

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

June 2017

Editor: Bill Jacobs

THE SOAPBOX Ben Thompson



Greetings from Sunny Seoul! I'm here captaining the Australian Open team in the Asia-Pacific Bridge Championships, including Victoria's young stars Pete Hollands and Justin Mill. Australia hasn't won the Open teams title at the APBF since 1970 – and we'd very much like to change that.

I ran into Kiwi world champion Mike Cornell at Hong Kong airport in transit. He regaled me with some extraordinary hands from recent play in Auckland, including an 11 card suit! 11 baggers are more than 3 million to 1 against; I've never seen one in real play and I don't expect to.

One of the best parts of any bridge tournament for me is running into old friends, making new friends, and sharing our stories – sometimes even non-bridge stories. That's true at any level of bridge. The social aspect is a key part of the fabric of our game, and there are plenty of crazy, funny, sad, wistful, instructive stories to go around at any tournament at any level. Don't tell anyone I said this but the craziest bridge stories often involve 4 experts at a high-level tournament.

Something we're increasingly realising about bridge is that the social aspect is extremely

beneficial for us as people, particularly as we age, and isolation and loneliness become very real issues. So do your future self a favour – go to some bridge tournaments, take a friend with you, and make some new friends.

2017 VICTORIAN TEAMS TO THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The VBA is pleased to announce the following teams to represent Victoria at the forthcoming ANC competition to be held in Canberra during July.

Open: Daoping Nie, Ming Zhang, Victor Zhang, Chen Ding, Gordon McRobert, Thilak Ranasinghe (Jamie Ebery, NPC)

Women's: Anna St Clair, Kim Frazer, Thea Cowie, Erica Windmiller, Susie Hall, Belinda Pearson (Laurie Kelso, NPC)

Seniors: Dee Harley, Doug Newlands, Stephen Weisz, Michael Chrapot, Kirsten Bailey, Gavin Bailey (Laurie Kelso, NPC)

Youth: Jamie Thompson, Vicky Thompson, Finn Rennie, Brian Callaghan, Aiden Robertson, Liam Robertson (Paula Schroor, NPC)

We wish our teams every success at the event.

As we go to publication, our Australian teams are toiling away in Seoul in the Asia Pacific Bridge Championships. In particular: Justin Mill – Peter Hollands (Open), Simon Hinge – Rob van Riel (Seniors) and Jamie Thompson (Juniors) are Victorians representing their country.

You can email them your support at teamoz@abf.com.au.

FOR STARTERS

You are having your first game with a new partner, and are eager to impress, when on board 1, with no one vulnerable, you pick up:

♠ KQJ874 ♥ J5 ♦ AJ10 ♣ 53

A nice easy 1♠ opening, but the auction then continues disconcertingly:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
			1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	?

You seem to recall in your discussions before the game partner saying "I play 1430". So what do you call?

1430 is a version of Roman Key-Card Blackwood (RKCB). In RKCB, the king and queen of trumps can also be included in the response to the ace-asking 4NT bid. The trump king is a key-card, combining with the 4 aces to create 5 key-cards. Using 1430, the responses are:

- 5♣: 1 or 4 key-cards (14..)
- 5♦: 3 or 0 key-cards (..30)
- 5♥: 2 key-cards, no trump queen
- 5♠: 2 key-cards, plus the trump queen

That's all well and good, but for this scheme to work, you need to know what suit is trumps. Often, it will be obvious, for example after the auction 1♠ - 3♠, what else could be trumps but spades? But when it's not obvious, trumps is assumed to be the last suit bid. In this auction, your 2♠ was the last suit bid, and partner is applying 1430 RKCB with spades as trumps.

In that case, your response is 5♠, showing two key-cards (on this hand, the ♦A and the ♠K) plus the queen of spades.

The auction concludes:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
			1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♠
Pass	6♠	All pass	

The ♥10 is led, partner says "I've got those covered", proudly puts down dummy and gives you an expectant look.

6♠, South	♠ A105
	♥ AKQ
	♦ 954
	♣ AQ62
♥10 led	N
	S
	♠ KQJ874
	♥ J5
	♦ AJ10
	♣ 53

It seems that it would be particularly wise for you to make this contract and get the partnership off to a flying start.

Let's see: you have 6 spade tricks, 3 hearts and the minor suit aces: that adds up to 11. So you will be looking at the minor suits for your twelfth trick.

You win the lead, and draw trumps, finding both opponents with two of them. You could finesse in clubs now, hoping West has the ♣K, but if he doesn't, then you are dead in the water with an inescapable diamond loser. The club finesse is a 50-50 proposition.

