doubt there was bidding to guide him: he won the club ace, played spade ace and ruffed a spade. Abandoning the three winners in dummy, he now ruffed a heart, and played ace, king and **two** of diamonds. Poor old East was in with the five, and had to give life to dummy's winners by leading a heart or a club. 6♦ bid and made.

However, you solved the problem correctly if you bet on the defenders. East had a most unusual counter – when the spade is ruffed in dummy with the ten, East must **underruff**. The endplay now disappears in a puff of smoke, and 11 tricks is the limit.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

DECEMBER RESULTS

VBA Mixed Pairs

- 1 A. Sarten, S. Tishler
- 2 S. Klofa, J. Collins
- 3 C. Rothfield, J. Rothfield

VBA Christmas Teams

- 1 J. Selwyn, S. Weisz, V. Goldberg, S. Gerdan
- 2 G. Kilvington, C. Snashall, R. Van Riel, K. Chan, I. McCance, D. Smart
- 3 W. Jacobs, C. Hughes, S. Hinge, C. Chua

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

AT THE 2003 BERMUDA BOWL Bill Jacobs

The 2003 World Championships were held over two weeks in November in Monte Carlo. There was splendid kibitzing to be had throughout the event via Bridge Base OnLine which ran a wonderful free Internet Vu-Graph service. Several thousand people were logged on to watch the dramatic last board of the Bermuda Bowl final, which saw USA edge out Italy by 1 imp.

The very first Vu-Graph segment was of particular interest to Aussies, as Australia took on favourites and eventual winners USA-1. Melbourne's Rob Fruewirth sat South in the open room, and this 3NT contract caught my eye:

♠ 97653
♥ Q93
♦ 8
♣ AKQJ

♠ KQ
♥ A86
♦ AJ754
♣ 983

Rob declared 3NT after the uncontested auction 1♦-1♠-1NT-3NT. A fourth-best heart five was led by Bob Hamman. What do you play from dummy? Think it over before reading on.

On Vu-Graph you of course see all four hands, which makes declarer play ridiculously easy, but Rob stewed over the problem for at least 5 minutes, an eternity, before sticking in the heart queen. When East covered this with the king (from K2 doubleton), the contract was in tatters, and he eventually went two off.

The Vu-Graph commentators were rather scathing of Rob's play, making comments like: "if the king is onside at trick one, it will be onside later as well". This infuriated me – I felt like kicking the monitor in.

Instead I fired off some emails to some good declarers asking what they would do at trick one.

Ian McCance was the first to respond – he wrote: "maybe queen is right on the grounds that you are desperate and can't afford to lose a tempo?", which strikes me as exactly the key point.

Next Cathy Chua wrote back with: "It seems to me that I have to rise don't I? If low and my ace is knocked out, a diamond shift after a spade will be the end of me when a heart continuation isn't. Tell me what I'm missing." As far as I am concerned, she wasn't missing anything. It's not that *you* need the fast trick, it's that you can't afford the *defence* to get a fast heart trick, to go along with the two diamonds and two spades that they are likely to be able to develop.

Cathy then gave the hand to Simon Hinge and reported back: "He played low(!), but he was doing the gardening at the time and he did concede it was the wrong thing to do." I wasn't sure what to make of that, except perhaps that Simon likes to do gardening.

I was feeling smug, until Rob van Riel came back with this:

"Looking at the hand as a whole, I've got 8 tricks on top (assuming 2 from hearts). Spades is the best bet for a ninth trick: a 3-3 break, J10/J8/108 doubleton. I'll win ♥A, knock out ♠A, win ♥Q, cash ♠Q, cross to ♣J, set up the spades (assuming ♠J10 haven't fallen). I'll need hearts 4-3, or the third round spade winner on my right. In the meantime, the defence isn't obliged to continue hearts. A diamond switch might do me a bit of damage, particularly if East wins ♠A. On the other hand, if the defenders press too hard in diamonds, they may present me with my ninth trick... In general, I'll need 2 tricks from hearts and playing low seems to be the best way to do that. There are plenty of layouts where the defence can't take 5 tricks before I take 9, although I don't much fancy my chances."

