

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

August 2010

Editor: Bill Jacobs

EDITORIAL: EVIL MEDIANS

Imagine that you are playing in the 2010 Women's Butler Final, aiming to be one of the top three pairs that will form the Victorian team.

It is the last round, and you are locked in a battle for third place with pair X. Here is the final board of your match against pair Y:

Dealer: S	♠ 54
Vul: All	♥ A63
	♦ Q83
	♣ AJ1043
	♠ J976
	♥ K52
	♦ AKJ
	♣ K98

As South, you play 3NT and ♠K is led. West continues with ♠2, East wins the ace and plays a third spade. West, who started with ♠KQ102, cashes a fourth round, East discarding a low diamond.

West now switches to ♥J, and you have to find the ♣Q for your contract.

You have an uneasy feeling that your play here might determine whether you make the team, and in fact that is the case. Figuring that RHO is more likely to have club length than LHO (as LHO has 4 spades to RHO's 3), you win ♥A, play ♣J from dummy, low, low, ... and you shut your eyes.

The Women and Senior Butler events had 5-table finals. The datum on each board was the median score: the middle of the 5 scores.

This deal had already been played at the other 4 tables. All of them played 3NT, with two declarers finding the ♣Q for +600, and the other two misguessing for -100.

After the match, whilst drowning your sorrows over your narrow 4th place finish (by

just 5 imps to pair X), you review the scores, and realise to your amazement that, no matter whether you made or went down in this 3NT, *you were destined for a flat board*. With scores already of +600, +600, -100 and -100, your result (+600 or -100) was going to be the median score and hence the datum on the deal. 0 imps for you.

How foolish is a scoring system that gives you a flat board, whether or not you make a vulnerable game?

But it gets a lot worse. When you opened your eyes after running ♣J, LHO had put a small club on it. Hurrah, you have just made your vulnerable game with a fine play. You then look at what happened to pair X. They were E/W at another table, and their declarer got the clubs wrong, scoring -100.

The average was +600, a flat board for you, but +12 imps for your rival. Now imagine that you had misplayed the hand, finessing the clubs the other way, and going down in 3NT. It would still have been a flat board for you, but now, with a median score of -100, it would also have been flat for pair X. By making 3NT, you missed out on the team – if you had gone down instead, you would have qualified! So your club guess **did** determine whether you make the team – you needed to get it wrong!

And how foolish is *that*?

The villain in this tale is the median scoring: a system that makes absolutely no sense when there is a single field. Whilst the above deal was fictional, there would have been many occasions over the two events where this sort of randomness actually occurred. A sensible averaging of the three middle results will result in sensible swings: in the above example, you will win or lose 6 to 10 imps depending on which side of the ledger your result falls.

Median scoring makes perfect sense in events with a separate N/S and E/W field, but none at all in single field finals.

FOR STARTERS
Bill Jacobs

Playing in a matchpoint event, you hold the following in fourth seat:

♠ A7532 ♥ 732 ♦ AQ6 ♣ J4

With no one vulnerable there are three passes to you, and you have to decide whether or not to open the bidding.

The question is: can you win a plus in a partscore, or would you be better off with a score of 0, for passed in?

A key factor is the spade suit. If you are going to compete for a making partscore, the side that has a spade fit is at a tremendous advantage. They can outbid the other suits, without raising the level.

"Pearson Points" is a method for deciding whether to open the bidding in fourth seat. Pearson Points is the sum of high-card points plus the number of spades held. If that comes to 15 or more, you open the bidding.

Pearson points should be counted when you have between 9 and 12 points. With 13 or more, you should open the bidding regardless of your spades, because it is entirely possible that the opponents cannot compete at all. Here is a simple table:

Points	Spades needed
9	6
10	5
11	4
12	3

On this deal, your Pearson count is 11+5=16 so it is worth opening 1♠.