What about the diamonds then? You are missing the ♦K and ♦Q, and there are four ways they could be distributed, each approximately equally likely:

1. West has the king and queen
2. East has the king and queen
3. West has the king, East has the queen
4. East has the queen, West has the king

In scenarios 2, 3 and 4, you can make the slam by leading a diamond towards the AJ10, playing the 10 if East follows low. In scenario 2, that's all she wrote: the ♦10 will win (or if East plays an honour, then you play the ace and then the jack of diamonds). In scenarios 3 and 4, West wins the trick, but you then get back to dummy and play another diamond, finessing East for the remaining honour.

The combination diamond play is therefore a 75% proposition. So you play a heart over to

dummy and a diamond, low from East, 10 by you and West wins the ♦Q.

West now tests you by playing a club. Final hurdle.

If you believe the above analysis, that one of two diamond finesses is a better chance than a simple club finesse, you will win the ♣A, discard your second club on the ♥Q, and take another diamond finesse. The full deal:

♠ A105		♠ 62
♥ AKQ		♥ 7632
♦ 954		♦ K87
♣ AQ62		♣ KJ109
♠ 93	N W E S	♠ KQJ874
♥ 10984		♥ J5
♦ Q632		♦ AJ10
♣ 873		♣ 53

Well, did you impress your new partner?

Points to remember:

- If you have agreed to play RKCB with your partner, and haven't formally agreed on a suit as trumps, then the trump suit, for the purpose of working out your response, is the suit that was bid last.
- A holding of AJ10 opposite xxx (or similar) has a 75% chance of generating two tricks. It is a much better proposition than a simple 50-50 finesse.

You might think that when West won the ♦Q, it became a 50-50 proposition on where the ♦K lay. It's a natural line of reasoning, but wrong. People's heads have been known to explode while trying to think through the Principle of Restricted Choice, on which this deal is based.

So rather than risk that, go back to the original understandable proposition that there was only a 1 in 4 chance that both diamond honours would be with West, and live happily ever after.

TEST YOUR BIDDING

RKCB Machinations

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
			1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦*	Pass	?

* 1 or 4 key-cards for spades

Let's practise Roman Key Card Blackwood. In this auction, spades, the suit last bid, is assumed to be trumps. You bid 4NT, and partner shows you 1 or 4 key-cards, playing "original" RKCB, not the 1430 variation, and is ambiguous on the spade queen situation.

Now what? Here are a few guiding principles:

If you are missing exactly one key card (whether it be an ace, the trump king or trump queen), then you should bid a small slam. You assume that missing card is your only loser. Trust your initial judgment that it was worth asking for aces in the first place.

Missing two key-cards, or one key-card and the trump queen, sign off at the 5-level.

If you wish to find out about the trump queen, make the cheapest bid available (other than 5 of your agreed suit): in this case, 5♥. Partner signs off in 5♠ lacking the ♠Q, bids higher otherwise.

5NT asks for the number of kings (excluding the trump king) and promises ownership of all the key-cards: it is an attempt to reach a grand slam.

With those concepts in place, try these:

- (a) ♠ KQ10 ♥ 3 ♦ AK983 ♣ AQJ6
- (b) ♠ K8 ♥ 3 ♦ AK10983 ♣ AKJ6
- (c) ♠ A108 ♥ 3 ♦ AKQ83 ♣ KQJ6
- (d) ♠ K1083 ♥ A ♦ AK983 ♣ KQ6
- (e) ♠ KQ ♥ A ♦ AQ983 ♣ A6542
- (f) ♠ A8 ♥ 3 ♦ AKQJ83 ♣ A654

Solutions over page.

TEST YOUR BIDDING - SOLUTIONS

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
			1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦	Pass	?

(a) ♠ KQ10 ♥ 3 ♦ AK983 ♣ AQJ6

6♠. You are missing one key-card, probably the ♥A. Whilst you can't quite count 12 tricks, they are likely to be there. At the very very worst, partner might have to finesse in clubs for the contract.

(b) ♠ K8 ♥ 3 ♦ AK10983 ♣ AKJ6

5♥. Asking for the ♠Q. If no, then he bids 5♠ and you pass. Otherwise you get to slam.

(c) ♠ A108 ♥ 3 ♦ AKQ83 ♣ KQJ6

5♠. You have a great hand, and you seem to have a lot of aces, but you are missing two key-cards. You could be off two aces.

(d) ♠ K1083 ♥ A ♦ AK983 ♣ KQ6

6♠. You're missing an ace, and maybe the ♠Q, but you don't need it. Partner has 6 spades, you have 4: the opponents only three in total. In this example, your fourth spade acts as a surrogate trump queen.

