

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

March 2016

Editor: Bill Jacobs

THE SOAPBOX Ben Thompson



My idea of fun at bridge is normally long, tough teams events but an early contender for my most fun bridge tournament of the year was the ERBA 21st birthday regional championship. ERBA invited me and my wife Jenny to come to Sale a few weeks ago to help them celebrate, and they very graciously asked us if we would like to play as well, even though we're interlopers.

The bridge itself was great fun. Great hands but more importantly, 100% friendly players. Absolutely everyone showed that you can play seriously with a smile on your face and in your voice.

Even more fun was the Saturday night dinner. Every ERBA club put on an enthusiastic performance. My personal favourite was Helen McAdam from Traralgon singing her own lyrics ("you're my bridge partner after all even when you revoke") to the tune of "Bridge over Troubled Water".

Congratulations ERBA. I may just have to move East so I can take part again!



2016 VICTOR CHAMPION CUP

Entries for the 2016 Victor Champion Cup are now open. The VCC is the most prestigious event in Victoria and this year's VCC promises to be bigger than ever. We are delighted to announce prizes will be available in all events this year for our winners.

Players who don't have very many masterpoints can join in the challenge of a national bridge event via our two day pairs event which caters for pairs with a combined total of under 200 masterpoints. Additionally events for Open Pairs, Women's Pairs, Senior Pairs and Open Teams all carry playoff qualifying points. Restricted players with fewer than 300 masterpoints at 30th December 2015 are offered the choice of pairs or teams events to compete in.

All teams may comprise up to 6 players so if you feel the event is too much bridge for you, try forming a 6 person team to share the workload. Enter via the VCC website at <http://www.vba.asn.au/vcc>.

We look forward to seeing you there.
Kim Frazer & Neil Ewart
Congress Convenors

	2016 VICTOR CHAMPION CUP FESTIVAL of BRIDGE	
THURSDAY 9TH JUNE – MONDAY 13TH JUNE 2016 Bayview Eden Hotel: 6 Queens Road, Melbourne Victoria		
SWISS PAIRS EVENTS - 10.30AM START WOMENS, SENIORS, OPEN, RESTRICTED, AND <200 MP 9 TH JUNE - 10 TH JUNE		
SWISS TEAMS - 10AM START OPEN & RESTRICTED 11 TH JUNE – 13 TH JUNE		
NEW FOR 2016 - PRIZES IN ALL EVENTS		
An ABF Gold Point and Playoff Qualifying Points Event For more details and to enter visit the website: www.abfevents.com.au/events/vcc/2016/		
SPONSORED BY		
		
 Paul Lavings Bridgegear		

FOR STARTERS

In a duplicate session, you hold

♠ 642 ♥ 5 ♦ AK4 ♣ KQJ1085

The opponents are vulnerable, you are not. Partner is the dealer, and the auction starts:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	2♥	Pass	?

2♥ is a weak two bid, showing 6 – 10 HCP and a decent 6-card heart suit.

What do you do?

A common trap in responding to weak two openings is to bid too much in the face of a misfit. You have a very tasty 13 HCP, but need to re-evaluate in the context of this auction.

If partner has from 6 to 10 HCP, there is a maximum of 23 combined HCP, which is not enough for game. What's more, you have no known fit.

A contract of 3♣ may well be better than 2♥, *but you can't get there*. If you bid 3♣ now, that bid is forcing. Partner will probably look puzzled and go back to 3♥, which is just a level higher in your misfit.

So you pass, but the auction is not over:

	2♥	Pass	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	?

LHO has come in with 2♠, passed back to you. What now?

Well, this is serendipitous! Perhaps you *can* get to a final contract of 3♣. Having originally passed partner's 2♥, bidding 3♣ now clearly says that this is where you want to play. So the auction concludes:

	2♥	Pass	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

LHO leads the ♠K, and this is what you see:

	♠ A8		
	♥ KJ10842		
	♦ J63		
	♣ 93		
♠K	<table border="1"> <tr><td>N</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N	S
N			
S			
	♠ 642		
	♥ 5		
	♦ AK4		
	♣ KQJ1085		

Let's start by counting the potential losers. There are two spades, one heart, one diamond, and one club = 5 losers.

This could reduce to 4 in several ways. Perhaps we can ruff a spade in dummy, or perhaps the ♥K can be developed as a winner, on which we can discard a loser.

Unfortunately, the defenders might be able to counter both these options. They can stop a spade ruff by playing on trumps; and they can prevent you making the ♥K by removing dummy's only entry, the ♠A.

