

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

April 2007

Editor: Bill Jacobs

EDITORIAL – PENNANT STRUCTURE

In the February newsletter, I took aim at the ABF in its construction of the National Open Teams this year: a format that resulted in the original 1st and 3rd seeds meeting in a sudden-death 32 board quarter final.

How quickly history repeats itself. The VBA tinkered with the Victorian Pennant this year, moving to a round-robin format, but with a 32 board quarter final on the 7th night. And sure enough, the original 1st and 3rd seeds (Sarten and Kilvington) had to meet. Both teams had been unfortunate to finish just 1 VP behind the next higher team in their sections.

The Pennant is the biggest event on our calendar, and in particular, it usually determines the makeup of the Victorian Open Team. We need to avoid a 32 board knockout in the middle of it. The move to a round robin was a good one – round-robin is an inherently fairer structure than Swiss, so it should be persevered with.

One simple solution would be to do away with quarter finals altogether, and simply qualify four teams over the 7 night qualifying period. With a complete or nearly complete round-robin format in one or two sections, any team that missed out could frankly not consider that it deserved to make the semi finals.

NEW! Intermediate Clinic and Supervised Play

Commencing on Tuesday 17th April 2007

At 7.30 p.m.

Come along and enjoy an intermediate clinic with **Jeff Fust** followed by supervised play

Learn new bidding tools, improve your declarer play and tighten your defence

Session cost \$7.00

No partner or booking required

Contact: Cathie Lachman 03-9530 9006

clachman@vba.asn.au



AUSTRALIAN OPEN AND WOMEN'S PLAYOFFS

Congratulations to various Victorians who distinguished themselves in the recent Australian Open and Women's playoffs played at the Hakoah Club in Sydney:

Open:

Semi-finalists: Andrew Mill, Adam Sarten

Women's:

Semi-finalists: Jenny Thompson, Helen Snashall, Sally Murray-White

Runners up: Felicity Beale, Diana Smart

Winners, and Australian Women's Team:



Paula Schroor (Vic), Rena Kaplan (Vic), Martin Willcox (npc), Candice Feitelson, Cathy Mill (Vic), Barbara Travis, Liz Havas

Clearcut?

Are these two bidding problems close or clearcut? What do you bid?

1. nil vulnerable

♠ 10952 ♥ 2 ♦ KJ74 ♣ A653

West	North	East	You
2♥*	Pass	Pass	?

* weak two

2. N/S vulnerable

♠ J972 ♥ KQJ52 ♦ 7632 ♣ -

West	North	East	You
4♣	4♠	3♣	Pass
5♣	D'ble	Pass	Pass
		Pass	?

VBA SENIORS' SELECTION ("LAST CHANCE") HEAT



The VBA invites Victorian players born before 1st January 1950 to try out for a place on the Victorian Seniors Interstate Representative team for 2007.

The VBA Seniors Selection Heat is a 3 week event which is IMP scoring against a datum, starting at the VBA on Tuesday 10th April 2007 at 7.30 p.m.

At the conclusion of all heats held at various clubs the top 12 placed pairs progress to Stage 2 held on the weekend of 5th and 6th of May. The first placed pair automatically becomes part of the State Team. Pairs finishing 2nd to 5th play off in Stage 3 on Saturday 26th May for the remaining two places on the team.

The Australian National Championships are to be held in Fremantle this year, commencing on the 6th July.

All Victorian Representative players have entry fees paid for them plus a partial air fare and accommodation subsidy.

NOTE: It is not necessary to be a member of the VBA to play in the VBA Seniors Selection Heat. Additionally, if you would like to participate as a non contending pair you may play in the VBA Heat.

Enter: via the website: www.vba.asn.au or phone 9530 9006

FOR STARTERS Bill Jacobs

The Protection Racket

We'll start by defining a "balance". A balancing bid is defined as a bid taken in the passout seat. So the opponents have finished bidding, and you have the opportunity to re-enter the auction.

