

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

October 2015

Editor: Bill Jacobs

THE SOAPBOX Ben Thompson



The biggest cheating scandal in the history of bridge exploded just over a month ago. In the bridge world, it's as big as the drug scandals in cycling headlined by the eventual outing of Lance Armstrong.

It was alleged, based on video and play evidence, that world champions Lotan Fisher and Ron Schwartz of Israel signalled which suit they wanted partner to lead by manipulating the placement of the board on the table.

Even bigger news was the allegation, again based on video and play evidence, that the world's #1 and #2 ranked players, Fulvio Fantoni and Claudio Nunes of Monaco, have been signalling the strength of the suit they led by how they placed their card¹.

The laws of bridge state clearly that partners can communicate via calls and plays only. The gravest possible bridge offence is for partners to swap information any other prearranged way.

A 3rd world-class pair, Alex Smirnov and Josef Piekarek of Germany, admitted not long afterwards that they had committed "ethical violations".

Official investigations and hearings are underway but 3 of the 6 European teams qualified for the World Championships (on right now in India) withdrew as a consequence.

As an occasional Australian representative, I've found these revelations deeply distressing. As a bridge administrator, I know that bridge's future depends on it being played in the right spirit and ethic at all levels of the game.

Every responsible bridge organisation in the world, including the ABF and the VBA, is looking seriously at how we can detect cheating, deal with allegations fairly, and protect the 99.9% of players who play ethically.

Every club and every player has a role to play but the nature of illegal communication at clubs is very different from the systemic cheating alleged of these world-class pairs.

In 30 years of bridge, I would say that almost every instance of illegal communication I've seen has been either unintentional or through simple ignorance (not knowing one's ethical obligations under bridge law). In most cases a gentle director call or quiet word with the director, followed by an understanding and confidential discussion between the director and the straying player or pair helps them to get their bridge ethics right.

I really want to emphasize that point about being understanding. As an example, a player who makes a bid then starts writing down the contract is definitely passing illegal information to their partner – to pass. However, please do not assume they're cheating! It could be subconscious, or perhaps they thought the auction was obviously over. Even if there was intent, they simply may not have known they were breaking a (fundamental) bridge law.

In summary – be aware but also be kind.

¹ To see a video of the allegations against Fantoni and Nunes, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKe7gLTfaF8> (Ed)

FOR STARTERS

Playing in your local duplicate, you hold:

♠ 5 ♥ 93 ♦ J832 ♣ AK7653

With your side vulnerable, partner deals and opens 1♥. Next hand passes. Your bid.

This is a problem that leads lots of starters astray. You want to bid 2♣, showing your excellent suit, but a 2-over-1 bid promises at least 10 HCP, and you only have 8.

You must respond 1NT. That is a bid that shows precisely:

1. 6-9 HCP
2. No support for partner's opened suit
3. No 4+ card suit that could be bid at the 1 level

This hand conforms. Requirements 2 and 3 mean that the hand does not have to be balanced, even though notrumps is a bid that often shows a balanced hand. This auction is the exception!

The bidding continues:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	?

What now?

Well, partner is making a game invitational bid – he probably has about 17 or 18 HCP in a balanced hand. He wants to know if you have 6-7 HCP in which case there isn't enough strength for game, or 8-9 HCP in which case there is.

Not only do you have 8 HCP, but there is a long strong suit included. Partner should have at least a couple of clubs, so there is every chance that you can take a lot of club tricks in a notrump contract.

Are you worried about the spades? You should be, but covering the spades is partner's job. In auctions like this, you need to go with the points. You have enough combined strength for game, and when a suit contract involves a

minor, one usually prefers 3NT, 9 tricks being easier to take than 11.

A good rule of thumb is: don't let an unstopped suit deter you from 3NT, unless the opponents have actually bid that suit.

With some nervousness, you bid 3NT, and everyone passes. LHO's ♠J instantly hits the table, and you wait for dummy with a sense of dread ...

Contract:	♠ AKQ
3NT	♥ A6542
	♦ K7
	♣ J109
♠J	N
	S
	♠ 5
	♥ 93
	♦ J832
	♣ AK7653

OK, not so worried about the spades anymore! You win the first trick, and clearly want to set about the clubs. But how?

There are four clubs missing, including the queen. If they are 2-2, there is no loser, but did you notice that the suit will be blocked? If you cash the ♣AK, and all the clubs come down, then the third club will be won in dummy, and your winners will be stranded.

