

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

March 2017

Editor: Bill Jacobs

THE SOAPBOX Ben Thompson



The Gold Coast Congress, held in February every year, is the largest tournament in Australia and one of the largest tournaments in the world. This year, they had about 300 tables in the pairs events and about 500 in the teams events!

Most impressive to me is their fantastic success in encouraging and attracting less experienced players. The three masterpoint-limited categories combined would be the largest event in Australia, full stop. That's an example for all tournament organisers and all clubs to go to school on.

At our own Victor Champion Cup festival, coming up around the June Queens Birthday weekend, we have two pairs events for players newer to the national tournament scene - the Victor Muntz Restricted Pairs (under 300) and the Frank Power Trophy (under 200).

If you've never tried a national event before, come and dip your toe in the water at the VCC. If you've played in some of these types of events before, please encourage others at your club to give it a go. You know and I know that they're great fun, and there's plenty of fun to go around!

2016 VICTORIAN AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Nominations for the Victorian Bridge Awards for Excellence for 2016 are now open. These awards are designed to recognise individuals around the state who have made a significant contribution to our game during the last year, whether it is in your club or a broader role. Four award categories are available, and the same individual may be nominated in more than one category:

"Teacher of the Year"

"Official of the Year"

"Volunteer of the Year"

"Sportsmanship Award of the Year"

Nominations are open until April 30 2017 and nominations should be made on the official form (available from the VBA website) and sent to the VBA Secretary by post to 131 Poath Road Murrumbeena Vic 3163 or email to secretary@vba.asn.au.

Finalists will be selected by a panel including the Presidents of the VBA, ERBA, NRBA and WRBA.

Finalists will be notified by May 20, 2017, and overall winners will be announced at the Victor Champion Cup in Melbourne on June 9, 2017.

2016 ABF MASTERPOINTS AWARDS

Congratulations to Dee Harley, who in 2016 won more **red** masterpoints than anyone else in Australia, a massive 182.70 of them. Stan Klofa ran third in this category.

At the Victorian State level, our most improved player, masterpoint-wise, was Chen Ding, who narrowly pipped Alex Zarnowski in the rankings.

FOR STARTERS

On this month's deal, the auction is short and doesn't involve you:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		2NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

2NT shows 20-22 HCP, balanced. You have to lead from:

♠ A93 ♥ QJ953 ♦ J6 ♣ 853

You will lead a heart, correct? This is a strong suit, and hearts might well be declarer's Achilles heel.

But which heart? Do you choose the top of the sequence, the queen, or fourth highest, the five?

The community is a little split on this question, but here's a rule of thumb that is easy to apply and usually works. If you have just two high cards, in sequence, then lead your fourth highest card. This gives you the best chance of establishing the suit, without it being blocked between you and your partner.

But if there is a third high card involved, not necessarily as part of the sequence, then that gives you an increased chance of developing the suit, without needlessly giving away a trick. In this case, the nine is that third card. It bolsters the suit. If for example, declarer has ♥AK10, you can lead the ♥Q and retain the ♥J9, sitting over declarer's ♥10. But if you start with the ♥5, well you see what happens.

You lead the ♥Q, and see:

3NT by	♠ J54									
South	♥ 842									
	♦ 102									
	♣ KJ1092									
♠ A93	<table style="margin: auto;"> <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								
♥ QJ953										
♦ J6										
♣ 853										

Declarer calls for a low heart, partner follows with the ♥6, and declarer wins the ♥A.

Declarer is reaching for his next card, a club no doubt.

What is your defensive plan?

Well, what might be happening with that club suit? If declarer has the ♣A, then he will make either many club tricks or few of them, depending on how many clubs he has, and whether he also has the queen.

But if *partner* has the ♣A, then he may be able to deny declarer the enjoyment of that suit, by withholding his ace until declarer has no clubs left. But to do this, he needs to know how many clubs *you* hold.

When declarer plays a club at trick 2, you must give partner the count of the suit. Suppose you play standard signals (high encouraging, low discouraging). Then in that scheme, a count card is low-then-high with an *odd* number of cards, high-then-low with an *even* number of cards.

But if you play reverse signals (low = like, high = hate), then the count is also reversed. We'll assume this scheme: when declarer plays a club, you should play the 8, starting a high-low=odd signal.

Declarer does in fact play ♣Q, you play ♣8, and declarer's queen wins the trick. He follows with a second club, partner winning ♣A. Partner plays back the ♥7, declarer puts in the ♥10 and you win ♥J.

