

# Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

May 2010

Editor: Bill Jacobs



## 2010 VICTOR CHAMPION CUP

**VENUE: New Melbourne Convention Centre**

**10<sup>th</sup> June — 14<sup>th</sup> June**

**10 am start each day, no night play**

McCance Seniors, VCC Womens & VCC Restricted Swiss Pairs	10 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> June
Victor Champion Cup & Charlie Snashall Trophy Restricted Swiss Teams	12 <sup>th</sup> to 14 <sup>th</sup> June

Tournament Organiser: Sue Smith (03) 9886 8809 or 0429 056 445  
Email: [vcc2010@optusnet.com.au](mailto:vcc2010@optusnet.com.au) Website: [www.vba.asn.au/vcc2010](http://www.vba.asn.au/vcc2010)

### **Gold Points and Playoff Points**

#### **MORE ON CUSTOMER CARE**

*Dear Sir,*

*Regarding your article about the actions of directors at major events: I myself have copped poor behaviour from some congress directors, but are owners of commercial clubs as lily-white as you say? Their behaviour may be all sweetness and light, but what about their rulings?*

*Getting courteous treatment is, as you imply, a big plus, but in my book, getting an adverse ruling which goes against the relevant laws cancels all that and then some. This sort of thing happened to me more than once in different clubs until I realised that the rulings were being skewed towards people who played the most and paid most in to the owner's hip pocket. A couple of times the director happened to be a grand master, and if anyone tells me that he had momentary aberrations, I'll reply that I too believe in fairies.*

*Give me a director who is paid to do a job any time.*

*Yours etc  
Sid Dunk*

Ah yes, "Bridge Director" meets "The Customer Is Always Right". Unfortunately, when making a ruling at the bridge table, generally at least one customer is wrong. The challenge for the commercial club director is to make an unbiased ruling without driving the customer away from your product.

Players too need to avoid paranoia about directors' rulings. It is a well known fact that most decisions made by directors and appeals committees leave the losing party feeling hard done by. So a view that "he just ruled that way because my opponents pay more" may be more a reflection of the typical irritation about a losing ruling.

#### **Upcoming State Events**

*Day Time State Charity Butler Pairs*  
For Cystic Fibrosis at the VBA  
Wednesdays 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May  
Commencing at 11.00 a.m.  
Walk in event, \$10 per player

*Victorian Mixed Teams*  
Wednesdays, 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May  
Commencing at 7.30 p.m.  
Enter online: [www.vba.asn.au](http://www.vba.asn.au)

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

Playing for imps, you pick up:

♠ AKQ1084 ♥ J5 ♦ AJ87 ♣ 5

Your RHO deals and passes, and you open 1♠. With the opponents silent, partner responds 2♣, you show your diamonds with 2♦, and partner now jumps to 3♠.

This is the auction to date:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	?

What do you bid?

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Partner is showing you at least 10 points, possibly a lot more, and three-card spade support. This puts you in the slam zone, but how best to investigate?

The hearts are a worry. Hearts is the unbid suit, and so they are likely to be led, and you don't control them. Asking for aces here won't really help you: if partner shows you one ace, slam could be cold, or it could have no play, the opponents cashing ♥AK.

You need a cue-bidding sequence. Partner has set spades as trumps – all new suit bids now will show a control in that suit. You need to know if partner can control hearts – find out by cue-bidding your diamond ace and listening to his next bid. Partner pleases you by bidding 4♥, so the auction is:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	?

What next?

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Now that you have some comfort in the heart department, you can ask for aces.

Partner responds 5♥ to your 4NT bid, showing two aces:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	?

He has ♣A and ♥A, and you are committed to bidding a slam. But what about a grand slam?

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A grand slam could be laydown, or it could have no play at all – you don't know. You have to hand the baton back to partner, and the way to do this is to bid 5NT, asking for kings, and guaranteeing that you have all the aces. You are not intending to bid the grand slam yourself, but partner might be able to, armed with this information.

Incidentally, if your 4NT bid was of the Roman Key Card variety, your 5NT tells partner that your side has all 5 keycards (the four aces and ♠K), and the queen of spades.

Partner bids 6♦ over your 5NT, showing one king.

Your bid?

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Bid 6♠. Unless partner showed all three missing kings, you were never bidding the grand slam on your own.

Partner chews his fingernails over your 6♠ bid, but eventually passes. Here is the complete auction, a work of art:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	5NT
Pass	6♦	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

LHO leads the heart king, and this is what you see (*see top of next page*).

How do you play 6♠?

