

# Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

July 2008

Editor: Bill Jacobs

## VICTOR CHAMPION CUP WRAP-UP

There was a lot to like about the 2008 Victor Champion Cup nationals, recently held in Melbourne over the Queen's Birthday weekend.

Entries were up in all the events, and the major event, the VCC, attracted a particularly strong field. The inaugural Charlie Snashall Restricted Teams should be persevered with, and perhaps promoted as the major Restricted Teams event on the ABF calendar.

The Convention Centre in Southbank is a wonderful venue: spacious, well lit, and close to everything one needs, in particular accommodation and restaurants. The \$10 parking fee is a small price to pay for the centralized location.

The one change I would like to see is in the session times for the VCC and Restricted Teams. The Nationals in Canberra and Adelaide have moved to a structure in which the bridge finishes by early evening – no late evening sessions. This is proving very popular, as players can then go off and have a leisurely dinner, or perhaps watch the football!

The constraints are to avoid an early start on the first day or a late finish on the last day, thereby enabling interstate players to fly in and out without the expense of extra nights' accommodation. Here's how it can be done, without changing the format or length of the event:

Saturday: 3 matches starting at 11:00 am, 2 pm and 4:15 pm.

Sunday: 4 matches starting at 9:30 am, 12:30 pm, 2:45 pm and 5 pm

Monday: 3 matches starting at 9:30 am, 12:30 pm and 2:45 pm.

Moving to a 3-4-3 structure rather than 4-4-2 would seem to satisfy all the requirements!

## STOP! (THE CASE FOR)

You pick up:

♠ A983 ♥ KJ762 ♦ A7 ♣ J8

RHO opens 3♦. If your thought processes are anything like mine, then they go something like this:

*"13 points. What's the vul? We are, they are not – typical! We might have a vulnerable game, I better bid. But 3♥ is scary with such a weak suit. Hang on – is partner a passed hand? Check board – RHO is dealer, partner is unlimited. Maybe I should double; but if partner responds with 4♣ I'm up the creek. I don't suppose I could bid 3NT could I? No, 3NT is a ridiculous bid. If we have a game, partner will probably be able to bid in 4<sup>th</sup> seat. I better pass."*

And out comes the green card.

The problem is that these thought processes are not instantaneous. There will have been a break of tempo for a few seconds, and that creates unauthorized information for partner. If partner now balances with a marginal hand, your opponents are likely to scream for the cops.

But if the 3♦ bid is accompanied by a Stop card, then you are required to wait for about 10 seconds whatever your hand, before making a call. You can do your thinking during that 10 seconds, and when you finally pass, partner will have no idea whether you actually had a problem. He can take his bid without any hint of impropriety.

That's what the Skip Bid warning, recently introduced into ABF and VBA Regulations, is designed to give players. When a jump bid is made into an auction, next hand must pause for 10 seconds before calling. This can help to remove problems with hesitations.

Are there any downsides to the skip bid warning? More on page 7.

**FOR STARTERS**  
**Bill Jacobs**

With no-one vulnerable, partner deals and opens 1♦. You hold:

♠ AKJ10953 ♥ 8732 ♦ - ♣ Q7

RHO passes. What are the possibilities? And which do you choose?

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Well, I assume you are going to bid some number of spades!

1♠ is an option. It is forcing of course, and partner's rebid might help your side decide where to end up.

If you play strong jump-shifts, 2♠ is also an option.

Some people might like a direct 4♠ response. If the rules of the game were changed such that you had to decide the final contract right now, you would surely select 4♠.

Of these choices, I would argue strongly *against* 4♠. Whilst the bid does have the miniscule merit of making it harder for the opponents to bid, it actually describes a much weaker hand, perhaps:

♠ KQJxxxx ♥ xxx ♦ xx ♣ x

Your actual hand is one where you want to have a constructive conversation with partner, not a hand to pre-empt.

A strong jump shift of 2♠ is certainly acceptable, but I would prefer to have more high cards for this bid, not a 10-count.

A simple 1♠ is my choice – let's hear what partner has to say!

In fact, after LHO passes, partner bids 3♣ - a strong jump shift of his own that forces your side to game:

	Partner		You
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	?

What do you do now?

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Now is the time to bid 4♠. You want to tell partner that your suit can play opposite any holding of his. Your overall auction - 1♠ and then 4♠ - is a fine description of your hand.

