

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

November 2015

Editor: Bill Jacobs

THE SOAPBOX Ben Thompson



Some forms of bridge are booming (eg daytime duplicate) while others are struggling (eg women-only bridge). The Victorian congress circuit has also struggled this year, with total tables down 6.7% at time of writing and teams events (my favourite format!) down 10.1%. That's disappointing after last year's strong increase (8.2%) in total congress tables.

I think part of the reason is that people come across too much aggressive, even bullying, behaviour at congresses. That has to change. It only takes one bad experience to negate a whole day of good experiences.

We get a trickle of complaints at the VBA about behaviour at congresses but unfortunately for legal reasons it's difficult for us to act at the moment. We all need a better way, so we've started engaging with congress-running clubs on putting together a congress-level disciplinary & ethics committee to address this issue head-on.

This will only work if every club buys in, and if the membership of the committee is diverse and dispersed. Expect to hear more about this initiative in coming months.

And if you've been turned off congresses, I hope this will encourage you to give them a(nother) go.

VBA 2015 AGM Council Elections

Special Councillor Nominations

At the close of the nomination period for Special Councillors to the 2015/16 VBA Council, the following nominations were received:

Rob Quirk representing Metro near VBA Zone

Helen McAdam representing Eastern Zone

Richard Giles representing Western Zone

No other nominations for Special Councillors were received. These nominees will be formally appointed to the VBA Council at the Annual General Meeting which will be held in the VBA Clubrooms on November 16 commencing at 6.30pm

As there was no nomination received for Metro Arc, this position will remain vacant. Interested members from the clubs in the Metro Arc region are invited to contact the secretary, Kim Frazer (email: secretary@vba.asn.au) for further details regarding nominating for this vacant position.

New Zealand Open Teams

Congratulations to Laura Ginnan and Peter Hollands, who recently won the New Zealand Open Teams event, with teammates Tony Nunn, Michael Whibley, Paul Gosney and Matthew Brown. Again (rugby excepted), Australia lords it over the kiwis.

Laura's summary was: "I had a good team." True, but even so ...

FOR STARTERS

In a matchpointed pairs event, you pick up:

♠ J105 ♥ Q1084 ♦ 3 ♣ J8764

Everyone is vulnerable, your partner is the dealer, and the auction starts:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	1♠	2♥	?

What's your call?

Let's see: you have only 4 HCP, but you do have support for partner's spades. The singleton diamond is worth 2 (or 3, depending on when you learned bridge) distribution points, so that brings your total point count up to 6 or 7, enough to give your partner a 6-9 TP 2♠ bid.

But ... you also quite like the idea of defending against their 2♥ contract: your ♥Q1084 represents excellent defensive values. So which way should you jump – 2♠ or pass?

The correct call is pass, and here is why: your ♥Q is not really worth 2 HCP. Suppose partner has a singleton: RHO leads a high heart against a spade contract, decides that partner has a singleton and switches to another suit. The ♥Q then has nothing more than nuisance value.

And if partner has two or more hearts, that's not good news either: your LHO may get a ruff.

You decide to pass 2♥, and no one has anything further to say. So you are now on lead – what is it to be?

There are two sensible possibilities: the ♠J and the singleton ♦3.

Now no-one ever got into trouble for leading their partner's suit, but on the other hand, side suit singletons (looking for ruffs) are also attractive. The fact that you have strong hearts, which are going to make tricks come what may, might lead you to avoid the singleton lead. But experience says: lead that singleton! It's amazing how many good

things happen when you lead a side-suit singleton to a suit contract.

You decide to lead ♦3, and this is what you see:

<p>2♥, South</p> <p>♠ J105 ♥ Q1084 ♦ 3 ♣ J8764</p>	<p>♠ K32 ♥ 73 ♦ QJ95 ♣ K1032</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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	
	N									
W		E								
	S									

Partner wins the ♦A, and returns the ♦2. Declarer plays a low one and you ruff it. Happy days! Now what?

You want to return the lead to partner so he can give you another diamond ruff. But is his entry in spades or clubs?

Partner opened 1♠ so he is perhaps more likely to have the ♠A. However, there is a strong counter-argument to this. Partner returned the ♦2, his lowest diamond, and this is a *suit preference signal*.