Now what?

Have you been counting? That's 8 hearts gone, you have 3 left, and dummy one. There is only one heart outstanding, the king, and declarer has it. You can play a third round of hearts to establish the suit.

Declarer wins the heart and plays a low spade from hand. And you?

No mucking around. Your side has won two tricks, you have two heart winners established plus that ♠A.

Win the ♠A and take the setting tricks in hearts. Well defended, the full deal being:

♠ A93	♠ J54	♠ 1076
♥ QJ953	♥ 842	♥ 76
♦ J6	♦ 102	♦ Q9753
♣ 853	♣ KJ1092	♣ A76

♠ KQ82	♠ 1076
♥ AK10	♥ 76
♦ AK84	♦ Q9753
♣ Q4	♣ A76

N	E
W	S

It was well defended. First you led the ♥Q, not the ♥7, which would have gifted declarer three heart tricks.

And then you and your partner combined to limit declarer to one club trick. If partner didn't know how many clubs you had, he might have let declarer win a second club trick. Declarer would then have abandoned clubs, switching to spades, setting up 3 spades, 2 hearts, 2 diamonds and 2 clubs for his contract.

Points to remember:

- With a sequence of honours, where there are three high cards involved, lead the top of the sequence part. For example, lead the queen from both of these suits:

QJ10xx
AQJxx

But with only two honours present, lead a low card.

- Count signals are important when dummy has a long suit, but no obvious side-entry. The player with the ace needs to know when to take it. There are other scenarios where it is useful to have the count, and in principle, you should play a count card to a suit that is led by declarer.

Count signals can be standard (high-then-low to show an even number) or reverse (low-then-high to show an even number). It's something to make sure you and your partner are on the same page with!

TEST YOUR BIDDING

Good hands after 2NT

Nil vulnerable, matchpoint duplicate

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	2NT	Pass	?

There are several ways to explore game and slam possibilities after partner's 2NT opening.

Stayman (3♣) is available to explore for a 4-4 major suit fit. With a 5-card major, you can transfer to that major (3♦ for hearts, 3♥ for spades) and then bid again: for example 3NT to offer partner a choice between 3NT and 4 of your major; or bid a new suit to show a two-suiter.

That takes care of 3♣, 3♦ and 3♥; what about a 3♠ response? Try playing that as a good hand, with slam possibilities, and *both minor suits* – at least 5-4 in the minors. This is also known as "minor suit Stayman". If partner has no interest in the minors, he can bid 3NT; but with a minor suit, he should bid it, and it's off to the races.

In the rare case that you want to ask for aces, bid 4♣, Gerber. Everyone knows Gerber, although it might be best if no-one did, it being the world's most abused convention. John Gerber would spend most of his time spinning in his grave.

A direct response of 4NT is *quantitative*: a natural invitation to 6NT. That's the bid you make with a balanced 11-12 HCP hand.

Try bidding these hands, and include not just your first response, but your follow-up plan.

- (a) ♠ Q10854 ♥ 3 ♦ 52 ♣ AKJ53
- (b) ♠ Q10854 ♥ 32 ♦ A852 ♣ 43
- (c) ♠ QJ8643 ♥ 32 ♦ A2 ♣ A106
- (d) ♠ 3 ♥ Q1083 ♦ 52 ♣ AK10653
- (e) ♠ 85 ♥ J5 ♦ AK52 ♣ K10653
- (f) ♠ 5 ♥ 532 ♦ Q852 ♣ KQJ53

Solutions over page.

TEST YOUR BIDDING - SOLUTIONS

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	2NT	Pass	?

(a) ♠ Q10854 ♥ 3 ♦ 52 ♣ AKJ53

3♥, then 4♣. Show the spades first, and then the clubs, indicating slam potential.

(b) ♠ Q10854 ♥ 32 ♦ A852 ♣ 43

3♥, then 3NT. The diamonds are not worth showing – or to put it another way, 3NT is quite likely to be the correct final contract. Partner has hearts and clubs stopped, I promise you.

(c) ♠ QJ8643 ♥ 32 ♦ A2 ♣ A106

3♥ then 4NT. If you play Roman Key Card Blackwood, then this is the way to use it, with spades set as trumps. As long as partner has at least two key cards here, there should be a slam. Two heart losers? It's possible, but unlikely. The problem with any delicate auction to identify the heart situation is that it points the opponents to a winning lead.

