

# Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

October 2004

Editors: Ian McCance & Bill Jacobs

## MORE ON TEAM SHIRTS

*We were delighted to receive correspondence from a VBA councillor on Bill's rant in the September edition about team uniforms. It proves to us that there is at least one reader of this Bulletin!*

Dear Bill,

I read with interest your editorial in this month's bulletin under the heading "on team shirts and dollars".

I think your comments are out of step with what the vast majority of current and former state reps have been screaming out for. The ANC is all about representing your state and having some pride in that. Indeed, a number of players requested additional shirts so they could be constantly in team uniform throughout the event. I also noted a couple of players at the VBA in recent nights still wearing their state shirts with pride (I don't think I have ever seen Leigh Gold NOT wearing his Black Victorian ANC Rep Jacket).

As you pointed out, the VBA was not alone with its decision to provide team shirts with SA, QLD and NSW (and possibly others) all providing team shirts, rugby tops or tracksuit tops.

It is extremely rare in any representative sport for participants not have some sort of distinctive uniform for the state or country they are representing. At the European Bridge Championships this year it was compulsory to be in team uniform at the table.

Finally, most sports psychologists will tell you that team-bonding things like uniforms have a tangible positive impact on performance.

Dave Thompson

*Anyone else willing to have their say on this contentious, if not earth-shattering, issue?*





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## IT'S ALL IN THE TIMING

**Bill Jacobs**

Test your play on the following 6♣ contract. It comes from the final of the ANC, so you can assume it's for high stakes.

Dealer: S      ♠ 52  
Vul: All      ♥ AK10753  
                  ♦ K3  
                  ♣ K98  
  
                  ♠ KQ8764  
                  ♥ -  
                  ♦ AQ6  
                  ♣ AQ103

South	North
1♠	2♥
3♣	3♥
3NT	4♣
4♦	4♥
4♠	6♣
Pass	

The opponents use natural carding. The lead is the diamond 7. What do you do?

Continued overleaf.

### IT'S ALL IN THE TIMING - CONTINUED

Did you win the diamond king in dummy (RHO follows with the four), and play a spade up?

It does seem normal to try to set up your spades, but my question is, how long did it take you to make this play?

If you took 10 seconds or more to decide, then go to page 4 to find out what happens next.

If you won the king and led a spade in tempo, without apparent pause for thought, turn to page 8.

### ASK BILLIAN

*In this segment, readers are invited to pose questions of any nature to co-editors Bill Jacobs and Ian McCance. The simplest way to do this is to use email, to either:*

*Bill.jacobs@oz.quest.com or*

*ianmcc@melbpc.org.au*

*Alternatively, you can write to the VBA, or catch up with us one night at the club.*

### ALERTING WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW

From IMcC:

Recently, playing with a partner with whom my recent experience was very limited, I was involved in the following auction that started (opponents silent):

1♣ - 1♦ - 1♠ - 3♥ ...

In subsequent discussion (I forget the timing) I explained that I had not alerted 3♥ because I did not understand what it meant. Our opponents had not and did not claim to have been damaged in any way but they seemed perplexed by this explanation and I wondered what you thought about it.

### Billian replies:

**Ian:**

My conviction is firmly: the sequence "Alert!" - "Yes?" - "Undiscussed" is pointless and has the potential to impart unauthorised

information to partner. To be more specific, the message conveyed by the act of Alerting must be "*I have information that may be useful to you*". "Undiscussed" is not useful information.

Since then I have consulted:

1. The ABF Alerting Regulations,
2. Laurie Kelso, our Tournament Director, chairman of the ABF's Systems Committee, and

### The ABF alerting regulations.

"2.1 Convention: A call that, *by partnership agreement*, conveys a meaning other than willingness to play in the denomination named..." [my emphasis]

"2.2 Natural calls: A natural suit bid is one that is not conventional..."

So what was the status of 3♥? It was unlikely to be natural but it might have been. "Unlikely" from my bridge experience of playing fourth suit forcing. It had no assigned partnership meaning that I was aware of. My assertion is that *it was neither of the above*, because §2.1. is quite clear – a convention requires prior agreement [without doubt this includes tacit agreement].

### Our Tournament Director.

"If there is no systemic agreement, then you obviously cannot disclose it and you should not attempt to do so. Whether you should alert is a more interesting question. An action that is obviously conventional would still require you to alert even if you don't know what it means! When someone asks, you just say that it is not natural, but you and your partner have not discussed the sequence and hence you don't know what partner is trying to impart....."

