

# Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

March 2018

Editor: Bill Jacobs

## THE SOAPBOX Ben Thompson



Ben Thompson with WBF President Gianarrigo Rona

I recently played in the teams event at the Gold Coast Congress. With over 460 teams playing across 5 categories, together with huge pairs events either side, it's easily the biggest bridge event in Australia and one of the biggest in the world.

Gianarrigo Rona, the president of the World Bridge Federation, passed through for a few days to meet regional officials. He's been to the GCC before and was still blown away by how big and how well run it is (the long-time convener, Therese Tully, and her team do a brilliant job).

I've been tremendously impressed for years with the masterpoint-restricted events – this year they had 202 teams in 3 different categories, and up to 20 tables in a series of one day events for rookies (under 10 masterpoints). That doesn't happen by accident. Therese and her team have put a lot of work into making sure the events are fun, but also in providing talks and having people just to help out and explain how everything works.

They personally encourage many less experienced players to "give it a go" and of course having done such a great job, simple word of mouth brings players in.

Every tournament in Australia – indeed the world – can learn a lot from the Gold Coast Congress, and how to make our game accessible and enjoyable for everyone, and at the same time.



*Also occurring at the Gold Coast Congress was a meeting of the World Bridge Federation. Here is a WBF press release as a result of that meeting ...*

*(see <http://www.worldbridge.org>).*

### **WBF PRESS RELEASE: BEN THOMPSON ELECTED MEMBER OF THE WBF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

On Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February at the Assembly of WBF Zone 7, South Pacific, Ben Thompson, from Australia, was elected as Zone 7 President and Member of the WBF Executive Council, starting from October 2018, after the end of the Orlando World Bridge Series.

Ben will replace John Wignall, WBF First Vice President and Member of the WBF Committee of Honour, who in Orlando will retire after 32 years of outstanding services to the WBF. Ben, a management consultant, married to Jenny, also an Australian representative, represented Australia several times in World Championship events, since his first appearance at the World Youth Teams Championship in Nottingham 1989. In 1991 in Ann Arbour he was a bronze medallist. With his partner William Jacobs he ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in the Open Pairs Championship at the World Bridge Games in Wroclaw, Poland in 2016. He is a WBF World International Master.

He has been active in bridge administration in Australia for over 25 years at local and national levels. His purpose is to help to grow our beautiful discipline everywhere.

To Ben, our congratulations and best wishes from the entire Bridge Family.

## FOR STARTERS

Suppose you are dealt this hand:

♠ 852 ♥ 76 ♦ AJ104 ♣ 9863

and with no-one vulnerable in a matchpoint duplicate, the auction begins:

| LHO | Partner | RHO | You |
|-----|---------|-----|-----|
| 1♣  | 1♠      | 2♥  | ?   |

The question is whether you should offer your partner a spade raise with your meagre assets.

Do you?

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I think you should. Your side having the spades is a gift: you can outbid their suit (probably hearts) without raising the level.

But to do so, you have to establish that your side has a spade fit, and the only opportunity to do that is right now.

If you win the contract in spades, there is certainly every chance it will go down, but that could be a good result if the opponents can score more in their fit. The fact that you are non-vulnerable, and hence the penalties are lower, is in your favour.

Mentally holding your nose, you offer a 2♠ raise, but the auction continues:

| LHO | Partner | RHO | You      |
|-----|---------|-----|----------|
| 1♣  | 1♠      | 2♥  | 2♠       |
| 3♥  | Pass    | 4♥  | All pass |

Well, no harm done.

It's your lead ...

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You should certainly lead a spade, your partner's overcalled suit, but which one?

If you had not supported your partner's spades in the auction, it would be correct to lead a low one, either the ♠5 (start of a MUD middle-up-down sequence) or the ♠2. Leading the ♠8 would be dangerous, because when it is followed by a lower spade, partner will interpret your plays as leading top of a

doubleton. He may attempt to give you a non-existent ruff.

*But* you did support spades, so if you lead the ♠8 here, partner will not be misled. And by leading a high spot-card, you imply a lack of an honour. When making leads, low cards suggest the presence of an honour, and high cards suggest the lack of an honour.

