

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

August 2015

Editor: Bill Jacobs

THE SOAPBOX Ben Thompson



I was in Fremantle recently for the Interstate Teams Championship. The coffee was barely drinkable (yes, I'm a Victorian coffee snob ☺) but getting to know our new crop of youth players was an absolute delight. They're all very energetic, very enthusiastic and play our game in very much the right spirit.

Recently ex-youth players Pete Hollands and Justin Howard were playing (very well) on the Open team but also made sure to spend a lot of time working with and encouraging the new kids on the block. Most players, wherever they were from, enjoyed spending a little time with their state's youth players. Geelong champion Arthur Robbins (on our Seniors' team) accidentally sat next to Ivy Anderson, our youngest representative, on the flight to Perth and was full of enthusiasm for her enthusiasm!

Youth players are the future of our game, and not just as players. A lot of bridge clubs are run by people who learnt when they were young, and they do a lot of teaching too. And as Arthur will tell you, their enthusiasm is infectious!

There's a terrific schools program in and near Bairnsdale, and Peter Hollands and Laura Ginnan have been doing a great job with a kids program at Waverley. The VBA wants to support youth bridge more – those programs,

expanding those programs around Victoria, and new programs – and we're asking for your help to do it.

At the suggestion of Richard Giles from the Ballarat Bridge Club, we're starting a Youth Bridge Week in October this year (see the ad that follows for details). Please get involved and please ask your club to get involved. It's easy, it's cheap and it supports the future of our beautiful game.

Youth Bridge Week

October 19 - 25, 2015

The VBA is inviting all clubs across the state to get involved with a fund-raising activity for youth bridge. To facilitate this activity, the VBA has declared one week in October as Youth Bridge Week.

To help, simply make a gold coin donation at any session at your club held during Youth Bridge Week and your donation will help support youth bridge.

Clubs may choose to run a special red point event(s) in conjunction, or simply use their regular duplicate session(s) and ask players to make a contribution.

Participation is completely voluntary and all funds raised will go towards supporting the growth and development of youth bridge in Victoria.

Upcoming State Events

Monday Board-a-Match Teams
3rd August: (2 weeks)

Wednesday Thwaites Mixed/Unmixed Pairs
26th August: (4 weeks)

Enter via the VBA website at <http://vba.asn.au>

FOR STARTERS

You pick up this fine hand as dealer:

♠ AKJ1098 ♥ K83 ♦ 82 ♣ AK

and the auction proceeds:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
			1♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	?

Partner's 4♠ is showing you spade support and enough for game, about 13 – 15 total points in support of spades¹.

There might, or might not, be a slam in the cards. How do you go about investigating?

There's not a lot of room to investigate. So let's look at points: you have 20 total points (18 HCP plus a point for each doubleton), which makes a combined total of 33-35 total points. 33 is what you typically need for a slam, so you are in the zone.

There are a couple of ways you could try for slam, but one simple one is to bid 4NT, Blackwood, to check whether partner has at least one ace. After all, it's possible that partner has neither red ace, and the last thing you want to do is bid a slam missing two aces: it might be the last hand you ever play with this partner. So you try 4NT:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
			1♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Partner shows you two aces, and you happily bid the slam.

What would you have done if partner had responded 5♦, showing *one* ace?

You should still bid the slam! The purpose of Blackwood is to establish that you are not missing two aces. If you are missing exactly one ace, you should assume that the missing

ace is your only loser, and therefore that there is still a slam in the cards.

The lead is ♣J, and this is what you see:

♠ Q43
♥ A52
♦ A10654
♣ Q6

N
S

♣J

♠ AKJ1098
♥ K83
♦ 82
♣ AK

Not the world's greatest hand, but you must make do. There's no problem in the black suits, but there is an eventual heart loser and a diamond loser. What are you going to do about that?

You can't do anything about the diamond loser, but you can try to establish one of dummy's diamonds as a winner, on which you can discard your losing heart. But entries to dummy are scarce; there are just 3 of them: ♠Q, ♥A, ♦A. You need to use them all to establish the diamonds: two of them to ruff diamonds (in case the suit divides 4-2) and one to enjoy the established winner.