But they might not be able to do both. Does this give you a clue about what to do?

If you take the ace of spades at trick 1, you are doing the defence's work, removing dummy's entry. And if you then play for a spade ruff, the defence could play trumps.

But if you play *low* at trick 1, it's the defence who can't do both things.

So you let West win the first trick, and he switches to a low club. East wins ♣A and plays another. You draw the last trump (East has it), and play a heart. West plays low.

You need to guess the hearts. You could play the king, hoping that West started with the ace, or you could play the jack, hoping that West started with the queen. If East wins the ace, dummy's ♠A is still in place for you to take your developed heart trick.

What's it to be?

The bidding provides a slender clue. West bid 2♠, vulnerable, with a suit headed by at least the king and the queen. He has nothing

in clubs, and at most the queen of diamonds. Lacking the ♥A, this would be a very slim overcall.

It's by no means a sure thing, but the odds favour playing West for the ♥A and putting up the king here, ...

♠ KQJ753	♠ A8	♠ 109			
♥ A3	♥ KJ10842	♥ Q976			
♦ 872	♦ J63	♦ Q1095			
♣ 72	♣ 93	♣ A64			
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N					
W E					
S					
	♠ 642				
	♥ 5				
	♦ AK4				
	♣ KQJ1085				

Points to remember:

- Rewind your thinking when partner opens with a pre-emptive bid. Your "good" hand may no longer be so good.
- When having to guess a suit, it's vital to think back to the bidding for a clue. In this case it was: "would West have bid 2♠ without the ♥A?" This line of reasoning can also work in reverse, along the lines: "if he had the ace, would he passed the hand?"

**TRAINEE DIRECTOR OPPORTUNITY
AT 2016 VCC (June 9 - 13)**

The VBA is offering Victorian Directors the opportunity to improve their directing skills at the VCC. We are inviting applications from Victorian Directors who wish to be junior members of the directing staff at the 2016 VCC. The VCC is broken into a Pairs event (June 9 - 10), and a Teams event (June 11 - 13). The successful applicant(s) will participate in either or both events, depending upon their availability and experience.

Ideally applicants should be reasonably experienced Directors who possess directing skills at near congress level. Applications or enquiries should be sent to Kim Frazer at secretary@vba.asn.au. Applications close on April 15th 2016.

TEST YOUR BIDDING

Responding to a Michaels Cue-Bid

Nil vulnerable

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♠	2♠	Pass	?

Partner's 2♠ is a Michaels Cue-Bid, and shows two 5 (or longer) card suits: the other major, in this case hearts, and one of the minors. Its minimum strength depends on the vulnerability: not vulnerable, it can be bid on as few as about 8 HCP; vulnerable, about 11 HCP.

There are several techniques for responding to Michaels: the one given here might not be the *standard* approach, but it has the advantage of being the *best* approach.

If you have support for partner's major, then bid it. With a weak hand, bid it at the minimum level; with hopes of a making game, jump bid it. That part is easy.

Otherwise, you are going to want to find out partner's minor. With a weak hand, bid 3♣, *pass-or-correct*, saying "partner, I want to play at the three-level in your minor". Partner will pass with clubs, or bid 3♦ with diamonds. With extra length or strength in the minors, you might want to do the same at higher levels, bidding 4♣ or 5♣: these are also "pass or correct" bids.

Finally, if you have a good hand that wants to find out partner's minor, but guarantee you the chance of bidding again, then bid 2NT, asking partner to bid his minor.

Choose your response to Michaels with:

- (a) ♠ KJ754 ♥ 5 ♦ Q10653 ♣ J8
- (b) ♠ KJ75 ♥ Q95 ♦ J653 ♣ Q8
- (c) ♠ A93 ♥ 95 ♦ J653 ♣ Q875
- (d) ♠ A932 ♥ QJ95 ♦ A3 ♣ 875
- (e) ♠ 97532 ♥ 5 ♦ A3 ♣ AQ875
- (f) ♠ A932 ♥ J95 ♦ QJ3 ♣ A85

Solutions over page.

TEST YOUR BIDDING - SOLUTIONS

Nil vulnerable

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♠	2♠	Pass	?

(a) ♠ KJ754 ♥ 5 ♦ Q10653 ♣ J8

3♣. Here's your typical hand ... no doubt partner's minor is clubs. So bid 3♣ (pass-or-correct), expecting to play it there.