Partner raises to 2♠ and RHO doubles. You pass, wondering what monster you have unleashed, and LHO bids 3♥. Partner persists with 3♠, and mercifully, that is the end of the auction:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	D'ble	Pass
3♥	3♠	All pass	

The lead is ♥K, and you see:

♠ 10984
♥ A5
♦ 743
♣ KQ10

♠ A7532
♥ 732
♦ AQ6
♣ J4

Let's count the losers. There are one or two in spades that you can do nothing about, a certain heart loser, and the ace of clubs out.

It seems the key will be minimising your diamond losers. You can hope the ♦K is onside, and also try to discard a diamond on dummy's clubs.

How do you play it?

The key play is your very first one. You should play low from dummy at trick 1, letting LHO win the ♥K. You want to make it hard for the defence to get your RHO in to lead a diamond through. Leaving LHO on lead means he cannot hurt you with his next play.

LHO thinks for a bit and continues with a second heart, dummy's ♥A winning.

What now?

You should play on clubs. Here is the deal:

	♠ 10984	
	♥ A5	
	♦ 743	
	♣ KQ10	
♠ Q6		♠ KJ
♥ KQ84		♥ J1096
♦ K95		♦ J108
♣ 7652		♣ A983
	♠ A7532	
	♥ 732	
	♦ AQ6	
	♣ J4	

You can play one round of trumps, winning ♠A, but then switch to clubs. East wins the second round with ♣A and puts ♦J through. You lose this finesse, but when a diamond is

returned, you win $\heartsuit A$, cross to dummy by ruffing your last heart, and discard your diamond loser on the long club. A second round of trumps sees the welcome 2-2 break, and you have made your $3\spadesuit$ contract, losing just one trick in each suit. Phew!

(Pearson) points to remember:

- This is the recommended method for deciding whether to open in 4th seat: Points + Spades = 15. It works surprisingly well.

Suppose hypothetically you had been the dealer. Then there would be three passes to East. His Pearson Points are $10+2=12$, and he should certainly throw the hand in.

- Refusing to take the first trick with your ace is quite a common ploy in suit contracts. It often reduces the flexibility for the defence. Sometimes it can act as a "mini" hold-up play, making it hard for the defence to subsequently cash their tricks in this suit.

On this hand it was essential to lose your heart trick in a way that prevented a switch to diamonds. Look what happens if you had won $\heartsuit A$ at trick 1. When RHO wins $\clubsuit A$ on the second round of the suit, and puts a diamond through, the defence can establish their second diamond trick whilst you still lack an entry to dummy. You will have to exit (in hearts or trumps), and the defenders will cash their second diamond trick.

In fact, you might well have made an overtrick with your good play at trick 1. LHO was sorely tempted to switch to a diamond at trick 2 (hoping his partner had a stronger diamond holding), and you would have happily won the free finesse.

The August Red Point Competition will support the "aeiou Foundation" – for children with autism.

Wednesdays 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th at 11.00 a.m.

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: W \spadesuit AQ10972
 Vul: Both \heartsuit KJ2
 \diamondsuit 9
 \clubsuit A73

\spadesuit K85
 \heartsuit Q
 \diamondsuit A7543
 \clubsuit J862

West	North	East	South
	1 \spadesuit	Pass	2 \heartsuit
Pass	4 \diamondsuit ¹	Pass	4 \spadesuit ²
Pass	5 \diamondsuit ²	Pass	5 \heartsuit
Pass	5 \spadesuit ²	Pass	6 \heartsuit
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- splinter raise
- controls

You cash $\diamondsuit A$. Partner plays an indeterminate $\diamondsuit 6$ and declarer $\diamondsuit J$. You can't read too much from partner's card since he can't have much. Although maybe $\diamondsuit A$ calls for "attitude" there is the matter of suit preference when dummy tracks with a singleton. All in all we should assume little and decide for ourselves what card comes next.

