

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

June 2015

Editor: Bill Jacobs

THE SOAPBOX Ben Thompson



"*Winter is coming*" has been a regular refrain throughout all 5 seasons of Game of Thrones. Winter has arrived in Victoria and will do so very shortly in Westeros (that's the English hotbed of political mayhem in the show) so I've been wondering what the Westerosi refrain will be now.

Clearly Game of Thrones should merge with House of Cards, rebrand as Game of Cards, and change their refrain to "*Let's play bridge!*" If you read the bulletin hot off the press like I do then there's still time to enter our very own national tournament, the Victor Champion Cup festival. Check out the VBA web site for details. There's even a partnership service if you'd like to play but don't know where to start.

Another refrain could be "*Let's learn bridge*". It's often too wet or too cold to play that other great Game of Frustration – I refer to golf of course – so why not encourage your sporting friends to indulge in a bit of apolitical mayhem in a warm and dry House of Cards (actually, many golf clubs have very popular bridge sections – which are even more popular in winter).

We're going to try a little competition this month. Tell us in 50 words or less which Game of Thrones character would make the best bridge player and why (by email to Cathie clachman@vba.asn.au with the subject "Thrones"). Best entry¹ wins a spot in a VBA crash course to give to a friend.

NEWS FROM THE COUNCIL Kim Frazer

Council resignations

The VBA advises that Mr Chris Lovelock, the Special Councillor for Metro Arc has resigned from the council. The VBA thanks Chris for his representation over the past few months on the council. This creates a casual vacancy that may be filled by a representative from a club in the Metro Arc Zone (see <http://www.vba.asn.au/VBADocuments/Constitution/SCZones2014.pdf> for clubs in the zone). Representatives from this zone who may be interested in nominating for council can contact the secretary Kim Frazer at secretary@vba.asn.au for further details on the nomination process.

State Awards of Excellence

Several nominations were received for these awards, and the inaugural winners will be honoured at the VCC presentations on the evening of Friday June 5th.

VCC 2015

If you are really quick, you can still enter for the 2015 Victor Champion Cup - your opportunity to win gold points, an ABF medallion and other great prizes. This year there are more prizes on offer and more opportunities for restricted players. Visit the VCC website at www.vba.asn.au/vcc to enter or email kim.frazer@bigpond.com for more information. Entries close 5pm on Tuesday June 3rd.

¹ "Best" in my opinion. Entries in by 5pm June 12 please. We'll print the winner's name and entry in the next bulletin. My nephew Jamie is excluded, even though it would be very Game of Thronesy to give him the prize.

FOR STARTERS

Very occasionally, you are dealt a good hand, like this one:

♠ AK82 ♥ K8 ♦ K85 ♣ AKQJ

23 HCP: that's an automatic 2♣ opening bid, showing a very strong hand. All hands with at least 23 HCP are opened 2♣.

With the opponents passing, your partner responds 2♦, which is the artificial negative response to 2♣ opening bids. It says nothing about diamonds, but simply indicates a weak hand: 0 – 7 HCP.

Now what?

An important principle of 2♣ auctions is that a player's first bid of a suit shows at least 5 cards. So here, you cannot bid 2♠ with only a 4-card suit. Instead you indicate the nature of your hand by bidding 2NT, showing a balanced hand of 23 – 24 HCP.

The auction continues as follows:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
			2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	?

What does 3♣ mean, and what is your next bid?

Suppose you had *opened* 2NT (showing 20-22 HCP) and partner had responded 3♣. What would that mean? It should be the Stayman convention: asking opener for a 4-card major. Stayman works equally well after 2NT opening bids as it does after 1NT opening bids.

The system you play in *this* auction, 2♣-2♦-2NT, should mirror the system played after a 2NT opening bid. The essential nature of the two auctions is the same: opening bidder has a strong balanced hand.

For example, if you play transfer bids after a 2NT opening, then you should also play them after 2♣-2♦-2NT. It's easy to remember, and works well.

If partner's 3♣ is Stayman, then you should now show your 4-card spade suit via 3♠. The auction concludes:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
			2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	All pass	

The opening lead is ♦Q, and this is what you see:

♠ 764
♥ 10952
♦ A
♣ 109643

N
S

♠ AK82
♥ K8
♦ K85
♣ AKQJ

Yes, partner was looking for a 4-4 heart fit and on being disappointed on that score, retreated to 3NT.