So you should lead the ♣J, and plan to finesse on the first round. If LHO wins the ♣Q, the rest will be easy: you will take 5 clubs, 3 spades and a heart. And if the ♣J wins, you will make an overtrick.

You play the ♣J, RHO plays low, you play low, and LHO discards a diamond! RHO started with ♣Q842. So what now?

Play another club. A thoughtful East (who also knows the club layout) will cover this with the ♣Q. And you need to let him win this trick, because if you take it, then the club suit will be hopelessly entangled.

When you regain the lead, you take the remaining clubs and make your contract.

The full deal:

♠ J10986 ♥ KJ107 ♦ Q1054 ♣ -	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N			W	E			S		♠ AKQ ♥ A6542 ♦ K7 ♣ J109	♠ 7432 ♥ Q8 ♦ A96 ♣ Q842 ♠ 5 ♥ 93 ♦ J832 ♣ AK7653
N												
W	E											
	S											

3NT was the spot, despite your misgivings in the bidding. The alternative of 5♣ would not have been a success, going one or two down.

Points to remember:

- The 1NT response is perhaps the most unintuitive bid in bridge, because it can be made on a very unbalanced hand.

You often have to conceal a long suit, but there is an upside. Having shown your 6-9 HCP, the auction often continues and you may get the chance to reveal a long suit later. Then partner will know both your strength and your distribution.

- For 3NT contracts, just go with the points. If there is enough strength for game and no major suit fit, then 3NT is your spot. Well, about 9 times out of 10. The 10th time, you belong in 5 of a minor.

Don't stress about an unstopped suit unless an opponent actually bids it. Good partners supply the stopper you are looking for.

- Watch out for blocked suits! They may require extra care and attention.

Finally, here's something not worth remembering. Your RHO could have defeated this contract with a prescient play. If he had covered the *first* round of clubs with the ♣Q, then you would surely have won the trick, thinking: "10 easy tricks, here we come". But then the club suit would have become blocked when the 4-0 split was revealed.

Of course, covering the club would have been disastrous, should West have the ♣K singleton.

TEST YOUR BIDDING

Responding to partner's overcall

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♦	1♠	Pass	?

Responding to partner's 1-level overcall is a little different to responding to his 1-level opening bid. Partner's strength is different: the opening bid shows about 12 or more HCP, but the overcall can be made on as few as 8 HCP.

So you need to adjust your responses accordingly. For example, a 1NT bid should show about 9-12 HCP, rather than 6-9. And of course it must include a stopper or two in the opponents' suit.

New suit bids are best played as forcing, although some players prefer them to be non-forcing.

With support, you can raise. A jump raise to the 3-level should be played as pre-emptive, showing a weakish hand with at least 4-card support for partner's 5-card suit. The opening bidder on your left might be itching to make a further bid, but your jump will limit his options.

What if you have a good hand with support: one that wants to invite a game? Then you have a bid at your disposal that's not available in an uncontested auction – a cue bid of the opponent's opened suit. This is called a 'cue raise', and shows about 10+ HCP and support for partner.

How do you advance partner's 1♠ overcall with the following hands?

- (a) ♠ Q54 ♥ 108643 ♦ 984 ♣ K2
- (b) ♠ Q854 ♥ Q643 ♦ 9842 ♣ 2
- (c) ♠ Q85 ♥ AK43 ♦ 9842 ♣ K2
- (d) ♠ 4 ♥ J43 ♦ 984 ♣ AJ9842
- (e) ♠ 4 ♥ J643 ♦ K84 ♣ AK842
- (f) ♠ K85 ♥ AK43 ♦ KJ4 ♣ K42

Solutions over page.

TEST YOUR BIDDING - SOLUTIONS

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♦	1♠	Pass	?

(a) ♠ Q54 ♥ 108643 ♦ 984 ♣ K2

2♠. With 5 HCP plus one for distribution, this is enough for a single raise. This is more about obstruction than seeking your own contract. For example, suppose LHO has diamonds and clubs: you are forcing him to bid at the 3-level and he might not be prepared to risk it.

(b) ♠ Q854 ♥ Q643 ♦ 9842 ♣ 2

3♠. The same principle applies as (a). Jack it up high and watch LHO squirm.

(c) ♠ Q85 ♥ AK43 ♦ 9842 ♣ K2

2♦. Here's a serious raise. If partner has more than a minimum, you might well make 4♠. The cue-bid tells him about your solid values and spade support. If partner now bids higher than a simple return to 2♠, you will go on to game.