Partner now motors along with 4NT. You have agreed to play Roman Key Card Blackwood, where the spade king (in this case clearly spades is the agreed trump suit) is counted as an ace. Holding the ♠AK, you have two of the five key-cards, and the RKCB response is 5♥ without the spade queen or 5♠ with the spade queen (or extra trump length). Which is it to be?

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Just bid 5♥ - you do NOT have unexpected extra trump length when you have already shown great length in spades. Partner could easily be progressing with a singleton spade, counting on your bidding to provide solidity in trumps.

Partner now concludes the auction with 6♠:

	Partner		You
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♠	All pass	

The lead is the heart queen:

♠ 64  
♥ A  
♦ AQ642  
♣ AKJ104  
  
♠ AKJ10953  
♥ 8732  
♦ -  
♣ Q7

Well bid!

Now it's just a matter of wrapping up this slam. What is your plan?

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You have oodles of tricks – at least 6 spades, 5 clubs and a pair of aces adds up to 13, so it's just a matter of avoiding losing two tricks.

One line you should *not* take is to cash the ace-king of spades at tricks 2 and 3, despite this being the percentage play in the trump suit. If the spade queen is still outstanding, you are now in a race to get rid of all your losing hearts before an opponent ruffs in. That's not a race you want to run.

If you wanted to make 15 or 16 tricks you could aim to ruff a couple of losing hearts.

But for 12 tricks, the play at trick 2 is simple and elegant. Take a spade finesse. If it loses, dummy's second trump is on hand to deal with a heart continuation. And if it wins, there's your overtrick. The full deal:

	♠ 64	
	♥ A	
	♦ AQ642	
	♣ AKJ104	
♠ Q72		♠ 8
♥ QJ10654		♥ K9
♦ 108		♦ KJ9753
♣ 93		♣ 8652
	♠ AKJ10953	
	♥ 8732	
	♦ -	
	♣ Q7	

Step out of line here, and down you go. OK, that's because I get to make up the hand. In real life, you are fortunately forgiven for some mistakes!

*Points to remember:*

- In the auction 1 minor – 4 major, responder is showing a weakish hand with a very long suit. Responder should not jump around with a good hand.
- Put not your faith in rules like "eight ever – nine never". Playing spades from the top here is the correct way of playing the suit in isolation, but is a misplay in the context of the whole hand.

**Yarrowonga Congress**

This congress will be held on August 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>. For further information, connect Jan Hackett at [hackett5@bigpond.net.au](mailto:hackett5@bigpond.net.au). Fliers and entry forms will be available soon!

**SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS**

**Problem 1:**

Dealer: W      ♠ 8754  
 Vul: N/S      ♥ Q10  
                   ♦ A92  
                   ♣ AQ83

♠ Q10963  
 ♥ AJ8  
 ♦ Q543  
 ♣ 8

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	2♠*	D'ble
3♣^	Pass	3♦	3♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

\* Cappelletti – spades and a minor  
 ^ Pass or correct

Partner starts with ♠A (declarer follows with the two), and switches to ♦8. You don't much like the look of that and ♦Q is swallowed up. Declarer now plays a heart to ♥10. You win ♥J and pause to consider your defence.

**Problem 2:**


Dealer: E      ♠ A752  
 Vul: Both    ♥ 94  
                   ♦ AKJ5  
                   ♣ 542

♠ J64  
 ♥ 732  
 ♦ Q43  
 ♣ AQJ9

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

Partner leads ♣3. You probably have two tricks in clubs, and if declarer has three diamonds, that's another. What are the prospects for a fourth? Plan the play. Solutions on page 5.

Ruth Leighton passed away on 13th April after a short illness. Ruth had been a member of the VBA since 1972 and played with her husband until his death some years ago. Our thoughts are with her son, Michael.



**DEFENCE CLINIC**  
Learn How Experts Think

**Jeff Fust** "Improving your defence brings tremendous satisfaction."

**Saturday 16th August 10:30 am - 4:00 pm**  
**The Five Lines of Defence**  
Gain a deep understanding of the themes common to every hand.

**Sunday 17th August 10:30 am - 4:00 pm**  
**Becoming a Bridge Detective**  
Deductions from the Bidding and Cardplay.  
Counting Tricks and Distribution.  
Locating the Missing High Cards.  
Different types of Signals and when to use them.

**COST** : \$30 per person per day  
**WHERE** : VBA Clubrooms, 131 Poath Rd. Hughesdale  
**REGISTRATION** : full payment in advance reserves your place (limited places available)  
**PHONE** : 9530 9006  
**EMAIL** : clachman@vba.asn.au  
**LUNCH** : Available at the Bridge Players Cafateria

**2008 Australia-Wide Novice Pairs**

The annual Australia-Wide Novice Pairs Competition is a national bridge event run by Australian Bridge Magazine for novices in clubs all around Australia, played in the week of 25-31 July. The VBA's session is on **Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> July**, starting at 7.30 p.m.