Draw only *one* round of trumps, and then make the key play: a low diamond, ducking in dummy. This preserves the ♦A as an entry with which to ruff a diamonds.

Here is the full deal:

♠ Q43
♥ A52
♦ A10654
♣ Q6

N	♠ 6
W	♥ QJ107
E	♦ Q973
S	♣ 9542

♠ 752
♥ 964
♦ KJ
♣ J10873

♠ AKJ1098
♥ K83
♦ 82
♣ AK

¹ There are more sophisticated and space-saving ways of showing a game-going hand with support, usually involving a response of 2NT, but that will be for another day.

West wins a diamond, and whatever he returns (other than a diamond), win it in your hand, play over to the ♦A and ruff a diamond. Then lead a spade to the ♠Q, ruff a second diamond (which will establish North's last diamond as a winner), draw any remaining trumps, and play over to the ♥A to cash your hard-earned diamond.

Points to remember:

- Just as you can use an estimate of your combined point count to decide whether to bid a game, you can use the same approach when in the slam zone. The magic number is 33: if you have a suit fit, then this is a total point figure (counting distribution); if you don't have a suit fit and are looking for 6NT, then you want at least 33 HCP.
- The 4NT Blackwood convention is primarily a check that you are not missing two aces (in which case you certainly don't want to bid slam). The corollary is that if you are missing one ace, bid the slam expecting the missing ace to be your only loser. A lot of starters get cold feet when they find out there is a missing ace.
- Ducking a round of a suit to maintain communications is a very common strategy. It can apply in both suit and notrump contracts. For example, if you had that diamond combination (Axxxx opposite two-small) in a notrump contract, it is correct to play low from both hands first. Then you can play to the ace and lead a third round.
- Did you notice that E/W could and should have defeated this contract? A low heart opening lead from West is a killer. When West gets in with a diamond, a second round of hearts rips out an entry from dummy at just the wrong time for declarer.

That's the 'could' part. The 'should' comes in the bidding. East had an opportunity to *double* North's 5♥ response to Blackwood. Such doubles are lead-directing, trying to help partner with the opening lead against an eventual spade contract.



TEST YOUR BIDDING

False Preference

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	?

In this auction, your partner is showing you at least 5 hearts and at least 4 diamonds. As for strength, that is unknown: 2♦ is best played as a forcing bid, and could be made on a very strong hand.

As responder, you can sometimes be caught with a forgettable hand in the 6-9 HCP range that doesn't include a fit for either of partner's suits; for example 4=2=3=4 or 5=2=3=3 shapes. In these circumstances, the best choice is often a simple return to partner's 5-card suit, in this case 2♥. This is called 'false preference': a bid that prefers hearts to diamonds, but without actually preferring hearts to diamonds.

False preference has the benefit of keeping the bidding low, and it is important that the partnership is aware that bidding hearts here doesn't mean you actually like hearts. One way to remember this is to think: "well, responder could have directly raised 1♥ to 2♥ if he had 3-card support for hearts. So maybe he only has a doubleton heart." I would go so far to say that the 2♥ rebid in this auction usually *denies* support for hearts.

As a corollary, don't rebid 2NT with hands that should be giving false preference. A 2NT rebid in this auction shows 10-12 HCP, not 6-9 HCP.

Practise your false preference decisions with each of the following 6-9 pointers.

- (a) ♠ Q8742 ♥ 53 ♦ 965 ♣ AQ8
- (b) ♠ AQJ82 ♥ 3 ♦ 965 ♣ J875
- (c) ♠ A9842 ♥ 3 ♦ KJ6 ♣ 8754
- (d) ♠ J1076432 ♥ Q3 ♦ 65 ♣ K5
- (e) ♠ Q10742 ♥ - ♦ 965 ♣ K8754
- (f) ♠ A9842 ♥ J53 ♦ KJ ♣ 754

Solutions over page.

