

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

April 2006

Editors: Ian McCance & Bill Jacobs

ABOUT BIDDING BOXES

Bidding boxes were used for the Commonwealth Nations Bridge Championship and have for the first time been employed in a VBA event – the knockout rounds of the Pennant.

There is one big advantage to the use of bidding boxes in preference to written bidding – a tree somewhere will say “thank-you”. We hope that the VBA will expand the deployment of bidding boxes to all its bridge sessions.

We are told that bidding boxes will pay for themselves within about a year, so there is no excuse!



2006 VICTOR CHAMPION CUP

Mark in your diary Thursday 8th June through to Monday 12th June to play in Melbourne's annual national event: the Victor Champion Cup, incorporating the VCC, McCance Senior Pairs, Women's Pairs and Restricted Pairs.

The event will once again be held at the Bayview on the Park on Queens Road.

Changes this year:

- The McCance Seniors event will be Swiss Pairs (has been a teams event in the past)
- You can have up to 100 masterpoints and still qualify to play in the Restricted Pairs

Playoff Points and Gold Masterpoints are up for grabs in the VCC, Senior Pairs and Women's Pairs. Red points are available in the Restricted Pairs.

Entry forms are available at your club – you can also download the form from the ABF web site. Get your entry including cheque or bank transfer to convenor Diana Jacobs – via mail, e-mail or fax.

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S PLAYOFF

Hearty congratulations to the two Cathy's, Cathie Lachman and Cathy Mill, on qualifying for the Australian Women's team at the recent playoffs. They are off to Shanghai later in the year to compete in the Far East Championships.

Paula Schroor and Rena Kaplan just missed out on the team, finishing in fourth place.

This continues the trend of excellent Victorian women performances at a national and international level: Felicity Beale, Diana Smart and Meredith Woods playing in the 2005 Australian Women's Team, Jenny Thompson and Jeannette Collins winning the National Women's Teams in Canberra (report next month), and now the two Cathy's.

Ivy Dahler: 1923 – 2006

We regret the passing of Ivy Dahler on the 6th March. Ivy was a wonderful stalwart of Australian bridge over many years: a fine player, administrator and director. She will be truly missed.

Suzie and Ron Klinger, in their obituary for Ivy, tell the following lovely story:

In her young days Ivy was one of the Girl Guides selling programs for one shilling at the Royal Albert Hall in London. A gentleman in uniform with many medals approached Ivy and asked for a program.

“One shilling, please, sir,” she said.

“But I have no money on me,” he said.

“I'm sorry, sir,” she replied.

He walked off and a little later another gentleman with also much regalia approached and bought a program for a shilling. As he left he said to Ivy, “Young lady, His Majesty King George wishes to let you know that he thinks you were quite right not to give him a program.”

Gamesmanship is too strong a word. The high fives in the other sporting arenas would not be regarded as gamesmanship.

And Cathy wasn't having a bar of that:

Well, I beg to differ! What it is called and what it is may not be the same thing. It may be defined as bolstering your side, but making the other side feel bad is just the other side of the same coin.

Witness the disgraceful behaviour of the Australian cricket team - everything they do is to weaken the mental condition of the opponents, including all their congratulatory stuff. And I am sure any sports psychologist telling the truth (for which you would have to pay \$500 an hour) would say just that. When Gilchrist says 'well-done' to Brett Lee as he almost knocks some chap's head off it isn't because the particularly odious Brett Lee needs an ego-boost - it is to put the final nail in the coffin of the bloke he is trying to kill.

I'm with John Armstrong¹: never have I been smacked up by such an utterly charming player and all his partnerships are run in that same wonderful spirit. I think it is best by far to beat the opponents through kindness. And the really best players generally do just that.

IN SUMMARY

So there you have it. Were the Indians encouraging each other in order to promote their own partnership harmony and effectiveness, or were they subtly engaging in gamesmanship tactics?



VBA Seniors' Selection Heat

Tuesday Evenings
April 11, 18 and May 2

Entry Fee: \$14.00
Table Fees: \$10.00

Enter online: www.vba.asn.au

¹ John Armstrong is a world-class English bridge player, who played in the recent CNBC.

