

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

September 2016

Editor: Bill Jacobs



THE SOAPBOX Ben Thompson

"Are you ok with H23 and 24? I can go more centred but these are better."¹

Very few people think it's a good idea to call me at 7 am and only one starts the conversation in the middle. "Sure, that's great Felicity". Then we talk bridge and theatre for 10 minutes before Felicity suddenly says "Ok, bye now" and hangs up, on to her next thing. Just a normal call between us.

Felicity Beale, one of the greats of Australian and Victorian bridge, passed away on August 19 after a brief struggle with cancer. It seems like everyone has a Felicity story, and I certainly have plenty.

She was always gracious, always having fun, always looking for fun, always full of life. At

¹ What? See page 8. (Ed)

first meeting she could seem frivolous but she had a rapid-fire razor-sharp mind, and she was an incredibly tough opponent at the table.

At her best she had great flair and could dismantle the very best players in the world. She had arguably her best bridge performance just 2 years ago, when she, Di Smart and the Australian women's team beat the world champion Chinese women in the semi-final of the Asia Cup, just falling short of the gold against the world-class Indonesians.

Felicity was one of those people who light up a room - and a party. She was truly extraordinary and I shall miss her terribly.

NEWS FROM THE VBA

Special Councillor Nominations

The VBA has notified clubs that nominations for Special Councillors to the VBA Council for 2017 are now open. Each year 4 Special Councillors are elected to the VBA Council, each representing one of the 4 zones (2 country and 2 metro). In 2016, the special councillors were Rob Quirk (Metro near VBA); Helen McAdam (Eastern); and Richard Giles (Western). There was no Special Councillor nominated for the fourth region (Metro Arc).

Candidates for election must be current financial members of one (or more) affiliated clubs within the zone they are seeking to represent and must be endorsed in writing by the President or Secretary of an affiliated bridge club within the zone they seek to represent. The current Special Councillors may also be re-nominated.

Nomination forms, details of Zone allocations, and the Regulations governing Special Councillor elections are all available on the VBA website. The closing date for nominations is 4.30 pm on Friday October 7.

FOR STARTERS

You have decided to enter a congress Swiss Pairs event for the first time. It is a little overwhelming, with 150 people milling around. But bridge is bridge, right?

For the first round, your opponents seem pleasant enough. They are discussing system:

"We play dopey, right?" says one.
 "I prefer dopey," replies the other.

Wondering if this congress falls under WADA rules, you feel a little dopey yourself, but take board 1 out of the slot.

♠ AK5 ♥ Q43 ♦ AQ87 ♣ J72

With no-one vulnerable, the bidding starts:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	Pass	1♥	?

It's your bid.

16 HCP, balanced: you know you should overcall 1NT, but how feeble that heart stopper looks! Nevertheless, it is 1NT that you bid, and there is no escape from this:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	Pass	1♥	1NT
Pass	3NT	All pass	

LHO leads ♥10, and you see:

♥10 led

♠ 92
 ♥ K82
 ♦ 64
 ♣ AK10953

N
S

♠ AK5
 ♥ Q43
 ♦ AQ87
 ♣ J72

Thanks partner! You have some help in hearts.

The contract looks good. Even if you have to lose a club, there are 5 club tricks, 2 spades, 1 heart and 1 diamond.

Plan the play.

Although you can make at least 9 tricks, the contract will go down if the defenders can win 5 tricks first. East's hearts are a threat.

The first trick will no doubt ride to your queen, and if West ever gets the lead, a second round of hearts would be disastrous, because East's 1♥ opening means that he started with 5 of them.

So don't ever let West get the lead. Take a finesse in the club suit, quite probably losing to East's queen. He can do you no damage whilst the protected ♥K stands sentinel in dummy.

Win the ♥Q at trick 1 and play to the ♠A, just in case East started with a singleton ♣Q. If both follow low, come back to your ♠A and play the ♣J. West plays low, you play low from dummy and East wins ♣Q with a little smile. Now he plays the ♦2, and you ...?

