

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

March 2008

Editor: Bill Jacobs

EDITORIAL ACTIVE ETHICS

At the National Open Teams in Canberra, you hold:

♠ Q7 ♥ 942 ♦ J932 ♣ J1065

and hear the opponents bid uncontested:

LHO	RHO
	1♣
1♥	2NT
3♦*	3NT

* Enquiry, suggesting a 5-card heart suit.

What do you lead? Sydney expert Matthew Thompson chose the spade queen – not a success as this was the full layout:

	♠ A654	
	♥ K10753	
	♦ K7	
	♣ 74	
♠ Q7		♠ J1092
♥ 942		♥ QJ6
♦ J932		♦ A10654
♣ J1065		♣ 2
	♠ K83	
	♥ A8	
	♦ Q6	
	♣ AKQ983	

Declarer romped home: it's not so nice on a diamond lead, although 3NT can still make.

Why did Thompson make such a strange lead? Well, when 3♦ was alerted, his inexperienced partner hitched, and asked what it meant. This was unauthorized information to Matthew, and rather than there be any hint that he took advantage of this, he led a spade.

What a fine example of Active Ethics this was. Active Ethics means bending over backwards to be ethical. The usual outcome of such behaviour is that you feel good and the opponents feel good. What more can you ask for?

NEW EVENT!

Inaugural Restricted Pairs Competition Saturday March 29, 2008

A large number of clubs are experiencing the situation where they host beginner lessons only to find that students don't play bridge at the club for very long. While there may be many reasons for this, one is that the opportunity to play in competitions with players of similar standard is limited.

To overcome this, a new Victorian State Event has been created specifically for newcomers and less experienced players, i.e. those with less than 300 masterpoints.

It is an event that enables players to play against other bridge lovers of a similar level, rather than playing in events where 'open' level players predominate.

The continuation of this event in future years is dependent on the response this year! So please come along to this event and "have a go".

It is being held at the VBA and registrations can be entered on-line: www.vba.asn.au, by posting your registration form or contacting Cathie Lachman on 03-9530-9006.

Other events for 'Restricted' players

- The 2008 Victor Champion Cup 'gold point' event in June will include, for the first time, a 'Restricted' category in the 'Teams' section. Watch this space for more info!
- And, in 2008 the ABF has introduced an inaugural tournament: The Grand National Pairs Championship of Australia (GNP). Again watch this space!

So spread the word and let restricted players know that they are being better catered for in events designed just for them.

We look forward to seeing you on March 29!

FOR STARTERS
Bill Jacobs

You are playing a Swiss teams match (IMPs) and partner opens 2NT, showing a balanced hand with 20-22 points. You are looking at:

♠ 8 ♥ KQJ4 ♦ KQ109763 ♣ 3

What do you do?

You are interested in only one thing - or four things to be precise: how many aces does partner hold?

4 aces?	7NT is just about laydown
3 aces?	6♦ is your spot
2 aces?	5♦, although a notrump game will be easy as well
0/1 ace?	Politely ask partner to count his points better next time

This setup is tailor-made for the Gerber convention. A jump to 4♣ over 2NT (it also applies after a 1NT opening) asks partner to give you a count of his aces. The responses are simple:

4♦:	0 or 4 aces
4♥:	1 ace
4♠:	2 aces
4NT:	3 aces

Over partner's response, you place the contract accordingly.

All very simple, but you may ask: can't I use 4NT to ask for aces after partner opens 2NT?

Well yes, you could (although a 2-ace response on the hand above would be awkward). However the real objection to using 2NT – 4NT as Blackwood is this:

♠ AJ4 ♥ 764 ♦ J8 ♣ AJ932

How should you respond to 2NT with that hand?

There are limits to the precision with which you can deal with a hand like that. On a point count basis, the combined hands total to between 31 and 33 points – marginal for a slam. You have a 5-card suit which is nice, but who knows whether slam is a good bet or not.

You would like to ask partner whether he is minimum or maximum for his bid, and a direct jump to 4NT can be used for this.

So in responding to a 2NT or 1NT opening, I suggest:

4♣:	Gerber: asking for aces
4NT:	Quantitative: asking partner to pass with a minimum, bid 6NT with a maximum.

Now for some play: you bid 4NT, partner bids 6NT, and the spade 10 is led. Let's play it for partner.

	♠ AJ4
	♥ 764
	♦ J8
	♣ AJ932
♠10 led	
	♠ Q3
	♥ AKJ10
	♦ AKQ4
	♣ K106

You play low from dummy; RHO wins ♠K and returns a low spade, LHO follows.