First things first: count your top tricks. 2 in spades, 2 in diamonds and 4 in clubs. Sadly, the opening lead has extracted dummy's one high card, and that fifth club in dummy is going to be stranded.

There are a couple of possibilities for a ninth trick: you could play a heart from dummy at trick 2, hoping to find East with ♥A: that will allow you to score your ♥K.

Alternatively you could hope that the outstanding spades are divided 3-3: if you play 3 rounds of spades and they all follow, your fourth spade will be a winner.

Unfortunately, you have to decide right now which way to jump. If you are going to play for ♥A outside, you must lead a heart at trick 2, because this is the only time the lead will be in dummy. If playing for spades 3-3, then lead out your clubs, just in case the defenders discard incorrectly, then the spades, hoping for the best.

So which is it going to be?

This is one of the few situations where you need to know basic percentages. The heart play is clearly a 50-50 proposition: either East has ♥A or West has it.

What are the odds on a 3-3 spade break? The answer is: about 36%. This is an important percentage to know: when there are 6 outstanding cards in a suit, they are unlikely to be divided 3-3.

So the correct play is to lead a heart from dummy at trick 2. The full deal:

♠ J3	♠ 764											
♥ Q76	♥ 10952											
♦ QJ1062	♦ A											
♣ 752	♣ 109643											
	<table style="border: 1px solid black; border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q1095	
	N											
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		♥ AJ43										
		♦ 9743										
		♣ 8										
	♠ AK82											
	♥ K8											
	♦ K85											
	♣ AKQJ											

Points to remember:

- In the auction 2♣ - 2♦ - 2NT, play the same system that you play after a 2NT opening bid.
- As usual with all notrump contracts, when dummy is put down, start by counting your top tricks to see where you stand.
- The odds on a 3-3 break is one of the few essential percentages you need to know.

Here's a useful rule-of-thumb for remembering the basics of splits:

*If there are an even number of cards outstanding (four, six or eight), the odds are that they will be split **unevenly** (3-1 or 4-2 or 5-3).*

*If there are an odd number of cards outstanding (three, five or seven), the odds are they will be split **evenly** (2-1 or 3-2 or 4-3).*

TEST YOUR BIDDING

Overcaller's Re-opening Options

No-one vulnerable

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
2♥	Pass	1♥ Pass	2♣ ?

Here is an auction where your opponents have found a fit and chosen to stay at the 2-level. There are two aspects to this, and they both point to your side competing further, if at all possible.

Firstly, if their side has a fit, then in all likelihood, your side also has a fit.

Secondly, if they have decided to stop at the 2-level, then your side has at least a reasonable number of combined points.

So on balance it pays to get back into the auction. Even if you go down 1 in your resulting contract, that will earn you a better score than letting 2♥ make. Particularly if you are not-vulnerable, it pays to push on. And who knows, you might push the opponents into 3♥ and then defeat the contract. So there are several ways in which bidding on can work.

What tools do you have at your disposal to keep the auction alive?

This is an auction for primarily natural bidding ... with extra-long clubs you can repeat the clubs, and with a second suit you can bid that. If you have support for *both* the unbid suits, then a takeout double is possible.

So do you keep bidding alive with each of the following hands, and if so, how?

- (a) ♠ K105 ♥ 3 ♦ A65 ♣ KQ10876
- (b) ♠ 1054 ♥ 32 ♦ A65 ♣ KQJ96
- (c) ♠ Q4 ♥ Q107 ♦ A5 ♣ AK10876
- (d) ♠ Q4 ♥ 32 ♦ A6 ♣ KJ108765
- (e) ♠ KQ105 ♥ 32 ♦ 5 ♣ AQ10876
- (f) ♠ 5 ♥ 32 ♦ KQ105 ♣ AQ10876

Solutions over page.

TEST YOUR BIDDING - SOLUTIONS

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		1♥	2♣
2♥	Pass	Pass	?

(a) ♠ K105 ♥ 3 ♦ A65 ♣ KQ10876

Double. This is the perfect bid to bring spade and diamonds into the picture.

(b) ♠ 1054 ♥ 32 ♦ A65 ♣ KQJ96

Double. This double is X-rated, absolutely not for children. Your hand is not too exciting, but selling out to 2♥ just can't be right. They will make it and you will get a bad score. Meanwhile, you are unlikely to be doubled in whatever partner bids next. You probably don't want to try this when you are vulnerable!

