

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

March 2005

Editors: Ian McCance & Bill Jacobs

VICTORIAN WOMEN'S SELECTION PROCESS - CHANGES

The new VBA Council, having considered comments by a range of players from a number of Victorian bridge clubs, has decided to return the Victorian Women's Team Stage One Selection Trial to Wednesday night. It is to be run concurrently with, but separately from, the Fred Altman Swiss Pairs on March 30th, April 6th, 13th, 20th, and 27th but not necessarily for five weeks.

The Second Stage of the Women's Team selection, for those pairs who qualify, will be held on April 30th and May 1st.

The other state-level Senior's and Women's Championships scheduled for Tuesday nights have been **cancelled** for 2005. The timing of the VBA club-level Senior's Selection Heat remains unchanged (April 19, 26 and May 3).

Victorian State events are played at the VBA and are open to all ABF-registered players.

VBA Match & Tournament Committee
15th February, 2005

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SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: W ♠ Q76
Vul: N/S ♥ AK73
♦ AQ2
♣ Q95

♠ AK5
♥ J652
♦ 73
♣ J842

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|--------|-------|
| Pass | 1♣* | D'ble# | Pass |
| 2♥ | Pass | Pass | 3♦ |
| Pass | 3NT | Pass | 4♦ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

* Precision
Majors

You start with ♠A and follow ♠K, partner following ♠2 then ♠3. What next?

Problem 2:

Dealer: E ♠ 10932
Vul: N/S ♥ QJ92
♦ 104
♣ 754

♠ A64
♥ 765
♦ 93
♣ 98632

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 3♣# | Pass | 2NT* |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | 3NT# |

* 20-22 HCP
Puppet: opener has no 4 or 5 card major

Partner starts with ♠7. You win ♠A (South playing ♠5) and have to decide how to proceed.

Solutions on page 7.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

THE OTHER SIDE

Blaine Howe

When playing in long bridge events you need to train and prepare and have a little physical discipline if you want to get the best out of yourself and your team, just as in other sports.

Bridge players tend to ignore this side of bridge a lot and go in keen, resolute and try to play their best game. For most of us it is not enough...

As I was playing in the SWPT this year with a particularly good set of teammates who were all fierce competitors, I tried to do all of the right things so that on the last day of the Swiss when it matters to your final position I was in as good a physical and mental shape as I could reasonably be.

This year when I started play on Thursday I felt I was as ready to do battle as I was on Monday morning and I know that for me it made a significant difference. The stuff below is what I did to get there.

1. *Write it Down*

Write your agreements down and have a copy each to refresh your memory occasionally. Most important is to delete anything you would not both happily use in the last round in an important match (it has taken me a long time to learn this...). Learn it before you go and don't waste energy revisiting it during the event.

2. *Practice Sessions*

Have practice sessions with your partner near the event. Online bridge is great for this. In the week before going to Canberra Neil and I played 3 sessions equivalent to a full evening each on BridgeBase against the strongest set of opponents we could organise. Doing this with your teammates helps everyone.

3. *Alcohol*

None until you have played your last board for the day and minimal in the two hours before you go to bed. Also minimise late night eating, especially sweet stuff. A tough ask but there it is.

4. *Sleep*

The most important thing of all. Do whatever you need to do to get a good night's sleep every night. Alcohol and food have a significant effect on the quality of my sleep so I have to watch what I eat and drink late. Each hour's sleep you miss will cost you something on the scoreboard.

5. *Diet and Exercise*

I take a vitamin capsule plus a fish-oil capsule and eat plenty of fruit and vegetables when I am away. Small regular meals are the go for me. No large serves of heavy food and things like salad plus meat or cheese mountain bread wraps for lunch. Plenty of walking helps keep your system chugging along.

6. *Lots of Water*

Drinking lots of water seems to make a difference and I always had a bottle of water at the table during play. Also, cutting down on the caffeine by drinking a bit less coffee and diet coke at the same time helps my nerves – too much of the stuff gets you jangly at the table and can make you impulsive.

7. *Low Energy Scoreups*

Write down the scores without discussion, check the result and then relax for the next match. Discuss quietly a couple of things that your partnership agreement wasn't working on but make it short and then let it go. Don't criticise your teammates' actions even (maybe especially...) if asked. A corollary to this is no system changes – I repeat – no system changes during the event.

You don't have to be on a strong team, you just have to want to get the best result you can in a given week for the team you are on. The next time you really want to get the best finish you can, think about this stuff.



