

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

September 2009

Editor: Bill Jacobs

Wally Scott 1941 - 2009

Wally Scott, one of Victoria's most successful and respected players, passed away in August.



A model of etiquette at the table, Wally had a de-facto mentoring role for an entire generation of bridge players in this state ...

REMEMBERING WALLY Ben Thompson

Wally Scott was a giant of Victorian bridge. He won 14 national titles, but more impressive to me is that he is one of just 8 Australians to have won the PABF (known then as the Far East), the tough pan-Asian qualifier for the world championships. Even more impressive is that Wally won it at the age of just 26 (in 1968).

I was very fortunate as a young player to play on teams with Wally for about 5 years in the late 80s and early 90s. At the start, I was very much the model of a modern youth player, full of the vivid imagination and energetic style that could generate -1400 as easily as +1400.

I learned a lot from Wally, but the most important thing I learnt was how to manage myself at the table. How to manage my time, my energy, my thoughts and my choices. If you say it quickly, it sounds simple, but it's extremely hard and incredibly important.

Here is Wally in top form in the final of the 1991 Victor Champion Cup, showing the clarity of thought and style that, for me, characterised his game.

Dealer: W	♠ 8652	
Vul: E/W	♥ Q93	
	♦ 10	
	♣ AQ984	
♠ AJ7		♠ KQ43
♥ -		♥ J842
♦ AQ98764		♦ K32
♣ J53		♣ 107
	♠ 109	
	♥ AK10765	
	♦ J5	
	♣ K62	

West	North Hinge	East	South Scott
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	D'ble	All pass

Wally patiently waited for E/W to tell him about their shape and strength, and then calmly (as always) balanced into their suit. Simon Hinge knew Wally was bidding hearts for real and confidently raised to game. East's double, not to put too fine a point on it, was poor. West tried, reasonably enough, to give East a diamond over-ruff at trick 2, and Wally made 12 tricks for a very solid +790.

In the other room, Wally's teammates played 3♦ in an uncontested auction and scored +150 for 14imps.

A SIMPLE SUIT COMBINATION

A32

KJ7654

You cash the ace (all follow), and play the two, RHO following with the remaining low spot card. King or jack?

Clearly it depends. The question is:

How many distinct different lines of reasoning can you think of to help in this decision?

FOR STARTERS
Bill Jacobs

With everyone vulnerable, you hold this modest collection:

♠ - ♥ J6542 ♦ J76 ♣ A10953

Partner deals and opens 1♠, next hand passes. Your bid?

With 6 high-card points, you owe partner a response. However, you must not bid a new suit at the two level: this would show decent values, typically at least 10 points.

1NT is what's left. This doesn't in any way promise a balanced hand. It shows 6-9 points, no support for partner's suit, and no suit that can be shown at the one-level: obviously irrelevant here over 1♠, but relevant after lower one level openings.

What happens next will define you as a bridge player. Those who have the Midas touch (oh, how I envy them) hear partner bid hearts. The rest of us suffer as partner repeats his spades at some level, making us wish we had left him well enough alone at 1♠.

But today, it doesn't pan out like that at all. LHO doubles your 1NT, and this is passed back to you:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	1♠	Pass	1NT
D'ble	Pass	Pass	??

Playing for time, you ask RHO what the double means. He replies: "It's a takeout of spades". So clearly RHO has passed the double with spades himself, and you have to decide what to do now.

The prognosis in 1NT doubled is not good. LHO will probably lead a spade, a bad start for your side. And establishing and running one of your suits is going to take some doing.

You are probably better off in 2♣ or 2♥, but which?

One way to enlist partner's help is to make a rescue redouble. The SOS redouble applies when the opponents have doubled you for penalties. Even when confident of making your doubled contract, redoubling to increase the score carries the risk of the opponents removing to their own contract. So it makes sense to use the redouble to ask partner to choose another spot.

You redouble here, LHO opponent passes, and partner bids 2♣ - good news. RHO passes, you pass, and LHO doubles again. Now partner redoubles, and RHO passes. Your head spins as you review the auction:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	1♠	Pass	1NT
D'ble	Pass	Pass	Red'ble
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
D'ble	Red'ble	Pass	?