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: S ♠ K105
 Vul: E/W ♥ J109763
 ♦ 86
 ♣ Q2

♠ A762
 ♥ AQ2
 ♦ Q7
 ♣ 9873

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT*
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

* 15-17

Dummy's far-from-sparkling holding suggests that this may not be a popular contract. All the more reason to defeat it. Partner gets off to the ♥4 lead, which we win with ♥A. Assuming the lead is from a doubleton (so that ♥Q is a trick), where is our fourth trick?

Problem 2:

Dealer: S ♠ KJ6
 Vul: nil ♥ KJ10
 ♦ K542
 ♣ 1094

♠ A3
 ♥ 9876
 ♦ QJ10
 ♣ A752

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

* 12-14

You start with ♥9, partner following with ♥2 (standard signals). Declarer wins in dummy, and plays ♠K, partner following with ♠5.

You win ♠A and try ♦Q. This wins, partner following with ♦3. What is your next card?

Solutions on page 7.



Autumn Day Pairs

3 week Red Point Day Time Event!



The VBA is conducting a Day Time Red Point Event!

Come Along and Earn Red Points!

Matchpoint Pairs

Thursday Mornings May 4, 11 and 18

Entry Fee: \$10.00

Table Fees: \$8 Members \$10 Non Members

FOR STARTERS ...
Bill Jacobs

You pick up:

- ♠ KQ1094
- ♥ 4
- ♦ AK8
- ♣ A653

and open 1♠. With the opponents passing, partner raises to 2♠. What do you do?

With 16 points and a singleton, your thoughts turn to game. If partner has a maximum raise and cards in the right places, you could well make 4♠. Conversely, the cards could be in all the wrong places, and you should stay out of game.

A simple option here would be to bid 3♠, asking partner to go on to game with a maximum. But you can do better than that. The holes in your hand are in the club suit ... to make game you will need partner to have high cards in clubs, or alternatively a shortage.

The right question to ask here is: "partner, are you maximum and can you help me with the club suit?" You can ask that question with a bid of 3♣, called a "long suit trial bid". It's essentially a natural bid, but because you have already bid and raised spades, it is not an attempt to play in clubs, but instead initiates a dialogue to help you reach the right level.

You bid 3♣ and partner jumps to 4♠. A low trump is led, and you see:

- ♠ A32
- ♥ 8765
- ♦ 976
- ♣ QJ4

- ♠ KQ1094
- ♥ 4
- ♦ AK8
- ♣ A632

What do you do now?

The first thing to do is, of course, to have a think about the hand. In suit contracts, it is normal to count your losers to see if there is an obvious problem up front.

In this case you have three losers you can see in hearts, diamonds and clubs, so you are clearly in with a chance.

Next look at the winners: 5 in spades, 2 in diamonds – you need to develop the clubs for 3 tricks somehow. That will present no problem if the suit is 3-3, as your thirteenth club will be good and you will lose just one trick to the king, but what if the suit is divided 4-2?

How should you play the club suit?

It is tempting to go to dummy with the spade ace and run the club queen, taking the finesse. But does that really help you? If the club king is on-side, East will cover the queen with the king, and because you lack the 10, you will have gained nothing in the suit.

But if *West* has the club king, you can "finesse" for it in a funny sort of way. Win the trump in your hand and play a low club. If *West* has the king, and plays it, then all your clubs are good. And if the club is ducked, you can win the queen, draw the rest of the trumps and play another low club from hand, presenting *West* with the same dilemma.

Meanwhile, if the club queen loses to *East's* king, you have two further chances. Take just one more round of trumps and then play

the club jack and another club. If clubs are 3-3, you can claim, but if they are 4-2, and the player with the doubleton club has no more trumps, you will be able to ruff your long club with dummy's last trump.

The full deal:

♠ A32 ♥ 8765 ♦ 976 ♣ QJ4 ♠ 86 ♥ AQ92 ♦ 542 ♣ K1087 ♠ KQ1094 ♥ 4 ♦ AK8 ♣ A632	♠ J75 ♥ KJ103 ♦ QJ103 ♣ 95
---	-------------------------------------

Notice how West has no winning choices when you keep playing low clubs from your hand towards dummy.