So you lead the ♠8, and dummy appears:

|                                    |   |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| 4♥ by<br>South                     | ♠ Q103<br>♥ AJ82<br>♦ Q53<br>♣ A105   |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |
| ♠ 852<br>♥ 76<br>♦ AJ104<br>♣ 9863 | <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table> |   | N |  | W |  | E |  | S |  |
|                                    | N   |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |
| W                                  |   | E |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |
|                                    | S   |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |

Declarer plays small from dummy and partner wins with the ♠K. He then returns the ♦8 and declarer plays the ♦6.

Your play.

---

Partner has returned the compliment, leading a high spot card to deny an honour in that suit. This means declarer must have the ♦K, and you should play the ♦10, allowing dummy to win the trick with the ♦Q and retaining your ♦AJ over declarer's presumed ♦K.

The full deal:

|                                    |   |                                   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |
|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| ♠ 852<br>♥ 76<br>♦ AJ104<br>♣ 9863 | ♠ Q103<br>♥ AJ82<br>♦ Q53<br>♣ A105   | ♠ AK974<br>♥ 93<br>♦ 872<br>♣ J72 |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |
|                                    | <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table> |                                   | N |  | W |  | E |  | S |  |  |
|                                    | N   |                                   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |
| W                                  |   | E                                 |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |
|                                    | S   |                                   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |
|                                    | ♠ J6<br>♥ KQ1054<br>♦ K96<br>♣ KQ4  |                                   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |

Declarer can draw trumps, but when he plays another spade, partner will win and shoot through a second diamond. Your side will win two spade tricks and two diamond tricks to scupper the contract.

Both 8 plays were crucial. From partner's perspective, he knew that you didn't have the ♠J. Had you lead a lower spade, he might have deduced you did have the ♠J, in which case his correct play would have been to play the ♠9 expecting to win the trick. That would be a disaster on the actual layout.

And when partner led the ♦8, denying an honour, it enabled you to not gift declarer two tricks in that suit by rushing in with your ♦A.

*Points to remember:*

- It is good bridge and good partnership psychology to support partner when you have support. And it is particularly good when it involves the spade suit.
- When you have shown length in a suit in the auction, you can afford to lead a high card if you are weak in that suit. Partner will not be misled into thinking that you have led top of a doubleton.



**RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS**

|                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| <b>State</b>       |                 |
| Coral Day          | Benalla         |
| Colin Jasper       | Kings & Queens  |
| <b>*State</b>      |                 |
| Susan Bunting      | MCC             |
| <b>National</b>    |                 |
| Jane Rennie        | Waverley        |
| <b>*National</b>   |                 |
| Sylvia Gluck       | Bridge Fanatics |
| Matthew Tiplady    | Berwick         |
| Mary Prowse        | Wodonga         |
| Dawn Wallace       | Bairnsdale      |
| Paul Kron          | VBA             |
| <b>**National</b>  |                 |
| Margaret Margitta  | VBA             |
| Anne McNaughton    | Moonee Valley   |
| <b>Life</b>        |                 |
| Richard Moss       | South Gippsland |
| <b>Bronze Life</b> |                 |
| Barbara Strachan   | Knox            |
| Christopher Leach  | MCC             |

**TEST YOUR BIDDING**

**After a sandwich overcall**

nil vulnerable

| LHO | Partner | RHO  | You  |
|-----|---------|------|------|
|     |         | 1♥   | Pass |
| 1NT | 2♣      | Pass | ?    |

In this auction, partner's 2♣ intervention is commonly called a 'sandwich overcall'. With bidders to both the left and right of him, he's the meat in the sandwich. One should be cautious about overcalling in this situation.

As a consequence, you can expect partner to have both a decent hand and, most importantly, a decent suit. This means that if you are, against all the odds, dealt a good hand in response, you should consider keeping game options open. This is particularly true in today's game, where people often open and respond on very marginal values!

