

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

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PARTNERSHIP COMPATIBILITY QUIZ

Warning: What follows is a non-working quiz. The only real way to get an outcome from this quiz is for you and your regular partner to answer it independently, and then compare your results.

This will result in you either:

1. finding out that you are a compatible partnership, or
2. you never speaking to your partner again.

We therefore recommend that if you are looking for a result, you both submit your answers to a trustworthy third party who will provide a final score.

All five questions relate to you and your most regular partner.

Question 1.

Comparing you and your regular partner, are you:

- A. a far superior bridge player
- B. a mildly superior bridge player
- C. about the same quality of player
- D. a mildly inferior bridge player
- E. a far inferior bridge player

Question 2.

Your partner invites you to an evening meal, perhaps just the two of you, or maybe including life partners. You are free that night. Do you:

- A. accept the invitation and look forward to meal and perhaps some bridge conversation
- B. invent a previous engagement and give your regrets

Question 3.

You and your partner are both free next Thursday and agree to "practise". Which of these is your preference?

- A. Play bridge, either a duplicate, or an online game, or organize a teams match
- B. Bid hands, using a program from the internet, or directly on the internet

Question 4.

You are in 4th seat, vulnerable against not atimps, and the auction proceeds:

LHO	Pard	RHO	You
4♦	4♥	5♦	?

You have a hand on which you would like to bid 5NT. Which of the following most closely matches your thought processes?

- A. I'm confident my partner knows that 5NT is the Grand-Slam-Force, so I will bid it.
- B. I'm confident my partner knows that 5NT is "Pick-a-Slam", so I will bid it.
- C. I am not confident my partner knows what 5NT means, but I'll bid it anyway and hope he works it out.
- D. I am not confident my partner will understand 5NT as I intend it, so I will bid something else.

Question 5.

You are in 2nd seat, vulnerable against not, holding:

♠ 5 ♥ AK9875 ♦ 72 ♣ KJ109

The auction proceeds, surprise, surprise:

RHO	You	LHO	Pard
4♦	4♥	5♦	5NT
Pass	?		

What do you bid?

- A. 7♥, definitely
- B. 6♣, definitely
- C. Something, with some excitement, not much confidence
- D. I don't know, something I suppose - what is partner doing to me?

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: S ♠ J10954
 Vul: E/W ♥ AJ84
 ♦ 72
 ♣ J10

♠ 3
 ♥ 63
 ♦ AK853
 ♣ A9742

West	North	East	South
			1♥
2NT	4♥	All pass	

You cash ♦AK, partner playing ♦4, ♦6 (reverse count) or ♦6, ♦4 (natural). Declarer follows ♦9, ♦J.

What next?

Problem 2:

Dealer: E ♠ Q85
 Vul: E/W ♥ Q1052
 ♦ AQJ53
 ♣ J

♠ K1093
 ♥ J7
 ♦ K1076
 ♣ 654

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

* 15-17

Partner starts ♣K, which wins, and he switches to ♥6. Your ♥J falls to ♥A and declarer finesses to ♦J. You win this, a move you might later have regretted, and return ♣6. Partner's ♣7 holds, and this time he switches to ♠6. declarer calls for dummy's ♠Q, and when you cover, ♠K wins the trick.

What is your next card?

Solutions on page 8.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

THE TWELFTH TRICK

Dealer: N ♠ A105
 Vul: nil ♥ AQ106
 ♦ 43
 ♣ Q873

♠ KJ82
 ♥ J987432
 ♦ -
 ♣ A4

West	North	East	South
	1♦*	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

* Precision

A trump is led – you cleverly play the ace dropping RHO's king. Now what?

Solution on Page 4.

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

Congratulations to the following members who have been recently promoted to a higher grade of Master:

- Graduate Master Jeremy Goldberg
- Club Master Tim Blizard
 Phillip Nankin
 Peter Yuill
- Local Master Helen Abeles
- **Local Master Kay Leeton
- *Regional Master Sam Herskope
- Silver Life Master Lyndy Hickman

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

Bad Bridge Players

Two women were debating whose husband is the worst bridge player in the world. Wife #1 says: "Last night my husband was playing 7NT with 12 top tricks. He had the ♠AQ in dummy and needed the finesse for thirteen. The finesse was onside, but he wound up in dummy at trick twelve and led the ♠Q from the dummy!"