The bidding guidelines for a balancing bid are different from the ones for a direct seat bid.

Here is a setup to illustrate this:

- ♠ A52
- ♥ 1098
- ♦ AJ42
- ♣ A76

- ♠ Q9643
- ♥ A74
- ♦ 75
- ♣ J82

Playing standard methods (strong notrumps), how do you think the bidding should go if

- i) there is no opposition bidding
- ii) West opens 1♦ (East will pass)
- iii) East opens 1♦ (West will pass)

i) Uncontested auction

I recommend:

North	South
1♦	1♠
1NT	Pass

1♦ and 1♠ are obvious.

It would be an error for North to raise to 2♠ here, because his hand is totally flat. This takes us back to the first article in this series (December 2005) which advised: with 4-3-3-3 shape, look for NT.

South should pass 1NT. Don't go back to 2♠ with a mediocre 5-card spade suit – wait until you have 6 spades or 5 good ones before insisting on a suit.

Note that 2♠ probably has at least 6 losers: a diamond, two clubs, two hearts and a spade – whereas 1NT, whilst not a favourite, at least has a chance to take 4 spades and 3 aces if spades are friendly.

ii) West opens 1♦

I recommend:

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

North, despite his opening hand, should pass 1♦. The hand is not strong enough for a 1NT overcall, which should show about 15 to 18 points. Some hyper-modernists would recommend making a takeout double: I would recommend that you avoid these people like the plague.

South should not allow the opponents to play 1♦. He should *protect* with 1♠, which does not show a full-value overcall, but recognises that to let the opponents play 1♦ is not long-term winning strategy.

In responding to 1♠, North should not bully his way to game, but instead do no more than invite. The best way to achieve this is to cue-bid 2♦, and subside when South can do more than rebid his spades.

iii) East opens 1♦

I recommend:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	1♦	Pass
Pass		Pass	Pass

South, with his 7 points of rubbish, is not within a bull's roar of a direct seat overcall.

North's 1NT overcall in the balancing seat shows about 12 to 15 points. South should pass 1NT, for the same reasons as he passed 1NT in the uncontested auction.

Point to remember:

There is an excellent rule-of-thumb available for dealing with balancing auctions, at least at the one-level:

In the passout seat, mentally add three points to your total and bid accordingly.

Let's see how it works:

When South is in the balancing seat with

♠ Q9643 ♥ A74 ♦ 75 ♣ J82

he mentally adds 3 points to his actual 7 to get to 10 points – which is enough for an overcall. When responding to the overcall, North allows for a weak balancing hand, and pulls in a notch.

When North is in the balancing seat with

♠ A52 ♥ 1098 ♦ AJ42 ♣ A76

he mentally adds 3 points to his actual 13 to get 16 points – which is enough for a 1NT overcall.

So this is why a balancing bid is also called "protection" – it is used to protect partner, who may have had to pass with a good hand in the direct overcall seat.

As long as both partners are on the same wavelength with these adjustments, it should all work out – most of the time!

Duck a la Supreme

Just for fun, let's follow the play:

	♠ A52	
	♥ 1098	
	♦ AJ42	
	♣ A76	
♠ K		♠ J1087
♥ QJ3		♥ K652
♦ KQ986		♦ 103
♣ KQ109		♣ 543
	♠ Q9643	
	♥ A74	
	♦ 75	
	♣ J82	

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	Pass	1♠
D'ble	2♠	All pass	

West leads ♣K, and declarer, hoping for a helpful continuation, **ducks**.

West switches to ♥Q, and declarer **ducks**, because he doesn't want to make it easy for East to gain the lead and fire a club through.

West continues with ♥J, and declarer **ducks** for the same reason.

West plays a third heart, South wins and plays a diamond up. West plays ♦K, and declarer **ducks**, end-playing West to do something helpful.

West switches to ♠K, declarer wins with the ace, and plays a second spade. East plays ♠J, and declarer **ducks**, maintaining the communications by which to draw trumps.