Play the ♦A, and take your 9 tricks, +400, board 2 please. The full deal:

♠ 92
 ♥ K82
 ♦ 64
 ♣ AK10953

♠ 87643
 ♥ 106
 ♦ J1053
 ♣ 86

N
W
E
S

♠ QJ10
 ♥ AJ975
 ♦ K92
 ♣ Q2

♠ AK5
 ♥ Q43
 ♦ AQ87
 ♣ J72

You could have made two overtricks by playing the clubs from the top and then finessing East for the ♦K. But these overtricks count for little because a congress Swiss Pairs is scored by IMPs, where making your contract is paramount.

If you had played this hand in a matchpoint duplicate, the best plan would have been a more contentious matter, because overtricks can deliver many matchpoints.

Playing for IMPs is in many ways a simpler form of the game than matchpoints: make your contract, defeat their contract.

Points to remember:

- Make the system bid (in this case a 1NT overcall) even though it entails risk. Show me a bridge player who avoids risk, and I will show you a loser.
- In notrumps, work out how to get enough tricks, but also evaluate the risk to your contract.
- When playing for IMPs (Swiss Pairs, teams events and the like), don't worry about overtricks: concentrate on making your contract.
- Similarly, on defence at IMPs, your sole objective is to defeat the contract: again, don't worry about donating overtricks in the pursuit of this goal.



RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

State

Anne Garratt	Geelong
Terence Passlow	Geelong
Tony Seed	Geelong

*State

Nola Allen	Dendy Park
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National

Chen Ding	VBA
Terry Dold	Sunbury
Lucy Gould	Dendy Park
Peter Martin	Dendy Park

*National

Christopher Leach	MCC
David Samuels	Moonee Valley

Life

Daoping Nie	VBA
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Bronze Life

Cecile Senior	Kooyong
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Grand

Michael Clarke	Geelong
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TEST YOUR BIDDING

After partner's reopening double

Nil vulnerable

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	1♥	2♣	Pass
Pass	D'ble	Pass	?

This double is for takeout: he has already shown you at least 5 hearts, but he also has tolerance (at least 3 cards in theory) for the other two unbid suits. This means he is short in clubs.

You should be a little wary about the purity of this double. This is an auction where partner might well be catering for you having a fistful of clubs, and wanting to play 2♣ doubled. You could not have doubled 2♣ yourself in that scenario, as that would be a negative double, showing interest in the unbid suits.

So partner might not always deliver 3+ cards in each of the unbid suits. For example with 4-5-2-2 shape, he might decide to keep the bidding alive with a double.

Some partnerships even play that partner must double here, with any normal hand, to cater for your potential penalty pass. That's a step too far in our view, but the basic principle is valid.

On that basis, choose your reaction to partner's double with each of these hands:

- ♠ 742 ♥ J3 ♦ K96 ♣ A6432
- ♠ 742 ♥ J3 ♦ K96 ♣ A10975
- ♠ 9742 ♥ J3 ♦ 653 ♣ Q642
- ♠ 742 ♥ J3 ♦ 9653 ♣ Q642
- ♠ Q4 ♥ J3 ♦ KQ653 ♣ 7642
- ♠ KJ742 ♥ 3 ♦ Q5 ♣ 96432

Solutions over page.

TEST YOUR BIDDING - SOLUTIONS

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	1♥	2♣	Pass
Pass	D'ble	Pass	?

(a) ♠ 742 ♥ J3 ♦ K96 ♣ A6432

2♥. You have 5 clubs, but this doesn't translate into tricks because your club spots are so pathetic. 2♣ doubled might go down one, for +100, but you have decent chances in 2♥ (for a score of at least +110): all your three honour cards appear useful.

(b) ♠ 742 ♥ J3 ♦ K96 ♣ A10975

Pass. What a difference to hand (a)! This hand delivers at least three club tricks by force, whereas hand (a) only as one. The spot cards in clubs are crucial, and you have expectations of a nice penalty in 2♣ doubled.