TEST YOUR BIDDING - SOLUTIONS

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	?

(a) ♠ Q8742 ♥ 53 ♦ 965 ♣ AQ8

2♥. The classic false preference. Partner should assume nothing about your hearts! The trap here is bidding 2NT with only 8 HCP, despite the fact that you have clubs stopped. Partner raises to 3NT on 14-15 HCP, and down you go, when you could have been comfortable in 2♥.

(b) ♠ AQJ82 ♥ 3 ♦ 965 ♣ J875

2♠. Whilst some die-hards will false preference to 2♥ with a singleton, here you have a decent spade suit and at least some hope that spades will play better than hearts, diamonds or notrumps.

(c) ♠ A9842 ♥ 3 ♦ KJ6 ♣ 8754

3♦. Yuck. The spades are too threadbare to rebid. You want to have 4-card support to raise partner's second suit, but 3♦ is the least-worst choice. Look at it this way: you have quite a decent hand for playing in diamonds.

(d) ♠ J1076432 ♥ Q3 ♦ 65 ♣ K5

2♠. 2♥ would be an acceptable false preference, but the 7-card suit is rebiddable. These hands often play well in the weak hand's long suit. You can keep control and use partner's high cards in the other suits to take tricks.

(e) ♠ Q10742 ♥ - ♦ 965 ♣ K87

Pass. Time to not honour the force. Look at this way: you got yourself out of 1♥, and a contract of 2♦ has to be an improvement on a contract of 1♥.

(f) ♠ A9842 ♥ J53 ♦ KJ ♣ 754

3♥. You have 10 Total Points in support of hearts, so this is worth an invitational jump. The king-jack in diamonds are excellent values opposite partner's second suit. The ♠A is a trick. Everything about this hand is upside, a positive note to finish after a grim set of hands.

CONGRESS RESULTS**Grand Prix Congress***Swiss Pairs*

- 1 R. Muir – I. Muir
- 2 P. de Zoysa – K. Nainanayake
- 3 P. Hill – R. Livingston

Swiss Teams

- 1 M. Woods, S. Collins, J. Collins, J. Magee
- 2 L. Gold, K. Muntz, N. Ewart, D. Beckett
- 3 G. Ridgway, A. Robbins, D. Harley, S. Weisz

Kattery Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 G. Johnson – Q. van Abbe
- 2 C. Arul – D. Sharman
- 3 S. Klofa – A. Czapnik

Swiss Teams

- 1 J. Guttman, E. Dickson, S. Kudelka, J. Kent
- 2 G. Johnson, C. Parkin, G. Schaller, F. Vincent
- 3 D. Middleton, C. Chakravorty, S. White, F. Kovacs

Theodor Herzl Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 G. Johnson – G. Schaller
- 2 M. Decouto – P. de Zoysa
- 3 M. Henbest – G. Harband

Phillip Island Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 K. Bailey – G. Bailey
- 2 J. Reynolds – P. Cork
- 3 T. Gariepy – B. Mill

Swiss Teams

- 1 M. Henbest, L. Ginnan, P. Hollands, J. Rennie
- 2 L. Robinson, P. Ditchfield, N. McManamny, M. Decouto
- 3 G. Whiting, S. Murray-White, D. Sheather, P. Schroor

Queen's Slipper Nationwide Pairs*Event 13 (July 4)*

- 1 J. Kuiper – A. Drury (South Gippsland)

Event 14 (July 19)

- 1 P. Blinman – D. Newland (Ballarat)
- 2 D. Yoffa – D. Happell (Berwick)

UPCOMING CONGRESSES

Melbourne Bridge Club

Saturday 8th August, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 9th August, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: MCC Kew
 397 Barkers Rd
 Kew

Contact: Sandra Mansell, 9459-9138

Enter: email bridgeclub@mcckew.com.au

Yarrawonga

Saturday 15th August, 12 pm: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 16th August, 9:30 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: Yarrawonga Mulwala Golf Club Resort
 Gulai Rd
 Mulwala