East plays a club, declarer wins with the ace in dummy, takes the marked spade finesse, draws trumps and triumphantly finesses in diamonds to land 8 tricks.

Did you notice a beautiful thing? All five defensive tricks were tricks that declarer *could* have won had he chosen to.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

If Cicero had played bridge ...

He'd warn: "Vultus est index animi!"



SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: N	♠ QJ5		
Vul: nil	♥ 108		
	♦ J975		
	♣ AJ85		
		♠ A1096	
		♥ AQJ54	
		♦ Q10	
		♣ 42	
West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	Pass	2♦
3♣	3♦	All Pass	

Partner leads ♥9: you win, and with nothing obvious to do, return ♥Q. Declarer covers and partner scores a low trump. He continues ♠7. What will you do next?

Problem 2:

Dealer: E	♠ 643		
Vul: both	♥ Q6		
	♦ 1084		
	♣ AJ1083		
	♠ K75		
	♥ J		
	♦ QJ973		
	♣ 9764		
West	North	East	South
		1♠*	2♥
2♠	Pass	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All pass	

* 5-card majors

Partner plays ♠A on your ♠5 and returns a spade, your ♠K prevailing over declarer's ♠J. Where next?

Solutions on page 6.

The VBA welcomes the Upwey Bridge Club (Club No. 3481) as an affiliate. Duplicate sessions are held on Tuesday at 10.00 a.m. and Wednesday at 7.00 p.m. All players are welcome. Venue is Upwey Bowling Club, Chosen Avenue, Upwey, 3158.

ETHICAL DILEMMAS - II

Bill Jacobs

He who hesitates is lost?

This is the biggie. In the middle of the auction, your partner hesitates at his turn to bid. Whatever he decides, he clearly isn't sure about it, but the laws of the game say that **you must not take any advantage of this knowledge** – partner's hesitation is *Unauthorised Information (UI)* to you.

Law 73C states:

When a player has available to him unauthorised information from his partner, as from a remark, question, explanation, gesture, mannerism, special emphasis, inflection, haste or hesitation, he must carefully avoid taking any advantage that might accrue to his side.

What this means is that if there is any doubt about a bidding decision for you, then you should not make the bid that could have been suggested by partner's hesitation.

Let's look at a classic example:

♠ 10952 ♥ 2 ♦ KJ74 ♣ A653

With no-one vulnerable, LHO deals and opens 2♥, a weak two, partner clearly hesitates¹ and passes, RHO passes, and you?

You can be about 90% sure from partner's pause that he has a good hand with a bunch of hearts. This suggests that you should double 2♥, which partner will probably pass, and you can expect a nice little penalty. Or if partner was thinking about overcalling, your double caters to that as well.

¹ In other parts of the world, there is a Skip Bid Warning in place. Anyone who jumps the bidding (like the 2♥ opener here) announces "skip bid", and next hand is required to "think" for 10 seconds before bidding. Thus every auction is a hesitation auction, and no unauthorized information results. The practice has never caught on in Australia, even though our bidding boxes have a "Stop" card which is to be used as the skip bid warning.

But is it an absolutely clearcut choice? Absolutely not! You should pass out 2♥, obeying law 73C, and avoiding taking an action that was suggested from the UI.

It's no good arguing on a stack of bibles that you would have doubled without the hesitation. You have a 8-count – you know that it's not clearcut to double here. Nevertheless, this line of argument shows up the dilemma with bidding after a hesitation. Suppose your hand was instead:

♠ A1092 ♥ 2 ♦ KJ74 ♣ A653

No one would argue with a re-opening double here - it wouldn't matter if partner had thought for 10 minutes over 2♥. So this means that somewhere between these two hands, there is one that is right on the border of bidding or passing in light of the hesitation.

There's no perfect resolution of the problem. I can only advise you to decide to pass if, looking deep into your heart, you accept that there is any doubt at all about the bid. Your reputation will be pure; your conscience will have a good night's sleep.