(d) ♠ 3 ♥ Q1083 ♦ 52 ♣ AK10653

3♣ then ...? If partner responds 3♥, then 4NT, RKCB for hearts. The same comment as in (c) applies to the diamond situation here. Otherwise rebid 4♣ (***not Gerber***) as a natural slam try in clubs.

(e) ♠ 85 ♥ J5 ♦ AK52 ♣ K10653

3♠. If partner just bids 3NT, then raise to 4NT, a quantitative invitation to slam. If partner bids a minor, raise it to slam, and damn the torpedoes.

(f) ♠ 5 ♥ 532 ♦ Q852 ♣ KQJ53

3NT. This hand is not strong enough for 3♠ as minor suit Stayman: slam is unlikely, although not impossible. Worried about the spades? Fine, go ahead and worry, but the poor score you get 5% of the time when the opponents defeat 3NT with spades is counterbalanced by the 95% of the time when 3NT is the correct final contract.

NATIONAL RESULTS**Gold Coast Congress***Open Pairs*

- 1 J. Howard – T. Nunn

CONGRESS RESULTS**Tricks & Trumps Congress***Matchpoint Pairs*

- 1 A. Hegedus – J. Howard
- 2 P. Moritz – L. Meyer
- 3 H. Stewart – F. Banner

Swiss Pairs

- 1 V. Zhang – M. Zhang
- 2 E. Samuel – S. Collins
- 3 K. Frazer – J. Ebery

Yarra Valley Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 G. McRobert – T. Ranasinghe
- 2 A. Hegedus – J. Howard
- 3 S. Klofa – M. Gurfinkiel

Swiss Teams

- 1 N. Ewart, D. Beckett, K. Muntz, L. Gold
- 2 S. Klofa, M. Gurfinkiel, R. Van Riel, D. Harley
- 3 J. Tunks, M. Spurrier, G. Hill, L. McKenna

Dendy Park Swiss Pairs

- 1 T. Kay – K. Muntz
- 2 E. Samuels – S. Collins
- 3 F. Halmos J. Hall

Queen's Slipper Nationwide Pairs*Event 1 (January 7)*

- 1 B. Romeijn – J. Day (Berwick)

Event 2 (January 22)

- 2 E. Ramshaw – A. Smith (Ballarat)

Event 3 (February 4)

- 1 G. Nicholson – J. Barbour (Traralgon)
- 2 K. Attwood – L. Attwood (VBA)

Event 4 (February 19)

- 1 E. Ramshaw – A. Smith (Ballarat)
- 2 M. Day – P. Richardson (Yarra Valley)

UPCOMING CONGRESSES & EVENTS

Rye Beach Congress

Saturday 11th March, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 12th March, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue Rosebud Country Club
 207 Boneo Rd
 Rosebud

Contact: Brian Morgan, 0439 845 753

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Frankston Congress

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

Venue St Francis Xavier Centre
 cnr Baxter & Davey Streets
 Frankston

Contact: Yvonne Minton, 9787 1208

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Ballarat Upcoming Events

The **Ballarat Festival of Bridge** is on again!

Wednesday April 5th: Duplicate (7:30 pm)

Thursday April 6th: Nationwide Pairs (1:30 pm)

Friday April 7th: Ballarat Festival of Bridge Swiss Pairs (10:00 am), including lunch and refreshments at the end of play.

Saturday April 8th: Red Point Duplicate (1:30 pm)

The Festival will conclude with a Social Dinner on Saturday Evening.

The Patti Neerhut Memorial Swiss Pairs is a NEW event in our calendar and is planned for April 19th. It will be a 10:00 am start, includes lunch and celebratory refreshments and prizes at the end of the day. Enter via <http://bridgeunlimited.com>.

Patti Neerhut was a long time member of the Ballarat Bridge Club and known widely in the Bridge Community.

BRIDGE FROM HERE AND THERE
Ian McCance

This deal from BBO I thought would separate the Boyes¹ from everyone else. You are South, East deals and everyone is vulnerable.

- ♠ A106
- ♥ A92
- ♦ AQ43
- ♣ J104

East passes and you open 1NT. Partner transfers and the auction goes:

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

* Clearly 4♦ is better, but with such good cards in both pointed suits you didn't want to suggest a poor holding in spades.