(c) ♠ Q4 ♥ Q107 ♦ A5 ♣ AK10876

Pass. Whilst there's a fit for your side somewhere, your hand is too defensively oriented to bid: the ♥Q is only worth anything on defence. You may well defeat 2♥, and partner didn't support your clubs: the only suit where you're likely to have a fit.

Comparing hand (b) 10 points: bid and hand (c) 15 points: pass, and you see these auctions are more about shape than points.

(d) ♠ Q4 ♥ 32 ♦ A6 ♣ KJ108765

3♣. This long club suit is worth bidding again: it stands on its own. Actually it might have been wiser to bid 3♣ directly over 1♥ but that's water under the bridge.

(e) ♠ KQ105 ♥ 32 ♦ 5 ♣ AQ10876

2♠. That spade suit is just begging to be bid!

(f) ♠ 5 ♥ 32 ♦ KQ105 ♣ AQ10876

2NT. That diamond suit is just begging to be bid, but it takes you past 3♣. This is an unusual 'unusual 2NT', indicating length in a suit inconvenient to bid. What sort of hand could you possibly have that wants to bid a *natural* 2NT here? There isn't one!

2NT is a strange bid, and if you want to ignore this option, then go right ahead.

JUST FOR CLUBS ... TRANSITIONING FROM SUPERVISED Bill Jacobs

As discussed in last month's newsletter, supervised bridge is the perfect mechanism for introducing new players to the world of duplicate. The next step is to transition those players out of the supervised into the regular duplicate session.

But first things first. Some players prefer to stay with the supervised duplicate on a permanent basis, and there is absolutely nothing wrong with this.

There are two reasons why some players resist moving out of the supervised. First, they may simply lack the mindset to play duplicate. This does not stop them having a fulfilling time in the supervised, and this should be encouraged.

And second, others players, whilst entirely capable of playing duplicate, prefer the relaxed and educational atmosphere of the supervised session.

Nevertheless, the default situation is that new players play supervised for a time, and then dip their toes in the water of duplicate bridge. If all goes well, that's where they will stay.

The transition from supervised to duplicate bridge is an important one and is full of hurdles. Let's look at some of them, and discuss how to overcome them.

Speed of play.

A duplicate session runs for about 3 hours and contains typically 27 or 28 boards, which translates to about 6.5 minutes per board. That is quick, and new players will find it difficult to play at that rate.

Rather than rush players, or let the session run overtime, it is better for the director to simply abandon the last board in the round should a table not have time to play it. If the opponents are riled by this ("it's not fair – they were so slow!"), the director can award the opponents "average plus" – a 60% score – on the board to mollify them. This is entirely legal, supported by Law 12C2.

Alerts.

New players are usually taught about the alerting procedure and this can instil a feeling of deep paranoia. They feel that if they get it wrong, they will quite possibly be drummed out of bridge.

Your club and the directors in it will do well to play down the importance of alerting, at least at the novice level. Since novices play very basic methods, there is really nothing to alert. Unfortunately, the ABF Alert regulations, which are geared more towards tournament bridge, do not help. Did you know for example that the Stayman 2♣ response to 1NT should not be alerted, but opener's rebid of 2♦, denying a major, should be alerted?

By all means, explain the alerting rules to your supervisees, but don't make a big thing of it. In fact, the experienced players in your duplicate are far more likely to fall foul of the alerting regulations than are those transitioning from the supervised.

Calling the Director.

One important piece of advice to give to those transitioning is: if something happens out of the ordinary, please call the director.

Directors should see themselves as problem solvers, not policemen. Has someone revoked? Or made an insufficient bid? Or led out of turn? Or failed to alert an artificial bid? These are not crimes: they are problems to be sorted out. The laws tell the director how to do so.

If players, whether ex-supervised or experienced, see the director in this way, then calls to the director become less of an issue.

Rudeness.

This is the biggie. Rude behaviour by opponents is the one thing that will drive new players either back to the supervised or right out of your club.

People see 'rudeness' as the use of bad language, or saying unpleasant things to your opponents. It's more than that. I'm sorry, but each of the following also constitute rude behaviour at the bridge table:

- Failing to greet your opponents at the start of a round
- Post-morteming a hand where you have gotten a bad result
- Calling the director without telling your opponents that you are about to do so
- Offering partner or opponent technical bridge advice

Behaviour that is not ostensibly rude can easily be seen as rude: it's all in the eye of the beholder.

