

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

June 2012

Editor: Bill Jacobs

THE AGE WEEKLY BRIDGE COLUMN

Dear Fellow-players,

I have contributed a weekly bridge column to the Age for the last 8½ years.

The Age is now planning to discontinue its bridge column from June 30. I am disappointed on my own account but also I believe this step would be bad for our game. A public presence in print is important to the continuation of bridge, which needs to retain current players and to recruit new ones. A bridge column is in a sense a showcase - it can be seen by casual readers as well as regular readers. The less accessible websites do not serve the same function.

If you agree with me please write to the editor (at The Age, 655 Collins Street, Docklands Vic. 3008), or email:

pramadge@theage.com.au

Ian McCance

NEWS FROM THE VBA COUNCIL

Victor Champion Cup

Bridge players have only a few days left to enter for Victoria's premier bridge event, the Victor Champion Cup. Support our major Gold Point event by entering now to ensure you don't miss out. To enter or for more details on the program visit our website www.vba.asn.au/vcc.

Congress Reporter

The VBA is inviting applications from any interested player willing to write reports on congresses for our website. Ideally this individual should be someone who is a regular congress player who can also liaise with congress organisers to get photos, and other information. For more details or to inquire, contact Kim at secretary@vba.asn.au.

VBA HOUSE SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT Tim Blizard

As chair of the House sub-committee of the VBA Council, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about what my colleagues and I have been up to. The House sub-committee is focussed on coming up with ways to strengthen the membership of the VBA and expand the services offered to its members. We've come up with a strategy which we hope you will find exciting.

We're taking a two pronged attack, with a range of initiatives aimed at making duplicate bridge sessions more interesting, fun and educational. We're also looking at non-bridge aspects of the club, e.g. catering services. This month I'd like to fill you in on the changes underway with regard to food and drink. Next month I'll bring you up to speed on our ideas for the duplicate sessions.

Our approach to improving the food and drink services is as follows:

- Install a new self-service coffee facility to replace the old machine at the rear of the club.
- Install a vending machine for snacks, soups and, hopefully, some fresh food.
- Apply for an upgraded liquor licence to allow for the onsite sale of alcohol to members and guests.
- Supply some form of fresh food (sandwiches and finger food) at every duplicate session.

Obviously it will take a little while for some of these changes to be made. There are some minor building works required to accommodate the new equipment, however you should start to see some of the changes very soon. In the meantime, we welcome any feedback regarding these initiatives.

I would like to thank my team members, Robert Ellery, Henri de Jong, Jeannette Collins, Anton Stavik and Bob Stiles for their hard work.

FOR STARTERS
Bill Jacobs

You hold:

♠ A5 ♥ A109 ♦ Q1083 ♣ A643

Playing in a team game, no-one is vulnerable, and your right-hand opponent deals and opens 1♣.

Checking their system card, you see that the opponents play "Standard", and 1♣ promises at least 3 clubs. What do you bid?

They stole your opening bid! Accept this theft and pass. You don't have a worthy suit to overcall. A 1NT bid shows about 16-18 points. Double is no better: what do you do if partner takes out your takeout double into spades? You don't have adequate support for spades, and you cannot take the spade bid out to notrumps, because that would show an even stronger hand: around 19-20 points.

The auction continues:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		1♣	Pass
Pass	1♠	Pass	?

Now is your opportunity to bid. But what?

Partner's overcall in the re-opening chair does not promise the wealth of the Indies. He might have as few as 8 points, and some would re-open the bidding with even less.

Adding 8 to your 14 gives 22, which is nowhere near enough to commit to a game contract. Nevertheless, you have a very nice hand, with all suits stopped, and it is worth making an encouraging bid.

A jump to 2NT here would show around 14-15 points: a hand that was not quite strong enough to overcall directly with 1NT.

You bid 2NT, and that concludes the auction.

The ♣2 is led and you see:

♠ KQ764
♥ KJ7
♦ J962
♣ 5

N
S

♠ A5
♥ A109
♦ Q1083
♣ A643

RHO plays ♣J. How do you play it in 2NT?

This sort of hand requires detailed planning. Start by counting your tricks. There are 6 top tricks: 3 in spades, 2 in hearts and ♣A.

So you are looking for *two* more tricks: they could come from spades (if the suit divides 3-3), or diamonds, once the opponents have taken their ♦AK. The heart suit can be used to develop 1 extra trick, with a successful success against ♥Q, so hearts is not a suit you should be playing on right now.

