

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

November 2006

Editors: Ian McCance & Bill Jacobs

VIVE LE MATCHPOINTS – II

There was a larger than average response to last month's editorial decrying the loss of matchpoint events, and all of it was positive about the matchpoint genre.

Blaine Howe explained to me the reason why matchpointed pairs is disappearing from Congresses: it's all about *masterpoints*.

Playing IMP pairs, you receive masterpoints for each match that you win or draw, and since you typically play about 7 such matches in a congress day event, virtually all players will receive some masterpoints for their efforts.

But with matchpoints, masterpoints are only awarded if you run a place in your section, so only a minority of pairs receive any masterpoints at all. The bottom line is: IMP pairs seems to deliver more masterpoints to more players.

Now everyone knows that masterpoints are intrinsically valueless; but everyone wants to get them to achieve that next grade of "master" – it's human nature.

So here's a suggestion for the masterpoint gurus at ABF Headquarters: *deliver masterpoints for matchpointed events like you do for IMP pairs events*: for every round that is won or drawn, give a few masterpoints. Even for two board rounds, a little dribble of masterpoints can be allocated, and they will all add up. I know it's viable, because it's just software. If this is what is necessary to return matchpointed events to the Australian bridge scene, then it is worth doing.

For any doubters about the worth of the matchpointed form of bridge, I can demonstrate that it provides better value than IMPs. Turn to page 6 for the "proof" that matchpoints delivers more bang for your buck.

... BJ

ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE Blaine Howe

Players write about not spending too much time being negative about bad scores and bad sessions but they don't go far enough. Are you looking at the things that you are doing right?

To quote the Johnny Mercer song:

You've got to accentuate the positive,
Eliminate the negative
Latch on to the affirmative,
Don't mess with Mister In-Between

To improve your partnership you need to improve and discuss the things that are working at least as much as looking at the bad stuff.

Let's say you have a very aggressive overcall style and you raise major suit overcalls to game on a very wide variety of hands rather than using too much science. If you play in a session and get 2 bad scores and 3 good scores, what's the problem?

You are going plus on the in column so maybe the bad scores are part of the package. Don't just check out specific poor scores, occasionally review the rules for your actions and adjust them if necessary.

The point is that you should have a look at what is responsible for the In Column as much as the Out Column and do something about both.

On the other side, spend less time on the stuff that went wrong. You get a bad result and ask partner (in a calm and positive voice, yes?):

Why did you bid 3♣ partner?

You will get one of four answers:


1. Later.
2. I wasn't sure what it meant.
3. I thought it meant such and such.
4. It was a mistake.

If he answered 1, 2 or 3 then you might talk about the hand after the session or (better) tomorrow. In fact, while I dislike back-slapping congratulations at the bridge table, I do believe that ignoring bad results (why ask the question at all during play?) totally and getting on with the day is a good way improve your results and worry the opponents.

If you do ask and partner answers 4, then wipe the hand from your mind and don't waste energy on any discussion at all – ever. Each time you follow “It was a mistake.” with “But why did you do it?”, you reduce the effectiveness of your partnership.


Neil and I had a misdefence in the VBA Open Pairs where poor discarding turned a simple average into a clear zero. We haven't even mentioned the hand. It was clearly just a mistake and not worth discussing.¹

Finally, anytime you and your partner believe you have played poorly as a pair but have a win or a small loss, shrug your shoulders and say, well we must be doing something right...



Directors' Course

Saturday 2nd December 2006



Conducted by Dr. Laurie Kelso
Victorian Chief Tournament Director
At the Victorian Bridge Association
131 Poath Road, Murrumbidgee

AN INTRODUCTION TO DIRECTING
10.00 am to 5.30 p.m.
COST : \$70.00

Affiliated Clubs are invited to send one ABF registered member at no cost

All enquiries and registrations to Cathie
(T) 03-9530-9006, (F) 03-9530-9212
or e-mail clachman@vba.asn.au

The Bridge Players' Café will be open for lunch,
coffee & cakes

¹ But there is no escape from the VBA Newsletter - the hand is reported elsewhere in this bulletin ... BJ

FOR STARTERS
Bill Jacobs

Avoidance

As declarer you sometimes have to work out who is the Dangerman in defence – the hand to which you do not want to lose the lead, for one reason or another.

With that in mind ...