There are prizes worth more than \$2000, and an instructive souvenir booklet of the hands. But more importantly, players get a great sense of participation by playing in an event alongside thousands of other competitors.



Winter/Spring Series 2008  
**BEGINNER'S BRIDGE LESSONS**  
at the VBA



131 Poath Rd, Murrumbena

**When?** Thursdays 7.30 pm-9.30 pm commencing 14<sup>th</sup> August  
**Where?** Victorian Bridge Association Clubrooms  
131 Poath Road, Murrumbena  
**Cost?** \$130 per person (students and under 30s \$80) includes:  
- 8 weeks of 2 hour lessons  
- Certificate on completion  
- 6 Free Supervised Playing Vouchers 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 TWELFTH TRICK**

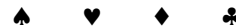
IMPs ♠ Q5  
Dealer: S ♥ J632  
Vul: N/S ♦ A8  
♣ K10987

♠ AKJ1084  
♥ A87  
♦ K43  
♣ Q

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

West leads a low spade. Plan the play.

Solution on page 6.



**RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS**

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

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Graduate Master    | Avi Rauchberger<br>Reginald Rich                              |
| Club Master        | Dick Adair<br>Mary Warnock<br>Steven Shochet<br>Mary Williams |
| Local Master       | Patrick Zhang   |
| *Local Master      | Marion Burns  |
| **Local Master     | Leslie Goldschlager<br>Lyn Lutcher                            |
| Regional Master    | Margot Slonim   |
| *Regional Master   | Ann Camamile  |
| *State Master      | John Yang<br>Ken Trolland                                     |
| National Master    | Margaret Margitta   |
| Bronze Life Master | Richard Greenfield<br>Mark Weinberg                           |
| Silver Life Master | Andrew Hegedus  |
| Grand Master       | Jean Hall   |

### SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS Ian McCance

#### Problem 1:

Dealer: W	♠ 8754		
Vul: N/S	♥ Q10		
	♦ A92		
	♣ AQ83		
♠ A		♠ Q10963	
♥ 654		♥ AJ8	
♦ 876		♦ Q543	
♣ J107654		♣ 8	
	♠ KJ2		
	♥ K9732		
	♦ KJ10		
	♣ K2		

Obviously you can lead a spade for partner to trump. Along with two hearts and ♠A, that comes to four tricks. Where is the fifth? Now that you ask, it comes from a club ruff. Whilst still in control of trumps, you can play ♣8 and if partner started with three trumps all will be well.

You see later that the opponents have missed the boat – 3NT was available, and the cost of 3♦ doubled would have startled even Cappelletti.

[From the Seniors' Swiss at the VCC. Defender: Wally Scott.]

#### Problem 2:

Dealer: E	♠ A752		
Vul: Both	♥ 94		
	♦ AKJ5		
	♣ 542		
♠ KQ9		♠ J64	
♥ 85		♥ 732	
♦ 8762		♦ Q43	
♣ K1063		♣ AQJ9	
	♠ 1083		
	♥ AKQJ106		
	♦ 109		
	♣ 87		

Best is to play ♣J, retaining the lead. Then you can cash ♣A before returning a spade to set up trick four for the defence. Alternatively if you win ♣A, your next card would be ♣Q – again you need to be on lead for trick 3 in case partner's spades are ♠K10x. If you return ♣9 after ♣A, partner won't know what to do.

### LOSING TRICK COUNT FAILS AGAIN ... Arie Meydan

This deal was from a Seniors Selection heat - the players' names remain secret to protect the guilty:

Dealer: N	♠ 2		
Vul: N/S	♥ 4		
	♦ KQ8632		
	♣ KQ643		
♠ AQJ974		♠ 10	
♥ 73		♥ KJ65	
♦ J1075		♦ A4	
♣ 5		♣ AJ10872	
	♠ K8653		
	♥ AQ10982		
	♦ 9		
	♣ 9		

West	North	East	South
	2NT	Pass	3♣
3♠	4♣	<b>D'ble</b>	All Pass

North opened with 2NT showing the minors, and after East passed, South had a decision to make. Most players would have passed, but South, who was afraid of advertising a misfit and inviting a penalty double, bid 3♣. After all, his support for clubs was as good as for diamonds and there was no reason to assume the hand would play better in 2NT than in a suit. In addition, the opposition might think along "we are being robbed" lines and get into the bidding.