(b) ♠ KJ75 ♥ Q95 ♦ J653 ♣ Q8

3♥. You have an acceptable heart fit and 9 HCP, but they are not a *good* 9 HCP. Unless partner has substantial extra values, there is no game. And if he does have those extras, perhaps he will bid 4♥. You can't expect precisely accurate bidding after a Michaels Cue Bid.

(c) ♠ A93 ♥ 95 ♦ J653 ♣ Q875

4♣. With a guaranteed 9-card fit in a minor, you should bounce the bidding up. Partner will correct to diamonds if that is his minor. You might not make this contract, but it's worth pre-empting your LHO, who might be itching to rebid his spades.

(d) ♠ A932 ♥ QJ95 ♦ A3 ♣ 875

4♥. Again, 4♥ might not make, but this is a lovely hand in support of hearts. You can't expect precisely accurate bidding after a Michaels Cue Bid.

(e) ♠ 97532 ♥ 5 ♦ A3 ♣ AQ875

3♦. An unusual pass-or-correct bid. If partner has the red suits, then you select 3♦ as the final contract. But if partner's minor is clubs, then he will correct to 4♣ and you will take a shot at 5♣.

(f) ♠ A932 ♥ J95 ♦ QJ3 ♣ A85

2NT. Should this play in 3♥ or 4♥? Perhaps it depends on which minor partner holds. If it is diamonds, then your ♦QJx is a great help, and you would expect 4♥ to make. But if it is clubs, then your ♦QJx (opposite a likely doubleton or singleton) is almost worthless, and your potential in a heart contract is far less. So let's find out!

CONGRESS RESULTS**Yarra Valley Congress***Swiss Pairs*

- 1 G. Ridgway – A. Robbins
- 2 A. Krolkowski – K. Chan
- 3 I. Hamilton – J. Atkinson

Swiss Teams

- 1 S. Ozenir, M. Yuill, R. van Riel, F. Beale
- 2 B. Romeijn, C. Fernando, L. Attwood, K. Attwood
- 3 A. St Clair, D. Harley, J. Gaspar, O. Nolf

Dendy Park Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 S. Sharp – D. Sharp
- 2 G. Johnson – C. Arul
- 3 A. St Clair – D. Harley

Queen's Slipper Nationwide Pairs*Event 23 (December 5)*

- 2 A. Smith – D. Newland (Phillip Island)

Event 24 (December 20)

- 2 P. Derrick – N. Walsh (Echuca)
- 3 P. Lardy – H. Gordon (Frankston)

Event 2 (January 24)

- 1 D. and T. Stewart-Uden (Phillip Island)
- 2 L. Griffiths – K. Delcourt (Bendigo)

Event 3 (February 6)

- 1 C. Bailey – V. Whitby (Yarra Valley)
- 2 D. Nicol – H. Saunders (Berwick)
- 3 A. Smith – D. Newland (Ballarat)

Event 4 (February 20)

- 2 W. Leppard – P. Hood (Echuca)
- 3 D. Wilderness – C. Hynd (Ballarat)

UPCOMING CONGRESSES**Rye Beach Congress**

Saturday 12th March, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 13th March, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: Rosebud Country Club
 207 Boneo Rd
 Rosebud

Contact: Brian Morgan, 0439 845 753

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Gardenvale Easter Congress

Friday 25th March, 1 pm: Butler Pairs
 Saturday 26th March, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 27th March, 10 am: Swiss Teams
 Monday 28th March, 10 am: Matchpoint Pairs

Venue: Gardenvale Bridge Club
 20 Spink St
 Brighton

Contact: Jeff Fust, 9530 6622

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Frankston Congress

Saturday 9th April, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 10th April, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: St Francis Xavier Centre
 Cnr Baxter and Davey Streets
 Frankston (Melway 102 D3)

Contact: Yvonne Minton, 0418 348 264

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

NATIONAL RESULTS

Congratulations to Ben Thompson and Bill Jacobs, who were on the winning team in the 2016 Australian Open Teams playoff. Their prize is a trip to Poland in September to represent their country in the World Bridge Games.

Peter Hollands and Justin Howard were on the team that was runners-up.