Points to remember:

- Always look for chances in the bidding to consult partner. Bidding is a cooperative exercise, and the worst thing you can do is to get all arrogant, and take all the decisions yourself.

On this hand, try switching partner's hearts and clubs, so

♠ Axx ♥ QJx ♦ xxx ♣ xxxx.

4♠ is hopeless – you have two clubs, a diamond and a heart to lose. And when you make the long suit try in clubs, partner, with a terrible holding in that suit and an overall minimum hand, will reject your invitation and bid 3♠.

- Before taking a finesse, check that it will actually gain you a trick if it works. On this hand, you do actually need to take a finesse, but you are finessing *West* for the king. There are finesses ... and there are finesses.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

THE TWELFTH TRICK

IMPs ♠ KJ10984
 Dealer: S ♥ 62
 Vul: N/S ♦ A5
 ♣ KJ7

♠ A62
 ♥ AKJ10
 ♦ KJ10
 ♣ A32

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	4NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	6♠	All pass	5♣

The opening lead is ♣6. You have finesses galore. Which ones do you take?

Solution on page 8.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

WHAT IS GOING ON (CONTINUED)
Ian McCance

#2
 Dealer: E ♠ AQJ962
 Vul: Both ♥ J
 ♦ 54
 ♣ K973

♠ K743 ♥ 843 ♦ KQ87 ♣ 85	♠ 1085 ♥ K1052 ♦ J102 ♣ AJ4
-----------------------------------	--------------------------------------

♠ -
 ♥ AQ976
 ♦ A963
 ♣ Q1062

West	North	East	South
Pass		Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♦*	Pass	Pass!
Pass			

* this jump is fit-showing, a raise of clubs. Train of "thought": *partner's raise of my second suit, not forcing. I had somehow transferred my 2♣ to 2♦.*

Cost zero – other table also –200.

#3

Dealer: S ♠ K9864
 Vul: N/S ♥ 1054
 ♦ 6
 ♣ A965

♠ Q7	♠ A52
♥ QJ9862	♥ 7
♦ AJ	♦ 7542
♣ 732	♣ QJ1084

♠ J103
 ♥ AK3
 ♦ KQ10983
 ♣ K

West	North	East	South
			1♦
2♥	D'ble	Pass	3♦*//

Train of "thought": *If I make a jump rebid of 3♦ partner can bid 3♥ to look for a stopper for 3NT.*

But of course 3♦ was not a jump.

Cost 11 IMPs, we lost this match 49/86.

In all three cases (first from the previous article, October '05) the errors were not errors of judgment, the sort you can argue about later: they were gross. It seems remarkable that discontinuity in the thought process can be so abrupt, and have such a substantial effect: this was no slide to second-best. It was a jump to worst.

"Don't make so much of it", you might say, "you just lost concentration".

Now I remember clearly that on the first occasion (October deal) I was concentrating intently, both up to, and at, the point where I played the wrong card.

So what does it mean, to "lose concentration"? How can it produce so massive a defect?

(To be continued)

NEW FACES

The VBA warmly welcomes the following new members:

Tony Housepeters	Geoffrey Stanning
Terry Strong	

WACKY METHODS¹ Bill Jacobs

This occasional series will be dedicated to exposing unusual bidding methods for your consideration. It never ceases to amaze that despite the limit of 7 levels and 5 denominations, there is no end in sight to bidding innovation.

Upon seeing some of these methods, your initial reaction might be to snort and say: "well that could never work". Suspend your disbelief for a moment ...

2♥ MULTI

Italian World Champions have played this: open 2♥ to show a weak two in either hearts or spades!

Ready to snort? As responder, you must guess. Suppose you hold something like:

♠ xxx ♥ x ♦ AKxx ♣ KQxxx

The odds are that the weak two is in hearts, so you guess to pass – right? And partner can occasionally enjoy gaining valuable experience in playing 2-1 fits. Alternatively, you can bid 2♠ (pass or correct), and force yourself to an unpalatable 3♥ in a 6-1 fit.