So which suit should you attack for your two extra tricks: spades or diamonds?

The danger with playing on spades is that if the spades divide 4-2, you will probably go down, as the opponents now will likely to be able to win at least 3 club tricks, 2 diamonds, and the spade you have established for them.

The danger with playing on diamonds is that the opponents might take 6 tricks first: 2 diamonds and 4 clubs, should RHO have a 5-card club suit.

In a nutshell, if the clubs divide 4-4, then it's safe to play on diamonds. If the clubs divide 5-3, you need to play on spades and hope that the suit breaks 3-3. How can you tell?

There's a deceptively simple solution. Withhold your ♣A until the fourth round of the suit, discarding 2 diamonds and a heart from dummy. When the fourth club is played, you will know the club layout. If clubs are 4-4, then play on diamonds; if

clubs are 5-3, then play on spades. The full deal:

♠ 92	♠ KQ764	♠ J1083
♥ Q642	♥ KJ7	♥ 853
♦ 754	♦ J962	♦ AK
♣ 10872	♣ 5	♣ KQJ9

N
W E
S

♠ A5	♠ A5
♥ A109	♥ A109
♦ Q1083	♦ Q1083
♣ A643	♣ A643

Having discovered the 4-4 club break, you simply attack the diamond suit and develop your 8 tricks.

Points to remember:

- If your RHO opens the bidding, and you have a balanced hand of up to 15 points, it is usually correct to pass.
- A re-opening bid by 4th hand after responder has passed the opening bid can often be made on quite a weak hand. Re-opener's partner should take this into account in choosing his next bid.
- As to the play of the hand, this deal was considerably more difficult than most play problems used in this series. It involved a rather unusual holdup play: holdups in notrump contracts are usually designed to destroy communications between the two defenders. That was not the case here: the holdup was utilized to obtain information for declarer about the lie in a key suit, in this case, clubs.



Wi-Fi at the VBA

Free wireless connectivity is now available at the club, accessible from your iPhone, iPad, laptop or Android phone. This includes free printing. Connection name and password are available at the club.

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dir: West	♠ KJ6
Vul: N/S	♥ 853
	♦ Q1097
	♣ AQ7

♠ -
♥ K104
♦ AJ8
♣ K1098432

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♥*	Pass
2♣	Pass	Pass	D'ble
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

* spades

You lead ♣10 and this runs to ♣J in declarer's hand, partner playing ♣6 (standard signals). South plays a spade to ♠K then a diamond to his ♦K, partner's signal likely *even*. You decide to win ♦A, then what next?

Problem 2:

Dir: North	♠ J87
Vul: All	♥ AJ53
	♦ QJ103
	♣ K3

♠ Q10
♥ K9
♦ 87542
♣ 10852

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
1♠	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Partner starts a trump and your ♥K wins. What next?

Solutions on page 6.

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

Local Master	Ming Zhang
State Master	Adrienne McGregor
National Master	Philip Knightly
Bronze Life Master	Max Henbest

EAST GIPPSLAND TRIATHLON Christine Heesom

Not only is East Gippsland the "Gateway to the Gippsland Lakes" and "Victoria's Riviera" but it is also the home to three enthusiastic bridge clubs – Bairnsdale, Paynesville and Lakes Entrance.

Earlier this year Paynesville came up with the idea of running an East Gippsland Bridge Triathlon – the plan being to run a different type of bridge event at each of the three clubs, to be scored across the field so as to produce one winner – the 2012 East Gippsland Bridge Triathlete!

With the support of the Victorian Masterpoint Secretary, who approved B5i red points for the event, the plan was floated to the other clubs and greeted with enthusiasm by their committees.

Bairnsdale Bridge Club conducted the first heat (the swimming leg) on March 30, a duplicate pairs event. Louise Pemberton and Helen Gault were the N/S winners with Dawn Wallace and Barrie Martin taking out E/W. Some players got into the spirit by dressing for the occasion but even flippers and floaties did not help yours truly and her partner who were still 100 yards offshore when the rest of the field took off on the cycling leg.



Swimming leg competitors: Helen Tyler, Mary Turnbull, Terry Nadebaum and Pauline Beck

Lakes Entrance Bridge Club hosted the cycling leg on April 17 – an Individual event. 32 players turned up and a local home club member, Jan Lewis was the overall winner with 61.73%.