(d) ♠ 4 ♥ J43 ♦ 984 ♣ AJ9842

Pass. You're not enjoying the situation, but any attempt to improve matters will probably only make things worse. Whenever I bid 2♣ here, partner simply goes back to 2♠, making me wish I'd left well enough alone. Look at it this way: both you and RHO are weak. So either partner has extra strength (in which case 1♠ will make) or LHO has extra strength, in which case he will bid and get you out of this hole.

(e) ♠ 4 ♥ J643 ♦ K84 ♣ AK842

1NT. Shows about 9-12 HCP and a diamond stopper. This could well be your best contract, so you better bid it.

(f) ♠ K85 ♥ AK43 ♦ KJ4 ♣ K42

3NT. A nice 17 HCP hand: this is worth going for game. Although you have perfectly good spade support, this is likely to play best in 3NT, with your ♦KJx protected from the opening lead. If you put partner into 4♠, a diamond lead will come *through* that suit, with possibly dire consequences.

CONGRESS RESULTS**Bairnsdale Congress***Swiss Pairs*

- 1 D. Sharman – C. Arul
- 2 A. Drury – J. Kuiper
- 3 L. Veenstra – L. Veenstra

Swiss Teams

- 1 C. Arul, D. Sharman, D. Clarke, K. French
- 2 H. McAdam, M. Hecker, D. Tylee, F. Sundermann
- 3 A. Drury, J. Kuiper, J. Sutton, M. Stiles

Ballarat Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 D. Clarke – K. French
- 2 D. Peacock – J. Johnstone
- 3 R. Muir – I. Muir

Swiss Teams

- 1 J. Yang, K. Zhang, V. Zhang, G. Ghali
- 2 S. Murray-White, G. Whiting, P. Schroor, D. Sheather
- 3 S. Ozenir, M. Yuill, M. Allison, B. A'Beckett

Mornington Peninsula Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 A. Czapnik – C. Hughes
- 2 C. Arul – R. Ellery
- 3 P. Hollands – C. Leach

Swiss Teams

- 1 A. Maluish, A. Mill, A. Hegedus, J. Howard
- 2 N. Ewart, D. Beckett, A. Czapnik, R. Stewart
- 3 J. Yang, C. Ding, K. Muntz, L. Gold

Dendy Park Swiss Pairs

- 1 J. Yang – C. Ding
- 2 D. Harley – S. Weisz
- 3 E. Linton – T. Cowie

Queen's Slipper Nationwide Pairs*Event 17 (September 5)*

- 2 B. Pollard – E. Farren (Frankston)

Event 18 (September 30)

- 1 G. Nicholson – J. Barbour (Phillip Island)



UPCOMING CONGRESSES

RACV

Sunday 4th October, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Venue: RACV City Club
Bourke Room Level 2
501 Bourke St, Melbourne

Contact: Email memberevents@racv.com.au

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Albury

Saturday 10th October, 11 am: Swiss Pairs
Sunday 11th October, 9:30 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: Commercial Club
Deane Street
Albury

Contact: Richard Harman, 0413 010 478

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Warrnambool

Saturday 17th October, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
Sunday 18th October, 9:30 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: Club South Rovers Football Club
Coulstock Street
Warrnambool

Contact: Janet Attrill, 0439 350 551

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Waverley

Friday 30th October, 10 am: Matchpoint Pairs
Saturday 31st October, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
Sunday 1st November, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: Electra Community Centre
21B Electra Ave
Ashwood

Contact: Mary Elson, 9807 6502

Enter: www.waverleybridgeclub.com.au

Youth Bridge Week

October 19 - 25, 2015

The VBA has declared the week commencing October 19th Youth Bridge week in Victoria. Youth bridge in Victoria is in a rebuilding phase with many of our successful youth players now too old (at 25!) to contest youth events. Developing new talent and players takes time, effort and money.

To this end, we would like clubs around the state to ask their players, in one or more of their club's duplicate sessions held during the week, to make a gold coin donation to raise funds for youth bridge. Funds raised will be held in a separate account and will go toward the development of youth bridge in Victoria, including providing material support for the youth bridge co-ordinator, and further development of the schools bridge program around the state.

Some clubs have already indicated several great ideas in their support of this initiative - we hope that players will get behind this program which could become an annual event.

TEST YOUR DEFENCE

♠ 94
 ♥ Q109
 ♦ AKJ3
 ♣ 10865

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q10832
 ♥ K63
 ♦ 82
 ♣ A74

West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	All Pass	1NT*

* 15-17 HCP

You lead ♠3 to the ♠4, ♠J and ♠A. Declarer now leads the ♥5.

