

# Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

September 2007

Editor: Bill Jacobs

## EDITORIAL NON-PLAYING CAPTAINS

The club has remaindered a number of old copies of Australian Bridge and The Bridge World – they are available in a rack near the scoring area. I picked up a copy at random – December 1986 – and lo and behold its editorial was on a topic currently close to the heart.

Victoria won the Open Teams event at the ANC in 1986 for the first time in 15 years, defeating South Australia in the final. The final was a sensational affair in that one of the SA pairs, international players Sue Lusk and Barbara Travis, did not play a single hand: they were benched for all six sets of the match, their performance in the round-robin qualifying having in no way suggested such a move. This outrageous captaincy decision was taken by a non-playing captain (NPC) who was close friends with the other two pairs.

Personally, I find non-playing captaincy to be a mostly superfluous role ... of the 100 or so sessions I have played in recent years in Victorian teams with a playing captain, there is only one where I strongly disagreed with the lineup decision *prior* to the set. (All the other disagreements were with the benefit of that good friend: 20-20 hindsight.)

Mind you, NPCs sometimes make extremely good decisions, as shown by Paula Schroor's management of the Victorian Women's Team in Fremantle. She pooh-poohed a rotational approach and tended to return winning combinations back into the fray, with some outstanding results.

The VBA should consider standardizing on a small panel of trusted NPCs and utilize them to manage multiple teams at future ANCs. This will have the dual benefit of reducing costs and ensuring that the South Australian debacle of 1986 never crosses the border into our state.

## THE SEVEN DEADLY PARTNERSHIP SINS Blaine Howe

### Sin 1: Talking Without Values

Your partner has just gone down in 3NT. You say at the table:

"I think you should have made that. And anyway, you could have put us in the 5-3 spade fit and let me play the hand."

I heard this said recently and, after the dust settled, it turned out that 4♠ had no play but 3NT did. 3NT was a better contract and it only went down because we defended well.

Declarer was not a happy camper.

This is a clear case of Talking Without Values and I hear this sin committed every time I play bridge.

Bridge is an emotional game and players get excited easily. This frequently leads to players blurting out their opinions at the table when they are unhappy about something – a very dangerous practice.

Clearly I am warning you to take the time to think things through before criticising the bridge actions of your partner or your opponents. Ignore me at your peril. Criticism like revenge is a dish best served cold.

The next time you hear this happening you can try what I do sometimes:

"Talking without values, eh?"

Catch the right tone and you can get the transgressor to move on happily. It's fun to try it, anyway.

The VBA Library of some 500 books will be listed on the VBA website in the first week of September with search options. A notice will appear on the Home Page with a link when the new web pages are available.

### DIRECTORS COURSE

The WBF intend to promulgate a new set of laws soon, hence the next VBA Directors Course will not be scheduled until after the revised law books become readily available. At that juncture the VBA will conduct both a New Laws Workshop (for experienced directors) and a regular Directors Course (for those with less experience).

Scheduled dates will be advertised in the VBA Bulletin and on the VBA website. [www.vba.asn.au](http://www.vba.asn.au)

### FOR STARTERS Bill Jacobs

You hold, all vulnerable at imps:

♠ AQ732 ♥ K52 ♦ A104 ♣ KJ

You deal and open 1♠. With the opponents silent, partner responds 4♣. What should that mean?

One of the best slam-bidding tools available is the *splinter bid*. A splinter bid is a double jump in a new suit showing shortage in that suit and game-going support for partner.

So 4♣ here has little use as a natural bid: 2♣ or a strong jump shift of 3♣ is available to show a good hand with clubs. The 4♣ splinter shows a singleton or void in clubs, good support for your suit (typically 4 cards at least), and enough values for game.

To start playing splinters, decide with your partner that a double-jump in a new suit shows the support+shortage combination. So for example, in the auction:

1♣            1♥  
3♠

3♠ would show 4-card support for hearts, a spade shortage and a very strong hand (enough to commit the hand to 4♥).

OK, back to our actual hand. Partner has splintered with 4♣ - what should you bid?

Look at your holding in the splinter suit. If it includes middle honours, then your hand is devalued – not as strong as its high-card points indicate. This will generally lead you

to the right decision. In this case, despite your lovely 17 points, the ♣KJ are largely wasted values, and you should sign-off in 4♠.