What's going on here? What do you do?

Apparently two can play this SOS game. Partner wants out of 2♣ for some reason, and you can oblige by bidding 2♥.

This is promptly doubled by LHO, who appears to be drooling, and no one has anything further to say:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	1♠	Pass	1NT
D'ble	Pass	Pass	Red'ble
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
D'ble	Red'ble	Pass	2♥
D'ble	Pass	Pass	Pass

After this eventful auction, the ♦A is led, and you see:

♠ AJ764
♥ A73
♦ 842
♣ KJ

♠ -
♥ J6542
♦ J76
♣ A10953

Partner found a way to get you to choose between the red suits – well bid!

RHO plays an encouraging $\diamond 10$ at trick 1, and LHO continues with $\diamond K$ and a third diamond, RHO winning $\diamond Q$. RHO now plays $\spadesuit K$, you discard a club from hand and win $\spadesuit A$, as LHO follows with $\spadesuit 3$.

What now?

The bidding tells you a lot. LHO's doubles of $2\clubsuit$ and $2\heartsuit$ means that he will have 4+ clubs headed by the queen, and 4+ hearts. You can handle clubs by cashing $\clubsuit KA$ and then playing $\clubsuit 10$. Dummy's trumps will deal with the $\clubsuit Q$ – a "ruffing finesse".

As for hearts, there's nothing you can do if LHO has all five of them, but if he has only four, then RHO has a heart and it's imperative that you remove it before playing on clubs.

The key is to cash the heart ace next. Then play on clubs, ruffing out LHO's queen. You lose three heart tricks for down one, but it could have been worse, the full deal being:

	\spadesuit AJ764	
	\heartsuit A73	
	\diamond 842	
	\clubsuit KJ	
\spadesuit 83		\spadesuit KQ10952
\heartsuit KQ108		\heartsuit 9
\diamond AK3		\diamond Q1095
\clubsuit Q872		\clubsuit 64
	\spadesuit -	
	\heartsuit J6542	
	\diamond J76	
	\clubsuit A10953	

Points to remember:

- After partner's one level opening, bidding a new suit at the two level should show at least 10 high-card points. With 6-9 points, then you must find a 1-level response (or raise partner), if necessary, bidding 1NT with unbalanced shape.
- When doubled for penalties, a redouble is generally for rescue. There are exceptions (aren't there always?); consider the following auction:

			1 \spadesuit
Pass	3 \spadesuit	Pass	Pass
D'ble	Pass	Pass	Red'ble

It's inconceivable that the redoubler could want to play outside of spades. In this case, he not only thinks 3 \spadesuit can make, but he's got the opponents' 4-level contracts covered.

- As usual, recalling the bidding can be very helpful in planning the play.

\spadesuit \heartsuit \diamond \clubsuit

THE TWELFTH TRICK

IMPs \spadesuit AK42
 Dealer: N \heartsuit A5
 Vul: All \diamond J87543
 \clubsuit 4

\spadesuit 85
 \heartsuit K1096432
 \diamond A
 \clubsuit AJ6

West	North	East	South
	1 \diamond	Pass	1 \heartsuit
Pass	1 \spadesuit	Pass	3 \heartsuit
Pass	4 \heartsuit	Pass	4NT
Pass	5 \heartsuit	Pass	6 \heartsuit
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The lead is $\clubsuit 10$, four, king, ace.

Plan the play. Solution on page 5.

\spadesuit \heartsuit \diamond \clubsuit

Funny Post Mortems

In the mid 90s, the English Junior team was playing an international event. One pair had been dabbling in some mind-altering substances, but the British NPC still decided to play them in the next morning's match, as they were theoretically the strongest pair.

Defending 6 \diamond , the player on lead selected the diamond king from $\diamond Kx$. When asked afterwards why he had done so, it having been rather unsuccessful, he replied: "I had to get it out of my hand – it was on fire!"

Apparently, that particular NPC has not been invited back.

BRIDGE ACROSS VICTORIA

Ballarat Bridge Club

The Ballarat Bridge Club was formed in the 1980s: participation has fluctuated over the years, but there is currently a strong membership of around 150, most of whom play frequently.