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- ♠ J93
- ♥ A64
- ♦ 63
- ♣ AKQ106
  
- ♠ AKQ1084
- ♥ J5
- ♦ AJ87
- ♣ 5

Observation 1: The ♣K can be used to dispose of your second heart. So win ♥A, and cash ♣AK, discarding your losing heart.

Observation 2: Your spade spots are very strong – dummy’s ♠J9 are welcome cards. They can be used to ruff your third and fourth diamonds. So play ♦A and a low diamond next, planning to ruff the last two diamonds with dummy’s high spades.

What about dummy’s ♣Q? It’s a decorative card, but is of no value to you in playing 6♠. In fact if you try to use it, you may end up in tears, as the full layout is:

♠ 752	♠ J93	♠ 6
♥ KQ3	♥ A64	♥ 109872
♦ K10932	♦ 63	♦ Q4
♣ 83	♣ AKQ106	♣ J9742
	♠ AKQ1084	
	♥ J5	
	♦ AJ87	
	♣ 5	

*Points to remember:*

Your auction was indeed a work of art. There were four distinct phases:

- *Suit agreement.* The natural bidding through to 3♠ essentially set spades as trumps. Unambiguously setting trumps gives you a solid platform for exploring slam.
- *Side suit controls.* The 4♦ and 4♥ cue-bids were needed to ensure you weren’t off two fast tricks in a side suit. You might have cue-bid 4♣ instead – the effect would have been the same: a 4♥ cue-bid from partner.

- *Ace check.* Blackwood was important. It might have prevented you from bidding a slam missing two aces<sup>1</sup> – this is the first and foremost reason to use Blackwood. If partner had shown one ace, you would have jumped to 6♠, with reasonable confidence. When partner showed two aces ...
- *Grand slam try.* Your 5NT bid actually handed over control of the auction to your partner, informing him that you had all the aces<sup>2</sup>. It’s an important point to remember: when Blackwood reveals that you have all the key cards, it’s usually correct to let partner know, even if you are not personally that interested in a grand slam.

As it turned out, partner was right to chew his fingernails over 6♠. He was just one jack short of bidding 7♠. Replace his ♣6 with ♣J, and there are 13 top tricks.

- As for the play, the important observation was your trump solidity. That made the plan of ruffing your diamond losers a sure bet. 13 tricks were there if the club jack drops on the third round of the suit, but your objective was 12 tricks, not 13.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

**Are you below \*Local Master?**

Come along and play in the 2010 Australia-Wide Novice Pairs at the VBA on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May, commencing at 7.30 p.m.

The Australia-wide Novice Pairs is a national bridge event run by AB Magazine for novices. Get a great sense of participation by playing alongside thousands of other competitors.

<sup>1</sup> How could you be off two aces when partner has cue-bid 4♥? Well, it depends on whether you are allowed to cue-bid a second round control – king or singleton. Could partner bid this way with

♠ Jxx ♥ KQx ♦ Kx ♣ KQJxx?

This is a matter for partnership agreement.

<sup>2</sup> Conversely, if you are missing an ace, you **must not** bid 5NT, even if you think it might help you decide between, say, 6 of your suit and 6NT.

**SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS**

**Problem 1:**

Dealer: N ♠ 86  
 Vul: E/W ♥ AJ854  
 ♦ Q1086  
 ♣ 32

♠ J  
 ♥ 103  
 ♦ AKJ752  
 ♣ KQ96

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♠
2♦	D'ble	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

You begin with ♦A and partner's card is ♦9, declarer's ♦4. How to read this?

Declarer may be fooling, and may need ♦Q for his 10<sup>th</sup> trick. Continuing a low diamond may be correct, but won't earn much gratitude if partner started with ♦93.

Is there an alternative defence if partner has only one diamond?

**Problem 2:**

Dealer: E ♠ A10  
 Vul: All ♥ AK73  
 ♦ J107  
 ♣ KQ97

♠ J  
 ♥ QJ108  
 ♦ KQ854  
 ♣ A32

West	North	East	South
		1♦	Pass
2♠*	D'ble	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	
* weak			

Partner leads ♦A and continues ♦6 to your ♦Q (declarer ♦2, ♦9). If ♦9 is a false card you can see your way to 4 tricks, but what about that 5<sup>th</sup>?

Solutions on page 7.



**CASES FOR ACES  
 Bill Jacobs**

Stayman and Blackwood are the world's most enduring bidding conventions. Whilst Stayman has been played relatively unchanged for many decades, a cottage industry has sprung up inventing variations and alternatives to Blackwood. Easley Blackwood (1903 – 1992) might be aghast – or proud.