(c) ♠ 9742 ♥ J3 ♦ 653 ♣ Q642

2♠. A more typical hand. Partner usually delivers at least 3 spades, and a *good* partner gives you 4 of them. Nevertheless, a sound case could be made for bidding 2♥.

(d) ♠ 742 ♥ J3 ♦ 9653 ♣ Q642

2♥. Partner's diamonds are more suspect than his spades. Put another way: partner may well only have two diamonds, but he usually has at least three spades. So go with the major suit contract.

(e) ♠ Q4 ♥ J3 ♦ KQ653 ♣ 7642

2♦. One way to look at this is your hand is a whole lot better than it might be, given your first-round pass. Another way to look at it is: where is your game contract? It is a bit much to expect partner to deliver both a club stopper and sufficient diamond strength to run diamonds in 3NT. And you are a long way away from making 5♦.

(f) ♠ KJ742 ♥ 3 ♦ Q5 ♣ 96432

3♠. There is excellent potential for a game contract in spades, and you must invite it. Some might even bid 4♠, but in the spirit of allowing partner some leeway for his reopening double, 3♠ is probably enough.

STATE RESULTS

Victorian Thwaites Mixed Pairs

Championship

- 1 B. Kat – K. Kat
- 2 K. Muntz – N. Ewart
- 3 E. Samuel – P. Hollands

Plate

- 1 A. Krolkowski – S. Collins
- 2 K. Frazer – M. Phillips
- 3 K. French – C. Arul

CONGRESS RESULTS

Coffs Coast Congress

Congratulations to Kitty Muntz and Leigh Gold, who were on the winning team at the Coffs Harbour Super-Congress.



William Jenner-O'Shea, Vanessa Brown,
Kitty Muntz and Leigh Gold

Phillip Island Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 C. Leach – K. Frazer
- 2 S. White – F. Kovacs
- 3 S. Livingston – H. Middleton

Swiss Teams

- 1 S. Klofa, R. Gallus, D. Harley, A. St Clair
- 2 G. Lovrecz, K. Muntz, K. Frazer, J. Ebery
- 3 M. Callander, S. Collins, L. Robinson, P. Ditchfield

Knox Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 L. Meyer – P. Moritz
- 2 R. Anderson – P. Edwards
- 3 L. Gold – L. Gold

Swiss Teams

- 1 A. Krolikowski, R. Stewart, J. Magee, T. Strong
- 2 S. Klofa, R. Gallus, K. Kat, B. Kat
- 3 R. Berlinski, S. White, M. Callander, S. Collins

Melbourne Bridge Club Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 H. Stewart – M. Allison
- 2 C. Louie – H. Louie
- 3 M. Darling – J. Howard



Mary Allison and Helen Stewart
(with Ian Mansell)

Swiss Teams

- 1 C. Louie, H. Louie, T. Rarasinghe, L. Saoud
- 2 V. Chang, G. Ghali, D. Nie, E. Ji
- 3 C. Hughes, K. Bechet, L. Young, M. Phillips



Herman Louie, Christine Louie,
Thalik Rarasinghe, Leo Saoud

Traralgon Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 J. Banks – A. Kearon
- 2 S. Collins – C. Chakravorty
- 3 C. Arul – K. Nainanayake

Swiss Teams

- 1 B. Mill, T. Gariepy, S. Collins, C. Chakravorty
- 2 M. Allison, R. O'Dell, R. Allison, L. Pope
- 3 J. Brazier, J. Macleod, L. Robinson, E. Thomson

Dendy Park Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 G. Ghali – V. Zhang
- 2 C. Ding – D. Nie
- 3 C. Arul – A. Paul

Queen's Slipper Nationwide Pairs*Event 16 (August 21)*

- 1 J. Sullivan – A. Johnston
(South Gippsland)
- 2 M. Baker – L. Carroll (Echuca)

UPCOMING CONGRESSES & EVENTS**Ballarat Congress**

Saturday 10th September, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
Sunday 11th September, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue corner Eyre & Ripon Streets
Ballarat

Contact: Tim Woodley, 5342 4847

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Mornington Peninsula Congress