In these situations, partner will play a low card to indicate that he wants you to play a low suit, or a high card to indicate he wants a high suit. The ♦2 is screaming 'clubs'!

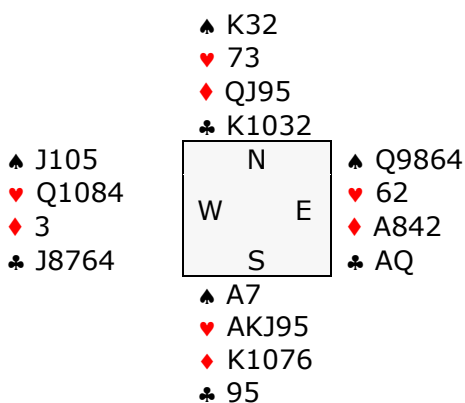
So you play a club, declarer plays dummy's ♣K and partner wins the ♣A. Next comes ♦4, declarer plays ♦10 and you ruff again.

Your lead again.

Well, if the ♦2 was a suit preference signal, then the ♦3 is also. So you should play another club.

Of course it's possible that partner only started with ♦A32, and so the 3 was his only remaining diamond. But in that case, it probably doesn't matter what you do: whatever black tricks you can take, you will take, and you cannot get another ruff.

In fact, partner wins the ♣Q, and gives you yet another diamond ruff. That's the first six tricks to the good guys, the full deal being:



Defeating 2♥ by a trick should be an excellent score. A 2♠ contract by your side won't succeed. South will lead a high heart, take one glance at your dummy, and switch to trumps. Your partner will be left with 3 diamond losers, and just 6 tricks to take.

Points to remember:

- Secondary values in the opponents' suit (such as the ♥Q10xx here) indicate defending.

It is also worth remembering that a side-suit shortage doesn't necessarily help you if your trumps are short. In a spade contract, your modest three spades were always at risk of being played by the defence to limit your ruffing power. In this worst-case example, your shortage was useless: all your trumps were removed before they could be used for ruffing purposes. But if you had *four* trumps, it would be a different matter.

- Lead side-suit singletons automatically against suit contracts.

The only exception would be when you hold a side suit ace-king, in which case it might be right to lead that suit instead.

On this deal, although you had only two natural trump tricks, you were able to turn this into three trump tricks through the power of ruffing. Indeed, even if declarer had started with only 3 diamonds, you would *still* have taken 3 trump tricks.

- Watch those spot cards! Suit preference signals (a low card for a low suit, a high card for a high suit) are very useful and surprisingly frequent.

TEST YOUR BIDDING

To open – or not

No-one vulnerable, you are the dealer

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
			?

It's the first decision of the auction – whether or not to open the bidding. To start, if you have 12 HCP or more, it is usually right to open. And with 9 HCP or fewer, pass unless your hand is suitable for a pre-emptive opening bid in a long suit.

With 10 or 11 HCP, it's more debatable. Here are two guidelines that can help.

1. The Rule of 20. Add the length of your two longest suits to your HCP: if it comes to at least 20, then open the bidding. This is a technique for balancing a paucity of points against good distribution.

2. Do you have a comfortable rebid? If a common response by partner (typically a bid in your short suit) leaves you stumped for a rebid, it might be better to pass instead.

Other factors can also be relevant: the presence of intermediate cards (tens and nines) make your hand better, but don't contribute to your HCP total. And where are your HCP? For example, a suit of QJ doubleton is not exactly worth 3 HCP! But a suit of QJxxx is worthwhile: it's much preferable for your honours to be in your long suits rather than your short suits.

All these factors should contribute to your decision about whether to open. Decide your opening bid or pass with:

- (a) ♠ 43 ♥ AJ954 ♦ KQ82 ♣ J2
- (b) ♠ J3 ♥ A4 ♦ KQ82 ♣ J8762
- (c) ♠ AQ10765 ♥ 43 ♦ A865 ♣ 2
- (d) ♠ K1093 ♥ 3 ♦ K762 ♣ AJ102
- (e) ♠ 3 ♥ AQJ8732 ♦ Q76 ♣ J2
- (f) ♠ Q ♥ Q1054 ♦ K762 ♣ AJ62

Solutions over page.