Original Blackwood was simple: one step for each extra ace you hold. The only "complexity" was that 5♣ showed 0 or 4 aces – mathematicians will read that as "0 modulo 4". Most people could handle the equation.

In this series of articles, we examine the merits – or otherwise – of these variations. And one thing is for sure: most people can *not* handle some of these equations.

Blackwood is the slam bidding tool of players starting out. "I think there's a slam – I'll bid 4NT asking for aces". It works some of the time. But there are problems, including:

- We might be missing only one ace, but the ace and king can be cashed against us in that suit
- The response to 4NT might take us too high
- We might have a void, so we can afford to be missing the ace of that suit
- We might lose a trick to the king, or queen, of trumps
- Partner of the Blackwooder is removed from the decision-making process

Here is a list of variations and alternatives to the simple Blackwood convention:

1. Keycard Blackwood
2. Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB)
3. RKCB 1430
4. Gerber
5. Exclusion Blackwood
6. Minorwood
7. Redwood
8. TURBO
9. Kickback
10. Blackwood according to Bob Gallus

... to be continued

## THE LEBENSOHL CONVENTION

### Jeff Fust

Stayman and Transfers are both extremely useful conventions which, when used properly, will usually help you find the right contract. It is now very common for opponents to overcall your 1NT opening simply to disarm you of those conventions.

Partner opens 1NT (15-17 points). RHO overcalls 2♣ (alerted as Cappelletti, showing any single suited hand).

What would you bid with the following hands?

- 1) ♠ Q1042 ♥ AJ53 ♦ 96 ♣ Q54
- 2) ♠ J3 ♥ Q98532 ♦ A7 ♣ 854

A 2♣ overcall of your 1NT takes away only one bid (2♣). You can reclaim that bid by doubling.

To avoid the opponents disrupting your bidding conversation, you should ignore the 2♣ overcall. Double for Stayman and bid as you would normally. This applies whether the meaning of the 2♣ bid is Cappelletti or natural.

Hand 1: You would have normally responded 2♣ (Stayman). When opponents overcall 2♣, don't give up Stayman; reclaim it by doubling. To double for Stayman is more useful than for penalties.

Hand 2: You would have, and still should, bid 2♦ as a transfer to hearts. When opponents overcall 2♣, don't give up your transfers.

Partner opens 1NT and this time RHO overcalls 2♠.

What would you bid with the following hands?

- 3) ♠ 4 ♥ Q653 ♦ AK6 ♣ Q9643
- 4) ♠ J3 ♥ K98532 ♦ 76 ♣ 854

The 2♠ overcall takes away more bidding space making it more awkward to overcome. We now have trouble using our two conventions - Stayman and transfers.

Solution: A set of bids called Lebensohl which is perfect for combating nuisance overcalls.

Hand 3: Using Lebensohl you could tell partner you have a game strength hand with 4 hearts and also deny holding a spade stopper. Partner would then be well informed to decide the contract.

Hand 4: Using Lebensohl you could tell partner you are weak with long hearts and therefore play in 3♥. If you had bid 3♥ directly how would partner know to pass?

Lebensohl reduces the effect of the opponents' interference and increases your side's ability to compete. It gives you the ability to express your hand accurately in important competitive situations. It is simple to play and, once learned, reasonably easy to remember.

Lebensohl is universally played by nearly every serious partnership and I recommend the convention to you without any reservation.

*To find out more ...*



## MASTERCLASS

### Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May

10am - 2:30pm

**Jeff Fust**

# Lebensohl

A complete system for when your opponents overcall your 1NT opening

**Cost** : \$30 payable on the day (includes booklet and notes).  
**Where** : VBA Clubrooms, 131 Poath Rd, Murrumbidgee.  
**Lunch** : Soup, Sandwiches, Mains, Deserts and Drinks are available.

**Spoil yourself for four days**

Join Brigitte and Keith, at

### The Bellinzona Hepburn Springs

For four days of wonderful bridge, fantastic workshops, superb meals, great company, peace and tranquility.