That ends the auction. LHO leads the heart jack to 4♠ and you see:

♠ KJ964  
♥ A86  
♦ Q632  
♣ 5

♠ AQ732  
♥ K52  
♦ A104  
♣ KJ

Despite all those values, you have four potential losers: a club, a heart and two diamonds. How do you plan the play?

Plan A should be to try to establish a club trick in order to pitch a heart from dummy. So win ♥A, draw trumps ending in dummy and play a club up.

RHO plays low on the club lead – which club do you put in, the king or the jack?

Play the jack. If RHO has ♣A, some of the time he will go up with it, given that he can see dummy's singleton. So it is more likely that LHO has that ace, and therefore your better chance is to finesse RHO for the queen.

The club jack loses to the queen, drat it, and LHO continues with the heart ten. Now what?

You can claim via Plan B. The key is the diamond suit. If the opponents can be forced to start that suit, there is no way they can develop the two diamond tricks they need.

Let's see how it works. You win the second heart with the king, ruff your remaining club and now make the key play: exiting with your losing heart. An endplay!

Now the opponents have to play diamonds, because if they play a heart or a club, you

can discard a losing diamond from hand, whilst ruffing in dummy, and only lose one diamond trick. The full deal will illustrate:

	♠ KJ964	
	♥ A86	
	♦ Q632	
	♣ 5	
♠ 8		♠ 105
♥ J1093		♥ Q74
♦ J95		♥ K87
♣ AQ1082		♣ 97643
	♠ AQ732	
	♥ K52	
	♦ A104	
	♣ KJ	

Try playing the diamond suit with the defenders leading the suit. The combination of the ♦Q and ♦10 is too powerful for them – you lose just one trick. But if you have to lead the suit yourself, you are liable to lose two tricks in it.

*Points to remember.*

- Splinter bids – double jumps in a new suit to show shortage there and support for partner – are valuable and fun<sup>1</sup>.
- When partner splinters, look at your holding in the splinter suit: kings, queens and jacks are bad – aces (or nothing at all) are good. Suppose partner had splintered with 4♦ holding ♠ KJxxx ♥ Axx ♦ x ♣ Qxxx, then your ♦ A10x is an excellent holding, and in fact slam is laydown. Slam laydown versus struggling to make game – what a difference a splinter can make.
- A tenuous suit combination such as ♦ A10x opposite ♦ Qxxx is best played by not playing it at all and forcing the opponents to broach it.

<sup>1</sup> ... unless you tread on them. Beware one particular auction: 1♠ - 4♥. Agree with your partner that this is a splinter bid. I have fond memories of this auction, because it let me (and Ben Thompson) into the Australian Open team in 1998. In the Playoff final, Stephen Burgess opened 1♠ and Malcolm Mayer splintered with 4♥. Stephen read it as natural and passed, so they played a 3-1 heart fit, down 5, with slam in spades cold.

**SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS**

**Problem 1:**

Dealer: W ♠ J8743  
 Vul: N/S ♥ 1054  
 ♦ AJ  
 ♣ Q32

♠ -  
 ♥ QJ63  
 ♦ 98432  
 ♣ A954

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

\* at least three  
 ^ probably four

You don't think much of that diamond suit and respond a modest 1♥. The opponents then grab the initiative and you find yourself defending. Partner gets off to a trump. Declarer wins that and plays ♠A and another to partner's ♠K. Your discards have turned partner off the red suits, and he plays ♣K then ♣J. If that holds you will have three tricks. Where will the next two come from?

**Problem 2:**

Dealer: W ♠ J843  
 Vul: Both ♥ K3  
 ♦ KQ1093  
 ♣ 106

♠ AQ10965  
 ♥ 5  
 ♦ 876  
 ♣ 974

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	2♦*	2♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♥
D'ble	Pass	Pass	Pass

\* Multi

Partner leads ♠K. It looks as if partner has some tricks in trumps, but it's unlikely that you can help further. What do you think about this ♠K? Singleton of doubleton? We leave you pondering.

Solutions on Page 7.

**DESCRIBER VERSUS DECIDER**  
**Bill Jacobs**

Every bid that you make in this world is either a *describing* bid or a *deciding* bid. A describing bid describes your hand to your partner in the hope of having a cooperative auction to a good contract. A deciding bid is one that attempts to finalize the auction.

To illustrate, consider the auction from this month's "For Starters".

Opener	Responder
1♠	4♣
4♠	Pass

1♠ is a describer: about 12 or more points with spades.