Contact: Jan Hackett, (03) 5744 1017
 Email hackett5@bigpond.net.au

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Traralgon

Saturday 22nd August, 11 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 23rd August, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: Federation Training
 49-63 Princes St
 Traralgon

Contact: Jocelyn Pilmore, 0418-387-758
 Email jocelyn.pilmore@bigpond.com

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Dendy Park

Sunday 30th August, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Venue: Dendy Park Bridge Club
 Breen Drive
 East Brighton

Contact: Boris Tencer, 0414 353 996

Enter: <http://www.dpbridge.com/entry.php>

Bairnsdale

Saturday 5th September, 12 pm: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 6th September, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: St Mary's Parish Centre
 Bairnsdale

Contact: John Brazier, (03) 5152 3494
 Email johnbrazier4@gmail.com

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Mornington Peninsula

Saturday 19th September, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 20th September, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: St Francis Xavier Church Hall
 60 Davey St, Frankston

Contact: Lindsay Young, (03) 9787 2235
 Email lindsayhy@westnet.com.au

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

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

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Congratulations to Justin Howard, who, playing with Kieran Dyke and two expert Norwegians, made the semi-finals of the recent European Championships, held in Tromso Norway. (These days, you don't have to be European to play in the European Championships, which has morphed into a global world-class event.) Winning the Bronze Medal was an outstanding result.

Particularly impressive was that, in the Round of 16, they dispatched the world's number one team, Monaco.

At the conclusion of the championships, Justin caught a flight direct to Perth, to play in the ...

ANC FREMANTLE

First up was the Interstate Teams event, fought over four divisions: Open, Women, Seniors and Youth.

The Open team: Ben Thompson (c), Bill Jacobs, Justin Howard, Peter Hollands, Leigh Gold and Jamie Ebery, qualified first after a hard-fought qualifying event, playing ACT in the final. Alas, they couldn't maintain their form and were comfortably defeated.

Along the way, Peter Hollands and Justin Howard won the Steve Hurley Award for the top pair in the datums, by what must surely be a record margin (almost 100 imps).



Justin Howard and Peter Hollands with the Steve Hurley trophy.



Open team: Justin Howard, Leigh Gold, Peter Hollands, Ben Thompson, Bill Jacobs, Jamie Ebery

The Women's team performed creditably, without ever threatening to make the final: they eventually ran 3rd. Cathie Lachman and Helen Snashall performed very well by topping the datums.

The Seniors team: Bob Gallus, Richard Greenfield, Stephen Weisz, Dee Harley, Gary Ridgway and Arthur Robbins (NPC Laurie Kelso), were involved in a tight 4-way tussle to qualify for the final. They got there in the end, running second to a strong NSW team.

The final was close fought: Victoria took an early lead but were overtaken in the middle of the match. Needing to win 23 imps in the final 10 boards, they could only manage a scoreline of 9 to 1, losing by just 14 imps. This is the second successive year that the seniors have won the silver medal.



Seniors team: Arthur Robbins, Laurie Kelso, Richard Greenfield, ABF President Bruce Neill, Gary Ridgway (absent: Stephen Weisz, Dee Harley, Bob Gallus)

Then there was the Youth team. They finished sixth out of six. This was not a surprise: the average team age was 14, and they were up against players in their twenties. This was a development team, and they will be all the better for the experience. They were ably captained by Laura Ginnan.



Youth Team: Aidan Robertson, Finn Rennie, Patrick Clifford, Jamie Thompson, Ivy Anderson, Conor Hosking, Liam Robertson

In 2003, a 13-year-old Justin Howard played in the Victorian Youth Team in Darwin. They ran last. The following year, he tried again, partnering up with Peter Hollands. They ran second last. It was an improvement ... and see where they are now.