**Tuesday afternoon June 22nd to**  
**Friday lunchtime June 25th.**

For more information, contact Keith on 0428-130-844  
or email: [keithkat@kattery.com.au](mailto:keithkat@kattery.com.au)



**BRIDGE APHORISMS – VIII**  
**SIX-FIVE COME ALIVE**

This was liked by the people who knew it:

*“Generally true, the more extreme the shape, the more one should bid” ... Rob Fruewirth.*

*“Count your losers and bid accordingly, especially if you have a known fit with partner. If a known misfit with partner stop as low as possible.” ... Kitty Muntz*

*“You can get killed if you have inadequate fillers, but the principle of bidding on shape and, more importantly, fit, is sound” ... Ben Thompson*

*“Haven’t heard this one – sounds like euchre to me, or would that be cribbage?” ... Cathie Lachman*

Cathie gets bonus points for mentioning the wonderful game of cribbage, but this is a bridge saying. Cribbage is *“Fifteen-two, fifteen-four and the rest won’t score”*.

Kitty and Ben’s point about degree of fit is interesting, but sometimes the player with 6-5 just has to start bidding it, and then partner can judge degree of fit.

I’m sure this is a good aphorism. In fact, a descendent of *“six-five, come alive”* is *“six-four, bid some more”*. The bottom line is that shapely hands are made for bidding.

A couple of years ago, I was playing in a team with a top Australian player in it, and I held a moderate 5-5 hand in hearts and clubs and passed over RHO’s 1♠ opening. At the post-mortem, and considering the 10imps we had just lost, I said: “vulnerable, I thought a 2♠ bid was too dangerous”. My teammate gently explained to me that a survey had been done in the past and that it strongly pointed to summoning up your courage with 5-5 shapes and just bidding.

So if it is suggested that with “five-five, you come alive”, then it should doubly apply to six-five shapes.

From match 6 of the Fred Altman Swiss Teams:

Dealer: E	♠ 543		
Vul: All	♥ J10843		
	♦ QJ982		
	♣ -		
♠ AK86		♠ QJ1097	
♥ K76		♥ -	
♦ K54		♦ 1063	
♣ Q63		♣ AKJ87	
	♠ 2		
	♥ AQ953		
	♦ A7		
	♣ 109542		

East opens 1♠ and South has to decide whether to “come alive”. If he does, via either 2♥ or 2♠, North will surely take the good sacrifice in 5♥ over 4♠. This is a classic example of bidding courageously with shape. The average on the board was 460 to E/W.

This concludes our series on Bridge Aphorisms. I will not devote an article to “the queen sits over the jack”, because in summary, this is only for players who believe in Astrology. It does have some minor merit if boards are hand-dealt.

One final word of warning from Jeff Fust. He accurately observes that playing bridge purely by following rules is a good pathway to mediocrity. He continues:

*When my students ask me for advice on opening leads I might say, tongue in cheek, “seventh from the left”. The first time they hear it they either smile or respond “Oh really? I hadn’t learnt that one.”*

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣



**Risky Contract**

## RECENT RESULTS

### Altman Swiss Pairs

- 1 C. Arul – A. Kaszubski
- 2 H. Snashall – S. Weisz
- 3= S. Ozenir – B. Wein
- 3= M. Dilks – H. Blakeman

### Restricted Swiss Pairs

- 1 P. Knightley – L. Attwood
- 2 P. Buchan – A. Segal
- 3 J. Bristow – J. Lacey

### Victorian Thwaites Mixed Pairs

#### Championship

- 1 F. Beale – R. van Riel
- 2 E. Caplan – G. Gaspar
- 3 M. Tencer – M. Chrapot

#### Plate

- 1 R. Szabo-Bencze – S. Vardi
- 2 B. Gold – L. Gold
- 3 S. Gerdan – M. Balint

#### Restricted

- 1 K. Hoff – J. Hoff
- 2 F. Engleman – E. Hechtman
- 3 I. Margitta – M. Margitta

### ANZAC Congress

#### Swiss Pairs

- 1 J. Magee – T. Strong
- 2 I. Webb – S. White
- 3 L. Branicki – J. Howard

#### Swiss Teams

- 1 A. Hegedus, A. Mill, J. Howard, P. Hollands
- 2 J. Collins, M. Phillips, N. Ewart, B. Howe
- 3 G. Hill, J. Tunks, D. Carter, G. Carter

## RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

Club Master	Michael Dunhill
*Local Master	Les Ajzner Bianca Gold Adrienne McGregor Dubravka Zec
**Local Master	Jeff Batten Paul Kron Sue Small Saul Vardi
State Master	Gordon Shinewell Lucy Henbest
*State Master	Simon Rose

*National Master	Irene Hamilton Angus Munro Robert Rosenberg
Life Master	Jeffrey Shapiro
Silver Life Master	Maxi Fogelgarn Richard Greenfield Jill Percil
Gold Life Master	Leeron Branicki

## SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS Ian McCance

### Problem 1

Dealer: N	♠ 86		
Vul: E/W	♥ AJ854		
	♦ Q1086		
	♣ 32		
♠ J		♠ 732	
♥ 103		♥ KQ62	
♦ AKJ752		♦ 9	
♣ KQ96		♣ J8754	
	♠ AKQ10954		
	♥ 97		
	♦ 43		
	♣ A10		

It's risky to continue diamonds, either high or low, though if you continue low that will gratify partner. A more prudent defence is to switch to ♥10 to remove the entry to an established ♦Q if that is the position.