Problem 2:

Dealer: N \spadesuit J98762
 Vul: E/W \heartsuit K873
 \diamondsuit 6
 \clubsuit A3

\spadesuit 4
 \heartsuit A1096
 \diamondsuit A104
 \clubsuit 107642

West	North	East	South
	2 \diamondsuit ¹	Pass	2NT ²
Pass	3 \diamondsuit ³	Pass	4 \spadesuit
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- Multi
- Enquiry
- Maximum with spades

Partner gets off to an enterprising lead, $\heartsuit J$. You play low and declarer wins $\heartsuit Q$ and leads $\diamondsuit K$. It seems prudent to win this. If partner has an entry there will be two tricks in hearts and possibly a heart ruff as well. What will you try next?

Solutions on page 5.

PANACHE - IV Ben Thompson

How you play a suit often depends on how high you are (that is, how many tricks you need).

Dealer: N	♠ AQ105				
Vul: nil	♥ J107				
	♦ AQ5				
	♣ J76				
♠ K32			♠ J		
♥ AK32			♥ 9865		
♦ J1074			♦ 9863		
♣ K9			♣ Q1082		
	♠ 98764				
	♥ Q4				
	♦ K2				
	♣ A543				

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

That's some pretty aggressive bidding by NS. Who went crazy?

Ron Klinger's latest book *Better Balanced Bidding* recommends Banzai points for **balanced** hands. Banzai points count 5-4-3-2-1 for A-K-Q-J-10 instead of the regular 4-3-2-1 (and 0 for 10's). You also add 2 Banzai points for holding a 5-card suit. There are 60 Banzai points in the pack instead of the regular 40, so you add 50% to your usual ranges when bidding balanced hands (stick with regular points for unbalanced hands).

On Banzai count, North has a strong 1NT opening, and South is just about worth forcing to game. Well bid, now all you have to do is make it.

West cashes his ♥AK and continues a 3rd one (afraid of playing any other suit, he hoped his partner had the ♥Q at trick 2, and then just stuck with his safety-first plan at trick 3).

The spotlight is now firmly on you as declarer. You still have one unavoidable ♣ loser, so you have to play the trump suit for no loser. Double-dummy it's easy – get to hand to play a trump to the queen, then cross back to hand to finesse the 10 with a song in your heart – but is it the right play?

As a matter of fact, it is! This is a surprising combination where the 10 is actually a dastardly deceiver. Needing all the tricks, finessing the queen (then playing the ace unless righty shows out) works against trumps 2-2 with the king onside, plus 3-1 with singleton jack offside – about 27%. The alternative of finessing the 10 then the queen needs both the king and the jack onside, which is only 24% (yes, only 24% - the 2nd honour being onside is a little less likely when the 1st one is already onside).

On the first night of the Rothfield teams, most N/S pairs stopped out of game. How do you play the trump suit in 3♠ after the same start? Now you can afford one loser, and the right play is to cash the ace first. If an honour appears, it's easy. If one doesn't, cross back to hand and play a trump up to the queen. That will get you four tricks and only one loser about 83% of the time.

Expert aside: Be very very careful with this honour layout. The recommended line for no loser is only right when you have a 9 or 10 card fit. With a smaller fit, the double finesse is your best shot. Gappy suits in particular can have lots of different 'right' lines depending on the situation.

The takeaway

Your experience will usually suggest a couple of sensible alternative lines to you in a gappy suit, but unless you're an elephant and can memorize every single suit combination, mentally check where your possible lines win and lose before you commit to one.

RECENT RESULTS

Elizabeth Sawicki Eclectic Pairs

- 1 P. Fent – S. Vardi
- 2 D. Crafti – A. Paul
- 3 P. Moritz – L. Meyer

Rothfield Teams

- 1 N. Howard, A. Mill, W. Jacobs, B. Thompson
- 2 G. Kilvington, F. Beale, R. Van Riel, I. McCance, H. Sawicki
- 3 S. Arber, R. Greenfield, H. de Jong, M. Chrapot, M. Tencer

THE TWELFTH TRICK

Dealer: S ♠ A5
 Vul: Both ♥ 4
 ♦ KJ872
 ♣ 107653

♠ -
 ♥ AKQJ962
 ♦ Q64
 ♣ AJ2

West	North	East	South
			2♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♣	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

♠Q is led to 6♥.