What are your options? A new suit by you is not forcing, given that you passed over 1♥. It would suggest a hand that is trying to suggest a better place. A raise of partner's clubs is primarily competitive, the better to block out the opponents. With game interest and a fit, you can cue-bid 2♥ instead.

It is also worth noting that LHO, the 1NT bidder, often has diamonds. He won't have heart support, he failed to respond 1♠, and since your partner bid clubs, LHO probably doesn't have many of them. That leaves diamonds as a likely suit.

Decide how to garnish partner's sandwich with:

- (a) ♠ K974 ♥ A1043 ♦ Q1084 ♣ 7
- (b) ♠ K10743 ♥ A103 ♦ 1084 ♣ J7
- (c) ♠ 1074 ♥ A1093 ♦ KJ9843 ♣ -
- (d) ♠ K74 ♥ A1093 ♦ 1084 ♣ J72
- (e) ♠ KJ7 ♥ 10932 ♦ A4 ♣ K972
- (f) ♠ 10743 ♥ AJ3 ♦ KJ4 ♣ Q72

Solutions over page.

### TEST YOUR BIDDING - SOLUTIONS

| LHO | Partner | RHO  | You  |
|-----|---------|------|------|
|     |         | 1♥   | Pass |
| 1NT | 2♣      | Pass | ?    |

(a) ♠ K974 ♥ A1043 ♦ Q1084 ♣ 7

Pass. This is not the hand to try 2NT. Whilst the stopper situation is good, the trick-taking capacity isn't. You can't expect partner to have both powerful clubs and the necessary entries to cash out the suit. After all, the opponents have opened and responded.

(b) ♠ K10743 ♥ A103 ♦ 1084 ♣ J7

Pass. Could you have a spade fit? Unlikely. Partner has long clubs and probably at least 3 hearts (your opponents don't seem to have an 8-card heart fit). That doesn't leave much room for spades. 2♣ should be just fine.

(c) ♠ 1074 ♥ A1093 ♦ KJ9843 ♣ -

2♦. Yuck. It could be right to pass 2♣ on the basis that when you are in a hole, stop digging. But your diamonds are quite reasonable, and on balance 2♦ is likely to be an improvement. Maybe on this deal, the 1NT bidder has clubs, not diamonds!

(d) ♠ K74 ♥ A1093 ♦ 1084 ♣ J72

3♣. Here, the 1NT bidder almost certainly has diamonds. You must raise clubs to obstruct your LHO from comfortably bidding diamonds.

(e) ♠ KJ7 ♥ 10932 ♦ A4 ♣ K972

2♥. A good hand, but 5♣ is unlikely to make (you would expect to lose say two top hearts and at least one other trick). However, 3NT is a possibility should partner have a heart stopper, which he would show by bidding 2NT over your cue-bid. If he simply returns to 3♣, pass him there.

(f) ♠ 10743 ♥ AJ3 ♦ KJ4 ♣ Q72

2NT. Here it is you with the heart stopper, and that ♥J is pure gold. 2NT here implies you are looking to run clubs in notrumps, and therefore have a club fit. If partner is weak, he can return to 3♣ without a qualm.

### NATIONAL RESULTS

Congratulations to Max Henbest, who, playing in the Australian Gold team, reached the final of the Commonwealth Nations Bridge Championship on the Gold Coast, eventually losing that match to the Indian team.



This was an excellent result, given the strength and depth of the field.

And we accidentally omitted a fine result from the Canberra Summer Nationals. The winner of the National Rising Stars Teams was Barbara and Roger Love and Mary and Steve Colling (pictured below).