### Summary and suggestion:

None of this addressed McCance's dictum: *No information, no alert.*

I stand by this mainly on the grounds that the ABF has, in my view, found a solution:

ABF Alerting Regulations, §3.3 *Delayed Alerts:*

"At the end of the auction, the *declaring* side should draw attention to any unusual features, particularly any unusual non-alerted calls." (For the whole of §3.3 go to [www.abf.com.au](http://www.abf.com.au))

So why can't non-natural bids that are not the subject of any partnership agreement (explicit or inferential) be treated by delayed alert?

**Bill:**

We'll get to that in a moment!

In general, I agree with you – when you have no idea what it means, then there is little reason to alert. If IMcC (whoever he or she is) truly had no idea what 3♥ meant, and "natural" was a possible intention of partner's, then no alert was required. But Laurie's point is a good one: if you think the bid is artificial, but you don't know what sort of artificiality it is, then you should alert it.

It would go like this: "Alert!" - "Yes?" - "Undiscussed ... *but I don't think it's natural.*" This gives the opponents an important opportunity to double or compete in the suit just bid ... something they can't sensibly do if the bid is natural.

Let's take a fairly simple uncontested auction:

1♦ - 1♠ - 3♣

You haven't discussed it, but general knowledge of your partner tells you that 3♣ is a spade raise and is some form of shape-showing bid, but does it show a shortage (splinter) in clubs, or does it show a fragment in clubs and a shortage in hearts? You have no idea, but you should alert it, because one thing it does not show is a big hand with the minors. Someone may want to double 3♣, as lead-directing or suggesting a save. But if 3♣ is strong and natural, it would be folly for the opponents to double.

The issue of transmitting unauthorised information when you alert and say "undiscussed" is not really relevant. If you don't alert, then you are also transmitting unauthorised information (that you don't think, or don't know, that the bid is conventional). Auctions like this are always

drenched in unauthorised information – it is up to your partner to do the right thing and ignore it.

Finally, ABF regulation 3.3 about the declaring side alerting at the end of the auction. This is an important regulation, and it is vital that players abide by it, and clear up any possible misunderstanding at the end of the auction. Its main intention, I think, is for a player to clear up *his own* bids, along the lines of "my partner didn't alert 3♣ but it was a splinter." Only the declaring side can make use of 3.3 – defenders have to keep mum about these things, because their partner is still in play.

The limitation of alerting at the end of the auction is that it's too late for the opponents to do any bidding based on the alert.

**Ian:**

You seem to be regarding *conventional* and *non-natural* as interchangeable. I don't think this is so: the ABF defines *conventional* as involving agreement. In doing so, as I have pointed out, it leaves *non-natural* undefined and undiscussed.

As to your example, a jump rebid, this is alertable, since it involves agreement, or at any rate strong implication, of a fit.

As to opponents wanting to double, if you double a bid at the 3-level in an ongoing auction then you must have a stack in that suit – doubling for the lead is fanciful. So I can't see that it matters whether the bid is natural or not.

I am sticking to the dictum – "Alert" must mean "There is *information*".

**Bill:**

Players should not need to have a PhD in semantics in order to conform to the alert regulations. So for me, "conventional" = "non-natural" is close enough.

My advice: if you think partner's suit bid is not showing length in that suit, or his notrump bid is not suggesting notrumps as a final contract, then let's see a circle around it.

## PRO-AM EVENING AT THE VBA Andrew Halmos

On Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September, the VBA ran a so called Pro-Am evening. The objective of the event was to introduce and enthuse some new players into the joy and tribulations of competition and duplicate bridge. Cathie Lachman's concept and organisation created this pleasant interaction of the less experienced with the more experienced players. The so called Pro(fessionals) were asked by Cathie to donate their time and energies to attend. The Am(ateurs) were people who have seen the notices in the VBA and either put their own name down and/or brought a friend along. The group were then matched by drawing names out of a hat. The winners are listed on page 7.

One would think that it was a one way learning exercise, but after years (decades) of playing, it really brings you back to reality when you have to explain without jargon the logic behind your bid or play. People really enjoyed the interaction and the game, which consisted of 10 rounds of two boards. Everyone learned something. Cathie organised some sandwiches and wine to enhance the activities and of course Alex's coffee and cakes were ever available.