For the grand finale, 10 teams contested the running leg playing B.A.M. Teams. This was a very close contest all day with the eventual winners Helen Tyler, Terry Nadebaum, Mary Turnbull and Helen Gault. The win in both the Duplicate Pairs and B.A.M. Teams gave Helen Gault an unbeatable points lead and she was presented with a perpetual wall hanging designed and made by Libby Thomson depicting stylised triathlon logos, playing cards, the name of the event and enough room for future winners to make sure this stays on our bridge calendar for a few years to come.

RECENT RESULTS

Fred Altman Swiss Pairs

- 1 W. Jacobs – B. Thompson
- 2 F. Beale – R. van Riel
- 3 N. Ewart – B. Howe

VBA Open Pairs

Championship

- 1 R. Gallus – S. Weisz
- 2 L. Meyer – P. Moritz
- 3 S. Klofa – P. Fent

Plate

- 1 J. Cowie – T. Masters
- 2 A. Meydan – A. Bell
- 3 H. Stewart – M. Allison

Seniors Interstate Selection

- 1 G. Ridgway – A. Robbins
- 2 S. Arber – H. de Jong
- 3 R. Gallus – S. Weisz

Women's Interstate Selection

- 1 L. Henbest – L. Ginnan
- 2 G. Wilson – L. Clark-Samuels
- 3 J. Magee – H. Snashall

The second-placed pair in the Women's Interstate Selection might not be well-known to Melbourne players. Gabby Wilson and Lesley Clark-Samuels are from Geelong, and are the first non-metropolitan pair to qualify for the Victorian Women's team in living memory. (Open and Seniors is a different story, with Dina Drury, Colin Manley, Gary Ridgway and Arthur Robbins all gaining recent qualification, including Gary and Arthur this year in the Seniors.)

Lesley initially played at Waverley, but moved to Geelong in 1980. Gabby learned bridge in Perth, then played in Sydney for a time, before returning to her home town of Geelong 5 years ago. She has a claim to fame that few if any Victorians could boast: she has won the Sydney Morning Herald Rubber Bridge Competition.



Gabby Wilson and Lesley Clark-Samuels

AFFILIATED CLUB DATA ON THE WEB

As part of our website revamp, we have a special section on the VBA website for Affiliated Clubs – “Affiliated Home”. A key part of this section is club information which potential new players may use to find out about a club near to them. Of course the data is only useful if it is up to date, and whilst we make every effort to ensure its accuracy, we do ask that clubs review their own club information to ensure phone numbers, contact details and other data is accurate. Should any data require changing, please contact Cathie at the VBA on 03-9530-9006 or email info@vba.asn.au.

NEWS FROM THE INTERIM COMMITTEE

The Interim Committee looking into the future governance of bridge in Victoria will present its findings at 5 p.m. after the Croft teams on Saturday, June 16th at the Waverley Bridge Club. All interested players are urged to attend. Some information may be found on the FABCV website <http://fabcv.bridgeunlimited.com/fbcv/ic/index.htm>, and comments before the meeting may be made to any of the IC members.

NORTHERN REGION PAIRS & TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP Jan Hackett

Over the weekend of April 28 and 29, Northern Region players met in Bendigo to contest their annual pairs and teams competition. It was a big weekend for the Echuca players. On Saturday, Wayne Leppard and Michael McQueen-Thomson won the pairs over fellow club members Jamie and David Thompson by a narrow margin of less than 3 points.

Nimal Weerasinghe and Frank Vearing (Bendigo) were third, qualifying them for next year’s seniors event, and Patsy Hall and Diane Heagney were the top placed women’s pair, qualifying them for the 2013 women’s competition.

In the teams’ event the following day, scores were even closer. The Echuca team (Leppard – McQueen-Thomson – Thompson – Thompson) once again finished first, however, the final 167 VP score was equal to the Yarrowonga – Wangaratta team (Tom and Jan Hackett – Maggie Brown – John Nankervis), and the Leppard team won on IMPs. Third spot went to the other Echuca team, Chris Turner, Bryan Fuller, Elinor Turner and Leigh Carroll.



David Thompson, Michael McQueen-Thomson, Jamie Thompson, Wayne Leppard

The Bendigo club put on a wonderful weekend, and thanks go to all those involved. The food and playing conditions were terrific. Thanks also to Martin and Ed for their directing and contribution to the events.



AGE DOES NOT STOP THEM

Congratulations to **Rose Stone**, a regular player at the VBA on Monday mornings, who recently turned 90.

Born in Poland, Rose emigrated to Australia in 1938, settling in St Kilda, where she still lives.