** Roman Key Card Blackwood

♠ KQ872
 ♥ Q7
 ♦ K10875
 ♣ A

♦9 led

N
S

♠ A106
 ♥ A92
 ♦ AQ43
 ♣ J104

West leads ♦9 and when dummy appears it is clear that the precipitant 4♠ has landed you in the wrong contract: 6♦ is secure for 12 tricks. On the other hand we will pick up 2 unearned IMPs if the inferior contract succeeds.

On the face of it, 6♠ has 12 tricks if spades are 3-2 or ♠J is singleton. Instead, spare some thought for the possibility that one opponent holds ♠Jxxx. Decide your play, and then turn the page.

¹ Norwegian star Boye Brogeland would not misplay this.

Win the diamond lead and play the ♠K. If the ♠J drops, play to the ♠A and ♠10, before returning to dummy with the ♣A to draw trumps.

When both follow with low spades, *continue with ♠Q*. If someone shows out, cash ♣A. This allows you to trump two clubs in dummy (with luck) to cater for either defender holding four trumps, the ♥K, and at most three clubs, which seems to be the only chance.

♠ KQ872			
♥ Q7			
♦ K10875			
♣ A			
♠ J953	N	♠ 4	
♥ KJ65	W E	♥ 10843	
♦ 96	S	♦ J2	
♣ Q82		♣ K97653	
		♠ A106	
		♥ A92	
		♦ AQ43	
		♣ J104	

After clearing the ♣A, you cross to the ♠A, ruff a club and return to hand with a diamond (whew!) to ruff your last club. You are now technically out of control, West having the only outstanding trump. But when you continue diamonds West has only losing options – eventually he will have to trump in and lead a heart for the ♥Q to score.

FOR BIDDERS

Last month, we examined this auction:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	1♥	D'ble	3♥

and decided it would be workable to play this jump raise as a weak pre-emptive raise, typically 4-card support.

A 2NT response was used to invite game in partner's major, with a redouble available to simply show points, without a fit. Everyone lived happily ever after.

Next, let's look at a slightly different auction:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	1♥	2♣	?

with you as responder holding:

♠ xxxx ♥ Qxxx ♦ Axx ♣ xx

With this weak hand, it would be nice to jam the opponents up with a pre-emptive raise to 3♥, just like you did over the takeout double.

However, the consequences of this on our system must be considered. We no longer have a redouble available, and a double is reserved as a takeout, or negative, bid, showing interest in the unbid suits.

So 2NT is required as a natural bid, showing about 10-12 HCP, no fit for hearts, but stoppers in the opponents' club suit.

If 3♥ is to be a pre-empt, then what is to be bid with an invitational-to-game raise, such as:

♠ Axxx ♥ Qxxx ♦ Axx ♣ xx

There is a spare bid in your arsenal: it is the cue-bid of 3♣, the opponents' suit. It could not possibly be a natural bid, and so it is sensible for it to portray support for partner's suit, and at least game-invitational values. If partner has some extra strength, she will bid 4♥. 3♣ is called a cue-bid raise.

In summary:

After RHO's double:

Weak 3-card support:	raise to 2 level
Weak 4-card support:	raise to 3-level
Limit raise:	2NT
Invite in NT:	Redouble

After RHO's simple overcall:

Weak 3-card support:	raise to 2 level
Weak 4-card support:	raise to 3-level
Limit raise:	cue-bid their suit
Invite in NT:	2NT

Is all this system worth it? It absolutely is. It is the mark of an improving player that he recognizes that bridge bidding is a four-player game, and not a two-player game. In a contested auction, there is as much value in preventing your opponents from reaching their correct contract as there is in you reaching your correct contract.

To be continued ...

**OH THE PAIN OF IT ALL
Bill Jacobs**

First board of a red-point duplicate, you pick up this exciting collection:

♠ AJ10642 ♥ - ♦ AQJ652 ♣ J

Everyone is vulnerable, and dealer on your right opens 1♥.

As you are about to make your first move, your partner bids 1♠ out of turn! Oh, gosh.

The director is called, and asks your RHO whether she would like to accept that 1♠ bid out of turn. When she declines, he turns to you and says, unfortunately you are not allowed to bid in this auction.

The bidding then proceeds:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		1♥	Pass ☹
4♥			

Partner looks at her collection, mutters "it's a bit high for me now", and passes. That's the sad end of the auction.

Dlr: East	♠ Q98753		♠ K
Vul: all	♥ K43		♥ A10752
	♦ 73		♦ 8
	♣ KQ		♣ A108762
♠ -		W	
♥ QJ986		N	E
♦ K1094		S	
♣ 9543			
	♠ AJ10642		
	♥ -		
	♦ AQJ652		
	♣ J		

4♥ made easily, of course, as would have 4♠. The world's coldest bottom for N/S.