If partner wins a heart he will play a club.

### Problem 2

Dealer: E	♠ A10		
Vul: All	♥ AK73		
	♦ J107		
	♣ KQ97		
♠ 987632		♠ J	
♥ 542		♥ QJ108	
♦ A6		♦ KQ854	
♣ 65		♣ A32	
	♠ KQ54		
	♥ 96		
	♦ 932		
	♣ J1084		

It looks as if you have to assume you have 3 tricks in diamonds. If you assume, further, that declarer has only 4 clubs your ♣A provides a solution. Return ♠J at trick 3, win the first club and play a low diamond.

**♠♥♦♣ Sale Congress ♠♥♦♣**

Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1 pm: Swiss Pairs  
 Sun 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 9:30 am: Swiss Teams  
 For details, contact Elizabeth Morrish on  
 5199 2626 or [egmorrish@bigpond.com](mailto:egmorrish@bigpond.com)

**PANACHE**  
**Ben Thompson**

Panache is a new series about the finesse. The finesse is a vitally important card-play technique, but how do you know which ones to take and when to take them? We're going to look at how you can take your finesses with panache.

For this first article, I'm going to go straight to one of my favourite topics – *eight usually, nine occasionally*. We all learnt "eight ever, nine never" to help us remember to *always* finesse for the Q with an eight card fit but *never* with a nine card fit. You know the rule is not quite right, but how do you know when?

The "eight ever" part is *usually* right and you need solid evidence not to finesse. The most common "solid evidence" is when one opponent either has to have, or can't have, the queen because of his bidding.

On the other hand, "nine never" is actually a very close thing. All by itself, looking at a suit like Axxx opposite KJ10xx, playing A and K ("the drop") wins just under 58% of the time while cashing the A (say) and taking the finesse wins just over 56% of the time. That's pretty close.

Imagine that one opponent has opened a classic 7-card pre-empt. How likely is your 9-card fit to break evenly? How likely is the pre-empter to have the Q? Not very likely at all. You know that you should normally break "nine never" and finesse instead.

So *occasionally* you should finesse, but when already? It turns out that the break point is when one opponent has just two more empty spaces in his hand than the other. A *space* is just unknown cards in someone's hand.

If one player has *one* more space than his partner, the finesse and the drop are exactly equal – use your nose and no-one can argue with you about the odds.

Here's Serhat Ozenir in action against me (curse him!) in the Fred Altman Swiss Pairs recently, demonstrating very nicely how to do it.

Dealer: S	♠ K108	
Vul: nil	♥ AJ742	
	♦ 1087	
	♣ Q6	
♠ 43		♠ Q9752
♥ Q96		♥ 8
♦ J652		♦ KQ9
♣ AK98		♣ J542
	♠ AJ6	
	♥ K1053	
	♦ A43	
	♣ 1073	

West	North	East	South
Ben	Brad	Bill	Serhat
			1♣
Pass	1♥	1♠	2♥
2♠	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

First, notice that 4♥ has zero play. Nice 3NT bid by Serhat (curse him!). Second, what am I doing raising with two small<sup>1</sup>? Two things – one is general competition, and the other is that I was trying to deflect *Brad* (who I thought would declare 3♥) from getting the hearts right by looking like I had more spades than I really had (so that it would look like Bill and I were closer on spaces than we really were).

That didn't work at all. I led a spade around to the nine and Serhat's jack. Next he cashed the ♠K to check just how crazy we were, played a heart to the king and ran the ♥10. Ka-ching. He was sure Bill had 5 spades, leaving 8 spaces. I had shown up with 2 spades, leaving 11 spaces. I had 3 extra spaces, and the odds clearly favoured finessing me (66.4% to 60.7% for the technically minded).

**The takeaway**

When one opponent has two (or more) extra empty spaces in his hand than his partner, expertly finesse him for the missing queen in your 9 card fit.

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<sup>1</sup> I was wondering that myself at the time ... BJ