When West overcalled with 3♠ it seemed South's wish had been granted. Unfortunately, this was not the end of the bidding. North, displaying the exuberance of youth<sup>1</sup>, bid 4♣. East doubled (in tempo), and everyone passed.

West led the ♣5. South was left playing a trick higher than intended. When the dust had cleared he was 8 tricks short of his contract. He said "Sorry partner, I misplayed the hand, should have been only 6 down". North was shell-shocked by the Newcastle postcode score and said in wonder: "but I had a 4-loser hand"!!

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

<sup>1</sup> I thought this was the Seniors selection? ... BJ

### THE TWELFTH TRICK Bill Jacobs

IMPs	♠ Q5	
Dealer: S	♥ J632	
Vul: N/S	♦ A8	
	♣ K10987	
♠ 763		♠ 92
♥ Q94		♥ K105
♦ Q972		♦ J1065
♣ 432		♣ AJ65
	♠ AKJ1084	
	♥ A87	
	♦ K43	
	♣ Q	

The simplest approach is to play East for the club jack. Win the trump in hand and play the club queen, *overtaking with the king* if West plays low.

Subsequently you will use first a spade entry and second a diamond entry to ruff out East's club jack.

If you lead the club queen at trick two, but then play low from dummy, a nasty East (or West!) can foil you by letting the club queen hold. Now you lack the entries to set up the clubs, and will eventually lose two heart tricks.

### WHO WAS THAT MASKED MAN? Blaine Howe

#### Episode 3 – Putting Dummy Down

The bidding is finished and you are now a little helper bee. You wait for the opening lead to be made and then put your dummy down. Do it properly:

- Clear enough space
- Place the suits in order (trumps on your right)
- Place the cards for each suit in order
- Ensure all the cards are visible
- No comments about your hand or the bidding.

Yet again the silence bit is the difficult item. I have lost count of the times that dummy gives the defence hope by making comments about the bidding or apologising for the weakness of dummy before putting it down.

The apology is the worst because declarer starts worrying about whether he can make before he starts. If you are my partner and you do this, make sure I am not carrying a gun first.

Finally, do not play a card until declarer calls for one. Many players fall from grace and immediately play a singleton or the lowest card in a suit after an Ace is led. Playing a card before declarer calls for one disrupts the tempo of the play and is an offence – do not do this.

The Victorian Bridge Association welcomes two new affiliated clubs:

Bayside Bridge Club – 3-311  
MCC Bridge Club – 3-406

#### GOOD NEWS!

The VBA has taken delivery of new plastic bidding box inserts. They are beautiful and slippery and much nicer than the cardboard variety.

### GRAND SLAM

If Joyce Kilmer had played bridge ...  
(<http://www.bartleby.com/104/119.html>)



I think that I will never hold  
A hand that's 7 NT cold.  
A hand with every Ace and King,  
And Spades 8, 9, 10, Jack and Queen.

But if I do, I'll bid that slam  
And bring it right on home, but damn  
Just as sure that's what I'll do,  
Every other North will too.

But wait ..... the way my luck has run of late,  
**Every other North makes eight!**

## STOP! (THE CASE AGAINST)

The mandated use of the Stop card has come about as a result of negotiations between the ABF and the New Zealand Contract Bridge League, in an attempt to standardize Zone 7 regulations pertaining to systems and tournaments.

The VBA has adopted this change – its regulations (available on the VBA web-site) now state:

*“6.2.8. Before a player makes a bid that skips one or more levels, a Stop Card should be placed face up on the table in front of the left-hand opponent. After an appropriate period (approximately 10 seconds but less at one’s own discretion) the person who made the skip bid picks up the Stop Card, whereupon the left hand opponents may then call.”*

It’s hard to know where to start in listing the drawbacks of this regulation.

The first and foremost objection is that the majority of skip bids don’t actually catch the opponents “by surprise” and therefore don’t warrant a skip bid warning. Consider the following uncontested auction:

1♥	2NT* (STOP!)
4NT (STOP!)	5♣
5♦	6♥ (STOP!)
7NT (STOP!?!)	

\* limit raise or better

According to the regulations, we must insert four skip bid warnings into this auction. I think that anywhere in the world, including places with skip bid warnings mandated for all jumps, there would be at most one STOP put into this auction.

And no one would care.