TEST YOUR BIDDING - SOLUTIONS

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
			?

(a) ♠ 43 ♥ AJ954 ♦ KQ82 ♣ J2

1♥. 9 cards in the two longest suits + 11 HCP = 20. What about a rebid? If you open 1♥ and partner responds 1♠ (or 1NT or 2♣), then you have a comfortable 2♦ rebid.

(b) ♠ J3 ♥ A4 ♦ KQ82 ♣ J8762

Pass. 9 cards in the two longest suits + 11 HCP = 20. What about a rebid? Suppose you open 1♣ and partner bids 1♥. All your options are super-yuck. 2♣ on that poor excuse for a 5-card suit? 2♦ is a reverse, promising 16+ HCP. And 1NT is unappetising with ♠Jx, not to mention that partner will think you are stronger.

And opening 1♦ (planning to rebid 2♣) comes with its own set of problems.

(c) ♠ AQ10765 ♥ 43 ♦ A865 ♣ 2

1♠. 10 cards in the two longest suits + 10 HCP = 20. This is a good hand in every sense: excellent 6-card major, good shape, two aces. Yes, you *could* open 2♠, but that would be a distinct underbid.

(d) ♠ K1093 ♥ 3 ♦ K762 ♣ AJ102

1♣. 8 cards + 11 HCP only comes to 19, so why open? Well, those tens and nines are considerable assets in the four-card suits. And you have no rebid problems: if partner responds 1♥, you rebid 1♠.

(e) ♠ 3 ♥ AQJ8732 ♦ Q76 ♣ J2

3♥. 10 cards + 10 HCP = 20, but this hand is not as impressive as say hand (c), with the side suit queen and jack floating in the breeze. Pre-empting is a better option.

(f) ♠ Q ♥ Q1054 ♦ K762 ♣ AJ62

Pass. More HCP than (d), but this is a much worse hand. It lacks intermediate cards, and the singleton ♠Q is not worth a full 2 HCP. And what will you rebid after the inevitable 1♠ response to your 1♣ or 1♦ opening?

RECENT RESULTS**Spring Nationals - Sydney***Open Teams*

- 2 Peter Hollands – Justin Howard (with David Beauchamp, Peter Gill, Helen Horwitz)

Linda Stern Women's Teams

- 2 Felicity Beale – Diana Smart (with Rena Kaplan, Nevena Djurovic)

Macedon Ranges Congress*Pairs*

- 1 S. White – F. Kovacs
- 2 L. Saoud – T. Ranasinghe
- 3 D. Clarke – K. French

RACV Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 J. Barbour – G. Nicholson
- 2 K. French – G. Johnson
- 3 C. Ding – D. Nie

Albury Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 S. Mullamphy – A. De Livera
- 2 S. Klofa – D. Newlands
- 3 D. Harley – A. St Clair

Swiss Teams

- 1 A. De Livera, S. Mullamphy, K. Frazer, J. Ebery
- 2 D. Sharman, C. Arul, G. Johnson, K. French
- 3 I. Lisle, V. Lisle, J. Carberry, K. Hart

Warrnambool Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 J. Barbour – G. Nicholson
- 2 A. Shiels – S. McMillan
- 3 T. Clement – M. Bird

Swiss Teams

- 1 S. Klofa, D. Newlands, D. Harley, R. Gallus
- 2 J. Simpson, L. Newton-Tabrett, P. Bailey, H. Lovegrove
- 3 L. Picone, F. Ross, A. Gunst, A. Feiner

Queen's Slipper Nationwide Pairs*Event 20 (October 18)*

- 1 Y. Mears – K. Douglas (Phillip Island)

UPCOMING CONGRESSES

South Gippsland

Saturday 7th November, 12 pm: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 8th November, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: Dakers Centre,
 Smith St, Leongatha

Contact: Neville Chapman, 5678 3323

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Kooyong

Sunday 15th November, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Venue: Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club
 489 Glenferrie Rd
 Hawthorn

Contact: Rob Nurse, 0418 848 486

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Bridge at Tivoli

Saturday 28th November, 10 am: MP Pairs
 Sunday 29th November, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: VBA Clubrooms
 131 Poath Rd
 Murrumbena