(l-r) Marj Davies, Lynne Veenstra, Janie Sloss

Like many clubs, it has moved to different venues over time, but it acquired its own premises in 2007, most fortunately being able to buy the property of the Ballarat City Bowling Club: it's actually leased from the city council, but the bridge club owns the building.

Ballarat bridge players are particularly enthusiastic - there are six (!) sessions held per week, with a mix of red and green masterpoint events:

Monday 10 am – 12 pm: supervised play
 Monday 7 pm – 10:30 pm: club comp
 Wednesday 7 pm – 10:30 pm: club comp
 Thursday 1 pm – 4:30 pm: club comp
 Friday 11 am – 3:30 pm: social game – no partner needed and BYO lunch
 Saturday 1 pm – 4:30 pm: club comp

Lessons are run at different times during the year, and for different levels of play. The club competes in all available events, with varying degrees of success; and friendly competitions with other clubs in the region are held quite often on a weekend. The members also get out and about, with some managing to attend most Victorian congresses.



John Whitelaw

Most importantly, Ballarat and Bendigo Clubs have an annual competition in March ("The Ashes"), with the host alternating. Bendigo holds the Ashes trophy for 2009.



Catherine Laffey

Ballarat's annual congress is held in September – see details of this year's congress below.

Venue: Cnr Eyre and Ripon Streets
 Ballarat, 3350

Contact: P.O Box 506W Ballarat
 5331 3948 (session times)
 5339 6485 (other times)

Congress: Sat Sept 19th: Pairs
 Sun Sept 20th: Teams
 Venue: bridge club (see above)

Entries to:
www.bridgeunlimited.com
 email: timwoodley@bigpond.com
 phone: 5342 4847

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: E ♠ Q52
 Vul: E/W ♥ AQ754
 ♦ 7
 ♣ Q962

♠ A108
 ♥ 108
 ♦ K854
 ♣ J1085

West	North	East	South
		1♣	1♠
2♠*	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

* good raise of clubs

You start, naturally enough, with ♣J, low from dummy and declarer trumps. He leads ♠J, which you allow to hold, and follows ♠6, which you win, partner following. Your fate is in your hands.

Problem 2:

Dealer: W ♠ 102
 Vul: Both ♥ Q763
 ♦ J108432
 ♣ J

♠ KJ6
 ♥ A84
 ♦ 7
 ♣ Q97632

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

* intended as signoff, but taken as transfer

Partner leads ♦K, taken with ♦A. Next ♣A, ♣4 ruffed in dummy after partner throws ♠4. Declarer then finesses in spades, ♠Q and then ♠A on which you play ♠K (partner has shown 4 spades). South's ♣K attracts partner's ♥9, overtrumped with ♠Q. Next a diamond from North and you have the hand-shape now, 4315, so you uppercut with ♥8. Declarer wins ♥K and plays a low club, partner's ♥10 holding. He leads ♥J. What are the prospects for the defence?

Solutions on page 8.

THE TWELFTH TRICK Bill Jacobs

IMPs	♠ AK42	
Dealer: N	♥ A5	
Vul: All	♦ J87543	
	♣ 4	
♠ Q6		♠ J10973
♥ Q87		♥ J
♦ K9		♦ Q1062
♣ Q109832		♣ K75
	♠ 85	
	♥ K1096432	
	♦ A	
	♣ AJ6	

There will be no worries if trumps are 2-2: you can ruff one club for your twelfth trick. Can there be any advantage to ruffing both your clubs, the second with the heart ace?

Certainly. If someone has a singleton jack or queen of hearts, then you will still be able to draw the trumps, losing just one trump.

Care is required. The correct start is:

1. Club ace
2. Club ruff
3. Diamond ace
4. Club ruff with the trump ace

This is the critical point. You should cash the spade AK here, before ruffing a diamond back to hand. Look what happens if you overlook this manoeuvre: West will win the second heart and plonk you into dummy with a spade. And there's no way off without promoting a second trump trick for West.

Terence Reese borrowed a chess term to describe this play: he called it "removing the flight square". It's also known as a Dentist Coup (extracting an opponent's exit).

[Thanks to Blaine Howe for this deal.]