Open team playoff winners, l-r, Andrew Peake, Peter Gill, Sartaj Hans, Tony Nunn, Ben Thompson, Bill Jacobs

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

State

Gerald Pearce VBA
 Alana Sharp Dendy Park

*State

Warren Cousins Waverley
 Chen Ding VBA
 Jane Rennie Waverley

National

David Hollands RACV

*National

Stephen Curtis Melbourne

**National

Evelyn Stephenson Moonee Valley

Life

Ian Speed Waverley

Gold Life

Terri Kay VBA

Grand

Graeme Neale Waverley

JOAN TURNS 100!

Joan Cecilia Smurthwaite was born on 14th February 1916 in Wellington NSW. Both her parents were of Irish background arriving as free settlers in the 1830s.

She married a banker in 1939 and has four children, 10 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

She started playing bridge at the Melbourne Bridge Club 35 years ago and has successfully competed ever since.

She and her partner Ann Perrott regularly win the North-South competition on Fridays.

... Ian Mansell



Joan considers the dummy (l-r Ann Perrott, Henry Josling, Joan Smurthwaite, Steve Curtis)

EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS

There are many ways to learn about bridge. Here are some activities available in the coming months for Victorian bridge players or potential bridge players.

Beginners Lessons



Beginner Lessons 2016
Love a challenge? Like to have fun?
BEGINNER'S BRIDGE LESSONS
(the world's most popular mind sport)
A 1 day course will be held on
Sunday 10th April 2016 and
Saturday 4th June 2016
131 Poath Road, Murrumbidgee
Cost \$40 per person - Lunch included - 10.30am to 4.00 pm
Registrations essential - clachman@vba.asn.au or 9530-9006

Waverley Bridge Club, the state's largest club, regularly holds Beginners Courses.

The next one is due to start on Tuesday afternoon 29th March (it is also taught simultaneously on the following Wednesday evenings).

Contact Mary Elson on 9807 6502 for more details.

Improve Your Bridge

Two Bridge Workshops with Joan Butts

Saturday 19th March at Geelong Bridge Club.

Workshop 1 – 10.00 am to 12.00 pm
*Modern Competitive Bidding with
Distributional Hands*

12.00 to 1.00 – Lunch

Workshop 2 – 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm
*Keeping our Defensive Communications and
Interfering with Declarer*

Both workshops will be multi-level, suitable for regular players. Come with or without a partner to any number of sessions

Cost: \$15 per head per workshop

Bookings essential:
phone Dorothy Read on 0427 626 370, or
email dotgeoffread@gmail.com.

Learn the 2-over-1 System

Improve the accuracy of your bidding in one easy step by adding "2-over-1 game forcing" principles to your system. This full-day workshop with Bill Jacobs will teach you all you need to know to play the world's most popular expert system.

Saturday March 19th from 10 am to 4 pm.
Cost is \$35 with a barbeque lunch included.

Contact Mary Elson on 9807 6502 for more details.

Teaching Bridge

Professional Development day for bridge teachers

Sunday 20th March, 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.
at Geelong Bridge Club.

This ABF-sponsored event is presented by Joan Butts. Workshop includes:

Teaching Defence, Conventions and
Competitive Bidding

Interactive lessons with teacher and student
exercise.

- Lunch provided
- Materials provided by ABF

Bookings essential:
phone Dorothy Read on 0427 626 370, or
email dotgeoffread@gmail.com.

This workshop is limited to 18 tables.

**BLACK MAGIC
Bill Jacobs**

Dir: South ♠ J87
 Vul: nil ♥ 62
 ♦ KQJ952
 ♣ 82

N
S

♠ KQ10954
 ♥ 7
 ♦ 1074
 ♣ AK5

West	North	East	South
4♥	4♠	All Pass	1♠

It appears partner is a devotee of last month's tip: "when in doubt bid 4♠ over their 4♥".

West leads ♥A, and continues with ♥K, which you ruff.

You can draw trumps, ruffing a club as you go, losing just a spade, a heart and a diamond.

The danger is that the opponents get a diamond ruff, should the suit not divide 2-2. There's not much you can do about that.

Or is there?

♠ J87
 ♥ 62
 ♦ KQJ952
 ♣ 82

♠ 3 ♥ AKQJ854 ♦ A83 ♣ J6	<table border="1" style="margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ A62 ♥ 1093 ♦ 6 ♣ Q109743
N					
W E					
S					

♠ KQ10954
 ♥ 7
 ♦ 1074
 ♣ AK5

South performed a magic trick to prevent the diamond ruff that would shoot his contract. He boldly led a diamond himself at trick 3!

West was completely taken in ... it seemed to him that most likely it was declarer with the singleton diamond. He hopped up with the ace and switched to clubs.