It's actually hard to avoid rudeness, and many perfectly pleasant people can behave quite poorly at the bridge table.

So how to help those transitioning from supervised to cope with rude behaviour?

There are two ways. First is to 'pre-alert' them to the fact that things won't be quite as friendly in the duplicate as they are in the supervised. Forewarned is forearmed to a degree.

Second is of course to do all you can to promote good behaviour at your club. That's a big topic, outside the scope of this article, but there is one thing you can do. At any duplicate where someone from the supervised is competing for the first time, make an announcement at the start of the session about the newcomers and tell everyone to be welcoming and to look after them.

A few final thoughts.

Mostly players will establish a partnership in the supervised, and they will enter the duplicate as a pair. But if you have a single who wants to try duplicate, see if you can organise a friendly and experienced mentor to play with them the first one or two times.

And don't forget that part of the education process in the supervised is to teach the essential protocols of duplicate play. These include:

- What dummy may and may not say
- The essentials of alerting (who alerts, when to alert, what to alert)
- How to manage the bidding pad or bidding cards once the auction is finished
- Remaining inscrutable at all times
- Never criticising your partner!

CONGRESS RESULTS

Victorian Simultaneous Pairs

Open

- 1 S. Sharp – D. Sharp
- 2 R. Moss – A. Drury
- 3 D. Newlands – G. Ridgway

Restricted

- 1 P. O'Hare – D. Upsall
- 2 G. Shanks – M. Halfpenny
- 3 T. Haley – L. Chan

Bayside Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 K. Frazer – G. Lovrecz
- 2 P. Cork – J. Reynolds
- 3 J. Magee – T. Strong

Swiss Teams

- 1 D. Middleton, M. Tildesley, J. Adams, E. Hynes
- 2 K. Frazer, B. Geyer, G. Lovrecz, D. Happell
- 3 C. Chakravorty, M. Callander, S. Collins, H. Snashall

Sale Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 K. Nainanayake – P. de Zoysa
- 2 K. Kat – J. Evans
- 3 K. Frazer – J. Ebery

Swiss Teams

- 1 D. Middleton, C. Chakravorty, B. Mill, T. Gariepy
- 2 S. White, M. Obenchain, E. Morrish, R. van Dyke
- 3 H. McAdam, D. Tylee, F. Sundermann, B. Kurosinski

Bendigo Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 D. Newlands – R. Lawrie
- 2 K. Bailey – G. Bailey
- 3 R. Muir – I. Muir

Swiss Teams

- 1 A. Maluish, A. Mill, L. Shaw, P. Shaw
- 2 B. Geyer, G. Lovrecz, K. Frazer, M. Callander
- 3 D. Newlands, R. Lawrie, H. Scott, F. Bell

Queen's Slipper Nationwide Pairs

Event 9 (May 9)

- 2 L. Allgood – P. Baker (VBA)
- 3 H. McKnight – A. Smith (Ballarat)

Event 10 (May 24)

- 2 H. McAdam – D. Tylee (Traralgon)

UPCOMING CONGRESSES

Theodor Herzl

Sunday 14th June, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Venue: Theodor Herzl Social Club
222 Balaclava Road
North Caulfield

Contact: Babi Ehrlich, 0417-593-101

Enter: <http://www.bridgewebs.com/thsc/>

Wodonga

Saturday 20th June, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Sunday 21st June, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: Student Administration Building
University Drive
Latrobe University
West Wodonga

Contact: Richard Harman, 0413-010-478

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Geelong

Saturday 27th June, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Sunday 28th June, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Open and Restricted sections on both days

Venue: Highton Bowls Club
Cnr Roslyn & North Valley Rds
Highton

Contact: Sue Robinson, 5229-0300

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Kattery

Saturday 12th July, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Sunday 13th July, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: Waverley Bridge Club
21a Electra Ave
Ashwood

Contact: Keith Kat, 0428-130-844

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

STATE EVENT RESULTS

Victorian Mixed Teams

- 1 E. Caplan, J. Thompson, B. Thompson, W. Jacobs
- 2 E. Samuel, J. Fust, K. Muntz, L. Gold
- 3 J. Magee, T. Strong, D. Beckett, N. Ewart

Victorian Seniors Team Playoff

- 1 D. Harley – S. Weisz
- 2 R. Gallus – R. Greenfield
- 3 G. Ridgway – A. Robbins

NATIONAL EVENT RESULTS

The recent Autumn Nationals in Adelaide saw Victorians take out both major teams events.