But the upside is considerable. One of the big disadvantages of the multi 2♦ is that it gives the opponents two bites of the cherry. For example, they can double 2♦ to show generally opening values, or pass and back in later. They can also overcall 2♥, which a natural opening of 2♠ would have prevented. Defending the standard multi has become easier and easier as experience has been gained.

Defending a 2♥ wacky multi gives you only one bite. A simple approach would be to play that double is takeout of hearts – if you have a takeout double of *spades* then you have to pass and hope to get a chance later. And there might be no later: a responder with say a weak 3-3-4-3 shape will pass 2♥ knowing that even if the weak two is actually in spades, they are quite likely to play 2♥ passed out. And 2♥ could be a good sacrifice against the opponents' 4♥!

¹ Wacky: eccentric, irrational, crazy, silly

SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS

Ian McCance

Problem 1:

Dealer: S	♠ K105	
Vul: E/W	♥ J109763	
	♦ 86	
	♣ Q2	
♠ J93		♠ A762
♥ 54		♥ AQ2
♦ A10932		♦ Q7
♣ 654		♣ 9873
	♠ Q84	
	♥ K8	
	♦ KJ54	
	♣ AKJ10	

Our ♠A looks fairly secure, although if South has five clubs, we may be in trouble. We need to build the setting trick in a minor, but which one?

There are no guarantees, but if partner has a minor suit *ace*, then if it is in diamonds, it can be lost if declarer has strong clubs, as in the above layout. The same is not true in clubs – the club ace cannot run away on declarer's diamonds, because we can ruff the third round of diamonds and belatedly cash a club.

So a diamond switch is recommended here.

Problem 2:

Dealer: S	♠ KJ6	
Vul: nil	♥ KJ10	
	♦ K542	
	♣ 1094	
♠ A3		♠ 9752
♥ 9876		♥ 432
♦ QJ10		♦ 83
♣ A752		♣ KJ63
	♠ Q1084	
	♥ AQ5	
	♦ A976	
	♣ Q8	

Let's count tricks. Declarer looks to have at most three spades and three hearts at this stage. As for our tricks – if partner has ♦A, then we have an easy set – three diamonds and two aces.

But declarer may be fooling us and be ready to pounce on the next diamond and take tricks 7, 8 and 9 in diamonds.

You should switch to a low club. If partner has ♦A, it will keep – if clubs don't work out, we will have time to switch back to diamonds when in with ♣A. But if declarer has ♦A, then ... fourth suit lucky.

RECENT RESULTS

Commonwealth Nations Bridge Championship

- 1 **Gold Medal:** India (R. Agrawal, A. Sequira, A. Chakradeo, A. Lewis, A. Shah, G. Manna)
 - 2 Derofoe Australia (I. del Monte, V. Lemuy, R. Richman, Z. Nagy)
 - 3 **Silver Medal:** England (J. Hoffman, M. Brunner, J. Hasset, W. Hirst)
 - 4 Noble Australia (B. Noble, M. Prescott, G. Bilski, T. Brown, H. Grosvenor)
- Bronze Medal:** Australia (R. Klinger, B. Neill, N. Francis, M. Moren, G. Feiler, J. Williams)

CNBC Swiss Pairs

- 1 J. Armstrong – P. Hackett (Eng)
- 2 A. Bach – M. Cornell (NZ)
- 3 R. Kaplan – P. Schroor

Victorian Pennant

- 1 A. Sarten, C. Hughes, W. Scott, J. Fust, A. Mill
- 2 C. Chua, S. Hinge, W. Jacobs, L. Gold, I. McCance, B. Thompson
- =3 D. Smith, R. van Riel, H. Snashall, G. Kilvington, B. Howe, N. Ewart
- =3 S. Klofa, M. Woods, J. Collins, J. Thompson, T. Chira, D. Hohor

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

There is something distinctly unusual about the writing style in this month's newsletter.

If you can work out what it is, email me at bill.jacobs@oz.quest.com, and you will get due recognition next month!