Here's an opening lead problem, solved with youthful flair:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♠	All pass

2♥ was a transfer bid, and 3♣ a strong super-accept. What do you lead from:

♠ Q8 ♥ AJ2 ♦ QJ42 ♣ K853

Here's the full deal:

	♠ 64		
	♥ K986		
	♦ 83		
	♣ J9764		
♠ AK93		♠ J10752	
♥ Q107		♥ 543	
♦ A1065		♦ K97	
♣ A2		♣ Q10	
	♠ Q8		
	♥ AJ2		
	♦ QJ42		
	♣ K853		

Faced with several unappetizing options, Finn Rennie led the ♥A! He followed up with a low heart at trick 2, and unsurprisingly, declarer misguessed and put up the ♥Q, eventually going down two.

With Aidan and Liam Robertson sensibly stopping in a spade partscore at the other table, making 10 tricks, that was 9 imps to Victoria.

This year's ANC saw the inaugural running of the Restricted Butler Pairs. Victoria sent two pairs, and Michael Halfpenny (president of Moonee Valley Bridge Club) and Gillian Shanks ran an excellent fifth, out of the 48 pairs.

Week 2 was the Butler Championships, and again there was a strong showing by Victorian players.

In the open division, Justin Howard, playing with Tony Nunn, gave the field a right shellacking (I believe that is the correct technical term), to win by a gigantic 40 victory points.

The women's event was much tighter, with Eva Caplan and Jenny Thompson engaging in a drawn-out battle with Marilyn Chadwick and Toni Sharp for first place honours. They eventually finished second.



Runners-up in the Women's Butler: Eva Caplan and Jenny Thompson

And in the Seniors division, Simon Hinge paired up with ABF President Bruce Neill to run second.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

WINNERS AROUND THE WORLD ...

Jeanne Anderson and Helen Cantwell from the Sale Bridge Club finished first in the Bill Hughes Simultaneous Pairs, a global event organized out of England involving 61 clubs world-wide.



Jeanne and Helen

As well as 9 clubs from Australia, there were competitors from England, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, France, Iceland, Kenya, Malta, South Africa, Zambia and the Channel Islands – a grand total of 848 pairs.

Australian clubs taking part were Sale, Bowral, Riverland, Bendigo, Yarrawonga, The St George Bridge Club, Rye Beach, Paynesville and Eastern Contracts.

Each club plays exactly the same dealt hands during the same week – the results being sent to the organisers in England via the internet where they are combined to produce an outright winner.

Jeanne and Helen had an amazing result of 72.49%, narrowly defeating the Welsh champions by .05%.

Sale Bridge Club also had Nellie Jones and Anne Hensen performing well on the day to finish 19th overall with a percentage of 65.77%.

... Christene Heesom

... AND AROUND AUSTRALIA

Meanwhile, Australian Bridge magazine has just finished running its annual Australia-Wide Novice Pairs tournament, operating along the same lines as the Bill Hughes event.

This event is restricted to players with fewer than 50 masterpoints. About 900 pairs participated from all over Australia.

The winners, with a huge score of 76.9%, were Rene Vodstrcil and James Thomas, from Waverley Bridge Club.



Rene and James

STATE EVENT RESULTS

Victorian Master Teams

Section A

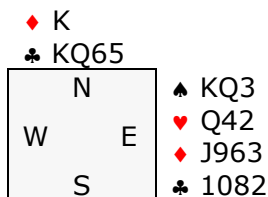
- 1 B. Thompson, W. Jacobs, P. Hollands, J. Howard, L. Gold, J. Ebery
- 2 S. Ozenir, M. Yuill, M. Allison, G. Gaspar, B. Tencer
- 3 D. Harley, S. Weisz, P. Schroor, D. Sheather

Section B

- 1 M. Tildesley, E. Windmiller, V. Daly, M. Adams
- 2 R. Berlinski, H. Snashall, T. Cowie, N. McManamny
- 3 E. Samuel. G. Lovrecz, R. Livingston, P. Hill