Saturday 17th September, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
Sunday 18th September, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue St Francis Xavier Church Hall
60 Davey St
Frankston

Contact: Lindsey Young, 9787 2235

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Macedon Ranges Congress

Sunday 25th September, 10 am: MP Pairs

Venue St Mary's Norma Richardson Hall
Buckland Street
Woodend

Contact: Ron Watkinson, 0422 622 658

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

RACV

Sunday 2nd October, 10 am Swiss Pairs

Venue RACV City Club
501 Bourke St
Melbourne

Contact: Claire McParland, 9944 8876

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

The 14th Annual Bairnsdale Bridge Congress will be held on the weekend of the 22 and 23 of October, 2016. Saturday starts at 12 noon, BYO lunch, \$25. Sunday starts at 10:00 am, \$40 and a lovely lunch will be supplied. John Brazier is the Convenor and can be contacted on (03)51523494 or email on johnbrazier4@gmail.com.

TIP OF THE MONTH

About Distribution Points

When I was a lad, they taught me to add points for a side suit shortage (once you had found a suit fit) as follows:

Doubleton	1 point
Singleton	2 points
Void	3 points

It seemed simple and effective, and I spent the next 30 years doing so.

I then started getting involved in teaching bridge and discovered to my astonishment that matters had evolved. The scale was now:

Doubleton	1 point
Singleton	3 points
Void	5 points

The rules of bridge hadn't changed, but the points had inflated: what was going on?

I really don't know (perhaps some historian can enlighten me), but there is something amiss with this new scale. I can understand a singleton being worth a bit more than 2 points, but 5 for a void?

Suppose you hold:

♠ xxx ♥ - ♦ QJxxx ♣ Qxxxx

Partner opens 1♠, the next hand passes, and you?

In the 20th century, I would have counted 5 HCP plus 3 for the void = 8 total points, and given a comfortable raise to 2♠ (showing 6-9 TP).

But this century, the hand is apparently worth 10 TP and an invitation-to-game raise, for example 3♠.

The problem with this overstatement of the hand's value is that you don't have that many spades with which to trump hearts. In the worst possible case, the opponents may be able to erase all of dummy's trumps before a single heart is ruffed. How valuable is your void *then*?

The ruffing potential of any side suit shortage is directly related to the number of trumps held: the more the merrier. Here is a simple formula for calculating the number of distribution points for a void:

points for a void = number of trumps held

Think about it, and you will see just how sensible this equation is. On our example hand, the void is worth 3 points, the number of our spades, which coincidentally conforms to the 20th century model. But *this* hand:

♠ xxxx ♥ - ♦ KJxxx ♣ Qxxx

evaluates to 10 TP (6 HCP plus 4 for the void, powered by the 4-card trump support), and is clearly worth a game invitation.

WORLD YOUTH TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIPS
Bill Jacobs

Last month, the world junior championships were held in Salsomaggiore, Italy. Australia sent Juniors and Girls teams.

The Juniors team, with Max Henbest and Jamie Thompson aboard, fought hard but ultimately finished 9th in the round-robin, just failing to qualify for the quarter-finals.

Our Girls team met with greater success, despite having only 5 players. They qualified 5th, and in the quarter-final easily disposed of Poland (although there's probably no such thing as easily disposing of Poland in any bridge event ... bridge is taught routinely in Polish schools, and the nation is a powerhouse).

They faced Indonesia in the semi-final, and with 5 boards to play in the 56-board match, trailed by 5 imps.

Board 24 was the critical board.

You hold, with no one vulnerable:

♠ 107 ♥ Q84 ♦ 1087 ♣ KQ1084

and hear this auction:

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
		1♥	1♠
2♥	4♠	All Pass	

It's your lead. Get it right, and a world championship final is yours to play in.