Her list of interests and activities, most of them still current, is impressive, and includes politics (of the left-wing variety), costume-making, short-story writing, chess and of course bridge.

Meanwhile, **Ignacy Tyrmand**, who is about to turn 101, put in a recent appearance at the VBA to play in the 4-session Fred Altman Swiss Pairs, partnered by Terry Strong. They finished in 7th place, out of 40 pairs – an admirable result.

He might be three figures in age, but don't mess with him:

Dlr: South ♠ QJ1054
 Vul: nil ♥ 876
 ♦ KJ95
 ♣ 3

♠ K762	<table border="1" style="text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 3
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ 5	♥ A109432										
♦ Q763	♦ A2										
♣ A1096	♣ KJ75										

 ♠ A98
 ♥ KQJ
 ♦ 1084
 ♣ Q842

Ignacy	North	Terry	South
			1NT
Pass	2♥	D'ble	2♠
Pass	Pass	3♣	Pass
Pass	3♠	Pass	Pass
D'ble!	Pass	Pass	Pass

North-South reasonably pushed on to 3♠ over 3♣, but Ignacy wielded the axe. He led a heart, got a ruff, then underled his ♣A to Terry's ♣K in order to take another ruff. The defence still had the ♦A and ♠K to come for down 300 and 5 imps, no other E/W pair collecting a doubled penalty.



SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS
Ian McCance

Problem 1

Dlr: West ♠ KJ6
 Vul: N/S ♥ 853
 ♦ Q1097
 ♣ AQ7

♠ -	<table border="1" style="text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q1052
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ K104	♥ AJ6										
♦ AJ8	♦ 6542										
♣ K1098432	♣ 65										

 ♠ A98743
 ♥ Q972
 ♦ K3
 ♣ J

Partner has turned up with nothing whatever in the minor suits, so the setting tricks must come from trumps and hearts. You can't tell about the trumps, partner's may be very weak, but you can't exit in clubs without providing a finesse, and if you exit a diamond declarer can finesse against your ♦J, and come to three discards, on all of which partner will have to follow.

This suggests an immediate switch to ♥4.

Problem 2

Dlr: North ♠ J87
 Vul: All ♥ AJ53
 ♦ QJ103
 ♣ K3

♠ K95432	<table border="1" style="text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q10
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ 87	♥ K9										
♦ A9	♦ 87542										
♣ AJ9	♣ 10852										

 ♠ A6
 ♥ Q10642
 ♦ K6
 ♣ Q764

Partner has made a vulnerable overcall with a bad suit – he won't have ♠AK. He must have cards outside. You are now a tempo behind if declarer begins to establish diamonds, and an immediate switch to spades is necessary.

Of course this may be suicidal if partner has ♠A and not ♠K, but is there a better option?

PANACHE - XX
Ben Thompson

Bridge books usually talk about the **backward finesse** as a play for declarer, but in practice it's actually more common in defence, where it's often called a **surround play**.

Dir: South ♠ J864
 Vul: E/W ♥ AK64
 ♦ 10632
 ♣ 4

♠ 95	N	♠ KQ107
♥ 1052	W E	♥ Q97
♦ A8	S	♦ KJ97
♣ Q109872		♣ J6

♠ A32
 ♥ J83
 ♦ Q54
 ♣ AK53

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♣	Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♦

Bill and I had a fairly routine Stayman escape auction in the Mixed Teams. You'd rather trade a small major suit card for a fifth diamond, but you can't have everything. Shirley Collins found the annoying (for me!) ♠9 lead.

On this sort of partscore, with tenuous trumps and sharp tricks (aces, kings and ruffs) outside, I recommend leaving trumps alone and trying instead to score a bunch of side tricks, leaving the defence to break trumps for you in the end game.

If you play trumps yourself, they might draw your trumps themselves and follow up by running their suit, which could easily happen here. Imagine instead what could happen if you set about grabbing as many side suit tricks as you can. You might get really lucky and score ♠A, ♥AK, ♣AK and two club ruffs for 7 tricks. Then you exit something and hope they have to blow a trump trick for your eighth trick.

Have you noticed the problem? Shirley's spade lead annoyingly took out my ♠A entry before I could use it to ruff the fourth round of clubs. Undeterred, I won ♠A, cashed ♣AK

(pitching a spade to protect against getting over-ruffed in spades) and ruffed a club anyway. Gadzooks, **that** got over-ruffed.