In the Open, Simon Hinge and Max Henbest won the ANOT (playing with William Jenner-O'Shea and Mike Doecke), defeating a powerful NSW squad in a tight final.

And a mix of Gippslanders and Traralgonites comfortably won the Under Life Master Teams: Pam Dingwell, Helen McAdam, Don Tylee and Sandor Varga.

Congratulations to both teams!

**DEALING WITH THE WEAK NOTRUMP
Bill Jacobs**

Here's a little bidding decision for you. On it rests the outcome of the final of the recent Autumn National Open Teams in Adelaide.

You hold:

♠ 73 ♥ K984 ♦ 10754 ♣ 654

Everyone is vulnerable and the auction proceeds:

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

1NT is a super-weak notrump, just 10-12 HCP. Partner's double shows general strength.

What do you bid, if anything? Decide for yourself, before reading on.

This problem was faced by one of Australia's top players. Unfortunately for him, he lives in Sydney, and they don't have a whole lot of experience with the weak notrump up North.

A popular approach for Sydneysiders is to remove partner's double with a weak hand, and that's just what he did, bidding his cheapest 4-card suit, 2♦.

Here is the full deal:

Dlr: East ♠ AQ94
 Vul: All ♥ A1065
 ♦ Q6
 ♣ AK10

♠ KJ52	N	♠ 1086
♥ Q2	W	♥ J73
♦ 983	E	♦ AKJ2
♣ J832	S	♣ Q97

♠ 73
 ♥ K984
 ♦ 10754
 ♣ 654

No one had anything further to say.

Against 2♦, West found the tricky lead of ♥Q. That fooled declarer, who went down two, -200. This led to a 9 imp loss, with N/S making a heart partscore of +170 at the other table.

We Victorians, brought up on Acol, know better. If your partner doubles a weak 1NT, you should pass with *any* balanced hand, no matter how weak. Yes, sometimes 1NT doubled will make, but passing with a balanced hand is the percentage choice.

The useful corollary is that if you do remove, you are showing at least a 5-card suit, and can avoid a silly 4-2 fit like the one reached here.

If only South had known ... 1NT doubled goes at least down one, and probably down two. Down two would have been a score of +500, a net gain of 8 imps. The actual final margin was 13 imps, so the 17 imp turnaround from that decision would have been sufficient to win the match.

Welcome to our latest Affiliated Club –
Deniliquin Bridge Club.

We wish our newest family member every success for the future.

AN AMERICAN NATIONALS
David Morgan

In March I travelled to New Orleans to play in the spring nationals run by the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL). There are nationals every spring, summer and fall, with the location moving among thirty or more cities.

These are much bigger events than any Australian tournament, even the Gold Coast. As well as having at least twice as many players, there are about ten times the number of competitions. Every day there are a few main events and a dozen or more side events. These vary by playing time (with some being daytime while most are afternoon and evening), scoring (there are lots of matchpointed pairs and knockout teams competitions) and ranking (North American players, if anything, love masterpoints even more than Australian players and want to play against people of comparable level so they have a better chance to win those masterpoints).

Some of the standard practices in North America would surprise most Australian players.

The ACBL does not take advance entries! (For the top ten events you can enter online at the BridgeWinners website, something that has started recently.) This means the start of every event is delayed while people buy an entry: cash only – no credit cards! Only then can the directors do any seeding. And you can nominate to be seeded.

There are no Swiss pairs. Not one in 12 days of bridge among the 177 (if I've counted correctly) events! There was an IMPs pairs national championship, but this is run like a normal matchpointed pairs event, except that it is scored via cross IMPs – no Butler scoring (where the top few and bottom few scores are dropped before the remainder are averaged to create a datum).

You need to remember how to shuffle and deal! I hadn't done so since 2007, the last time I played in North America. Only the three major pairs events, and the quarterfinals and later stages of the major teams events use pre-dealt boards. For all other events every

board is shuffled and dealt at the table. In the teams events this means that no-one else is playing the boards you play.

This has some advantages as it reduces the risks of fouled boards and players overhearing or seeing cards from another table. But it also means there are no hand records available and you can't compare with friends. If you want to discuss boards you need to remember the layout of the cards.