You can count 10 top tricks – four diamonds and two in each other suit, and two more are available in either clubs or hearts if you can deal with the queen.

In hearts you would twice finesse East for the queen. In clubs, it's a two-way finesse, but here you would finesse West for the queen, as you can then cash the king first (maybe picking up singleton queen with East), and then take two finesses through West.

How do you play it?

It's often a good idea to run your long suit in this situation: it can provide data about the opponents' shapes, or maybe an unwise discard. But running diamonds here is unlikely to help: there is not much discarding to be done nor information to be received. And worse, it reduces your options on how to play clubs or hearts, as entries to dummy will be lacking.

No, you have to take a position now on the play. One losing finesse and you are

finished, so the technique here is to play for the drop in one suit and if it doesn't eventuate, fall back on a finesse in the other.

On this deal, you have a combined eight clubs, so it's quite possible that the queen will drop in two rounds. Best play is to cash the king and ace of clubs, and if the queen doesn't drop, fall back on the heart finesse.

Notice that this is a better line than playing the ♥AK, and falling back on the club finesse if no ♥Q appears. With 5 outstanding clubs and 6 outstanding hearts, it's more likely that the ♣Q will drop short than the ♥Q.

Success, as the full deal is:

	♠ AJ4	
	♥ 764	
	♦ J8	
	♣ AJ932	
♠ 10972		♠ K865
♥ Q93		♥ 852
♦ 765		♦ 10932
♣ 874		♣ Q5
	♠ Q3	
	♥ AKJ10	
	♦ AKQ4	
	♣ K106	

Points to remember:

- When partner opens 1NT or 2NT, try using 4♣ (Gerber) to ask for aces, and 4NT as a quantitative enquiry asking partner to pass with a minimum and bid on with a maximum. In each case, you should discuss with your favourite partner what the followups might be.¹
- Look for combination chances when planning the play. Plan A followed by Plan B, where a failure of Plan A is not fatal.

¹ My suggestions, and they are only suggestions:

After Gerber, 5♣ asks for kings, all other bids place the contract.

In responding positively to the quantitative 4NT, opener bids his suits up the line (an alternative is to respond with the number of aces).

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: S ♠ 62
 Vul: Both ♥ J4
 ♦ QJ1086
 ♣ AKJ2

♠ AQ5
 ♥ K82
 ♦ K2
 ♣ 109876

West	North	East	South
			4♥
D'ble	Pass	Pass	Pass

Partner leads ♦A and switches to ♠7. Clearly partner has made one of his optimistic take-out doubles. Don't let that deflect your concentration. How will you defend?

Problem 2:

Dealer: S ♠ 9
 Vul: N/S ♥ KQ4
 ♦ 96542
 ♣ 6543

♠ Q10872
 ♥ 962
 ♦ K7
 ♣ AQJ

West	North	East	South
			1♦*
1♠	3♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

* Likely 4+ diamonds

You lead ♠7 to partner's jack and declarer's ace. He plays a heart to a picture in dummy, and then a low diamond to ♦Q. Where are the tricks for the defence?

Solutions on page 7.

Don't miss the ...
WAVERLEY BRIDGE CLUB CONGRESS

Saturday – Monday March 8 -10
 Venue: Hungarian Community Centre
 760 Boronia Road Wantirna

Convenor: Trish Henderson
 03 9877 5000
trish.henderson@south-eastern.com.au

USUALLY UNUSUAL
Bob Slutzkin

These days it is unusual for a 2NT overcall to be usual because it is usually unusual. It is just as unusual for a 2NT opening bid to be unusual, because it is usually usual.

The usual 2NT shows a balanced hand with a 20-22 point range; but the unusual 2NT, when overcalling a major suit, shows two long minors (each with at least 5 cards), and that bid asks partner to bid his longer minor. It would be unusual to bid an unusual 2NT with less than 5 cards in the minors, but not very unusual to bid the unusual 2NT over a minor suit to show hearts and the unbid minor.

The usual unusual 2NT is weak with 5-10 points, and is bid with the intention of passing partner's bid; but it can also be very strong, when it is bid with the intention of bidding again after partner's bid. So it would be unusual to bid an unusual 2NT with intermediate values.

Then there are several 2NT overcalls that are very unusual and only bid by very unusual people. They are quite different from usual people's unusual 2NT overcalls. Think of them as Clayton's 2NT – bidding no-trumps when you are not bidding no trumps.