Did you get all that? Rob certainly did justice to the analysis. And he might just have made the contract with some good guesswork later in the play, as East's hand was: ♠ AJ84 ♥ K2 ♦ 109632 ♣ 62.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

THE SETTING TRICK - SOLUTIONS

Ian McCance

Problem 1

| | |
|----------|-------------|
| Dealer E | ♠ QJ973 |
| Vul Both | ♥ J8 |
| | ♦ KJ7 |
| | ♣ J62 |
| ♠ K8654 | ♠ A102 |
| ♥ 62 | ♥ 3 |
| ♦ A106 | ♦ Q9832 |
| ♣ 873 | ♣ AQ105 |
| | ♠ - |
| | ♥ AKQ109754 |
| | ♦ 54 |
| | ♣ K94 |

Against 4♥, partner did very well to stay off the ♦A on lead, and South's spade void is a helpful clue. Most likely he has two diamonds, and if he has three clubs you need to set up the setting trick in that suit before the ♦K provides a discard. The winning play is ♣Q, establishing a tenace over dummy's ♣J. Partner will win ♦A and return a club for a total of four tricks.

What! you exclaim, *you used that theme earlier!* So I did (Bulletin July '03, problem 1). But that's the point – these situations do turn up more than once. Did you get it right the second time? This was board 13 from 2004 NOT match #13. South was Rob van Riel. East did not switch ♣Q.

Problem 2

| | |
|----------|-----------|
| Dealer N | ♠ AKJ6 |
| Vul: Nil | ♥ AK9 |
| | ♦ J94 |
| | ♣ J53 |
| ♠ 75 | ♠ 9 |
| ♥ Q532 | ♥ J87 |
| ♦ K32 | ♦ AQ10876 |
| ♣ KQ64 | ♣ 982 |
| | ♠ Q108432 |
| | ♥ 1064 |
| | ♦ 5 |
| | ♣ A107 |

Against 4♠, you win ♦A. Declarer clearly has a singleton diamond, so the defence's remaining three tricks have to come from the round suits. If declarer is 3-3 those suits, partner will need to hold the ♥Q and ♣AQ or ♣KQ.

The blue-print for the setting trick is clear – start clubs at once with ♣8 or ♣9. If partner holds ♣KQ, he will win the first round and exit. When declarer draws trumps, eliminating diamonds at the same time, and plays a third round of hearts, partner will, of course, have unblocked ♥Q to avoid being endplayed. If you don't switch at trick two, the elimination play succeeds and your second club trick will disappear.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

OLDIE BUT GOODIE

A Russian rocket-scientist is walking down Elizabeth St when something catches his attention. Behind a window is a massive block of steel with titillating lights and a large sign that says "Bernie the Super-Computer", and a smaller one that reads: "Feed me a dollar and I will entertain you".

Curiosity gets the better of the visitor and he puts in a dollar. Red lights start flashing as he hears: "Hi, I am Bernie the Computer – what's your IQ?" The rocket scientist replies "185". So the computer goes on and on for 10 minutes about the splitting of the atom, quantum physics and nanotechnology. Eventually his time is up, and Bernie the computer says goodbye.

At this point, the big-talking-steel-box has attracted a bunch of kibitz ... sorry, spectators. Someone else feeds in a dollar, and hears: "Hi, I am Bernie the Computer – what's your IQ?" "150" comes the reply, and Bernie starts babbling about socialism, communism, capitalism and their principles. Eventually his time is up.

A third chap decides to try his luck and puts in a dollar. "Hi, I am Bernie the Computer – what's your IQ?" "123", and Bernie talks about the Big Bang, Darwin, evolution and the survival of the fittest.

At this point, the rocket scientist, a little bit perplexed, decides to try again. He puts in a dollar and hears the familiar: "Hi, I am Bernie the Computer – what's your IQ?" "77", he replies, and Bernie starts: "You hold ace-jack-fifth, three little ..."

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