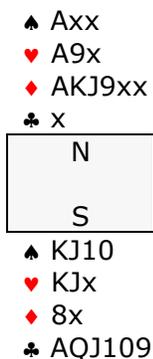
There are lots of top-level players from all over the world, most of whom are playing on sponsored teams. The main teams event at each of these nationals has a field that is at least as good as, and often better than, world championships. If you want to have a chance of playing the world's best players then try playing in one of these nationals.

I wanted to have such an opportunity so played in the Vanderbilt teams, the main event at the spring nationals. This is a knockout event, with day-long matches. It attracted 76 entries – because there are so many other events run in parallel for players who prefer not to play against top players. The first day was about reducing the field to 64 teams, so most of the top seeds had the day off while we lesser mortals determined who else would qualify.

My team (seeded 59th only because one teammate had more than 13,000 masterpoints) played 30 boards against the Chinese women's team that won the world championship last year. We lost by one IMP. That meant we had to play in the evening against another loser to determine who would be knocked out.

We won that match comfortably so played the next day against team six, sponsored by Jimmy Cayne, a former top US player, and his expert partner, two multiple Italian world champions (Lorenzo Lauria and Alfredo Versace) and two young French players who had just won the major pairs event.

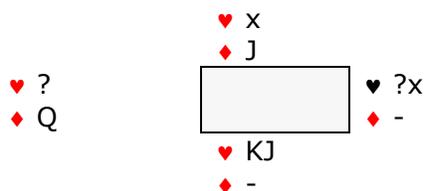
We weren't expected to win this match, and didn't. However, I had one great experience. Try your declarer play in 6NT on the lead of the ♠9.



I played low from dummy, queen, king, solving one problem for me. I played a diamond to the ace and a club to the queen and king.

Now a diamond came back, forcing me to guess. My plan had been to take three spades and four clubs, then cash the ♦AK in case the queen dropped, then take the heart finesse unless a squeeze developed. I didn't see any reason to change my mind so won the ♦K but East showed out, pitching a low heart.

Now I cashed my spades ending in hand and my clubs. East, who started with three clubs, pitched the thirteenth spade and a heart and West discarded a diamond on the last club. Now a heart to dummy's ace, West playing the ten, and the position was



What would you do?

I knew West, one of the young French stars, was good enough to discard the ♥10 from ♥10x to make it look as though he had ♥Q10 doubleton. I also knew East had started with five hearts to West's two so the odds were 5 to 2 that East had the ♥Q. I took the finesse and it lost. We lost 14 IMPs, almost all of the margin between the teams after the first quarter.

At the other table, Lauria played in 6♦ as North. He too got a spade lead which he won in dummy to take a diamond finesse. When East pitched a heart and the fourth spade on the ♦AK, Lauria cashed the spades and ended West in trumps: he had to lead a

heart or a club, taking a winning finesse for declarer.

Shortly after this the kibitzer who had been watching (our opponents, not me and my partner!) left. I knew that I had seen his picture but couldn't remember his name. The next day I found out. It was Tor Helness, a Norwegian world champion who now plays for Monaco. He was sitting alone at his table fifteen minutes before the next quarter started so I introduced myself and asked if he remembered the hand from the day before. He did. He had been watching, not playing, but remembered the entire layout. I asked him about the way I'd played the hand and had a ten-minute discussion about how to play this hand (my line was good but he would have gone to dummy in a major rather than diamonds) and got a few other tips about high-level declarer play and defence as well.

In what game other than bridge could I have the opportunity to play against world champions and then have one of the world's best players help me like that?

Directors' Course

A 2-day Directors Course conducted by Laurie Kelso, Victorian Chief Tournament Director, will be held on **Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th August** at the Victorian Bridge Association 131 Poath Road Murrumbena

Saturday: Laws, Movements, Technology and Scoring
 Sunday: Movements, Masterpointing, Preparation and Organisation

10:00 am to 4:30 pm (½ hour lunch break)

COST: \$50 for 1 day or \$80 for both days

Any Victorian Affiliated Club may send one (registered ABF) attendee at no charge. A travel subsidy is available for attendees residing more than 100 km from the GPO All enquiries and registrations to Cathie on 03-9530-9006 or email clachman@vba.asn.au

**VALE KEN PEARSON
1943 - 2015**

Ken won the Victorian Pennant Teams in 1972 and 1977. He also represented Victoria at the ANC on the Open Team in 1978 and the Seniors Team in 2009.