4♣ is another describer: enough for game, spade support, club shortage.

4♠ is a decider: attempting to close the auction at 4♠. (If opener had instead bid 4♦, that would have been a describer, showing diamond control and interest in slam – handballing further describing and deciding to responder.)

The final Pass is also a decider.

The best partnerships have a balance of describing versus deciding. Not every auction should have a whole bunch of describing bids followed by a decider – in particular, sometimes it is best to leave partner *and the opponents* in the dark. But the partner of an inveterate decider might feel cut out of the decision making process. And the partner of an inveterate describer will feel that the describer can never make a bloody decision.

Client-professional partnerships are unbalanced. The client spends life describing his hand to the pro, who then decides the contract, preferably with the client as dummy. Meanwhile the pro does very little describing of his own! It can be an effective mechanism, which will be explored in a later article.

Generally, describing is an easier business than deciding. That's a pity, because bridge classes and text-books tend to emphasise the

describing process ("this is what 1NT shows", "with two key-cards and the trump queen, bid 5♠", ...), with less attention paid to the more imprecise deciding process. So to improve your own game, spend more time reviewing your decisions than your descriptions. And if you watch top-quality vu-graphs on the internet, concentrate more on learning from the deciding bids than the experts' systems and descriptions.

A good case-study of describing versus deciding is this explosive deal from the final session of the 2007 Thwaites Mixed Pairs:

Dealer: S	♠ KQJ9754
Vul: E/W	♥ K7
	♦ J92
	♣ 7
♠ A	♠ 108
♥ 8	♥ AQ10543
♦ AKQ105	♦ -
♣ Q108432	♣ AKJ95
	♠ 632
	♥ J962
	♦ 87643
	♣ 6

At my table, this was the auction:

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♦	4♠	5♥	Pass
6♣	Pass	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	7♣	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Before reading further, try categorizing all the bids made in this interesting auction into descriptions and decisions, and the effect of those categorizations on the final result.

- 1♦ an attempt to start describing the hand
- 4♠ this is a key bid, and it's a decision, not a description. North could not know whether 4♠ was the right place to be, but by pre-empting, she makes life tough for her opponents. A descriptive alternative would be 1♠.
- 5♥ is a description: good hand, with hearts. Alternatives are deciders, for example double or 6♥. Neither particularly consults partner.

6♣ is a decision – or maybe a description. Not every bid fits neatly into my pigeon holes!

Pass (by East) is certainly a decision – deciding not to gamble that partner has the first round spade control needed for 7♣.

6♠ is a decision, and the wrong one on the actual layout. 6♠ goes down 1400, 10 points more than the 1390 that E/W were getting in 6♣ (and this was matchpoints). That's not to say that 6♠ is a bad bid, not at all, but South is working in the dark, due to North's earlier decider of 4♠.

Pass (by West) is the vital describer. It shows first round spade control and offers a grand slam to East. The alternatives, double and 7♣ are big deciders, and obviously inferior.

7♣ is the final decider.

Notice how in competitive auctions, describers can be interleaved with deciders. And to me, the learning comes from looking at the decider bids, in particular 4♠ and 6♠ here.

So, do you like to describe - or decide?  
*... to be continued*

**THE TWELFTH TRICK**

Dealer: E      ♠ K8  
 Vul: N/S      ♥ Q974  
                   ♦ A84  
                   ♣ AJ65

                  ♠ A9532  
                   ♥ AK  
                   ♦ KQ10  
                   ♣ K82

West	North	East	South
		3♠	3NT
Pass	4NT	Pass	6NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads the heart jack.

Plan the play. Solution on page 6.

**YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD**  
**Christine Heesom**

Loma Watts, aged 74, decided the time was right to take up a new interest – bridge.

Although she did have previous card-playing experience, she had no idea about bridge, but was keen and enthusiastic and soon convinced teacher Anne Den Houting from Lakes Entrance that she was ready to “fly”.

Her first game, outside of the confines of the lessons, was arranged – Charlie Clymo from Bairnsdale, one of the “cunning old foxes” agreed to be her partner – and the Lakes Entrance Club Championship Pairs (a red point event) was the venue for the launch.

After the first week’s play Loma and Charlie found themselves in first place with 61.4% and .45 of a red point. The question was asked – is this a first? A win at your first outing, and red points before green?