Wife #2 says, "What's so terrible about that? Against *my* husband, that play works!"

THE PARTNERSHIP BATTLEGROUND - 2

Bill Jacobs

CHOOSING A PARTNER

What are the attributes of your ideal partner? I asked my wife Diana this question, and she gave me:

1. A better player than her
2. Someone that she likes and can socialize with
3. Someone with a genuine sense of ethics

That seems like a good list, although there is clearly a problem with attribute number 1: if both partners require this, only one can achieve it.

To this I would add:

4. Someone with a similar approach to complexity and detail of system agreements
5. Someone who likes to practise the same way (and frequency!) as I do

Call me a mad scientist, but I feel the need to create an appropriate experiment to measure all this ... hence the quiz on page 1.

Quiz "Answers"

Question 1.

Well, where do you think you sit on the quality scale from A. "far superior" to E. "far inferior"?

To me, the answer to this question is the crux of any partnership. Not the *truth* of the matter, but the *perception* of the matter.

The most frequent answer to this question, worldwide, is I am sure B: you think you are a better player than your partner, right? Not *much* better, otherwise you'd be after a new partner, but moderately superior. You know this for a fact, due to observation of all the mistakes your partner makes, mistakes you would never be guilty of.

You realise that you make mistakes – we all do – but most of yours are due to one of the following reasons:

- not feeling very well: have had a bad cold lately so it's hard to concentrate
- shocking day at work: just so tired
- my play might have worked on a different layout: this was an "expert's error"
- played too quickly: we're not in contention in this event, so am not giving it my full attention

Your partner's mistakes however are more due to innate lack of talent!

Sorry, but when you both answer B, at least one of you has to be wrong. In this situation, the truth of the matter is probably C (equal quality), and if you can both recognize that, then mutual respect will be fostered.

For a compatible partnership, you must answer consistently with your partner: A&E, B&D or C&C. Note: A&E, where one player thinks he is much better than the other, whilst the other player agrees, thinking he is much worse, can be an extremely successful combination: this is proved by the performance of many sponsor-professional partnerships over the years.

A combination of D&D, or E&E, where both partners think they are the weak link, could work in theory, but I doubt that it has ever been put to the test!

Question 2.

This one's simple. You do need to like your partner, because all partnerships come under stress as mistakes are made. Friendship will provide the necessary buffer. So one would hope that both partners answer A to this question.

This article does not attempt to deal with bridge partnership compatibility between life partners. Too hard!

Question 3.

If you're serious about improving your partnership, you do need practice, and most importantly system practice.

Bidding hands is a more efficient way of practising, no doubt, because simply playing involves a lot of time where nothing is being practised, for example, dull hands, or hands

where you have no cards. But current tools not only allow you to bid hands where you have plenty of high cards, but you can also tailor the hands to certain auctions. If you want to practise your 1NT methods for example, it's easy to get the computer to construct pairs of hands involving 1NT openings.

If you want to practise remotely (both in your own home), then you can take either the "play" option or the "bidding" option by using BridgeBase Online (www.bridgebase.com: it's all free).

If you want to meet and bid hands, you can print out controlled sets of hands using a number of free products: Richard Pavlicek's site (www.rpbridge.net) is one of the best.

If one of you likes to play, whilst the other likes to bid hands, then you might have an incompatibility problem.

If neither of you want to practice, then you are compatible, but don't expect to win anything much!

Questions 4 and 5.

Here's a matched set. A partnership where one player wants to have a definite agreement about 5NT bids and the other isn't that interested in such complexity is not going to work out in the long term.

You and your partner need to give the same answer to each question. So if you both answer A to both questions, then you have a partnership in heaven that agrees that 5NT asks for two top honours in hearts (the 5NT bidder has ♠ AKQJx ♥ Qxx ♦ - ♣ Axxxx). A set of B's indicates that you are on the same "pick a slam" wavelength (5NT is bid on ♠ AQxx ♥ xx ♦ A ♣ AQxxxx).