I first met Ken when we had adjacent offices as graduate maths students at the University of Adelaide. Ken struck me then as someone who spent all of his spare time, as well as his working time, on his studies.

My impression of Ken could not have been more wrong. While he was extremely conscientious at what became his profession, he found time to marry and start a family; devote himself to music as a chorister, pianist and organist; play golf and tennis; and most relevantly, and unknown to me, play bridge.

It was a surprise when, some years later, we ran into each other at the VBA. Over the next few years Ken was a member of the winning Pennant team twice but then, like me, decided to "retire" due to other demands.

More than 25 years later, I rang him and he agreed to "unretire" and play bridge again. I did not know that a couple of years earlier he had been diagnosed with terminal cancer.

We played together for the next 7 or 8 years which included representing Victorian Seniors in the 2009 ANC. It was always a pleasure to play with Ken, although he was a very slow player. What was often not recognised, though, was that his slowness was not indicative of a slow mental function, far from it; it was simply a reflection of the thoroughness of his thinking.

Throughout his last years, Ken led a full life, continuing all of his favourite pastimes, as well as extensive travel, but most of all spending time with his wife, four daughters and nine grand children, one of whom he took to Waverley Bridge Club to learn bridge. He also continued his highly successful career having been a professor of mathematics, and then a mathematician and programmer supporting a commercially successful projection of various aspects of the world economy. When the end approached, he carried on his life, only slowing to the extent that his physical state demanded. He never complained.

I was prone to criticise Ken's play, often wrongly, but I can recall only one criticism that he levelled

at me – namely, that I had not thanked him when he laid down dummy. Such was Ken - a true gentleman.

... Richard Greenfield

**VALE DAN HOHOR
1962 - 2015**

Dan won the 2013 Open Team Playoff, the 2014 Victorian Swiss Pairs and the 2014 Altman Swiss Pairs, all playing with Traian Chira. He also partnered Meredith Woods to win the Victorian Mixed Pairs in 2004 and 2006.

In January this year, Dan donated his entire bridge book collection to the VBA Library.

One of Dan's loves in life was bridge. He and long-time partner Traian Chira played a version of Precision which Dan added to in many innovative ways over the years. He was a brilliant declarer. In fact if there was any way at all to make a contract you could be confident he would find it. He was also an excellent defender. Moreover, he was also notable for his high level of bridge ethics.

Dan and Traian played on a Victorian representative team at the PABF in 2008, and were well placed in many State events at the VBA over the years.

I had the privilege of playing with Dan on and off over the last 15 or so years, twice winning the Victorian Mixed Pairs. He was very patient at trying to persuade me to play some of the more complex areas of his latest system.

But the happiest memories I have of Dan and bridge are the Saturday afternoon sessions we had over the last several years playing on-line on Bridge Base. Dan would play with Traian and I would play mostly with Margi Bourke. It was loads of fun with plenty of jokes and the occasional insult. Dan would always be cooking some exotic Romanian dish – I recall once it was Tripe Soup. He would often disappear from the table for a minute or so. We would guess whether it was to attend to the cooking or have a quick puff outside.

Many people at the VBA cared about Dan and often asked me how he was going during recent months. He is a loss to the bridge club and will be greatly missed.

Adieu Maestro!

... Meredith Woods

TIP OF THE MONTH

Four Cards or Five?

One of the bugbears for the improving player is knowing when partner's suit bid promises at least 5 cards, or when it might only have 4.

Here is a specific auction that sometimes causes confusion:

You	Partner
1♠	2♥

By bidding a two-over-one, partner is promising at least 10 HCP, but how many hearts?

We learn early on that when responding to an opening bid, we are allowed to bid 4-card suits, and also that when choosing which of two 4-card suits to bid, we should show the cheaper one first: "up-the-line bidding".

This auction is an exception: partner is promising at least 5 hearts. Why? Well, your opening 1♠ promises at least 5 spades, so partner would support your spades with at least 3 cards there. Therefore partner has at most 2 spades. With only 4 hearts, that would mean partner must have at least a 4-card minor somewhere, for example, 2-4-4-3 distribution, and if he *does* have a 4-card minor, he would bid it first according to the principles of up-the-line bidding.