And if you "get it wrong", and the director is called ... well, that is the subject for next month.

Another example, to illustrate an important principle:

♠ J972 ♥ KQJ52 ♦ 7632 ♣ -

West	North	East	You
		3♣	Pass
4♣	4♠	Pass	Pass
5♣	D'ble	Pass	?

You know what's coming – partner's double of 5♣ was after some thought. You really want to bid 5♠ with your vast unshown support, but you must, repeat ***MUST*** pass 5♣ doubled.

If partner had doubled 5♣ instantly, you wouldn't have been so sure, right? Now it might be that partner has a nasty club surprise for them, perhaps:

♠ AKQxxx ♥ x ♦ Qxx ♣ KQJ

Of course, when partner thinks before doubling, you know he doesn't have that hand – and that is the whole point.

Finally, consider one last variation. Partner thinks for a time over 5♣ and then *passes*. What does that mean about his hand? You don't know – maybe he was thinking of doubling; maybe he was thinking of bidding, but no particular action is suggested by the pass, and there is no ethical problem for you to bid 5♠.

In a sense, the slow pass only indicates what is already known from the vulnerable 4♠ bid – that partner has a good hand. So you are free to do what you like.

This article has probably given you a sense of the complexity of this area of the game. If you just stick with the general principle: "lean over backwards to not make a bid suggested by the hesitation", then you cannot go far wrong.

RECENT RESULTS

Victorian Masters Pairs

Championship – Section A

- 1 M. Tencer - M. Chrapot
- 2 S. Arber – L. Meyer
- 3 S. Klofa – J. Leach

Plate – Section A

- 1 D. Davis – L. Gold
- 2 B. Kingham – P. Hollands
- 3 J. Gaspar – G. Gaspar

Championship – Section B

- 1 D. Karhan – B. Gesundheit
- 2 K. Gullan – E. Matheson
- 3 F. Halmos – R. Ellery

Plate – Section B

- 1 K. Trolland – C. Karliner
- 2 J. Shapiro – M. Fogelgarn
- 3 M. Yuill – G. Hill

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

**SETTING TRICK UNDONE – A NOTE ON
COMPLEX SQUEEZES
Ian McCance**

Both problems of the March Setting Trick required the defence to frustrate a squeeze: in problem 1, an either-or double squeeze, and in problem 2, a criss-cross squeeze. Unfortunately, we overlooked another possible squeeze on problem 1: a trump squeeze!

Dealer: S	♠ A1097	
Vul: N/S	♥ 106	
	♦ 10863	
	♣ KQ8	
♠ QJ862		♠ K53
♥ J5		♥ 82
♦ 97		♦ AKQ542
♣ J953		♣ 106
	♠ 4	
	♥ AKQ9743	
	♦ J	
	♣ A742	

Against 6♥ on a diamond lead to the queen, the analysis suggests that what is required is a club from East, to break up an either-or-double squeeze that operates on whichever opponent holds four clubs. This solution is imperfect.

Say you do the right thing and return ♣10. Declarer can win ♣A, play ♠A and ruff a spade and come down to:

	♠ 109	
	♥ -	
	♦ 10	
	♣ KQ	
♠ QJ		
♥ -		
♦ -		
♣ J95		
	♠ -	
	♥ 43	
	♦ -	
	♣ 742	


When declarer leads his second-last trump West is trump-squeezed in the black suits.

Although the club shift is an imperfect solution, it is still the best bet – your declarer may be able to play the either-or double squeeze and not the trump squeeze.



Autumn/Winter Series 2007
BEGINNER'S BRIDGE LESSONS
at the VBA

FREE if you are under 30 years of age

When?	Thursdays 7.30 pm-9.30 pm commencing 17 th May	
Where?	Victorian Bridge Association Clubrooms 131 Poath Road, Murrumbena	
Cost?	\$125 per person, includes: - 8 weeks of 2 hour lessons - Certificate on completion - 6 Free Supervised Playing Sessions upon completion of course (value \$42)	
Registration?	Only by deposit of \$50 - MasterCard and Visa accepted	
Teacher:	Jeff Fust	
Phone:	9530-9006	E-Mail: clachman@vba.asn.au

The VBA library now has a collection of video cassettes which are available for loan by all Affiliated Clubs, members and associates. All videos are by Ron Klinger.