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

Club Master	Martin Shub
Local Master	Lucy Henbest Adrienne McGregor
National Master	Harry Brown Peter Kriksciunas
Life Master	Christina Macquarrie Catherine Whiddon

BRIDGE APHORISMS – II
EIGHT EVER – NINE NEVER

This aphorism tells you that with an 8-card fit, missing the queen, to “ever” finesse someone for the queen; with a 9-card fit, “never” finesse – play the ace and king hoping to drop the queen.

It does *not* mean, as one inexperienced player once thought, that from 98 doubleton you should lead the 8.

The survey rated this one as 5.2 out of 10, which seems a tad generous to me. Several correspondents correctly pointed out that the “eight ever” bit is more likely to be right than the “nine never”. I would rate “eight ever” as a 7, “nine never” as about zero. Here’s why.

How many lines of reasoning did you find on playing

A32 (dummy)

KJ7654 (declarer)

the classic “nine never” scenario? I can think of eight.¹

1. A-priori odds

At the point of decision where RHO plays low a second time, there is, a priori, a 52% chance that the king will drop the queen, a 48% chance that you must finesse. This is where “nine never” came from. It’s not a very compelling differential, is it?

You might ask: why is it not a 50-50 position, either opponent being equally likely to hold the missing queen at that point?

The answer to this question is important, because it leads to a vital area of bridge theory. At the point of decision, where RHO has followed low a second time, there are 11 missing cards in his hand. Meanwhile, LHO, who has only followed once, has 12 cards

¹ A ninth method is to peek. But beware of this story: a defender knew declarer was an inveterate “looker”. So he hid the queen behind another card. The looker still got it right, and the defender, outraged, asked: “how did you guess that?”. “Whoever heard of a hand with 12 cards?” came the reply.

remaining. Because LHO has one more card where he can hold the queen, he is a 12/23, or 52%, chance to have it.

This is the theory of “vacant spaces”, and you can immediately see that this 52% calculation never actually applies. This is not tricks 1 and 2 that have been played, and other cards will have been revealed in the defenders’ hands, thus changing the calculation somewhat. This leads us to:

2. Vacant spaces recalculation

Suppose LHO has opened a preempt, you subsequently play in your 9-card fit (with a 2-2 fit in the pre-empted suit) and must guess trumps. The pre-empted suit is led, and on the bidding, you think it’s breaking 7-2. You win trick one and attack trumps.

Now at the point of decision, LHO has shown (inferentially) 8 cards: his pre-empted 7-card suit and the one low trump; RHO has shown 4 cards (two in the pre-empted suit, two in trumps). That leaves 9 vacant spaces for RHO, just 5 for LHO. The odds are around 9/14 or 64% for the finesse.

Most experienced players would instinctively get that decision right, but it can also work in more subtle ways.

You play 3NT, and a side suit looks like this:

32

QJ4

LHO leads the 6 (playing fourth-best leads), RHO wins with the ace and returns the 9, LHO lets your queen win, following with the 5. It looks to all the world as if LHO started with K10xxx, RHO with A9x.

Now do the vacant spaces calculation: LHO has 7 vacant spaces, RHO has 8 vacant spaces – the odds have swung in favour of the finesse in your 9-card fit!

Vacant Spaces recalculation just about destroys “nine never”.

3. Bidding inference

LHO opened 1NT. No point playing him for a singleton!

Or LHO has doubled this suit for takeout – he's more likely to have that singleton.

Or either opponent has opened the bidding and must have that queen to justify the opening bid.

4. Lead inference

If this happens to be an unbid side suit in a trump contract, might LHO have led a small singleton in this suit? So LHO is more likely to have Qx, and you play the king.

(This is an unlikely scenario on this particular 9-card fit, but it applies more clearly when declarer has 4, and dummy has 5.)

5. Avoidance

If you need to keep RHO off lead, then of course you should finesse. Maybe you have an unprotected king in your hand, which you don't want RHO to lead through. Conversely, to stop LHO getting on lead, go up with the king.

6. Communications

You are playing notrumps, with no entry to hand. You better finesse – even if it loses, you get 5 tricks in the suit. But if you go up with the king and LHO shows out, suddenly you are down to 2 tricks in the suit.