They are:

- The *pre-emptive* 2NT, promising a long broken lower ranking suit,
- The *Modern* 2NT, the same, only with a strong hand
- The *Roman* 2NT, showing a strong 2-suited hand.
- The *Artificial* 2NT game-force

Although the usual unusual no trump bid is a 2NT overcall, some no trump bids at other levels can also be unusual no trumps (if you can recognise their unusualness). Look at these two bidding sequences:

Pass 1NT	1♠	Pass	Pass
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Pass 1NT	Pass	Pass	1♠
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Marty sez that 1NT in the first sequence is a usual balancing bid. It is an unusual bid but not an unusual 1NT. In the second sequence the 1NT is an unusual 1NT, because a passed hand would not usually have the strength for a usual 1NT overcall in a live auction.

But hey! Isn't it a passed hand in the first sequence?

So there are all sorts of unusual no trumps around, even an unusual 4NT which is a sort of unusual Blackwood – not asking for aces but asking for minors. There are plenty of unusual unusuals for unusual people; but our partnership will stick to the usual unusual no trump. It will be a 2NT overcall of a 1-level suit bid, and promise at least 5-5 in the lowest ranking unbid suits. However, when an opponent makes a 2NT overcall of partner's opening bid, we must remember to ask for a full explanation of the bid, if they don't take the trouble to alert it.

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

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

Graduate Master	Mary Williams Dubravka Zec
Club Master	Ruth Hall Tony Housepeters Paul Kron
*Local Master	Steven Tiomkin
National Master	Ivan Margitta

2007 McCUTCHEON SHIELD

The McCutcheon Shield is the annual Australia-wide awards for masterpoints. Congratulations and well deserved accolades to Victorians:

Jamie Ebery: Overall Winner and winner of the Gold & Silver Grand Master Section

Andrew Hegedus: Winner of the *National Master Section

Martin Wardle: Winner of the *Local Master Section

THE TWELFTH TRICK

IMPs ♠ AK86
 Dealer: S ♥ Q6
 Vul: E/W ♦ KQJ98
 ♣ 109
 ♠ -
 ♥ AJ108
 ♦ 104
 ♣ AKQ8543

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	6NT	All pass	

West leads the spade 2. Take it from there.
 Solution on page 8.

Participants Required for Multivitamin Study

Swinburne University is currently seeking participants to take part in a study assessing the effects of multivitamin supplementation on memory, brain electrical activity (EEG) and general wellbeing.

To participate in the study you will need to be:

- Aged 55 to 65 years
- A non smoker in generally good health
- Not currently taking multivitamins

Participants will be assessed before and after 16 weeks of multivitamin or placebo supplements, and will be paid \$50 for completing the study.

If you interested in participating please contact:
 Liz Harris Phone: 9214 5656.
 Email: eharris@swin.edu.au

RECENT RESULTS

Ramsden Handicap Swiss Pairs

- 1 L. Meyer – S. Arber
- 2 E. Samuel – J. Fust
- 3 A. Hegedus – A. Mill

Ailsa Tandy Eclectic Pairs

- 1 R. Szabo-Bencze – S. Gerdan
- 2 D. Davis – L. Gold
- 3 E. Windmiller – P. Hemmingway

VICTORIANS AT THE SUMMER FESTIVAL

National Open Teams:

Andy Hung, Bill Jacobs and Ben Thompson all made the quarter-finals. Jessel Rothfield got as far as the semi-finals, playing with Seamus Browne (does Seamus qualify as a Victorian now?).

Youth Week:

Andy Hung won everything in sight, playing with Nabil Edgtton from NSW. In particular, the two main events: the Australian Youth Teams and the National Youth Selection Butler.

National Womens Teams:

Perennials Felicity Beale and Diana Smart won the Swiss qualifying, but went down in the semis to a team that included Juliette Alexander and Eva Caplan.

They in turn narrowly lost the final to the Creet team, which included Jenny Thompson (playing with Canberran Julia Hoffman) and Rena Kaplan – Paula Schroor. Well done!

Rena Kaplan demonstrated that careful declarer play can be worth plenty of imps:

Dealer: S	♠ AQ1094	
Vul: Both	♥ 6	
	♦ KQ52	
	♣ 1076	
♠ 82		♠ KJ5
♥ A94		♥ K10873
♦ J873		♦ 106
♣ Q983		♣ 542
	♠ 763	
	♥ QJ52	
	♦ A94	
	♣ AKJ	

Rena declared 4♠ as South after a transfer auction, and was favoured with a club lead to her jack. She lost a spade finesse to East's jack, and a club was returned.

Now she kept her eye on the ball and played a spade to the ace next, not taking another finesse. When everyone followed, it was a simple matter to play on diamonds, ruffing her fourth diamond to make the contract.