Plan the play.

Solution on page 7.



RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

Club Master	Maria Campbell Robert Geschke Joseph Stevens Ella Pattison (Youth)
Local Master	Ray Shaw Ros Shaw
*Local Master	Anna Geppaart
**Local Master	Helen Abeles
Regional Master	Kay Levy Pat Makinson
*Regional Master	Mary Lipp
State Master	Genie Harband Herman Louie
*State Master	Patrick Zhang
National Master	John Yang
Bronze Life Master	Christina Macquarrie Jennifer Savage
Gold Life Master	Gregory Carter Belinda Lindsay Guta Wikinski
Grand Master	Dan Hohor

SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS
Ian McCance

Problem 1

	♠ AQ10972	
	♥ KJ2	
	♦ 9	
	♣ A73	
♠ K85		♠ J43
♥ Q		♥ 9863
♦ A7543		♦ Q10862
♣ J862		♣ 10
	♠ 6	
	♥ A10754	
	♦ KJ	
	♣ KQ954	

There is no reason why ♦J should be a false-card and declarer probably has ♦K - it should be safe to continue diamonds. But if declarer has so many round cards, your hand has critical cards in both black suits and you need to protect them.

Remember the auction - South showed a control in spades, clearly a singleton (or a void).

If your next card is a spade and declarer has one, he will now have a nasty guess - you know clubs don't run but he doesn't.

Problem 2

	♠ J98762	
	♥ K873	
	♦ 6	
	♣ A3	
♠ KQ5		♠ 4
♥ J5		♥ A1096
♦ 732		♦ A104
♣ KJ985		♣ 107642
	♠ A103	
	♥ Q42	
	♦ KQJ985	
	♣ Q	

Alas there is only one card now - ♥A. You can hand partner his ruff in hearts and hope he has a natural trick in trumps as well. Diamonds are a potent threat, and if you don't cash your ♥A - dummy's two hearts go away on diamonds. Fate dealt you ♥10 to deceive.



CASES FOR ACES - IV Bill Jacobs

About kings and queens

Consider this auction over the course of history:

1♥	2♣
2♥	4NT

Let's put some hands and decades to it:

1960s. Responder holds:

♠ AKQx ♥ Qxx ♦ x ♣ AKxxx

Opener responds 5♦ to simple Blackwood, one ace. But does he have:

A) ♠ Jx ♥ J10xxxx ♦ AKQ ♣ Qx

or

B) ♠ Jx ♥ AKJ10xx ♦ Qxx ♣ Qx

Slam might have no play or be cold, and the one-ace reply doesn't tell you which.

You really need to know about that king of hearts. The king of the agreed trump suit is almost as good as an ace. It's true that a missing trump king might not translate to a loser – you could win a finesse; however, it's not a bad strategy to stay out of a slam that needs a finesse. And of course, no finesse will help when the missing trump king is accompanied by the missing trump ace!

So along came Key-Card Blackwood, where the king of the agreed trump suit¹ counted as an ace ... there were now 5 "aces" instead of 4. Hand A) bids 5♦ (one or four key cards), and Blackwooder signs off in 5♥, as he is

¹ Why is hearts the "agreed trump suit" here? Because it was the last suit shown ... in Acol, for example, the 2♥ bid would show at least a 5-card suit, so extra length has just been shown – the 1♥ opening only promised four hearts. In other styles, 2♥ doesn't show any extra length in particular, but nevertheless, the Blackwood bid of 4NT should come with an "agreed" trump suit, and hearts it must be.

To use Blackwood with clubs as trumps, responder needs to go slower. For example, rebid 3♣ (if forcing) or perhaps 4♣ to set clubs as trumps unequivocally. But that's another article ...

missing two key cards. Hand B) bids 5♥ (two key cards), and Blackwooder goes to slam.