The 2<sup>nd</sup> week’s play was equally impressive with a 3<sup>rd</sup> placing and 55.3% and .18 of a red point. Overall, Loma and Charlie, cruised in to second place with a total of 1.37 red masterpoints.



Charlie Clymo and Lorna Watts

**THEODOR HERZL SOCIAL CLUB INC**  
**RED POINT SUNDAY CONGRESS**  
**SWISS TEAMS 10am – 5 pm**  
**30<sup>TH</sup> September, 2007**

Venue: Theodor Herzl Club, 222 Balaclava Rd, North Caulfield  
 Director: Laurie Kelso  
 Entry Fee: \$35 pp includes lunch  
 Cash prizes according to entries

To enter:  
 Laurie Kelso – 0412 559 171  
 Babi Ehrlich – 0417 593 101  
 George Sandor – 9528 4355 or 0411 813 673

**RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS**

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

Graduate Master	Cathie McIntosh
Club Master	Judith Ben-Meir
Local Master	Tim Blizzard Geoffrey Cohen Sena Hasthanayake Phillip Nankin Gerald Snowden
*Local Master	Mary Bertuna Jerzy Cholewka
**Local Master	Rose Stone Elizabeth Williams
Regional Master	Ann Bednarz Genie Harband
State Master	Andre Cabelli
Bronze Life Master	Kenneth Pearson
Silver Grand Master	Eva Caplan

**FREE INTRODUCTORY LESSONS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

The VBA is pleased to be able to offer free bridge lessons for secondary school students in the upcoming school holidays.

**Want to try something new and make some new friends?**

Three fun-filled sessions - pizza included!  
Tuesday 2nd, Wednesday 3rd and Friday 5th  
October from 1pm - 4 pm

Teacher: Ben Kingham

Let your family, friends and neighbours know about this offer!

Phone 9530 9006 to reserve a place or for further information  
or e-mail: info@vba.asn.au

Victorian Bridge Association Ltd  
131 Poath Road Murrumbena

**THE TWELFTH TRICK  
Bill Jacobs**

Dealer: E	♠ K8	
Vul: N/S	♥ Q974	
	♦ A84	
	♣ AJ65	
♠ -		♠ QJ10764
♥ J108632		♥ 5
♦ 965		♦ J732
♣ Q1073		♣ 94
	♠ A9532	
	♥ AK	
	♦ KQ10	
	♣ K82	

The bidding tells you that spades will provide no joy, so you need four tricks from clubs to go with your eight top winners. The club finesse is a must, but what about the long club?

It looks like whoever has the long clubs can be squeezed – West guards hearts and East guards spades. The best approach is to lose your trick now, rectifying the count for this squeeze. The only suit where you can lose a trick is spades, so play a low spade from both hands. Win the (say) spade return, take the club king and club finesse, and cash all your red winners ending in hand:

	♠ -	
	♥ 9	
	♦ -	
	♣ A6	
♠ -		♠ QJ7
♥ J		♥ -
♦ -		♦ -
♣ Q10		♣ -
	♠ A9	
	♥ -	
	♦ -	
	♣ 8	

Now play the spade ace – West has to let go a club, and now you can discard the heart nine from dummy and take the rest in clubs.

Similarly, if East had the club control in the diagrammed position, he would have had to ditch one because of your spade threat.

This is called a “simple squeeze played as a double squeeze”. You are squeezing one opponent – but you don’t know which.

**SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS**  
**Ian McCance**

**Problem 1:**

Dealer: W	♠ J8743		
Vul: N/S	♥ 1054		
	♦ AJ		
	♣ Q32		
♠ K62		♠ -	
♥ A987		♥ QJ63	
♦ Q6		♦ 98432	
♣ KJ108		♣ A954	
	♠ AQ1095		
	♥ K2		
	♦ K1075		
	♣ 76		

The setting tricks will have to come from hearts, and it would be a mistake to let ♣J hold this trick. Partner held 3 spades, has bid clubs and raised hearts. So he is likely to be shortish in diamonds and dummy's ♦AJ suggest that dummy's hearts might go away if we don't pounce. Partner won't have ♥AK but is very likely to hold ♥A (he would be more likely to have led from ♥K), so pop ♣A and lead ♥Q.