Cathie specifically asked that we thank the Pros contributing their time, but I am sure that their motivation was to give something back to bridge for all the pleasures we have received over the years, and encourage more people to become addicted like us. The pros were: Lilli Allgood, Sam Arber, the Atkinsons, Michael Chrapot, Neil Ewart, Bob Gallus, the Gaspars, the Halmoses, Blaine Howe, Bill Jacobs, the Kelsos, Grant Kilvington, Cathie Lachman, Belinda Lindsay, Len Meyer, Jill Magee, Ian McCance, Gloria Peston, Charlie Snashall, Sara Tishler, Robbie Van Riel and Meredith Woods. So you can see it was a family affair in many ways. If you missed out on the fun this time, I'm sure you can volunteer for next time. Cathie intends to repeat this every six months or so.

A brilliant idea, well executed!



## IT'S ALL IN THE TIMING - CONTINUED

You have sensibly taken time to think about a difficult 6♣ contract.

- ♠ 52
- ♥ AK10753
- ♦ K3
- ♣ K98

- ♠ KQ8764
- ♥ -
- ♦ AQ6
- ♣ AQ103

You win the diamond lead in dummy, and play a spade to your king. Both (strong) opponents follow low, without any apparent thought.

How do you continue? Try to be specific. Then turn to page 6.



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## BIDDING EXAM – ANYONE FOR HEARTS? Bill Jacobs

Sit this examination by covering the page with a piece of paper and revealing the problems one by one. When you see: "What do you bid", stop and consider.

You have agreed to play "Standard American Yellow Card" (strong notrumps, 5-card majors) with a strong partner. All vulnerable at IMPs, you deal yourself:

♠ AQJ7  
♥ J106  
♦ J3  
♣ AQ42

*What do you bid?*

---

Standard American stipulates 15 to 17 for a 1NT opening. This 15 count is grotty, but the heart 10 is a worthwhile value in tandem with the jack, and it would be a dangerous decision to downgrade when vulnerable at IMPs.

You open 1NT, partner responds 2♦, transferring to hearts, you bid 2♥ and partner now bids 3♦ (natural and forcing).

*What do you bid?*

---

Those black quacks scream "bid 3NT". Should you suppress the three card heart support and ruffing value? It's tempting, but it is a deep position. You could be open to an attack in clubs (opposite ♠Kx ♥Qxxxx ♦AQxxx ♣x), or even diamonds (opposite ♠Kx ♥KQxxx ♦xxxx ♣Kx). Better to take the honest route with 3♥ - after all, partner can still suggest 3NT.

You bid 3♥, and partner bids 4♦.

*What do you bid?*

---

Partner is rounding out a 5-5 shape, but is he trying for slam? That is not clear, and you should discuss it after the session, but for now, the black quacks are sending a new message: "we're worthless". With a total of 2 points in partner's suit, it's time to apply the brakes with 4♥.

You bid 4♥, partner continues with 4NT (key card for hearts), you respond 5♥ (two key cards, no heart queen), and partner now continues with 5♠. What now?

*What do you bid?*

---

Well, this is virgin territory. According to the system, 5NT would show possession of all the key cards and ask you to cue-bid kings. Maybe 5♠ sends the same message, but leaves you room to cue the spade king (via 5NT). It's another discussion point that you have to leave until later. Maybe partner is really interested in the diamond king for his grand slam try.

In any case, you are lacking an outside king of any colour, so meekly return to 6♥. Partner now shocks you with a 6♠ bid! What now?

*What do you bid?*

---

There are two possibilities: partner is crazy, or he is making a final grand-slam try, with 6NT in reserve. You can do little about the first option, but the second requires thought. Partner has at least AKQxx in hearts and the diamond ace.

Let's consider the diamond suit. Partner knows you lack the king, so if he also lacks it, then he must consider there's a good chance of discarding all four of his diamonds on the black suits. He must then have both black kings, and those black quacks are finally trumpeting "cash us" - indeed in this scenario, you have seven black tricks, five hearts and one diamond, for 13 tricks.

More likely partner has the diamond king - in that case, would he make a grand slam try without a black king? Even with xx-AKQxx-AKQxx-x, he can see that 7♥ is only on a finesse, if he trusts your earlier bidding - he wouldn't consider it. No, if partner has the diamond king, he will also have a black king, and you have a solid play for 7♥ by ruffing one or even two diamonds.

Somewhat nervously, you bid 7♥ to end the auction. After a trump lead, partner tables: ♠6 ♥AKQ97 ♦AK652 ♣K8. You carefully ruff diamonds with the jack and ten to score up your grand. It has been a remarkable auction indeed:

- 1NT - 2♦
- 2♥ - 3♦
- 3♥ - 4♦
- 4♥ - 4NT
- 5♥ - 5♠
- 6♥ - 6♠
- 7♥ - Pass

So, you pass this bidding exam if, after the 1NT opening, you bid minimum hearts at every opportunity.

**SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS**

**Problem 1:**

Dealer: E ♠ Q5  
 Vul: E/W ♥ K108  
 ♦ Q54  
 ♣ K8753

♠ 3  
 ♥ A5  
 ♦ J10963  
 ♣ Q10942

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	3♠
Pass		All pass	

Partner leads ♣J, which runs to ♣A. Declarer leads ♠6; partner pounces on this with ♠4 and leads ♥Q, covered by ♥K and you win ♥A. Next card?

**Problem 2:**

Dealer: W ♠ 542  
 Vul: Both ♥ QJ4  
 ♦ KJ6432  
 ♣ A

♠ Q109  
 ♥ 108  
 ♦ 8  
 ♣ Q1087654

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	All pass	

You lead ♣10 to dummy's ♣A. A diamond to ♦Q wins the next trick, and you discard a club on the next diamond, which is won by partner's ♦A. Partner switches to the ♠6 to declarer's ♠7 and your ♠9 wins. Next?

Solutions on Page 8.

**IT'S ALL IN THE TIMING - CONTINUED**

♠ 52  
 ♥ AK10753  
 ♦ K3  
 ♣ K98

♠ KQ8764  
 ♥ -  
 ♦ AQ6  
 ♣ AQ103

In 6♣, you have won the diamond lead and played a spade to the king winning.

There are now two possible lines:

**Line A:** Play a low spade from your hand. If this is won by the ace, then you simply have to negotiate the trumps. If it's won cheaply, then attempt to ruff the third spade in dummy and then draw trumps.

(It would be a mistake to try Line A1: cross to dummy's club king and lead another spade up. This risks a third spade being played and ruffed with the club jack. And if RHO has the spade ace, then it is just as effective to lead spades out of your hand.)

**Line B:** Cross ruff the hand, with twist. Two top diamonds pitching your remaining spade from dummy, heart ace-king, heart ruff, leaving:

♠ -  
 ♥ 1075  
 ♦ -  
 ♣ K9

♠ Q8  
 ♥ -  
 ♦ -  
 ♣ AQ10

If this has all stood up, you can claim. Ruff a spade with the *king*, then ruff a heart with the *ace*. Now you can ruff your last spade with the 9, not caring if it gets overruffed.

Which is it to be? Choose, and go to page 8.

## HOW TO GUESS A QUEEN (2)

Terence Reese describes a novel way of guessing a queen in his book "Practical Bidding and Practical Play", one of the greatest ever bridge books, by the way. He was in 6NT on this layout, with the lead of the club jack:

- ♠ A64
- ♥ A75
- ♦ QJ953
- ♣ 43
  
- ♠ KQJ
- ♥ KJ10
- ♦ K1062
- ♣ AK7

He won the club, forced out the diamond ace, took the club return and cashed a diamond which were 2-2. He now needed to find the heart queen for the contract.

He cleverly pushed the spade jack through the little old lady on his left, and discovered that she hesitated slightly with her nothing holding in spades. Having "calibrated" his opponent's gamesmanship technique, he crossed back to hand and played the heart jack. When LHO played low without a flicker, he successfully finessed her for the queen! (This was Reese at his most sexist and ageist ... IMCC)



## RECENT RESULTS

### Pro-Am evening

#### North/South

- 1 Spencer David – Ian McCance
- 2 Tim Blizard – Gloria Peston
- 3 Alan Johnston – Laurie Kelso

#### East/West

- 1 Elizabeth Williams – Charlie Snashall
- 2 Mary Betuna – Grant Kilvington
- 3 Margaret Kelly – Andrew Halmos

### Grand Prix Pairs

- 1 G. Gaspar – D. White
- 2 B. Barned – H. Lyngsjo
- 3 J. Collins – S. Klofa

## VBA Club Championship Standings as of 30/9

- 1 G. Gaspar
- 2 R. Lel
- 3= K. Lee
- 3= B. Tencer
- 3= G. Wikiski

## August Duplicate Champions

*Mon afternoon:* Tess Gillies (=2: Freda Hirsh, Jean Pearce)

*Mon evening:* =1: Michael Broder, Maurice Gross

*Tue evening:* Lilli & Ray Allgood

*Thu afternoon:* Lilli Allgood & Peter Havlicek

*Thu evening:* Isaac Kiven & Nathan Kohn

*Sat afternoon:* John Bennett & Maurice Brumer

## 70% Solutions

Anyone who can score 70%+ in a duplicate session deserves recognition! In September, Irene Elliott and Ivan Margitta scored 70.83% in a Thursday evening duplicate.



## Get Set for Canberra

**STEP 1**  
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