Correction: Sid Dunk was tickled pink to get acknowledgement for writing the poem "The Last Trump" in last month's newsletter, but has pointed out that the actual poet was in fact one A. B. (Banjo) Paterson.

ASK BILLIAN

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| ♠ QJ10653 | ♠ K2 |
| ♥ 8 | ♥ AQ |
| ♦ 764 | ♦ AK105 |
| ♣ 1032 | ♣ AJ876 |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| | 2♥ | 3NT | Pass |
| ? | | | |

Here is a query through Tor Helness of Norway, who bid 3NT with the South hand in the 2001 World Championship. His partner had to decide what to do after the 3NT overcall. Since his partnership plays 4♠ as slam invitational here, he couldn't see any alternative to pass. However, 3NT was a terrible contract, and 4♠ was cold. What methods do you recommend after partner overcalls 3NT?

Bill: It would be nice to distinguish between hands that just want to play four of a major and those that want to invite. The method that I have played over the last 8 years or so is as follows:

- 4♣ is Baron, with at least slam-try values, asking partner to bid suits up the line.
- 4♦ is a form of Flint, saying that I want to sign off somewhere. Partner puppets to 4♥ and then passes the next bid.
- 4♥, 4♠, 5♣ and 5♦ are invitational – because with the weak hand, you go via 4♦. (If the opponent's suit is a major, then cue-bidding that major would be a minor suit slam try.)
- 4NT is quantitative.

Using this method Tor, you can have your cake and eat it.

Ian: I believe most of our readers would not have discussed it. Accordingly I think the solution is intuitive, and 4♠ would be to play. I think treating it as forward-going is against the percentages because games are more likely than slams. Even a weakness 4-of-a-minor (not forcing) might be commoner than slam hands.

A strongish hand could cue, but I think it's too hard to remember what the 3NT-ist is supposed to do, even if there was an agreement.

This situation should be distinguished from 3NT after an opening 3-bid, where 3NT might have much less in hand than the jump to 3NT.

Bill: Well, it is true that in the eight years of playing my excellent methods it hasn't yet come up. And I admit that if and when it does, it's not certain that either me or my partner will remember it!

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

RECENT RESULTS

Ailsa Tandy Eclectic Pairs

- 1 B. Barned – H. Lyngsjo
- 2 M. Balint – S. Shub
- 3 S. Gerdan – R. Szabo-Bence

Ramsden Handicap Pairs

- 1 M. Tencer – M. Chrapot
- 2 J. Alexander – G. Gaspar
- 3 C. Lachman – J. Chan

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

BRIDGE AND THE INTERNET (3) REC.GAMES.BRIDGE Bill Jacobs

Rec.games.bridge is a newsgroup devoted to bridge. It is a forum in which anyone with an internet connection can post any material, and followup posts are maintained by subject thread.

Because there is no supervision or restriction on material, RGB covers the whole gamut of the game, from the technical (what do you bid? how should you play this? whose fault was it?), to the procedural (directors' rulings, alert regulations) and elsewhere (detecting cheating, puzzles, bridge politics).

The standard of contribution to RGB, both technical and general, is quite high. Several world-class players contribute, and certainly if you are interested in a bidding or play issue, you will receive a very complete and worthwhile response. Of course, there are some contributors who have a heavily over-inflated opinion of themselves, but you can learn to ignore them.

Accessing RGB

There are several ways to hook up to RGB. The simplest is to use Google: point your browser at www.groups.google.com and select rec.games.bridge. This will allow you to look at all articles posted to this newsgroup. To post, you create an account for yourself.

Alternatively, you can use a news program and access a news server. This is a bit more complicated, but results in a user interface that is tailored for news groups.

One news program that is available to almost everyone is Outlook Express. This program supports both email and news. From the Accounts section in the Tools menu, you can add a link to a news server (a computer that stores all the news articles). Your ISP will most likely have one of these servers: for example, Optus has a news server "news.optusnet.com.au".

RGB Sampler

It is difficult to give a true feel for RGB in a short article. But here are a few technical problems all originating in RGB.

1. As South, you hold this monster:

♠ 6532 ♥ 92 ♦ 763 ♣ 8542

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | | Pass | Pass |
| 1NT | D'ble | 2♥ | Pass |
| Pass | D'ble | Pass | ? |

Systemically, partner's second double just shows extra strength, for example about 20 points. Your bid.

2. In the following layout:

| | | |
|-----|---------|----|
| | A106532 | |
| J84 | | K7 |
| | Q9 | |

declarer needs to run this suit at notrumps, but has no entries to dummy. He is in dummy at trick one, but can cross to hand if desired.

How should the suit be played? Can declarer run the suit?