1. Bidding over Pre-empts
2. Card Combinations for Declarer
3. Competitive Bidding I
4. Competitive Bidding II
5. Defensive Play
6. Improve Your Hand Valuation
7. Opening Leads I
8. Opening Leads II
9. Responder's Strategy



PAUL LAVINGS TEACHING TOUR
Paul Lavings will be visiting Victoria again in early June 2007

Affiliated Clubs interested in hosting a Lavings session are invited to contact the VBA to arrange scheduling.

Tel: 03-9530-9006
E-m: clachman@vba.asn.au

This year's topics are:

COMMON ERRORS IN BIDDING
COMMON ERRORS IN DECLARER PLAY

Suit combination of the month

A10872
K3

At notrumps, how do you play this suit for four tricks? (Solution over page)

Suit combination of the month

A10872
K3

Lead the king (assume all follow low), then small. If LHO plays a low one, put in the *ten*. If RHO started with doubleton nine, you will cheer. Note that if you finesse the eight, and RHO wins with a quack, you have gained nothing and remain at the mercy of the 3-3 break. (This suit gives your RHO a number of interesting false-carding options, holding 9x, Q9 or J9 – I'll leave the details to you.)

Armed with the understanding of that suit combination, try this one:

A1087542
3

How should that suit be played? Decide and then read on.

Lead the three, if LHO follows with the 6, put in the *ten*. If RHO started with a singleton nine, don't just cheer – go out and buy a Lotto ticket.

Will you ever encounter this problem in your lifetime? Probably not. And if you do, will RHO having a stiff nine? Nope. But if it should happen, you will be ready!

Bridge Terms

Confused by some of the words used in the above discussion? If a stranger overhears a bridge discussion he may find the language amusing.

"The king was stiff" Translation: It was a singleton king.

"Suppose he wins with a quack"
Translation: Suppose he wins the trick with the queen or jack¹.

¹ This reminds me of the funniest bridge article title ever. The Bridge World published an erudite article about false-carding from QJ10 combinations. The argument was that if a defender plays the queen or jack, in certain circumstances, it is correct to let him hold the trick. The title of the article: **"The Quack says Duck"**.

THE THIRTEENTH TRICK Bill Jacobs

Dealer: E	♠ A	
Vul: E/W	♥ K53	
	♦ A96	
	♣ AK10965	
♠ KQJ		♠ 10763
♥ 98742		♥ QJ106
♦ J102		♦ 84
♣ J2		♣ Q43
	♠ 98542	
	♥ A	
	♦ KQ753	
	♣ 87	

This hand is from the 2005 Cavendish Pairs in Las Vegas. 7♦ was played by Frenchman Frank Multon.

The key is to set up the clubs safely. After winning the spade ace, cross to the heart ace, and cash the king and queen of diamonds. Now over to the club ace, and cash the heart king (the key play), discarding a club, now you can ruff the *second* round of clubs, return to dummy with the diamond ace, and enjoy all the clubs.

Well done if you found the timing to make this deceptively difficult slam.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

VICTOR CHAMPION CUP – IT'S BACK

Put these dates in your diary now:

Queen's Birthday Weekend Thursday June 7th to Monday June 11th at the Melbourne Convention Centre.

Thursday and Friday:

Women's Swiss Pairs (playoff points!)

Seniors Swiss Pairs (playoff points!)

Restricted Swiss Pairs (< 100 masterpoints)

Saturday, Sunday and Monday:

Victor Champion Cup (playoff points!)

Gold points available for ALL events

Entry forms are at your local club, or from <http://www.abf.com.au/events/vcc/index.html>