The defence and I cashed out our respective majors, and I exited with a heart to put them back on lead to break trumps. Maggie Callander now found the **defensive backward finesse** via the ♦J. If I cover, Shirley continues a low one through dummy's 10 to Maggie's K9. If I duck, Maggie continues a low one to Shirley's ace. No more tricks for me.

By the time the ♦J came through, I knew Shirley's shape. If Maggie had continued with the ♦9 I would have ducked. If Maggie had tried ♦K before the 9, I would have ducked that too. Either way, I would have taken another trick.

Imagine how this works with Q108 after dummy's 9xx when declarer has AJx. It works just as well (of course!) if you rotate the hands so that dummy has AJx over your Q108. Same with AQ10x over Jxx and under Kxx. Sometimes you don't have the key low card and just have to hope that partner has it (eg swap the ♦8 and ♦9 on this hand).

Expert aside: Shuffle my hand a little bit to strengthen the side suits and weaken my trumps, and paradoxically it would be right to draw trumps. For example, if I had ♠A10x ♥Qxx ♦xxx ♣AKJx, I would have plenty of tricks outside, and my biggest danger would be one of them getting ruffed. My best plan is to win the spade lead, ruff a club and then play trumps at all of my legal opportunities¹.

The takeaway

Look out for the defensive backward finesse (or surround play). It's usually easier to find on defence than play because you get to see dummy. Think about the effect of leading the middle card – declarer may have no good option.



¹ Ben's explanation presents a great example of the two basic strategies when declaring 4-3 fits: the "scramble", where you try to quickly cash side-suit tricks, versus the "control", where you draw some trumps and keep control of the hand. ... BJ

GADGET CITY
Bill Jacobs

Seriously ...

You hold:

♠ Qxx ♥ Axxx ♦ Ax ♣ Qxxx

Partner opens 1♠, you respond 2♣, she bids 2♦, and you jump to 3♠, which you play as forcing to game after the 2-over-1 response.

Partner bids 4♣, clearly a cue bid, as you have agreed spades as trumps. You bid 4♦, cue-bidding your diamond ace, and partner bids 4♠. What now?

It's a puzzle. Partner could have:

A. ♠ AJxxx ♥ Jx ♦ KQxx ♣ Ax

where you want to stop right here in 4♠.

Or she might have:

B. ♠ AKxxx ♥ xx ♦ KQxxx ♣ A

where slam is excellent.

Partner's intentions on the two hands are different. On hand A, she's politely cooperating in a slam hunt in case you have a strong hand: 4♣ is a "courtesy cue". On hand B, she wants to drive the investigation, focusing on whether you can control the hearts: 4♣ is a "serious cue".

The dilemma can be resolved by utilising an apparently idle bid: 3NT. What should 3NT mean in an auction like this:

1♠	2♣
2♦	3♠
3NT	

You have gone out of your way to establish your spade fit: it doesn't make a lot of sense in such circumstances for a 3NT bid to be an offer to play 3NT.

Instead use 3NT to introduce a *non-serious slam try*: a hand that's mildly interested in slam, but not very interested, just like hand A above. Conversely, if you have a strong hand that is highly slam-oriented, you bypass 3NT and cue bid at the 4 level.

Finally, if partner has:

C. ♠ KJxxx ♥ xx ♦ KQxx ♣ Kx

where she is not the slightest bit interested in slam, she bids neither 3NT, nor a 4♣ cue-bid, but simply signs off in 4♠.

The 3NT gadget to introduce a non-serious, or mild, slam-try applies when you have found an 8+ card *major* suit fit. It gives up on a final contract of 3NT. When you have found a *minor* suit fit, 3NT is a much more plausible final contract, and therefore 3NT retains its natural meaning.

With serious cue-bids at the 4-level and non-serious 3NT bids, the auctions can proceed:

Hand A:

1♠	2♣
2♦	3♠
3NT	4♠
Pass	

Hand B:

1♠	2♣
2♦	3♠
4♣	4♦
4♠	4NT
5♣	6♠
Pass	

Hand C:

1♠	2♣
2♦	3♠
4♠	Pass

Either partner can use the non-serious 3NT, depending on how the auction proceeds. For example, in this auction:

1♦	1♥
3♥	?

a 3NT bid by responder would be both a non-serious slam try, and also deny the ability to make a spade cue-bid. With spade control, responder can instead cue-bid 3♠ (not yet indicating a level of seriousness), and now opener has the option of bidding 3NT, a mild cooperation in the slam hunt.

The artificial 3NT as a non-serious slam try is a classic example of using all the golf clubs in your bag.