A pair of C's means that you are not certain, but are prepared to give 5NT a whirl and respond as best you can (if you ever play with Rob Fruewirth, you better prepare yourself for option C).

And a pair of D's means that you are both happy not to go into uncharted territory.

But if your answers are different, then the sparks might fly!

TWELFTH TRICK – SOLUTION Bill Jacobs

Dealer: N	♠ A105	
Vul: nil	♥ AQ106	
	♦ 43	
	♣ Q873	
♠ 964		♠ Q73
♥ 5		♥ K
♦ AQ92		♦ KJ108765
♣ K9652		♣ J10
	♠ KJ82	
	♥ J987432	
	♦ -	
	♣ A4	

This one's from the Interstate Butler stage 1. Here's what end-play-king Dan Hohor did.

At trick 2, he ruffed a diamond, then over to the spade ace, diamond ruff, spade king, and now he exited a spade. If the spade queen had dropped doubleton, or an opponent had queen-third of spades and the club king, then he was home (his opponent being endplayed).

No luck.

Another line: eliminate the diamonds and play ace and another club. Win the club return (if available to the opponents ... if either opponent has ♣Kx, he is endplayed), ruff the fourth club to find out who has extra length in clubs, and play the other hand for the spade queen.

Bingo.

Which line is better? The one that works, right? But if you were doing a calculation at the table, how would you go about it? Gut feel, or a detailed calculation based on your encyclopaedic knowledge of the probabilities?

I can't answer for gut feel, but I can use a card combination analyser to work out the probabilities.

The first line needs Q(x) in spades in either hand (18.6%) or Qxx of spades in either hand, with the club king (half of 35.5% or 17.75%). Total chance: 36.35%.

The second line must demonstrably be at least 50%, since you are guessing to finesse

someone for the spade queen, and are using distributional information to make that guess greater than 50%. Plus you have the chance of someone with K(x) in clubs. The calculation here is more complex, but I think it comes to somewhere between 65% and 70%.

If you are deep into self-analysis, there is a lot to be learned from this problem. Did you see both lines? (Assuming you saw the correct second line, are you worried if you didn't even think of the first line?) If you saw both lines, how did you compare them? Is there a third line somewhere that I haven't thought of?

RECENT RESULTS

Ern Palfreyman Teams

Final

- 1 C. Snashall, H. Snashall, J. Selwyn, S. Gerdan
- 2 S. Klofa, M. Woods, J. Collins, T. Chira, D. Hohor

Plate

- 1 K. Chan, A. Lasocki, R. Gallus, B. Howe
- 2 J. Fleiszig, G. Fleiszig, Y. Millman, M. Tildesley

Consolation

- 1 C. Hughes, J. Gaspar, S. Collins, A. Czapnik
- 2 R. van Riel, D. Smart, G. Kilvington, F. Beale, I. McCance
- 3 L. Hickman, P. Corrigan, V. Muntz, K. Muntz

Victorian Butler Stage 2

North-South

- 1 C. Chua – S. Hinge
- 2 D. Morgan – J. Stark
- 3 R. Gallus – W. Jacobs

East-West

- 1 S. Lester – A. Mill
- 2 B. Howe – N. Ewart
- 3 C. Snashall – G. Kilvington

“Last Train” Qualifiers

- 1 V. Goldberg – M. Chrapot

**BUTLER STAGE 2
Bill Jacobs**

Let's start with a play problem:

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| ♠ KQ4 | ♠ A972 |
| ♥ A84 | ♥ 93 |
| ♦ KJ102 | ♦ A93 |
| ♣ A96 | ♣ K1074 |

As *East*, you play 3NT: 1NT (11-14) - 3NT. South leads ♥K, North encourages with the ♥2, you duck. South then continues ♥Q, ducked, and ♥10 to your ♥A, as North follows up the line. Plan the play.

Next up, I am duty bound to report a historic event: a weak 2♦ by Bob Gallus that actually worked.