**A law that no one obeys, and where the authorities don’t care that the law is routinely ignored, is a bad law.**

I’ll give you another example. The VBA regulations also say, and have done so for many years:

*“6.2.11. At the end of the auction, the opening leader places his lead face-down on the table ...”<sup>1</sup>*

Face down leads are rare in Australia. It seems to be a rule “more honoured in the breach than the observance”.

Both the stop card and the face-down lead suffer the same fundamental drawback: they insert a delay into the game with very little benefit. They are just plain annoying.

My other complaint about the STOP card is physical. To be ready to play at the VBA I need to be equipped with:

- My scorecard
- My system card
- The opponents’ system card
- The bidding cards
- Alert card
- Stop card

There’s no damned room anymore. And when my RHO puts a 2♦ opening bid on the table, he also shoves a STOP card in my face, whilst my LHO fumbles in the bidding box for an ALERT card, and throws it onto the table.

I have to admit ... written bidding is looking better and better.

Why do people play duplicate bridge? It’s not for the money. We play because the game provides an enjoyable and peerless intellectual challenge. We want the game to be fair, but there’s a limit to the rules that should be imposed to make the game fair. Australian cultural values suggest that the use of skip bid warnings oversteps that limit. *American* cultural values are different!

Here’s my suggestion. Either:

1) Do away with skip bid warnings altogether (we are not obliged to follow the ABF here, and I am told not all states are doing so), or

2) Change the regulation to require the use of the STOP card for only *opening bids* of 2♣ or higher, no other jumps. This will catch a healthy subset of situations where the skip bid warning can help prevent unauthorized information leaking into the auction.

<sup>1</sup> Actually, the face-down lead is stipulated in the Laws of Bridge (Law 41A), proving that the tendency to over-legislate has no bounds.

## RECENT RESULTS

### Fred Hapgood Matchpoint Swiss Pairs

- 1 R. Gallus – S. Henbest
- 2 M. Balint – S. Gerdan
- 3 S. Klofa – R. Livingston

### Mixed Teams

- 1 B. Gold, L. Gold, B. Howe, N. Ewart
- 2= J. Thompson, B. Thompson, W. Jacobs, H. Sawicki
- 2= D. Hohor, M. Woods, C. Hughes, T. Chira

### Thwaites Mixed Pairs

#### *Championship*

- 1 D. Smart – I. McCance
- 2 M. Woods – D. Hohor
- 3 R. Szabo-Bencze – S. Vardi

#### *Plate*

- 1 B. Lindsay – N. Ewart
- 2 J. Alexander – W. Scott
- 3 C. Lachman – A. Branicki

#### *Consolation*

- 1 S. Collins – J. Selwyn
- 2 D. Jacobs – W. Jacobs
- 3 P. Schroor – D. Sheather

### Melbourne Nationals

#### *McCance Trophy - Seniors Pairs*

- 1 J. Newman – P. Buchen
- 2 K. Wooles – J. Wignall
- 3 G. Gaspar – B. Richman

#### *Women's Pairs*

- 1 M. Chadwick – T. Sharp
- 2 P. Schroor – R. Kaplan
- 3 P. McLeish – C. Currey

#### *Restricted Pairs*

- 1 J. Krysiak – W. Mroz
- 2 W. Easley – J. Simpson
- 3 C. Parkin – D. Stewart

#### *Victor Champion Cup*

- 1 J. Rothfield, S. Browne, I. Del'Monte, R. Fruewirth, J. Wignall, K. Wooles
- 2 A. Kanetkar, A. Peake, T. Nunn, K. Bagchi
- 3= C. Boylson, S. Burgess, W. Jacobs, B. Thompson
- 3= N. Rosendorff, R. Jedrychowski, L. Gold, J. Ebery



VCC winners: Kris Wooles, Seamus Browne, Jessel Rothfield, Ishmael Del'Monte, (Jeannette Collins), John Wignall, Rob Fruewirth

#### *Charlie Snashall Trophy – Restricted Teams*

- 1 K. Trolland, C. Macquarrie, J. Knight, R. Casey
- 2 D. Middleton, I. Hamilton, J. Adams, A Slutzkin, L. Attwood, P. Zhang
- 3 W. Freeman, J. Kipping, C. Arul, H. Stewart



Restricted Teams winners: (David Smith), Ron Casey, Ken Trolland, Christina Macquarrie, John Knight, (Jeannette Collins)

### Inappropriate Book Titles

"Bridge is a simple game"

"Educating partner with healthy criticism"

"Relay Precision for Novice Players"

"How Australia won the Bermuda Bowl / Venice Cup double"