Contact: Leeron Branicki, 0412 884 446

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

VBA Summer Congress

Saturday 5th December, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 6th December, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: VBA Clubrooms
 131 Poath Rd
 Murrumbena

Contact: Cathie Lachman, 9530 9006

Enter: <http://vba.asn.au>

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
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** National

Denis Upsall	Bendigo
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Life

Jo-Anne Heywood	RACV
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Bronze Life

George Campbell	Sale
Anna Kearon	Bairnsdale

Silver Life

John Yang	VBA
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THE TWELFTH TRICK

Here's a deal from the semi-final of the recent Bermuda Bowl – Poland versus England.

See if you can do better than the Polish declarer, who misplayed.

Dlr: East ♠ A6532
 Vul: all ♥ AK10
 IMPs ♦ Q10
 ♣ A104

N
S

♠ Q10
 ♥ J
 ♦ A8643
 ♣ KQJ93

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♠
Pass	5NT	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Lead ♥5. Plan the play. Solution over page.

THE TWELFTH TRICK

♠ A6532
♥ AK10
♦ Q10
♣ A104

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J874
♥ 6532
♦ 72
♣ 876

♠ K9
♥ Q9874
♦ KJ95
♣ 52

♠ Q10
♥ J
♦ A8643
♣ KQJ93

The Polish declarer took dummy's ♥A, trumped a heart and led a diamond towards the ♦Q10. East won this, and played a trump.

Declarer was doomed: he needed three entries back to his hand: two to ruff diamonds, and one to finish drawing trumps. The ♦A was one entry, but the other two could only be from ruffing spades, and this left him with insufficient trumps to draw them.

Jason Hackett from England found the right play: at trick 2, he lead the ♦10 from dummy, and ducked it. A 4-2 diamond break didn't hurt him (as long as clubs were 3-2), because he had not shortened himself in trumps.

In real life, diamonds did in fact break 3-3. So the Polish declarer made 6♣, despite taking an inferior line. Such is life. Poland went on to win the match by 2 imps, and then win the final as well.



TEST YOUR DEFENCE

Watching the world championships on Bridge Base Online can be good for your confidence. Seeing the world's best players muck things up does wonders.

So here's another Bermuda Bowl deal, this time butchered by the eventual runner-up team, Sweden.

Dlr: East
Vul: nil

♠ J32
♥ A876
♦ J8
♣ K762

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 86
♥ Q93
♦ Q7653
♣ A103

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
D'ble	2NT*	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

* heart raise

Partner leads the ♣Q which wins the trick, and then ♣4, won by your ♣10, declarer playing ♣5 then ♣9.

Now what?

The Swedish East switched to a spade, which seemed natural enough, leading up to the weak length in dummy.

But it was not the right play, as the full deal demonstrates:

♠ J32
♥ A876
♦ J8
♣ K762

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K975
♥ J
♦ K942
♣ QJ84

♠ 86
♥ Q93
♦ Q7653
♣ A103

♠ AQ104
♥ K10542
♦ A10
♣ 95

Declarer played low on the spade and West won. But now the spades provided a discard for the diamond loser. And declarer picked up the trumps, tipped off by West's takeout double.

Some clear thinking had been required. On the auction, it was likely declarer had 4 spades: any spade tricks for the defence would probably keep. But the diamonds wouldn't keep: that suit needed to be attacked at trick 3.

TRAIAN CHIRA WINS INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE PRESS ASSOCIATION AWARD

Victorians have a habit of winning these international prizes. The latest is Traian Chira, who has won the 2015 Alan Truscott Award, for his work in creating a video record of major events, which was instrumental in proving cheating allegations against a series of top-level pairs.



Here is the citation:

Alan Truscott Memorial Award: The Investigators

"The Alan Truscott Award is presented periodically to an individual or organisation that, in the opinion of the IBPA Executive, has done something in the world of bridge that Alan would have approved of and appreciated.

With all the allegations flying around, we have no doubt that Alan would have appreciated the work done unpaid by bridge players of a wide range of ability in assisting the investigations. These people are far too many to name individually so we are simply calling them "The Investigators". We puzzled over who should receive the Award. Some of this work might help a prosecution, some a defence. But what Truscott would surely have wanted in Buenos Aires are videos with clear pictures of what was happening at the table.