(e) ♠ KQ ♥ A ♦ AQ983 ♣ A6542

5NT. Ask for kings. You won't bid a grand slam yourself whatever his response. But *partner* is allowed to bid it, as your 5NT promises that you have all the key-cards. If he has ♠AJxxxx ♥xx ♦Kx ♣Kxx, he will bid 7♠, having heard you show length in diamonds and clubs.

(f) ♠ A8 ♥ 3 ♦ AKQJ83 ♣ A654

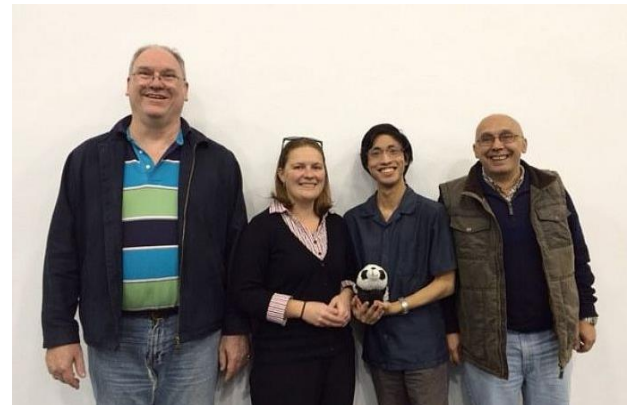
5♥. Worth finding out about that ♠Q. If partner lacks it, then you can switch horses and play 6♦, hoping partner has something like: ♠KJxxxx ♥QJx ♦xx ♣ Kx. Wouldn't that be sweet? If partner does have the spade queen, then 6♠ should be a good contract.

NATIONAL RESULTS**Autumn Nationals - Adelaide***Open Pairs*

1 Leigh Gold – Howard Melbourne

Autumn National Open Teams

2 Laurie Kelso, Traian Chira, Laura Ginnan, Sebastian Yuen



Laurie Kelso, Laura Ginnan, Sebastian Yuen, Traian Chira

CONGRESS RESULTS**Bayside Congress***Swiss Pairs*

1 B. A'Beckett – S. Ozenir
2 W. Sieredzinski – C. Shugg
3 N. McManamny - C. Chakravorty

Swiss Teams

1 T. Ranasinghe, G. McRobert, K. French, T. Gariepy
2 S. Klofa, A. St Clair, D. Harley, M. Gurfinkiel
3 L. Attwood, K. Attwood, L. Robinson, C. Fernando

Bendigo Congress*Swiss Pairs*

1 J. Yang – M. Gurfinkiel
2 F. Vearing – D. Sampson
3 S. White – I. Webb

Swiss Teams

1 D. Clarke, G. Wilson, L. Griffiths, M. Clarke
2 S. Klofa, R. Gallus, D. Harley, A. St Clair
3 B. Mill, T. Gariepy, S. Collins, C. Chakravorty

UPCOMING CONGRESSES & EVENTS

Wodonga Congress

Friday 16th June, 7 pm: Welcome Pairs
 Saturday 17th June, 10:30 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 18th June, 10:30 am: Swiss Teams

Venue The Hangar Cafe
 University Drive
 Latrobe University
 West Wodonga

Contact: Mary Prowse, 0401 132 074

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Geelong Congress

Saturday 24th June, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 25th June, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue Highton Bowls Club Rooms
 cnr Roslyn & North Valley Roads
 Highton

Contact: Sue Robinson, 5229 0300

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Kattery Congress

Saturday 1st July, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 2nd July, 10 am: Gold Point GNOT Pairs

Venue Waverley Bridge Club
 21a Electra Ave
 Ashwood

Contact: Keith Kat, 0428 130 844

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Beginner's Bridge Course

Commencing mid July.
 Daytime and Evening lessons.
 Gardenvale Bridge Club,
 20 Spink Street, Brighton.
 Teacher: Jeff Fust.

1st lesson is FREE. No obligation to continue.
 Bookings/Inquiries 9530 6622
 or via www.gvbridge.com.au

BRIDGE FROM HERE AND THERE Ian McCance

The Takeout Double of all time

I pick up this modest collection (as Reese would have stated):

♠ A642
 ♥ 9654
 ♦ Q1085
 ♣ 4

and the auction goes:

LHO	Partner	RHO	Me
1♠	D'ble	Pass	2♦ ¹
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♥ ²
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦ ³
Pass	6♥	All pass	

- 1 Preferring a simple suit to volunteering NT with single stopper
- 2 Partner clearly has a strong hand, but is unable to unwind it because no force is available except this ambiguous cue-bid. This is the critical point. If partner has only a running club suit and is fishing for NT, I am going to disappoint him, because if he has 4+ in either red suit my ruffing value in clubs will be useful. So I proceed with the unwind.
- 3 Bingo. RKCB on hearts¹. Always tell the truth to Blackwood.