2♣
Bill Jacobs

Your methods after you open a strong artificial 2♣ are no damn good – I will bet on it. I will *certainly* bet on it if you follow “standard” principles, which is that a 2♦ response is either negative or waiting.

“Waiting” actually means “waiting for the ensuing disaster”.

I’ve been wanting to write this article for years, but what pushed me into it was reading a recent entry in the Daily Bridge Calendar (a terrific product which has sadly ceased in 2008). It was by one of my favourite authors, Mike Lawrence.

Lawrence posed the following three hands all in response to an opening 2♣:

- 1) ♠ Q107653 ♥ K ♦ 832 ♣ Q95
- 2) ♠ Q87 ♥ QJ8 ♦ K832 ♣ K93
- 3) ♠ 6 ♥ 8763 ♦ 10874 ♣ J763

His recommendation is to respond 2♦ on all these hands!

On 1), he says: “Do not bid 2♠. Most players reserve a 2♠ bid for a better suit. My suggestion is that you almost always bid 2♦, which leaves more room for partner to bid something”.

On 2), he says: “The other choice is 2NT, which is as vile a bid as your partner would ever want to hear.”

And on 3): “Not much point to this hand other than to show you what many 2♦ bids can look like”.

Responding 2♦ on each of those hands, all wildly different in their own way, turns responder’s bid into a meaningless noise, giving opener the chance to describe the nature of his force. Superficially attractive that might be, but it’s a mirage. It implies that responder needs to find out as much as possible about opener’s hand, whereas the reverse is true. It’s the strong hand that needs to find out about the weak hand, because it’s rare that a 2♣ opener can impart

enough data for the responding hand to take control.¹

I won’t delve into the myriad ways in which the auction can fall apart after the meaningless 2♦ response. Suffice to say that the failure of responder to impart meaningful information puts the auction “behind the game”.

Some partnerships go the reverse route with CAB responses. This is an artificial step response showing the number of controls: 2♦ = 0 or 1 control, 2♥ = 2 controls, etc. I’ve had only limited experience with CAB, but have little doubt that it is superior to “2♦ negative or waiting”.

The method that has worked for me over the past 10 years or so was first pioneered by the great American theorist Alvin Roth. It uses three tiers of strength in response:

Negative:	0-4 points
Semi-positive:	5-8 points
Full positive:	9+ points

You see the concept of “semi-positives” in a lot of strong club methods. Here’s how the responses are structured (all the point counts here refer to high-card points):

2♦	Any 9+, or 5-8 without a 5-card suit
2♥	Any 0-4
2♠	5-8, at least 5 spades
2NT	5-8, at least 5 hearts
3♣	5-8, at least 5 clubs
3♦	5-8, at least 5 diamonds

After a 2♦ response, responder can clarify his hand as follows (let’s assume the 2♣ opener names a suit next):

New suit:	9+, natural
Min NT:	5-8, no support
Jump raise:	5-8, with support
Single raise:	9+, with support
Jump in NT:	9+, no support (forcing!)

It’s a very simple and natural scheme, with little ambiguity in the bids. No 2♦ bids that can range from 0 to 11 points and beyond.

¹ This reminds me of the “Irish jump cue bid overcall”. Over an opposition 1♥ opening, a 3♥ overcall is the Irish ask. It says: “partner, I have a heart stopper – bid 3NT if you have 8 solid tricks to go with it”.

And the ability to immediately name a suit with limited values has paid off for me time and time again – when the 2♣ opener has 3-card support and moves to game or slam in responder’s suit.

Try it – you’ll like it.

NOVISS SCHMOVISS

Dealer: S	♠ 852		
Vul: All	♥ K83		
	♦ AK76		
	♣ A54		
♠ AKQ106		♠ J943	
♥ 42		♥ 10986	
♦ 8543		♦ QJ10	
♣ J8		♣ 63	
	♠ 7		
	♥ AQJ7		
	♦ 92		
	♣ KQ10972		

West	North	East	South
			1♣
1♠	2♠	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

An adage bridge teachers like to tell,
If you bid badly --- you must play well.

With novice defenders, the story goes,
North-South were a pair of nasty pros.
Pros are pros, they sure play cute.
East-West could merely follow suit.

The spade king is led and it will hold,
The queen is next – the hand is cold.
Our expert declarer is not trump rich,
So on the spade he takes a pitch.
A third spade, this too will win.
Our expert discards with a grin.

Against any return the hand will make.
How well he handled the 4-2 break.
“I’m a pro,” he said with a sigh.
“You’ll never be as good as I.”