Simple and effective. Until:

1980s. Responder holds:

♠ AKQx ♥ Jxx ♦ x ♣ AKQxx

Opener responds 5♥ to key-card Blackwood, two key cards. But does he have:

A) ♠ xxx ♥ Axxxx ♦ AKJ ♣ Jx

or

B) ♠ xxx ♥ KQxxx ♦ AQJ ♣ Jx

Slam might have nearly no play or be almost cold, and the two-key reply doesn't tell you which.

So along came *Roman* Key-Card Blackwood, where the queen of trumps also plays a part. The responses are:

5♣: zero or three key-cards
 5♦: one or four key-cards
 5♥: two key-cards, no trump queen
 5♠: two key-cards with trump queen

After a 5♣ or 5♦ response, Blackwooder can bid the next step (if below 5 of the agreed trump suit) to ask responder whether he has the trump queen.

Hand A) bids 5♥ (two key-cards, no trump queen), and Blackwooder passes, missing a key-card and the trump queen. Hand B) bids 5♠ (two key-cards and the trump queen), and the slam is bid.

By the way, if the responder to Blackwood estimates that the trump fit is at least 10 cards long, then he should "show" the trump queen, even though he doesn't have it. For example:

C) ♠ xx ♥ AKxxxxx ♦ KQx ♣ x

would be a 5♠ response – two key cards plus the heart queen. Partner is likely to have three trumps in this auction, so there is probably no heart loser, even missing ♥Q.

The method isn't full-proof. For example, add the 10 and 9 of hearts to hand A), and slam becomes good again. But it works most of the time, and is certainly superior to not having any way to find out about the trump queen.

Until:

2000s. Responder holds:

♠ AKJx ♥ Kxx ♦ x ♣ AKxxx

Opener responds 5♦ to key-card Blackwood, one key card. But does he have:

A) ♠ xxx ♥ Axxxx ♦ KQJ ♣ Qx

or

B) ♠ xxx ♥ AQxxx ♦ KJx ♣ Qx

Slam might have nearly no play or be almost cold, depending on that heart queen.

The problem this time is that there is no room for Blackwooder to make the secondary ask about the trump queen: there is no space between 5♦ and 5♥.

So along came the 1430 convention, which modifies the 5♣ and 5♦ responses as follows:

5♣: one or four key-cards ("14")
5♦: zero or three key-cards ("30")

The theory behind 1430 is that a *one* key response is more likely to require the followup of a secondary queen ask than a *zero* key card response.

This can have a payoff in particular if hearts is the agreed trump suit. In the example above, the response to "1430" is 5♣ (one or four key-cards), and now Blackwooder can bid 5♦ asking: do you have the trump queen? Hand A) says "no" with a 5♥ bid, passed by Blackwooder. Hand B) says "yes" with a bid higher than 5♥.

1430 is a catchy name and has immense popularity, but I wonder whether it's all worth it. Playing it when clubs is the agreed trump suit seems pointless: who wants to hear a 5♦ response showing no aces in a position where this means you are missing two aces? Maybe I am just stuck in the nineties!

What will we all be doing in the 2020s? I don't know, but the story of Blackwood – which we haven't finished yet in this series, not by a long way – is a fine demonstration of the evolution of bidding theory.

... to be continued

THE TWELFTH TRICK Bill Jacobs

Dealer: S	♠ A5	
Vul: Both	♥ 4	
	♦ KJ872	
	♣ 107653	
♠ QJ1082		♠ K97643
♥ 873		♥ 105
♦ 103		♦ A95
♣ K94		♣ Q8
	♠ -	
	♥ AKQJ962	
	♦ Q64	
	♣ AJ2	

Assuming diamonds break 3-2, you have plenty of potential tricks, but there is a problem with entries to dummy.

Ruff the spade lead in hand (key play 1), and draw trumps discarding two clubs from dummy. Now play the diamond queen (key play 2), and another diamond. If the diamond ace is won on the second round, you can claim – but if it is ducked again, to prevent you enjoying the diamond suit, you are in dummy at the right time.