BLACK MAGIC
Bill Jacobs

Dir: South ♠ J10987
Vul: all ♥ AK9

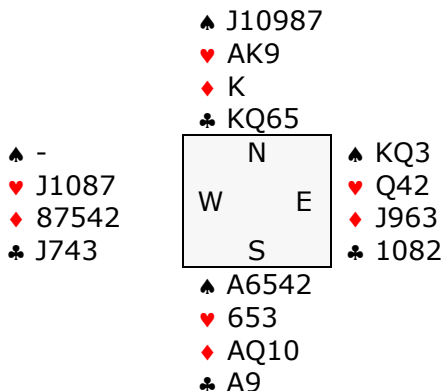


West	North	East	South
Pass	4NT	Pass	1♠
Pass	6♠	All pass	5♣*

* 3 key-cards for spades

Lead: ♥J

Blast it. You were hoping against hope that the ♠A would turn up in dummy. Oh well. Plan your defence.



You had about 5 seconds between when dummy was laid down and declarer called for the ♥A to plan the defence.

Top American player Gail Greenberg smoothly followed with the ♥Q at trick 1. She could see that there was never going to be a heart trick for the defence (declarer could pitch dummy's low heart on the ♦A for example), so she tried throwing some sand in declarer's eyes.

From South's perspective, the ♥Q looked like a singleton. That meant the last thing he wanted to do was to run the spade jack to West's singleton honour and have a heart returned for East to ruff. So he led a spade to the ace ... down one.

Gail said afterwards that she only found this play, which needed to be made in perfect tempo, because she'd previously read about the position. Now you have too.

A husband and wife are playing at home with friends and begin to quarrel. He insults her and she leaves the room in tears. They wait for her to return, but she doesn't come back.

The husband says "let's deal out a hand and I'll bid for her without seeing her hand because it couldn't be any worse than if she were here." He deals and opens 1♠. Next hand passes and he bids 2♠ for her. When it comes back to him, he bids 3♠. Now he thinks a while and bids 4♠ for her.

The lead is made and when the dummy comes down he sees he is in a reasonable contract, actually the best contract he's been in all night. As the play winds down, he finds he needs a finesse to make the contract.

As he takes the finesse, which loses, his wife returns, determined to finish the game. He looks at her and says "You just had to bid 4♠, didn't you?"

THE TWELFTH TRICK

Dir: North ♠ 8764
Vul: N/S ♥ AK62
♦ AKJ10
♣ 3



West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Lead ♠10.

Plan the play. Solution over page.

THE TWELFTH TRICK

♠ 1092	♠ 8764	♠ 53
♥ Q1074	♥ AK62	♥ J95
♦ 85	♦ AKJ10	♦ Q942
♣ K1065	♣ 3	♣ QJ74

♠ AKQJ	♠ 53
♥ 83	♥ J95
♦ 763	♦ Q942
♣ A982	♣ QJ74

N	E
W	S

You have 9 top tricks (4 spades, 2 hearts, 2 diamonds, 1 club) so are looking for three more.

They can come in one of two forms: a) two extra diamonds (from a successful finesse for ♦Q) and a club ruff, or b) one extra diamond and two club ruffs.

It would be nice to combine both chances, but entries to your hand are lacking. If you take a diamond finesse at trick two and it fails, when a trump is returned, you no longer have the communications to ruff two clubs.

You must give up on plan a) and pursue plan b): taking two club ruffs. Play ♣A and ruff a club. Next make the key play: ♦J from dummy!

Everyone, including dummy, will be surprised, and start wondering if you've forgotten to take your medication. Nevertheless, after an opponent has won ♦Q and played a second trump, you will simply ruff another club, return to your hand by ruffing a heart, draw the outstanding trump (on which dummy's last heart is discarded), and claim the remaining diamonds.

Get Wines Direct – No More!

The sponsorship agreement between the ABF and Get Wines Direct has expired. The 7% discount is no longer available.

TIP OF THE MONTH

4-3-3-3 = Notrumps

The four-triple-three is the worst shape in the game: not a distributional point to be seen. That makes it bad for suit play, and this month's tip is to steer hands of this shape towards notrumps.