The expert declarer just made his game,
While the novice hides his head in shame.
Said the novice, “That was just grand,
I’d have ruffed and lost the hand,
For I’m a novice and make lots of flubs,
But with your cards – I’d make six clubs.”

SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS
Ian McCance

Problem 1:

Dealer: S	♠ 62		
Vul: Both	♥ J4		
	♦ QJ1086		
	♣ AKJ2		
♠ KJ107		♠ AQ5	
♥ 3		♥ K82	
♦ A7543		♦ K2	
♣ Q43		♣ 109876	
	♠ 9843		
	♥ AQ109765		
	♦ 9		
	♣ 5		

You may or may not have a trick in ♦K but the principal task is to set this contract. Partner must have ♠K so you have two tricks there to go with ♦A, and the safest line is to force dummy to trump a spade.

You should play to retain control of the defence – partner can’t see that ♥K – and by rights South should have it! Win this trick with ♠Q. Then you can cash ♠A and continue with a third spade, ensuring the setting trick.

Problem 2:

Dealer: S	♠ 9		
Vul: N/S	♥ KQ4		
	♦ 96542		
	♣ 6543		
♠ Q10872		♠ J43	
♥ 962		♥ 10873	
♦ K7		♦ 108	
♣ AQJ		♣ K1082	
	♠ AK65		
	♥ AJ5		
	♦ AQJ3		
	♣ 97		

One card partner is unlikely to hold is ♦A – he would probably have popped it to return a spade (you know he has at least three). If declarer has ♦A, he seems to have 9 tricks: 4 diamonds, 3 hearts and 2 spades.

So the solution is that this must be cashout time – the only suit for the defence is clubs. Start from the top.

THE SEVEN DEADLY PARTNERSHIP SINS Blaine Howe

Sin 6: Creating Bad Vibes

This is not suggesting you join the silly backslapping of many team sports but that you do not go out of your way to be negative. How often have you said or heard one of the following as your team gathers for a score up after a match:

"We were terrible."

"We had two disasters."

"I went down in two laydown games."

Not only is this unnecessary but it erodes the confidence of the team as a whole (not to mention that of your poor partner) and the confidence of other players in you – I urge you to think about that.

Just do the score-up and get on with the day. Some players seem to use as much energy in the post mortems at score-ups as they do during the match itself – this is not productive. In fact, the use of the term post mortem to describe how many players review their performance seems to have been particularly well chosen.

Jim Borin was at a national teams event many years ago and his pair went for a postcode. At the score-up, however, it seems the board had been scrubbed at the other table. Jim took the entirely sensible position that it was not necessary to tell his teammates until after the event, so he temporarily buried the result.

If you cannot stop yourself and decide you have to confess to the sin immediately, at least do so with a sense of humour. Since when is one bad board a disaster anyway? Get a grip my old darlings...



The VBA is saddened by the loss of one of its members, Zane Golding who passed away on 21st February. Our thoughts are with Doris and her family.

THE TWELFTH TRICK Bill Jacobs

IMPs	♠ AK86	
Dealer: S	♥ O6	
Vul: E/W	♦ KQJ98	
	♣ 109	
♠ 109542		♠ QJ73
♥ 974		♥ K532
♦ A72		♦ 653
♣ 76		♣ J2
	♠ -	
	♥ AJ108	
	♦ 104	
	♣ AKQ8543	

You should win the spade ace, pitching the heart 8, and run clubs (don't even think about a bad club break), pitching two spades, two diamonds and the six of hearts from dummy.

Then play a diamond. The best the defence can do is win the second diamond and play a heart, and you can hope that either the queen wins in dummy (dummy is high) or the king is played forcing your ace (your hand is high).

If the ♦A and ♥K are swapped you will go down, but nothing would have worked, and you can only reflect you should have reached the superior 6♣ contract.

In real life, declarer pitched the heart *queen* on the run of the clubs – an unblocking play that no doubt looked good at the time. But when the defence won the second diamond and played a low heart, declarer was left with a heart loser and 14 imps worth of regrets.



SEMINAR The New 2007 Laws of Duplicate Bridge

Laurie Kelso, Victorian Chief Tournament Director
will conduct a 1.5 hour seminar on Sunday 30th
March 2008 from 2.00 p.m to 3.30 p.m. on the new
laws of duplicate bridge at

The VBA, 131 Poath Road, Murrumbena

The seminar is suitable for experienced directors

Cost \$5.00

All Victorian Affiliated Clubs may send 2 ABF
registered members free of charge

Registrations Essential

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E-Mail: clachman@vba.asn.au