*Without that, many are still in doubt fifty years later about the findings. Let us hope that today's videos will allow the accuracy of any theory to be tested with confidence. And so **Traian Chira**, who initiated the videos, receives the 2015 Alan Truscott Memorial Award on behalf of The Investigators."*



THE RESTRICTED PAIRS IN FREMANTLE Michael Halfpenny

Last July, my bridge partner, Gill Shanks, and I headed to Fremantle for the Australian National Restricted Butler Pairs. We had finished second in the Victorian Simultaneous Pairs and each gained a \$1000 subsidy from the ABF to attend the National Championships. Players in other states were also subsidised by the ABF to encourage more participation by restricted players in such competitions.

Although we have been regular bridge players for many years, we have rarely played in congresses and certainly never bothered to travel interstate to play bridge! We had a fantastic time in Fremantle, finishing 5th in a challenging yet friendly competition.

I would like to commend the ABF on this initiative and encourage other restricted players to broaden their bridge experience by playing in congresses and interstate competitions.

Australian National Restricted Pairs 2016: Queensland

The ABF has once again agreed to offer a \$2000 subsidy for two restricted pairs from each state to attend the Australian National Championships in 2016.

The host state will be Queensland, and qualifying rounds will once again be held via the Victorian Simultaneous Pairs with a Restricted Final conducted in conjunction with the Open Final. More details will be circulated to clubs early in the New Year.

TIP OF THE MONTH

Suppose you pick up:

♠ AQJ9654 ♥ 4 ♦ 103 ♣ Q82

This hand is just perfect for an opening bid of 3♠, a pre-emptive bid showing 6-10 HCP and good 7-card suit.

You are all ready to do just that, when your right-hand-opponent, the dealer, opens 2♥, a weak two bid.

Does that change matters? Should go ahead and jump to 3♠ over 2♥?

This month's tip is:

Don't pre-empt over a pre-empt.

Or to put it another way: only one pre-empt per deal.

Once someone has made a pre-emptive bid against you, they are officially the pre-emptors and you are the pre-emptees. It makes little sense for you to try to pre-empt their auction when they have already made a relatively explicit pre-emptive bid.

In the auction:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		2♥	3♠

3♠ is a *strong jump overcall*, showing a one-suited hand that is too strong to simply overcall 2♠. An example would be:

♠ AQJ9654 ♥ 4 ♦ 103 ♣ AK2

Such a hand wants to strongly invite partner to bid 4♠ with a little something, for example:

♠ x ♥ xxxx ♦ AKxx ♣ Jxxx

Only a strong jump overcall of 3♠ will reassure partner about the spades and allow him to co-operate in the search for a game.

With:

♠ AQJ9654 ♥ 4 ♦ 103 ♣ Q82

you content yourself with a simple overcall of 2♠.

BLACK MAGIC Bill Jacobs

Here is a hand where a resourceful declarer was able to manufacture a top score through a little sleight-of-hand.

♠ 8432

♥ KJ3

♦ J62

♣ Q32

N
S

♠ 9

♥ AQ1094

♦ 107

♣ AKJ105

In a matchpoint duplicate, South played 4♥, and West led the ♠K, then ♠Q. There are an easy 10 tricks, with 5 top tricks in hearts and clubs. Could one somehow take 11?

What about a dummy reversal? If you can trump 3 spades in your hand, then draw trumps in dummy (discarding a diamond from hand on the last trump) you can take 11 tricks.

Unfortunately, dummy entries for this manoeuvre are lacking. You need three of them: two to ruff spades, and one to draw trumps. But you only have two entries, the ♣Q and a high trump. You can't use both of dummy's high trumps as entries, because dummy's third trump is a loser.

So is there anything a magician can do?

Declarer found a deceptively simple solution ... he used the defenders as an entry. At trick 3, he boldly played a diamond. The opponents were sucked in: after winning the diamond, they played a third spade.

Declarer gratefully ruffed, crossed to the ♣Q and ruffed dummy's last spade high. He then drew trumps and claimed 11 tricks. Magic! (Unless trumps happened to divide 4-1, in which case, moronic. It can be a fine line.)