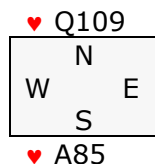
What do you do?

Solution over page.

FRUSTRATION Bill Jacobs

I've read a lot of bridge material over the years: lots of books, lots of magazines, and in the past couple of decades, lots of internet. Much of it is educational, much of it is entertaining, and much of it is simply interesting (cheating scandals for example).

But there's one topic that seems to come up every couple of years or so that I find just plain frustrating. It is about how to play the following suit combination:



(The essentials of this combination are the same if you add a small card to each of North and South.)

I apologise but I need to take out my frustration on the readers of this bulletin and tell you how to play it.

There are four essential ways to play this suit: one of them is wrong, two of them are reasonable and one of them is right. Here are the four:

- A. Lead the ace and then a low one towards dummy, playing the 10 if LHO plays low.
- B. Lead the queen from dummy and run it. If it loses to the king, cross to dummy and run the 10. (Alternatively you can do the same essential play by starting with the 10 and following up with the queen.)
- C. Lead low from hand and play the queen if LHO plays low. If that loses to the king, then cross to dummy and run the 10.
- D. Lead low from hand and play the ten if LHO plays low. If that loses to the jack, then cross to dummy and run the queen.

Play A is wrong. It is approximately a 50-50 shot, working if LHO has the jack, and not otherwise. The same 50-50 applies if you guess to put up the queen: now you are hoping that LHO has the king.

Plays B, C and D are reasonable in that they all work in 3 out of 4 scenarios. It depends where the king and jack are. There are four possibilities, all about 25% in probability:

- both with East,
- both with West,
- jack with East and king with West
- jack with West and king with East

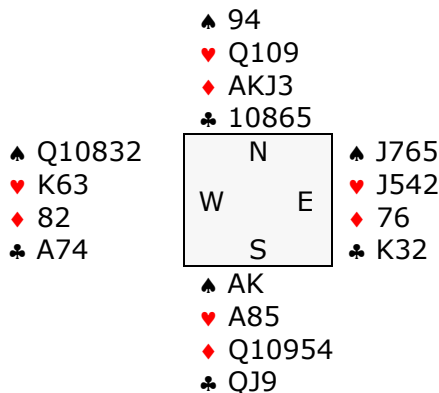
Play B (running the queen) will work unless West has both the king and the jack.

Play C (low to the queen) will work unless West has the jack and East the king.

Play D (low to the 10) will work unless West has the king and East the jack.

My frustration is that virtually all the books, magazines and internet posts tell you to play line B: running the queen. And they are all wrong, *wrong*, **wrong!**

Line D (play a low card from hand to the 10) is the correct play, and this is why:



This was posed recently as a declarer play problem in a British magazine. How should you play 3NT after a spade is led?

You have 8 tricks, but there is not time to develop the ninth in clubs. So you need an extra heart trick. As usual, the advice was to lead the ♥Q from dummy. That worked beautifully because in the full magazine layout, East has ♥KJx (of course they would never give West the ♥KJx).

The correct play is to lead a low heart from your hand at trick 2. West, who is not psychic, might go up with the ♥K. Or he might at least *think* about it (in which case you still have the option of switching from line D, put in the 10, to line C, put up the Q). The psychological

factor makes line D close to a 95% play in my opinion. And if West is able to play low smoothly with ♥Kxx, then more power to him!

When this hand was posed as a defensive problem for West, did you have a think about what to do? Of course you did. And would you have had a think about it if it had occurred in real life? Of course you would!

Ah, that felt better.

Victorian Seniors Festival

The VBA, in conjunction with the Victorian State Government, is pleased to be participating in the Seniors Festival in October. The catch phrase this year is "It's Your Time".

The VBA is hosting a one day crash course for beginners on Tuesday 6th October, 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

Seniors price is \$20 including lunch. Tell your friends and family.



RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

State

Jenny Gray Waverley
 Craig Irwin VBA
 Jolanta Terlecka Waverley

*State

Robert Jacobs RACV
 Susan Ruffin South Gippsland

National

Nancy Heffernan Kooyong

** National

Denis Upsall Bendigo

Life

Jo-Anne Heywood RACV

Bronze Life

George Campbell Sale
 Anna Kearon Bairnsdale

Silver Life

John Yang VBA

TIP OF THE MONTH

The Ugly 2NT

2NT is a bit of an ugly duckling ... it's usually not a very desirable contract. It is not a game bid, so it would be a lot better, if you're not going to bid game, to be in 1NT.