Dealer: S ♠ 97
 Vul: All ♥ AQJ
 ♦ A1072
 ♣ J1092

♠ A64
 ♥ K1095
 ♦ QJ9
 ♣ AQ53

West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	All Pass	1NT

West leads the spade 5, on which East plays the king.

What do you do?

Do NOT win the king with the ace. The spade suit is the threat to your contract. If someone has 5 or more spades, then it's going to be essential that you do not let them in to cash them.

If spades are 5-3, you can isolate the five card suit from the three card suit by withholding your spade ace until the third round. This will leave the hand that started with three spades without any left, and if you then lose the lead to this hand, the defence will not be able to cash spades.

You play low on the first trick. East continues with the spade jack, which you again duck, West following with the three. East plays the spade two, and you win perforce with the ace, West following with the eight.

What now?

If you have been following the spades, it would seem quite likely that West started with a 5 card suit. So West is the Dangerman.

Count your tricks: one spade, four hearts and two minor suit aces makes seven. You need two more tricks, and can set up either minor for those two tricks.

With a choice of minor suits to play, you should select **diamonds**, because if you lose a finesse there, it is to the non-dangerman East. East, out of spades, will have to return the lead to you, and you can take your nine tricks in comfort.

The full deal:

♠ 97 ♥ AQJ ♦ A1072 ♣ J1092 ♠ Q10853 ♥ 872 ♦ 54 ♣ K86 ♠ A64 ♥ K1095 ♦ QJ9 ♣ AQ53	♠ KJ2 ♥ 643 ♦ K863 ♣ 742 ♠ AJ73 ♥ 84 ♦ KJ87 ♣ 872 ♠ 5 ♥ J10932 ♦ 10632 ♣ AQ4 ♠ K10942 ♥ AK ♦ AQ5 ♣ K65
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Both minor suit kings are wrong - such is life - but by choosing which finesse to lose, the contract is safe.

Try this one:

Dealer: N ♠ AJ73
 Vul: nil ♥ 84
 ♦ KJ87
 ♣ 872

 ♠ K10942
 ♥ AK
 ♦ AQ5
 ♣ K65

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads the heart jack to 4♠. How do you play it?

On this hand, East is Dangerman. If you let him on lead, a club through your king will cost you three tricks (and just like the previous hand, you can bet your socks that the club ace is offside, this being a magazine article).

Meanwhile, if you can keep East off lead, you will be able to discard a club on the long diamond, losing at most two clubs and one spade.

The only suit where East might get the lead is trumps, so you should play trumps as follows: cash dummy's ace, and lead the jack; if East follows to the second round with a low spade, play low from your hand, finessing! If West wins with the queen (so that spades were 2-2 all along), he cannot hurt you. But if West shows out, so that East started with ♠Qxx, you have successfully held East off lead. The full deal:

♠ 5 ♥ J10932 ♦ 10632 ♣ AQ4 ♠ K10942 ♥ AK ♦ AQ5 ♣ K65	♠ AJ73 ♥ 84 ♦ KJ87 ♣ 872 ♠ Q86 ♥ Q765 ♦ 94 ♣ J1093
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The play in trumps is counter to the rule "eight ever, nine never" (meaning, with an 8-card fit missing the queen, finesse for it; with a 9-card fit missing the queen, don't finesse).

The correct rule is, to paraphrase Captain Corcoran from HMS Pinafore: "eight ever, nine hardly ever".

Points to remember ...

- identify the danger hand, and work to keep it off lead
- when they attack a danger suit at notrumps, hold up your stoppers as long as possible. Stoppers, plural. To see more about holding up with multiple stoppers, turn the page.

HOLDING UP WITH MULTIPLE STOPPERS
Bill Jacobs

Here's a deal where you should hold up with two stoppers in the suit:

♠ Q10853 ♥ 872 ♦ A54 ♣ 109 ♠ AK4 ♥ K109 ♦ QJ96 ♣ AK5	♠ 976 ♥ AQJ ♦ 10732 ♣ Q63 ♠ J2 ♥ 6543 ♦ K8 ♣ J8742 ♠ J2 ♥ 6543 ♦ K8 ♣ J8742
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South plays 3NT and West leads a spade. Declarer, who needs to knock out the two top diamonds, should let the spade jack hold. Then when East wins the diamond king later, he will have no spade to play, and West's suit cannot be established.