So partner must have at least 5 hearts. QED!

That means you are perfectly entitled to raise partner's 2♥ bid with just three hearts.

And one more thing

The same principle applies to the auction:

You	Partner
1♥	2♦

That 2♦ response logically shows at least 5 diamonds, given that partner is ostensibly denying 3 hearts, and wouldn't hold just 4 diamonds, because that would give him either 4 spades or 4 clubs.

But, a 2♣ response to a 1♦ opening bid does not promise 5 clubs, because now partner could easily have 3 or even 4 diamonds.

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THE TWELFTH TRICK

Dlr: South ♠ A75
Vul: N/S ♥ AQ3
♦ 87642
♣ 92

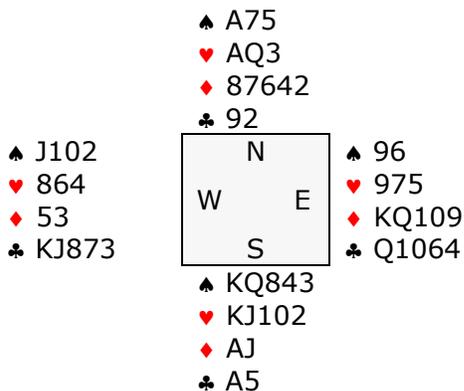
N
S

♠ KQ843
♥ KJ102
♦ AJ
♣ A5

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	1♠
Pass	5♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	6♠

Lead ♠J. Plan the play. Solution over page.

THE TWELFTH TRICK

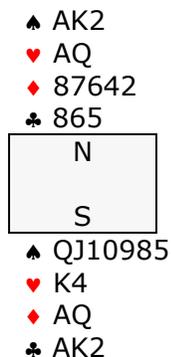


There is a loser in each minor, and the only way to eradicate one of them is to set up a long diamond.

That doesn't look so hard, but a little care and attention wouldn't go astray. If you play ace and another diamond, a third round of diamonds by the opponents would potentially set up a trump trick for them. You could counter that threat by drawing trumps first, but unfortunately that means that you must use up a precious entry to dummy.

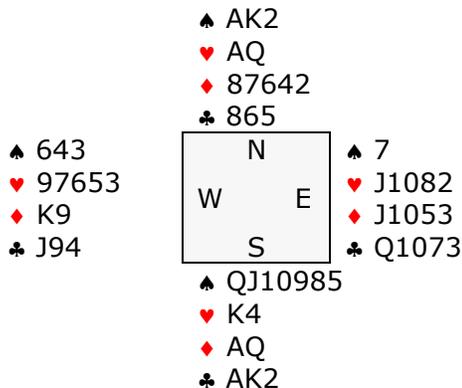
The correct play is to win the first trick in your hand and play the jack of diamonds. Win the return in your hand, clear the ♦A, then draw trumps ending in dummy. Ruff a diamond, and use your two heart entries to ruff another round of diamonds, if necessary, and finally enjoy the established diamond.

Now that you've handled that one, try this:



Again you are in 6♠, and this time a heart is led. How do you play it?

Have a think about that and then read on.



Again entry considerations limit your options. You should win the heart in hand and lead the ♠Q. When everyone follows, give up on the diamond finesse and play ace then queen of diamonds. It's a funny game.

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

State	
Lorna Cook	Beaumaris
Hana Kadera	Bayside
Marisa Milito	Bairnsdale
Trevor Tonkin	Ballarat
Jenni Turner	Knox
*State	
Deborah Anglim	Phillip Island
Maria Michelsson	Moonee Valley
National	
Carlín Bruce	Benalla
Gordon Shinewell	VBA
Matthew Tiplady	Berwick
Denis Upsall	Bendigo
*National	
Fatma Ahmet	Moonee Valley
Penny Blankfield	Kooyong
Michael Davy	Rye Beach
Melroy Decouto	Waverley
Gus Ghali	Moonee Valley
Linda Healy	Macedon Ranges
Dorothy Love	Sale
Sue Meyer	Dendy Park
Joan Quirk	Waverley
Pat West	South Gippsland
Bronze Life	
Dorothy Read	Geelong
Silver Life	
Chandradeep Chakravorty	Waverley
Sue Read	Yarra Valley
Geoffrey Schaller	Yarra Valley
Gold Life	
Jennifer Lee	Geelong
Frank Vearing	Macedon Ranges