Partner tables a takeout double of immaculate shape and incredible strength:

♠ 8
 ♥ AKQ8
 ♦ AKJ7
 ♣ AQ52

♠ KQJ109	N	♠ 753
♥ J72	W	♥ 103
♦ 2	E	♦ 9643
♣ KJ76	S	♣ 10983

♠ A642
 ♥ 9654
 ♦ Q1085
 ♣ 4

There is little to the play – win ♠K lead, club finesse, low club ruff, cross in trumps, low club ruff, back to draw trumps and claim 13. 6♦ makes on a similar line, but it is gratifying that 6NT looks to fail.

¹ Last bid suit, right? (Ed)

TIP OF THE MONTH

All about the trump ace

It's the most important card in the deck, and you have it as defender. The question is: when should you take it?

There are very few bridge questions with absolute answers, and this certainly isn't one of them. But all things being equal, the most likely strategy is to **take the trump ace when you have exactly one other trump remaining.**

So with Ax of trumps, you win the ace on the first round; with Axx, the second round and with Axxx, the third round. Here are three reasons why this might be a good idea:

- It gives you the option of playing your last trump, which might draw two of declarer's trumps to your side's one.
- You may denude dummy of trumps by doing so.
- It may give partner a chance to signal.

Try this problem:

Contract:	♠ 1054
4♠, South	♥ A6
	♦ KQ873
	♣ Q65
♠ A632	N W E S
♥ KQJ52	
♦ 62	
♣ 74	

After 1♠-3♠-4♠, you lead the ♥K. Declarer wins ♥A and plays a spade to the ♠K, partner following with his known singleton spade.

You should duck, and duck again when declarer plays a second round. Now if declarer plays a third round of trumps, you can win the ♠A and continue hearts. Declarer will eventually trump a heart and can draw your final trump, but now the trumps are all gone. If declarer has to lose a minor suit trick to partner, then any hearts that you have remaining will be winners.

And if declarer doesn't play a third round of trumps, maybe you will get a ruff with your small trump.

The full layout ...

♠ A632	N W E S	♠ 8
♥ KQJ52		♥ 10976
♦ 62		♦ A54
♣ 74		♣ 109832
		♠ KQJ97
	♥ 83	
	♦ J109	
	♣ AKJ	

One word of warning

In this example, the trump situation was clear. But on other occasions, you need to be aware of the possibility that partner has the trump king. You don't want to have an accident where your side's trump ace and king collide on the one trick.



**2017 Victor Champion Cup
Victoria's biggest gold point event!
Entries closing June 6th.**

The 2017 VCC will once again be held over the Queen's Birthday weekend – from June 8 – 12. This year our two events for 'restricted' players are played over two days on Thursday 8th and Friday 9th June:

- The Victor Muntz Restricted Swiss Pairs for players with Under 300MP each, and
- The Frank Power Trophy for players with a combined total of Under 200MP'.

There are also pairs events for women, senior and open pairs as well as our premier event, the Victor Champion Cup Swiss Teams (from June 10 – 12) which features several category prizes as well.

There are only a few days left before close of entries, so why not enter online today via www.abfevents.com.au/events/vcc/2017.

Players needing help finding a partner or team-mates should contact the convenors Kim Frazer or Neil Ewart at vcc@abf.com.au

Victorian Teams of Three

A pro-am development day

Saturday July 8, 9 am – 5:15 pm



One of the best ways to improve your game is by playing with more advanced players. The Teams of Three provides developing players with three wonderful development opportunities in the one day.

- Play with an expert player.
- Attend a celebrity speaker talk (notes and exercises provided).
- Compete in red point pairs competition that is restricted to your skill level and has hand analysis provided.

This year the event will be restricted to players with less than 1,000 masterpoints and played in two divisions, fewer than 150 masterpoints and fewer than 1,000 masterpoints. This will allow players to compete in an environment that is suited to their skill level.

	<i>Morning</i>	<i>Afternoon</i>
<i>Under 150 MP</i>	Pro-am pairs or teams (entry dependent)	Celebrity coaching session and under 150 MP pairs
<i>Under 1,000 MP</i>	Celebrity coaching session and under 1000 MP pairs	Pro-am teams (1 pro : 3 ams on each team)

This fun event always has a great atmosphere and provides a chance to meet new people from all over Victoria, learn new skills and have a great day out.

Many of Victoria's leading bridge players kindly donate their time to this event.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to meet and play with some of the players who have represented Australia and that you regularly read about in publications like the VBA Bulletin.

Entry and details of the day are provided on the VBA website.

Cost: \$55 (including lunch)
 Venue: VBA 131 Poath Rd Murrumbeena 3163
 Convenor: Laura Ginnan (lauraginnan@hotmail.com)
 Director: Laurie Kelso