How far can we go with this principle? Would you believe that a hold-up play could be necessary when holding **four** stoppers in a suit?

Dealer: S ♠ 9652 Vul: N/S ♥ - ♦ 9842 ♣ Q7653 ♠ A43 ♥ 1098764 ♦ AK5 ♣ 8 ♠ QJ10 ♥ AKQJ2 ♦ QJ10 ♣ AK	♠ K87 ♥ 53 ♦ 763 ♣ J10942
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West	North	East	South
			2♣
2♥	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

In 2NT, the heart 10 is led, and South lets it win (!), executing a gorgeous hold-up play. If South were to win the first heart, and mis-guess which QJ10 suit to play next – playing the one in which East has a high card – then West's hearts will set up.

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: S ♠ 8732
Vul: N/S ♥ K83
 ♦ AKJ6
♣ 62

♠ Q106
♥ 10764
♦ Q532
♣ A10

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

You begin with a spade, which goes to partner's ♠9 and South's ♠J. Next comes ♣K.

How will you defend?

Problem 2:

Dealer: S ♠ 8753
Vul: N/S ♥ Q875
 ♦ AK
♣ A84

♠ 4
♥ AK103
♦ 10764
♣ J1073

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	3♠*	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

* forcing

You lead a top heart, and partner plays ♥9 (natural count). How will you defend?

Solutions on page 7.

NEW FACES

The VBA warmly welcomes the following new members:

Dick Adair	Marcel Dayan
Trish Farney	John Makinson
June Pulford	

THE TWELFTH TRICK

Dealer: S ♠ KQ6
 Vul: All ♥ A843
 ♦ KQJ
 ♣ AK10

 ♠ AJ10982
 ♥ Q2
 ♦ 5
 ♣ 9653

West	North	East	South
			2♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

West leads ♦7 to East's ace, who returns a trump (which will turn out to be 2-2).

Plan the play. Solution on Page 7.

Victorian Bridge Association

invites you to the

VBA Summer Congress

to be held

**Saturday 9th December and
 Sunday 10th December**

at the

VBA, 131 Poath Rd, Murrumbena

**A Red Master Point Event
 Convenors - Lyndy Hickman &
 Margaret Yuill**

Phone Enquiries: 03-9530-9006

BOOK REVIEW

**5-CARD MAJOR STAYMAN
 (FOR STANDARD AMERICAN PLAYERS)**

This Ron Klinger book is easily summarized:

"If you have a balanced hand with a 5 card major and the points for a 1NT opening, then open 1NT."



Klinger provides a strong argument to support his premise, although his opening sentence: "bidding styles change ... invariably for the better" raised my philosophical hackles.

A sensible and simple response structure is described in detail, which is similar to what we oldies would call "Lavings". The book concludes with 60 example hands for you to bid with your partner.

The BIG question for Acol-based Victorians is: "should we open a 12-14 1NT with a 5 card major?" Klinger skirts the issue, simply saying that if your 1NT is a range other than 15-17, you can adjust the example hands accordingly.

My feeling is that the answer is Yes – Victorian Acolites should open 1NT with 5-3-3-2 shape and a 5-card major. Whilst this seems dangerous, it should be noted that world champion Italians Fantoni-Nunes play 1NT exactly this way – any 12-14 balanced hand.

And perhaps it is worth it rather than to face this unrebiddable hand:

♠ Kx ♥ Kxxxx ♦ AJx ♣ Qxx

You open 1♥ in Acol, partner responds 1♠.

5-CARD MAJOR STAYMAN sells for \$19.95 and is recommended for anyone who is interested in exploring an improved approach to playing a natural system.

... BJ

MATCHPOINTS – THE PROOF
Bill Jacobs

Playing matchpoints gives the bridge player better value for money. I offer as evidence the following two hands from Session 2 of the Victorian Open Pairs:

Board 16:

	♠ 532		
	♥ K5		
	♦ Q8		
	♣ AK9532		
♠ Q9876		♠ K104	
♥ J1098		♥ Q632	
♦ AK		♦ 1072	
♣ 107		♣ 864	
	♠ AJ		
	♥ A74		
	♦ J96543		
	♣ QJ		

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♦
D'ble	Pass	1♥	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Board 30:

	♠ 10542		
	♥ J975		
	♦ A1074		
	♣ A		
♠ Q86		♠ KJ97	
♥ KQ62		♥ 108	
♦ K2		♦ 953	
♣ 8762		♣ J1095	
	♠ A3		
	♥ A43		
	♦ QJ86		
	♣ KQ43		

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Playing IMPs, you have been duded by these two deals. They both play in the obvious 3NT, and there are 9 stone-cold tricks (on board 30, once the diamond finesse works). There's no interest, and the two hands might as well not have been dealt.