Melbourne's own Ella Pattison chose a high club. This was the full deal

	♠ AQJ82		
	♥ 762		
	♦ J62		
	♣ 93		
♠ 107		♠ 5	
♥ Q84		♥ AJ1083	
♦ 1087		♦ AK4	
♣ KQ1084		♣ J765	
	♠ K9643		
	♥ K5		
	♦ Q953		
	♣ A2		

The defence effortlessly won a heart, two diamonds and a club for down one.

At the other table, the auction was identical, but West led ♥4, her partner's opened suit. East won the ♥A, played a top diamond, and unable to read partner's signal, cashed a second diamond. That established a discard for declarer and 4♠ came home: 10 imps to Australia.

There were no further major swings, and the Aussies won the match by 6 imps.

There was a bit of good fortune, but also good judgment in that opening lead. When partner opens the bidding in a suit, it doesn't promise any genuine strength in that suit: partner is merely conforming to a rigid protocol for choosing which suit to bid (it's different when partner overcalls in a suit). So Ella was probably right in theory to choose a good suit of her own, and she was certainly right in practice.

The final was against the Netherlands, who were altogether too strong, Australia going down, but not disgraced, in that match. Congratulations to Jessica Brake, Renee Cooper, Kirstyn Fuller, Francesca McGrath and Ella Pattison on their Silver Medal.

Renee Cooper was also joint winner of the Joan Gerard Award for sportsmanship (an award won by Jessica Brake at the previous championships).



Renee Cooper, Justine Beaumont (coach), Francesca McGrath, Jessica Brake, Ian Thomson (NPC), Kirstyn Fuller and Ella Pattison

BLACK MAGIC Bill Jacobs

In this deal East-West defeated declarer's 3NT with a remarkable sequence of plays.

Dlr: North	♠ K52		
Vul: All	♥ 643		
	♦ AKJ10943		
	♣ -		
♠ 93		♠ QJ1087	
♥ QJ1098		♥ 75	
♦ 652		♦ Q87	
♣ K84		♣ A62	
	♠ A64		
	♥ AK2		
	♦ -		
	♣ QJ109753		

West	North	East	South
	1♦	1♠	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led ♠9, overtaken by East's ♠10. Declarer had to duck (otherwise West could win the first club and play his second spade whilst East still had a top club). East couldn't see much future in the spades, due to lack of entries, so switched to ♥7. Again South ducked, for the identical reason.

West won the heart, and could see no future in the hearts (clearly South had ♥AK), so tried the effect of a diamond play.

Poor declarer's head was spinning. Having lost two tricks, and with two losers in clubs, it seemed he needed the diamond finesse to work. So he played the ♦J, losing to the queen. East now cashed the ♣A, got an encouraging signal from his partner, and continued with a club. The defence had won the first 5 tricks.

What was so magical about this? Well, the defence could only defeat the contract by playing all four suits to the first four tricks.

Felicity's Call

... was about seat numbers for a performance from the Production Company.

SELECTING VICTORIA'S REPRESENTATIVES IN THE INTERSTATE TEAMS

Thanks to all the players and clubs across Victoria who provided their views on how Victoria's teams should be selected.

For 2017 Victoria's teams will be selected by playoffs.

Open team

A four-team playoff between:

- the winners of the Victorian Teams Championship (the Pennant);
- the three highest-placed pairs in the Victorian Butler Pairs Championship;
- a team formed from the three pairs whose total number of VQPs, earned solely in Congresses, exceeds that of any other team that nominates; and
- a team formed from the top three place-getters in the Victorian Representative Pairs. This event will be open to any pair where both players have won at least one VQP in a congress, to the three winners of the regional pairs championships, and to the winner and runner-up of each of the state championship events.

Women's and Seniors' teams

Unlike for the Open, there are insufficient interested players to offer the same variety of selection pathways for either the women's or seniors'.

Selection will be via a weekend playoff of 12 pairs, consisting of:

- the winner of each region's women's/seniors' selection event (i.e. up to three pairs);
- the top six pairs in the three- or four-week stage one event held at the VBA; and
- the top three pairs in a one-day Swiss Pairs with entry open to any pair in Victoria.

More details, and the rationales behind the event formats, are available on the VBA website.