Discard your third losing diamond on the spade ace, and play a club to the jack. The residual chance in clubs will work if East has both honours, or if he has one honour and is short in the suit, or if West has KQ doubleton.



Jeff Fust

MASTERCLASS

Saturday 4th September
10:30am - 3:30pm

It is not necessary to bring a partner

End Plays and Squeezes

Cost : \$30 payable on the day (includes notes).
Where : VBA Clubrooms, 131 Poath Rd, Murrumbena.
Lunch : A 30 minute break will be provided for lunch.
Soup, Sandwiches, Mains, Deserts and Drinks are available.
Contact : jeffafust@yahoo.com
Website : www.bridgemind.com

YOUNG AND OLD AT THE HOBART ANC

Congratulations to our Youth and Seniors teams, both of which made the final of the ANC in their division. Neither team was able to take the extra step, but their silver medals were a worthy result.

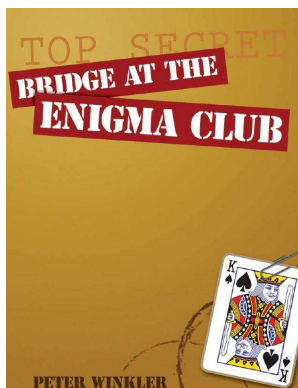
Youth: Justin Howard, Pascale Gardiner, Peter Hollands, Max Henbest, Lucy Henbest, Angus Munro.

Seniors: Michael Dilks, Robert Gallus, Stan Klofa, Alex Czapnik, John Pettitt, Arie Meydan.

Both teams were captained by Laurie Kelso.

BOOK REVIEW

This is the story of a most unusual duplicate session at a most unusual bridge club.



Peter Winkler, who invented the concept of encrypted signalling, uses this book to express his thoughts on many aspects of the game. The characters are fun, the deals are fascinating, and the ideas are thought-provoking.

Chip Martel sums it up best in the Foreword. He writes: *"Here you will see more new ideas in bridge than you ever dreamed of. Will you agree with all of them? Probably not (I don't) ... Chances are, you'll never look at bridge quite the same way again."*

I won't spoil things by supplying a hand from the book. But I will tell you about the scoring system used for this duplicate. It's a Mitchell movement (N/S pairs play against each E/W pair, resulting in a N/S winner and an E/W winner), and the scoring is IMPs *with the datum being the par score* on the deal. This is like median scoring taken to its logical conclusion: you can work out your score at the end of each hand. What a great idea!

Do yourself a favour and buy this book.

ABOUT HAND RECORDS ...

A reader writes: *"I don't think I'm the dumbest member, but I can't understand the last 2 rows of "RECAP" on the hand records."*

RECAP				
	N	S	E	W
Avg HCP	12.03	8.41	10.69	8.87
Bal-anced	16	14	17	16
Singles & voids*	2/13	2/11	2/10	2/11
Suit with 7+	0	1	2	2
*Number of singletons & voids / number of hands with a singleton or void.				

Here's the answer:

The "Balanced" row indicates the number of hands without a singleton or void, and at most one doubleton, i.e. 4333, 5332 or 4432 shapes.

The "Singles & voids" row is as follows: the first number (before the "/") is the number of voids held; the second number is the number of singletons held. So the footnote is just plain wrong - no wonder our not-so-dumb member is confused.

The "Suit with 7+" shows the number of hands with a 7-card or longer suit.

On each deal, the bottom-left corner shows the number of points held by each hand, as shown. This might help the arithmetically challenged, but could it be put to better use?

	7
6	15
	12

How about showing the par score, like "+650" or "-200"? The par score is the result if both sides can see the whole deal and bid and play to best effect.

Then, after the session, you can see how you scored against par - that could be fun. And it would be interesting to see the response to running a Mitchell duplicate session with scoring against par - just like at the Enigma Club.