Specifically, if you have 4333 shape, and partner opens 1NT, commit to a notrump contract, right now. If your 4-card suit is a major, don't use Stayman. For example, with:

♠ Kxxx ♥ AJx ♦ Jxx ♣ Kxx

bid 3NT over 1NT.

Worried about missing an 8-card spade fit? Don't be. Worried about lacking a diamond stopper? Don't be.

Partner's hand:

♠ AQJx ♥ KQ ♦ xxx ♣ Axxx

Not only have you missed your spade fit, but there is no diamond stopper in sight. Yet 3NT is the right contract! There are 9 top tricks unless the defence can run off 5 diamonds, which will only happen rarely. Meanwhile, 4♠ has 4 losers.

Another example:

♠ AQx ♥ Kxx ♦ Jxx ♣ Kxxx

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

Partner's 2♥ shows 10+ HCP and at least 5 hearts (with only 4 hearts, he would make a negative double). Despite the guaranteed 8+ card heart fit, you should rebid 2NT. Your 4333 screams 'notrumps'.

Moreover, would you like partner to be declaring in hearts, with a spade lead coming through your ♠AQx, or would you like you to be declaring in notrumps, with a spade lead coming up to your ♠AQx?

Partner's hand:

♠ xx ♥ AQJxxx ♦ Axx ♣ Qx

And again: 3NT making easily, with 4♥ probably down, even with the 9-card heart fit.

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

State

Anne Josephine Bell	Dendy Park
Neville Chapman	South Gippsland
Judith Clezy	MCC
Justin Clezy	MCC
Val Cross	Frankston
Nola Curran	Ravens
Chen Ding	VBA
Robynne Owen	Paynesville
Pamela Ramshaw	VBA
Pat Schelling	Berwick
Chris Scott	Frankston
Petra Starkins	Frankston
Clare Stratton	Yarra Valley
Robyn Svefvar	Moonee Valley

*State

Adrian Dezilva	Bendigo
Ian Stirling	Yarra Valley
Russell King	Moonee Valley
Anne Roberts	Waverley
Rosemarie Schwabegger	Paynesville

National

John Brazier	Bairnsdale
Michael Francis	Sunbury
Patricia Frost	Geelong
Frank McConvill	Rye Beach
Maria Moryto	Waverley
Myrna Saunders	Moonee Valley
Ian Wright	Yarra Valley

*National

Paul Corry	Frankston
Barb Evans	Bendigo
Ron Hubbard	Berwick
Marie Irving	Dendy Park
Philip Knightley	VBA
Daoping Nie	VBA
Faye Symons	Bendigo
Ron Wilson	Paynesville

** National

Jacque Morton	Moonee Valley
Howard Silver	Dendy Park
Chris Turner	Echuca

Life

Barbara A'beckett	Dendy Park
Genie Harband	VBA
Bill Pheasant	Yarrowonga
Barbara Strachan	Knock

Bronze Life

Simon Begg	Yarra Valley
Bill Pattison	Dendy Park
Gloria Peston	VBA
Frieda Shapiro	VBA
Jo Stewart	VBA

Silver Life

Chris Fernando	Berwick
Kathy Palmer	Waverley

Gold Life

Jens Norlyng	Frankston
Jill Pyke	Waverley

Silver Grand

Eva Samuel	VBA
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New Women's and Seniors' Pairs events

The VBA is introducing two new events in November this year. These are the Victorian Women's Pairs and the Victorian Seniors' Pairs, both matchpointed events. They will be held concurrently on Monday 16th, 23rd and 30th November. The winners and 2nd, 3rd and 4th placegetters in each event will be awarded VQPs that can only be used towards qualification for the women's or seniors' trials in 2016 (i.e. not towards qualification for the open trials). Entries will be open in the usual way: by online entry or contacting Laurie. These events will be in addition to the Women's and Seniors' IMP Pairs Championships that will be held in March 2016.