**Problem 2:**

Dealer: W	♠ J843		
Vul: Both	♥ K3		
	♦ KQ1093		
	♣ 106		
♠ K2		♠ AQ10965	
♥ QJ96		♥ 5	
♦ J2		♦ 876	
♣ K8532		♣ 974	
	♠ 7		
	♥ A108742		
	♦ A54		
	♣ AQJ		

There are 3 ways to go: 1) let ♠K hold; 2) overtake and play ♠Q; 3) overtake and play another suit.

Before choosing – you might think it a guess – think about partner's double. He can't have expected two tricks in spades, much more likely one there and three outside.

I think that rules out (2), which is shooting for a maximum – first make sure of the penalty\*.

Partner's 3+ outside tricks will be trumps-and-another(s). If his minors include ♦A that will always make, but if partner's stuff is in clubs you may need to lead them now. (3) is the winning choice – ♠A then club.

\* Notice that there was little chance of beating 4♥ without West's double.

(From a match on BBO, the final of the 4<sup>th</sup> Farnen International. This defence was found.)

*For the convenience of retired people and for parents while the kids are at school, and because of many requests for these, the VBA is commencing*

**Daytime Introduction to Bridge /  
Beginner's Bridge Classes**

**Wednesdays 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.  
10<sup>th</sup> October to 28<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

**Cost ~ \$75 for 8 lessons**

*The first session is free – come along and meet Cathie and discover what bridge is all about - there is no obligation to continue if you feel bridge is not the game for you....*

*If you have friends or neighbours who would like to learn bridge and would find daytime classes convenient spread the word!*

**Phone 9530 9006 to reserve a place  
or e-mail: [info@vba.asn.au](mailto:info@vba.asn.au)**

**Victorian Bridge Association Ltd  
131 Poath Road Murrumbena 3163**



### Have you tried the VBA-BBO Tournament yet?

Readers of the bulletin and the website will know by now that Blaine Howe hosts a BBO Tournament for Victorian players on Tuesday evenings.

If you would like to play, simply register your BBO handle with [webmaster@vba.asn.au](mailto:webmaster@vba.asn.au) and log on and join the fun.

Christine Heesom from Paynesville participated in early August. Christine has only been playing bridge for 2 years and by admission is an addict. When she logged on to play the tourney alas no partner was available, until at the death knell, Blaine asked her to play. She nervously agreed and to her amazement she and Blaine won.

Christine says.... "the tournament is a great concept and I will be trying hard to encourage my regular partner here in Paynesville to sign up and have a go".

## Ron Klinger Day



**Date:**  
Two sessions, Friday 7 September,  
10am and 1.30pm

**Venue:**  
Borin Bridge Centre  
20 Spink St  
Gardenvale

**Morning session:**  
Improve your Signals and Discards

**Afternoon session:**  
Improve your play in trump contracts

\$50 for all day, includes lunch  
\$25 for single session, lunch not included



Enter by email at  
[borinbc@bigpond.net.au](mailto:borinbc@bigpond.net.au)  
or telephone 9530 6622

## VBA FOUNDATION

Victorian Bridge players may be aware of the VBA Foundation which was established on 29 October 2003. The Foundation was set up to enable the "procurement of buildings and/or depreciable assets for the benefit of the VBA Ltd, the support of bridge education and the support of participation in the game by players in need of special assistance".

Since the establishment many players have contributed to the Foundation, some anonymously. Recognition of donations are on the honour boards in the foyer of the VBA Clubrooms and also plaques on the back of chairs around the clubrooms. Donations can be made to the fund at any time.

During August one of the major contributors to the fund, June Grigg, generously donated another significant amount and following her donation, June has secured the naming of the June and Harold Grigg Room in perpetuity. The Foundation gratefully acknowledges June's continued support over the past years which ensure the growth of the Foundation.

If you would like further information about the Foundation, the Chairman of Trustees Dr Ian McCance will be able to help.

## RECENT RESULTS

### Team of 4 Combo

- 1 G. Gaspar, B. Howe, R. Gallus, S. Klofa
- 2 J. Selwyn, S. Gerdan, C. Snashall, H. Blakeman
- 3 M. Chrapot, M. Tencer, L. Meyer, S. Arber

### Victorian Mixed Teams

- 1 J. Selwyn, S. Gerdan, P. Schroor, D. Sheather
- 2 B. Tencer, G. Gaspar, E. Kaplan, C. Lachman
- 3 G. Lovrecz, N. McManamny, L. Szabo, C. Hagan

The Ethical Dilemma series will continue next month.