So here is the tip:

A bid of 2NT always invites 3NT

What does this mean? It means that you don't bid 2NT as a suggestion of a final contract. You only bid it if you have the necessary invitational values for a possible game contract (typically 3NT, but depending on the context, it might be game in a suit contract).

You will only end up in a final contract of 2NT if partner, with minimum values, passes. But given that you have enough to invite, you should have a good chance of making 2NT.

Here's a typical scenario:

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

Your 2NT shows about 10-12 HCP ... *it invites 3NT*. Don't make this bid on less than 10 points. Find an alternative, eg rebidding your spades, or going back to 2♥, which you are perfectly entitled to do with a doubleton.

Or:

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

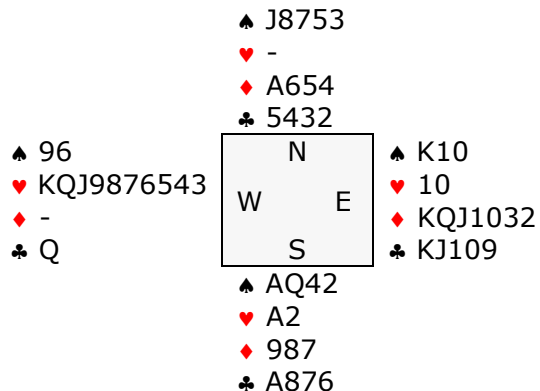
Don't like spades? Too bad. Unless you have a strong hand, or extra length in one of your suits, you are best off simply letting partner play 2♠. 2NT here shows about 16-18 HCP, and so a healthy interest in game. If instead you hold:

♠ x ♥ Axxxx ♦ AQx ♣ Kxxx

just pass 2♠. 2♠ may not be the world's best contract, but it will be a thing of beauty compared to 2NT.

BLACK MAGIC
Bill Jacobs

On the assumption that there is no copyright on tea-towels, try this problem.



South to make 4♠ on the lead of ♥K.

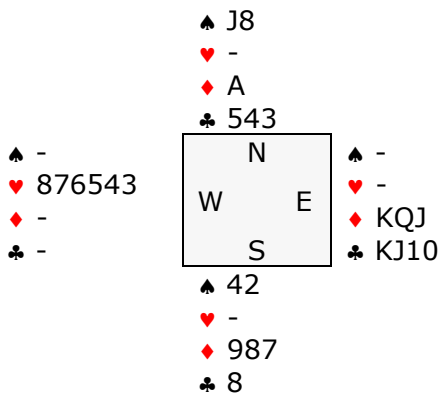
(Expert's time limit: 3 minutes.)

South should win trick 1 twice! Ruff the heart in dummy, and play the ♥A to boot.

Now draw trumps with a finesse, and cash the ♣A.

Next play a heart, discarding a diamond from dummy. West wins, and also wins the next two hearts, dummy discarding diamonds, declarer clubs.

This is the position on the 5th round of hearts:



Dummy trumps the heart, and South throws the remaining club.

Meanwhile, East has to make a discard, and he is squeezed. If he throws a diamond, the ♦A is taken next, and South has two entries to

ruff a diamond and establish a diamond winner. Or if he throws a club, a club is ruffed, and dummy has two entries (♦A and a trump) to establish the clubs.

That's well worth a tea-towel print run!

VBA 2015 AGM Council Elections

The VBA Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday November 16th commencing at 6.30 pm. The VBA has sent out notices calling for nominations to the council.

All VBA members have received notification and nomination form for VBA Councillors.

All Affiliated Clubs have received notification, nomination forms, regulations and other documentation for nominations for VBA Special Councillors.

The closing date for all nominations is Friday October 17th at 4.30 pm.

A link to the relevant nomination forms and other information is located on the front page of the VBA website.

Questions regarding nominations should be directed to the secretary, Kim Frazer at secretary@vba.asn.au



STATE EVENT RESULTS

Victorian Mixed Pairs

Championship

- 1 M. Yuill – S. Ozenir
- 2 S. Collins – A. Krolikowski
- 3 K. Muntz – N. Ewart

Plate

- 1 P. Schroor – D. Sheather
- 2 E. Caplan – S. Arber
- 3 E. Samuel – P. Hollands

Consolation

- 1 T. Bloom – L. Meyer
- 2 J. Day – S. Klofa
- 3 A. Paul – R. Berlinski