Declarer drew trumps and claimed. Voila!

**VBA REPRESENTATIVE TO
ABF YOUTH COMMITTEE**

The VBA is seeking a member who would like to take on the role of VBA Youth Bridge Representative to the ABF Youth Committee. Such a representative will liaise between the ABF Management Committee through the Youth Committee to the State with regard to Youth matters. The Youth Committee has a number of tasks, but major ones are:

- running Youth Bridge week
- overseeing Australia's Youth international representation
- developing a Youth development program
- approving and submitting an annual budget.

These tasks are heavily supported by the ABF's Youth committee Co-ordinator, David Thompson, who acts as Secretary to the Youth Committee.

The VBA State Representative should be keen to see Youth development within Victoria, be prepared to lobby the State Association and the Youth Committee to support youth programs within the state with financial support from the Youth Committee, and liaise with the Youth committee and the ABF about Youth matters. It will be beneficial if the representative is a younger player, in touch with youth players.

Most of the tasks for this representative would be communicating between the VBA and the Youth committee. The Youth committee will normally meet via Skype on a Sunday, late afternoon, about three or four times a year, and communicate via e-mail.

Please contact the secretary, Kim Frazer at secretary@vba.asn.au if you are interested in taking up this position or for further information.

THE FUN HAS GONE OUT OF BRIDGE Peter Wilkinson

What do you open, not vulnerable, with

♠ x ♥ xxx ♦ x ♣ KQJxxxxx ?

3♣ is for wimps. 4♣? No, the best bid is 3♠. (1♣ also has some merits). Welcome to the fun world of psyching.

If you are doubled, you simply go back to 4♣. The opponents do not present a danger; the danger person at the table is your partner, who might sacrifice in spades! A possible reason why psyching has gone out of fashion is the modern style of bouncing the bidding. However it still occurs at the very top.

In my first year, never having heard of a psych, I had a game with an experienced player (later a judge). I opened and the bidding went:

Me	Partner
1♦	1♠
2♠	2NT
3♠	3NT

At this stage I passed, confused that he ignored my 4-card support, but deferring to his seniority. Of course, he only had a singleton spade, aiming to deter a spade lead against notrumps. This psyche is standard, indeed in the first interstate match Victoria complained that NSW used it so often that it was part of their system (Cathy Chua, *History of Australian Bridge*, p.46).

In the late 50s and early 60s I was part of a freewheeling group who naturally took up occasional psyches. The fun is that you can get tops, hopefully more than the bottoms, but not stodgy middles. My minimum of one trick came from opening 1♣ non-vulnerable first in hand holding only ♣QJx and rubbish. LHO doubled with a rock crusher, partner passed and RHO passed with ♣AKxxxx and a couple of honours. Of course our partners had a lay-down small slam (should have been in the grand) and at IMPs this was an OK result. (In 1987 the rules were changed to make the non-vulnerable doubled penalties more severe.)

If you are noted as a steady player the occasional psyche can catch the opponents. The other style is to get a reputation as a psycher so that opponents don't believe your genuine bids. Playing with the (in)famous psycher David White against Jim and Norma Borin, who afterwards represented Australia, David opened first in hand.

The bidding went

West <i>David</i>	North <i>Jim</i>	East <i>Me</i>	South <i>Norma</i>
1♥	Pass	2♦	D'ble
Pass	2♠	3♦	Pass
Pass	D'ble	All pass	

With my 6-card diamond suit and David's genuine 1♥ (just genuine!) I made it for a top. Jim doubled because he thought David had psyched and it was the only time I saw him angry at the table. Note that I bid naturally: it is unethical to deduce that partner has psyched until it becomes obvious to all.

What about the disasters, you ask? Funny how these disappear from memory. But not one humiliating bottom. I had the impertinence to psyche against Tim Seres, the greatest player Australia has produced. I played it in 2♠ doubled. They methodically took ten tricks while I felt like the fool that I was to try it on, even though their demeanour in play and scoring was just like a routine 2♠ bid and made.

I have never psyched at the Moonee Valley Bridge Club. My wife would never have trusted any of my bids after I had psyched once with her. There have been partners occasionally who would not let a psyche destroy confidence, and I have had the itch to psyche against the handful of opponents who should be able to cope. However it is unsporting, almost unethical, to psyche against inexperienced opponents and it can lead to unpleasantness because people can feel you have cheated, even though the psyche is perfectly legal.

So if I ever psyche against you, take it as a compliment.