- | | |
|-----------|----------|
| Dealer: S | ♠ 10 |
| Vul: Both | ♥ 763 |
| | ♦ QJ832 |
| | ♣ AK52 |
| ♠ Q9642 | ♠ AK8 |
| ♥ Q85 | ♥ A4 |
| ♦ 106 | ♦ AK54 |
| ♣ J73 | ♣ Q1096 |
| | ♠ J753 |
| | ♥ KJ1092 |
| | ♦ 97 |
| | ♣ 84 |

West	North	East	South
Gerdan	Gallus	Szabo-Bencze	Jacobs
			Pass
Pass	2♦ (!)	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

2♦ gets an explanation-mark only because it works. In theory, it deserves a bunch of question-marks.

The first trick was ♦9, ♦6, ♦2, ♦5. Declarer quite reasonably ducked all round, hoping that South had no more. The second diamond was won by declarer, who quite correctly played on clubs for her ninth trick. She was very unlucky that Gallus had both club honours, and was able to set the contract with three diamonds and two clubs.

That was extraordinarily irritating – declarer's only consolation was the 4♠ would also go down if the defence find their club ruff.

consider this: would North play an *encouraging* ♥2 from ♥652?

Gripe time

The conditions of contest were that the top 5 pairs from each direction would qualify, together with the "best" 6th. The last and 12th qualifying position would go to the winner of the "Last Train" event to be held the following weekend.

There was a humorous error in the printed regulations. It defined the best 6th, as the 6th placed pair that was "closest" to 5th, defined as the "% relative score".

Hmm, that would have been fun if 5th had been on 0 imps, and 6th had been on -1 imps. Then, assuming my rusty maths is correct, the % relative score would have been $-1/0 * 100 = -\infty\%$. Rather unlucky for finishing only an imp behind 5th.

As it turned out, the N/S 5th and 6th were:

5th: +32
6th: +26.2

And the E/W 5th and 6th were:

5th: -7
6th: -8

Whichever way you calculate it, it appears that the E/W 6th was closer to 5th than the N/S 6th, so it was the E/W 6th that qualified.

I question whether the correct pair qualified. There seems to be good evidence that the pair with a score of 26.2 played better bridge than the pair with a score of -8. It was put to me that the two fields cannot be sensibly compared, but is that really correct? It is true that the imp scores of the two fields don't necessarily add to zero, because outlying scores are discarded from the calculation of averages.

However, I took a look at the final imp scores of the entire field, and as it turned out the average final score of a N/S pair was +3.5 imps, and the average final score of an E/W pair was -3.7 imps. So even with a "standardization" adjustment of 7.2 imps, it seems to me that the N/S 6th was 26 imps to the good of the E/W 6th, and it was somewhat of a travesty that they missed out on qualification.

And how legitimate is this Last Train event anyway? The event will be missing the 11 strong pairs who have already qualified, so could be considered as a test of who can best chop up a weak field. I think the 6th pair who missed out from Stage 2 would have a far stronger claim to Stage 3 qualification than the winner of the Last Train event.

The Last Train should not run again.



FROM ESTORIL
Bill Jacobs

At time of printing the World Championships in Estoril Portugal were down to the semi-final matches. None of the three Australian teams (Open, Women, Seniors) made the quarter-finals.

The Women, with three Victorian representatives, Felicity Beale, Diana Smart and Meredith Woods, ran 11th out of 22 – a respectable performance against the world's best.

If Datums are anything to go by, then the partnership of Meredith Woods and Margaret Bourke was the best performed of the women: their Butler score of +0.22 imps per board placed them in 22nd position out of 73. This is particularly interesting because Meredith and Margaret were playing a somewhat home-grown form of Precision, as pioneered by Dan Hohor and Triain Chira. It seems that the system stood up well!

The Open team was just a little bit disappointing in equal 14th place. A disastrous 6-24 loss to bottom placed Jordan (who only won one other match, narrowly), didn't help. They also lost to Guadeloupe, which must be pretty bad, because I don't even know where Guadeloupe is. I looked it up in Google, as one does, and the first web site returned was www.cia.gov!

Speaking of Datums, Tony Nunn and Sartaj Hans ran 8th in the Open field, a fantastic performance.

The Seniors team finished in a creditable 10th place, still not quite good enough to qualify for the finals.