7. Need a swing

Don't we always? Perhaps it is the barometer final of the Open Pairs, and you are mid-field. You need a top, and what better way to try for it than finessing here (with no other obvious inferences available). A top if you're right, a bottom if you are wrong: the 48% odds look very good when you need that top.

8. Beginner's count, or faker's exposure

RHO is an inveterate signaller. He plays high-low in this suit, so you go up with the king with some confidence.

Or, you tag RHO as a sneaky individual, who likes to pull wool over the eyes. He plays high-low, so you finesse!



RECENT RESULTS

Ros Blutstein Swiss Pairs

- 1 G. Gaspar – M. Chrapot
- 2 S. Klofa – R. Livingston
- 3 C. Louie – H. Louie

Victorian Mixed Teams

- 1 B. Thompson, J. Thompson, E. Caplan, W. Jacobs
- 2= D. Smart, F. Beale, G. Kilvington, R. van Riel, I. McCance
- 2= R. Livingston, P. Hill, Q. van Abbe, M. Hickey

VBA GNOT heat

- 1 B. Thompson, W. Jacobs, E. Caplan, R. Kaplan, J. Thompson
- 2 A. Krolkowski, R. Stewart, R. Gallus, H. Blakeman
- 3 E. Samuel, J. Fust, A. Branicki, L. Branicki

Directors' Course CHANGE OF DATES



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SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS
Ian McCance

Problem 1

Dealer: E	♠ Q52	
Vul: E/W	♥ AQ754	
	♦ 7	
	♣ Q962	
♠ A108		♠ 73
♥ 108		♥ J3
♦ K854		♦ A1092
♣ J1085		♣ AK743
	♠ KJ964	
	♥ K962	
	♦ QJ63	
	♣ -	

Declarer, who started with only 5 trumps, seems intent on drawing them. He has made no attempt to trump diamonds or to develop that side-suit. Partner's opening bid had ♠AK and presumably one other high card. It surely must be ♦A. That means that on the line of play chosen declarer can expect to make only 4 trumps and 5 hearts - what is he about?

The answer is that he is playing for error, a dummy reversal his only hope. You must return a trump. If instead you continue the forcing defence, ♣J, he can trump, then play a prudent ♥9 to ♥Q, trump another club and return to dummy's ♥A to draw your trump and enjoy those hearts.

Problem 2

Dealer: W	♠ 102	
Vul: Both	♥ Q763	
	♦ J108432	
	♣ J	
♠ 7543		♠ KJ6
♥ J109		♥ A84
♦ KQ965		♦ 7
♣ 10		♣ Q97632
	♠ AQ98	
	♥ K52	
	♦ A	
	♣ AK854	

If you have followed all that, declarer has 2 small trumps in each hand and has taken 6 tricks. After ♥J he will have one trump in each hand, which he will make separately unless you overtake ♥J to lead ♥4.

June Grigg
1918 - 2009

We lost one of the club's finest members in August.

June Grigg was born in Ouyen, Victoria, the youngest of six children. She moved to Melbourne as a young girl and survived on clerical work, before being recognized and employed as a dress-maker and designer, becoming one of Australia's highest paid women at the time.



June married Harold Grigg in 1955, and her daughter Sandra modelled June's creations for the "Grigg" label they had built. This label was very much a part of Melbourne society in the 50s.

An enthusiastic bridge player ever since she taught herself to play in the 70s, June has contributed to bridge in Victoria in so many ways: as a benefactor, teacher, director and congress convenor. She played on the Victorian Women's team at the 1990 ANC, partnering Kris Brook.

June loved to travel, and age was no barrier. It started in 1961 when she took Harold and Sandra on a trip to South Hampton England, and attended the Queen's garden party at Buckingham Palace.

It ended in 2008, when at age 90, she made the trip to Mexico to visit her great grandson Nolan. In between, there were 48 world trips to all corners of the globe.

Besides bridge, she loved cats, everything about the Australian cricket team, AFL football, tennis and golf. She had an expert view on the stock market.

Her death notice in The Age perhaps said it all:

"A true lady, passionate bridge player and generous friend who was excited to say she'd had a simply wonderful life. She played a perfect hand."