Changes to Selection Events in 2016

In 2016 the ANC (Australian National Championships) will be held almost one month earlier than usual. This means the VBA will need to select the open, women's, seniors' and youth teams to represent Victoria by the beginning of May. To meet this new deadline, we are changing both when our selection events are held and the format we use to select the open team. In 2016 there will be a final pairs selection event run over a single weekend with the top three pairs to form the open team, similar to those used to select the women's and seniors' teams. Entry to the open trials will be open to the 14 pairs that have won the most VQPs.

The time constraints mean the trials will be in early March, very soon after the Open Butler final (which will take place over the long weekend, on 5-6 March; as usual, pairs representing each of the three regions will be invited to participate in this event). Full details of the calendar will be available when all the 2016 events have been finalised.

... David Morgan (Chairman M&TC)

**DEPARTMENT OF POINTLESS QUESTIONS:
IS BRIDGE A SPORT?**

Well, perhaps not so pointless, as there might be money involved. The UK Daily Mail reports:

A High Court judge has ruled that Bridge is more physically challenging than rifle shooting and ruled a bid for the card game be recognised as a sport to go ahead.

Mr Justice Mostyn said that, despite the lack of physical activity involved, Bridge could be said to be legitimate sport under English law, because 'the brain is a muscle.'

Sport England had refused to recognise the trick-taking game as a legitimate sport, which would make it eligible for lottery grants.

Now, in a controversial ruling, the judge - who admitted enjoying a hand of Bridge himself on social occasions - has granted the English Bridge Union Ltd's application for the game to be recognised as a 'mind sport' can continue to court.

At the moment, Bridge receives no public funding and tournaments are funded by members. A win for the Aylesbury-based union would make them eligible for funding for tournaments.

But Sport England, who control lottery grants to non-professional sporting groups in the country, are fighting the case and insist Bridge is no more a sporting activity than 'sitting at home, reading a book.'

Today, Mr Justice Mostyn granted the Union permission to mount a full judicial review challenge to Sport England's stance.

And he also said the World Chess Federation should also be informed of his ruling, encouraging the body for the mentally-challenging board game to 'get in on it' and attempt to be recognised as a sport as well.

Richard Clayton QC, representing the Union, told the judge: 'This case raises a short, but important point - whether Sports England is entitled to refuse to recognise Bridge as a sport.'

He said that Sports England had refused to accept that Bridge fell within the body's definition of a sport in a decision letter sent in November last year.

Kate Gallofent QC, for Sport England, said: 'The starting point of the definition of sport is physical activity. Bridge cannot ever satisfy this definition.'

But Mr Justice Mostyn told her: 'If the brain is a muscle, it does. You are doing more physical activity playing Bridge, with all that dealing and playing, than in rifle shooting.'

He added: 'There are a number of physical activities, such as running on a treadmill in a gym, which are physical recreation but not sports.'

However, Miss Gallofent said there was 'an absolutely clear bright line' between Bridge and chess and currently recognised sports.

In sports such as snooker or rifle shooting, for example, no other person could take your shot for you, she pointed out. But, in Bridge, she said, 'somebody else could step up and play my cards for me in these sort of mind games'.

'There is a difference between sport and recreation. I can enjoy sitting at home reading a book - it does not mean I can claim it's a sport' she told the judge.

Mr Justice Mostyn said: 'There are a number of strong indicators that an essential ingredient of sport, even if it is not competitive, has to embrace physical activity.'

'However, in 1999, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) recognised that Bridge and Chess should be recognised as mind sports.'

'The fact that the IOC recognised that Bridge and chess were sports is very significant.'

'I do not conclude that this case is completely unarguable, or that this challenge is vexatious or frivolous. By a narrow margin I grant permission.'

Miss Gallofent said that the Department of Sport, Media and Culture and other sporting bodies are likely to be joined as interested parties in the test case.

Outside court afterwards, the Vice Chairman of the English Bridge Union, Ian Payn said: 'We are very pleased with the decision.'

He added that by being recognised as a sporting body, the Union hoped to 'strengthen its hand' in a separate, ongoing legal battle for tax exemptions.