But Matchpoints is a different game. At my table, on both hands, declarer made a 10th trick for a top board.

On board 16, West led the heart jack, won by the ace (declarer holding the heart king in dummy as an entry to the clubs). After clearing the club queen-jack, declarer led a diamond, which West won to play a second heart.

On the run of the clubs, the defence came under pressure and each defender let go a heart. Now declarer could knock out the second diamond, and the defence had only one further heart to cash.

On board 30, a club was led, sensibly. Declarer ducked a heart to East's 8, and a second club was played. After a winning diamond finesse, declarer cleared the hearts. They didn't break, and West cashed the two heart winners, and played a third club.

Now on the run of the diamonds, both defenders held on to spades, discarding a club, and eventually declarer's club 4 took the 10th trick!

It's not the point of this article to surgically dissect the mis-defences here (although the similarity of the spade setups is quite a coincidence). The point is that there were lots of points at stake playing matchpoints, virtually nothing at stake playingimps.

One can only conclude that matchpoints is inherently the more satisfying game.

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

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

Local Master*	Geoff Schroder
Local Master**	Sylvia Heimer
Regional Master*	Sidney Dunk
National Master	Betty Rosenberg



Vu-Graph quotes from Edgar Kaplan:

“Bad enough when the trumps are 4-1, but when the singleton gets a ruff, that's an affront.”

"In his three notrump contract, declarer has seven tricks. One more from heaven makes eight and where there's eight, there's nine."

RECENT RESULTS

Victorian Individual

- 1 Eva Caplan
- 2 Sara Tishler
- 3 Robert Ellery

Ern Palfreyman Teams

- 1 D. Smart, F. Beale, I. McCance,
R. van Riel, D. Smith
- 2 A. Hegedus, A. Mill, A. Hung, J. Howard
- 3 S. Gerdan, G. Gaspar, J. Selwyn,
C. Snashall

Victorian Interstate Butler – Stage 2

N/S

- 1 E. Caplan – G. Gaspar
- 2 J. Magee – T. Strong
- 3 J. Stark – L. Gold

E/W

- 1 I. McCance – B. Thompson
- 2 K. Chan – M. Willcox
- 3 M. Dilks – D. Morgan

GNOT Melbourne Final

- 1 W. Jacobs, L. Gold, C. Chua, S. Hinge
- 2 N. Ewart, B. Howe, R. Gallus, M. Dilks
- 3 A. Samuel, E. Samuel, J. Fust, K. Chan
- 4 D. Smith, R. van Riel, C. Snashall,
G. Kilvington, F. Beale, D. Smart

These four teams qualify for the GNOT national final in Tweeds Heads in November.

And our warm congratulations to Paula Schroor, Rena Kaplan and Cathy Mill, who together with Sue Weal, Kathy Yule and Candice Feitselson have just taken out the Spring National Women's Teams in Sydney.



Paula Schroor and Rena Kaplan



Join Joan Butts for a day of Bridge

Victorian Bridge Association

131 Poath Rd, Murrumbeena

Friday 17th November 2006

Joan hails from Brisbane and is the official teacher of bridge in Queensland. Additionally she has owned and operated a bridge club there for 17 years. She has a BA, Dip Ed & Dip Ed Psych from the University of Qld, has written bridge books for beginners and intermediates and has introduced thousands to the game. As a player she has represented Australia and Queensland many times. Her passion is teaching bridge, from beginner to advanced and she aims to create an atmosphere of fun for the students while using a hands-on straight forward approach.

The Day

10.30am – 12.30 pm - Intermediate Lesson with Joan – “**New Bidding Techniques**”

12.30 pm – 1.00 pm - Lunch

1.00 pm – 4.30 pm - Duplicate game of bridge using pre-dealt boards with hand records followed by discussion of interesting hands using Vu-Graph Bridge Movies with commentary by Blaine Howe.

\$30.00 for the day including lunch

Registration - Notice Board at VBA ~ e-m clachman@vba.asn.au or Tel: 9530-9006