The hero of this comic-tragedy was Dean Winkle, sitting South. I was the director, and as I gave the ruling, looked at Dean to observe his reaction to the news that he was barred from the auction (I had no idea what his hand was).

Dean was totally inscrutable, as if his forced silence was no problem whatsoever. I left the table none the wiser as to whether he

had been discomfited by the ruling. Would that we all were able to act like that in such circumstances!

**Beginners Bridge Crash Course
March 2017**

♠♥♦♣ **Learn to play Bridge in One Day!**

Come along and learn the basics of the world's most popular mind sport

When? Sunday 26th March

Where? VBA, 131 Poath Road, Murrumbidgee

Time? 10.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Cost? \$40.00 lunch included

Registration Essential
Phone 9530-9006



RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

State

David McKenzie	Eastern
Marjorie Pertzelt	Northern
Lisa Yoffa	Waverley

***State**

Sylvia Gluck	Bridge Fanatics
Robynne Owen	Paynesville

National

Jennie McKenzie	Eastern
Rosemarie Schwabegger	Lakes Entrance

***National**

Ant Edwards	Waverley
Bruce Minchinton	Nagambie
Anne Roberts	Waverley
Myrna Saunders	Moonee Valley

Silver Life

George Campbell	Sale
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Gold Life

Geoff Chettle	Moonee Valley
Susie Hall	VBA

Grand

Belinda Lindsay	VBA
Christina Macquarrie	VBA
Frank Vearing	Macedon Ranges

Cute bridge terms

Perverted Minor:	opening diamonds and rebidding longer clubs
Driftwood:	one player plays 3014, the other plays 1430

TIP OF THE MONTH

Try this thrilling opening lead problem:

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

Everyone is vulnerable and your hand is:

♠ 832
♥ 7543
♦ A93
♣ 753

They've bid the red suits, so it seems normal to lead a black suit. But which one? You might think it's a blind guess, but there's a clear indication which suit is more likely to be successful.

Here's the tip:

In deciding between two unbid suits to lead, choose the one that partner couldn't easily bid.

On this deal, you need partner to have some points, *and* a decent suit to develop. If you are to place him therefore with a 5-card suit, then it's going to be clubs, not spades. If he has a moderate hand with a 5-card spade suit, he would likely have overcalled 1♠. But with a 5-card club suit, then he might not have enough to bid 2♣.

You should lead a club. The layout could be:

Dir: North Vul: All	♠ AQx ♥ xx ♦ KQJxxx ♣ Jx	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 60px; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <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		♠ xxx ♥ Axx ♦ xx ♣ KQ10xx
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ 832 ♥ 7543 ♦ A93 ♣ 753	♠ KJxx ♥ KQJx ♦ 10x ♣ Axx											

A club lead sinks the contract, as long as the defence is smart subsequently.

Could the layout have been exactly the same, except with the black suits swapped around – partner having

♠ KQ10xx
♥ Axx
♦ xx
♣ xxx

No! Partner would have overcalled 1♠ with that hand. But with his actual hand, his pass was correct, because a 2♣ bid requires more high-card strength.

The moral of this little tip is that Pass is the hardest call in bridge to draw an inference from. It's such an insignificant thing, whether a green Pass card or a diagonal line on a piece of paper. But it speaks volumes: it says "there are many hands that I *don't* have, otherwise I would have made a bid."

On women's inhumanity to men ...

BRIDGE PLAYING: ADVERSE EFFECT ON MEAT SALES. COMPANY DIRECTOR'S VIEW.

'Because of the modern trend among women towards bridge-playing during the afternoon, the taste and demand for meat are steadily changing' said Mr RJ Hickey of Sydney at a meeting of directors of the Forbes Co-operative Dairy Society.

He stated that women seemed to be resorting more and more to the tin-opener. They hurried home from bridge, often coming in one door whilst the husband was coming through the other, and not having time to cook a meal, provided tinned meat. Not many men got roast joints except on Sunday.

Mr Hickey, who was advising the board on its proposals to establish a bacon factory, urged the directors not to launch out until the prospects were assured.

Sydney Morning Herald, 6 November 1936

(From Cathy Chua's History of Australian Bridge)

Want to have your say about the structure of the ANC?

Visit <http://www.abf.com.au/anc-survey/>.