3.

Matchpoints ♠ Q5
 Vul: N/S ♥ A7
 ♦ K52
 ♣ K96543

 ♠ AK8732
 ♥ K1095
 ♦ A
 ♣ 107

| | | | |
|------|-------|-------|----------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | 1♣ | Pass | 1♠ |
| 2NT | Pass | 4♦ | 4♠ |
| Pass | Pass | D'ble | All pass |

The lead is a low club. East wins the jack and ace (as West discards), and plays a third club.

What if anything do you ruff with?

4. What do the following two deals have in common?

| | | |
|--------|---------|--------|
| | ♠ A5 | |
| | ♥ 76432 | |
| | ♦ 10973 | |
| | ♣ AK | |
| ♠ J108 | | ♠ 9732 |
| ♥ KQ98 | | ♥ A |
| ♦ AQ6 | | ♦ J842 |
| ♣ 1082 | | ♣ 6543 |
| | ♠ KQ64 | |
| | ♥ J105 | |
| | ♦ K5 | |
| | ♣ QJ97 | |

and

| | | |
|---------|--------|--------|
| | ♠ 9643 | |
| | ♥ 105 | |
| | ♦ AKQ8 | |
| | ♣ J42 | |
| ♠ KJ | | ♠ AQ87 |
| ♥ 864 | | ♥ Q973 |
| ♦ J75 | | ♦ 642 |
| ♣ AKQ83 | | ♣ 97 |
| | ♠ 1052 | |
| | ♥ AKJ2 | |
| | ♦ 1093 | |
| | ♣ 1065 | |

Solutions overleaf.

1. When this problem was posed on RGB, no-one knew whether to pass the double or bid 2♠. Most posters agreed that the method being played was inferior – you should play either clear penalty doubles or clear takeout doubles in this situation. The actual meaning, which could be described as “optional”, gives partner no real clue of what to do.

The reason this problem is included here is that one poster had a suggestion which I hadn't seen before. He said that when you double 1NT, and they run to a suit, you should play penalty doubles if they bid a minor, and takeout doubles if they bid a major!

There are two good reasons for this: one is that 2♣ and 2♦ doubled are not game, so there is less arithmetic risk to doubling 2 of a minor. The more important issue is that a rescue to 2♣ or 2♦ is often psychic, with the bidder planning to redouble for rescue. In this scenario, it is entirely possible that with takeout doubles in place, both opponents have a penalty double of the rescue, and the result is that the contract is passed out! And taking 50s or 100s might not be enough.

2. Declarer's best play is not obvious, but *whatever* he does, the defence can counter by playing low cards on the first trick!

3. If spades are 3-2, you are laughing; if they are 5-0, you are crying. What about a likely 4-1 break? If West's singleton is the 6 or 4, you must ruff with the 7. If West's singleton is the jack, 10 or 9, you must ruff with the ace! (Not the king, which is insufficiently spectacular.)

So the correct play is to ruff high.

4. No one can make anything.

TWELFTH TRICK – SOLUTION
Bill Jacobs

(see top of next column)

11 tricks in 6NT are easy to see, and you hope the twelfth trick will come from clubs. If either East or West has both honours, then the result is pre-ordained. But if the honours are split ...

- ♠ 102
- ♥ Q
- ♦ AK10732
- ♣ 10642

- ♠ AQ65
- ♥ AKJ
- ♦ Q98
- ♣ KJ9

Often the bidding can help with the club guess; however in this case, unless you have inside information on East's habits, there is no strong indicator on whether he holds the ace or queen.

One way to approach the play is to cash as many tricks as possible and look carefully at the discards. A defender with the club queen is likely to hang on to low club cards, so that the queen won't drop. Conversely, a defender with the club ace may discard low clubs as they are of no particular value. So you could run diamonds and play for the defender who discards more clubs to have the ace.

But did you spot an interesting alternative? Cross to dummy in diamonds and lead a club at trick three, playing either the king or jack. For the sake of argument, let's say you play the king and it loses to West's ace. Drat!

Try not to let out a groan of despair - look at the problem from West's perspective. He needs to return a club to his partner's queen immediately! Suppose he plays a red suit instead (he doesn't have a second spade to lead). You cash your hearts and run the diamond suit – leading to the following:

- ♠ 2
- ♥ -
- ♦ 2
- ♣ 10

- K9
-
-
- Q

- ♠ A5
- ♥ -
- ♦ -
- ♣ J

When the last diamond is played, East is squeezed in the black suits.

Thanks to Leonie Szabo for the following interesting memorabilia:

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