Roger & Barbara Love, Mary & Steve Colling

### CONGRESS RESULTS

#### Yarra Valley Congress

##### Swiss Pairs

- 1 S. Klofa – D. Harley
- 2 P. Moritz – L. Meyer
- 3 K. Frazer – J. Ebery

##### Swiss Teams

- 1 P. Hollands, C. Leach, K. Frazer, A. St Clair
- 2 J. Yang, M. Gurfinkiel, G. Ghali, T. Ranasinghe
- 3 J. Ebery, D. Morgan, R. Van Riel, D. Harley

#### Dendy Park Congress

##### Swiss Pairs

- 1 H. Snashall – M. Gurfinkiel
- 2 V. Zhang – D. Wei
- 3 B. A'Beckett – S. Ozenir

**Queen's Slipper Nationwide Pairs***Event 3 (February 3)*

2 P. Geschke – R. Geschke (VBA)

**UPCOMING CONGRESSES & EVENTS****Rye Beach Congress**

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March, 10 am: Swiss Pairs  
 Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> March, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue Rosebud Memorial Hall  
 994 Point Nepean Rd, Rosebud

Contact: Brian Morgan, 0439 845 753

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>**Berwick Congress**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Venue Solandra Community Hub  
 7-9 Solandra Blvd  
 Clyde North (Melway 134 J3)

Contact: Bob Westrip, 8786 7878

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>**Gardenvale Easter Congress**

Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> March, 10 am: Swiss Pairs  
 Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> April, 10 am: MP Swiss Pairs  
 Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Venue 20 Spinks St  
 Brighton

Contact: Jeff Fust, 9530 6622

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>**Ballarat Festival of Bridge**

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> April, 10 am: Swiss Pairs  
 Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> April, 1:30 pm: MP Pairs  
 Friday 13<sup>th</sup> April, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Venue 1001 Eyre St,  
 Ballarat

Contact: Richard Giles,  
 Email: [r.giles@aussiebb.com.au](mailto:r.giles@aussiebb.com.au)

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>**Whittlesea Congress**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> April, 10 am: MP Swiss Pairs

Venue Whittlesea Community Centre  
 57-61 Laurel St  
 Whittlesea (Melway 246 H9)

Contact: Lyndall Shaw, 0428 601 111

Enter: <http://whittlesea.bridgeaustralia.org>**NEWS FROM THE VBA COUNCIL****Congresses**

- The VBA has received a few complaints about standards (across a wide range of issues including venue, food, prizes, and directing) at several congresses over the last 6 months. Please remember that players go to congresses to enjoy themselves – and enjoyable congresses attract more entries.
- The Marketing Committee is working with a potential sponsor interested in providing a prize at all congresses. The committee will be contacting all congress conveners as details are finalised.

**Club support**

- There are now 10 ABF-accredited teachers in Victoria. See the full list at <http://vba.asn.au/accredited-bridge-teachers-in-victoria/>.
- The new website is operating well. We are keen to publish articles from around Victoria. Contact the webmaster Neil Ewart for the submission template.
- Reminder: the Affiliated Clubs Day is coming up on March 3.

**State**

- Some clubs, especially smaller ones, raised concerns about people dealing boards, even with dealing machines, and then playing those boards. We are investigating how we can manage the security issues while enabling everyone to participate.
- The Capitation fee for 2018 has been increased per CPI to \$11.

## MY FAVOURITE SUIT COMBINATION Bill Jacobs

How should this trump suit be played?

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| ♦ 954   |   |   |
| <table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 10px;">N</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 10px;">S</td> </tr> </table> | N | S |
| N   |   |   |
| S   |   |   |
| ♦ AQ10762   |   |   |

If you said, 'it depends', then you got this one right.

If you need to bring this suit in for all 6 tricks, then your best bet is to lead low from dummy and if East plays low, put in the queen. You will succeed if West has a doubleton without the king, or the singleton jack.

However if you can afford to lose one trick, but not two, then you should cash the ace first. If the opponents follow with all small cards, or West shows out, cross over to dummy to play a second round. This will pick up the suit for 5 tricks in all layouts where that is possible (and as a bonus, you score 6 tricks if West started with singleton king). It only fails if West started with KJ(x).

Since the answer is 'it depends', I will give you the entire play problem, which was from the final of the 2017 Victorian Open Pairs (matchpoint scoring, N/S vulnerable):

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| ♠ 10  |   |   |
| ♥ KQ6542  |   |   |
| ♦ 954   |   |   |
| ♣ Q109  |   |   |
| <table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 10px;">N</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 10px;">S</td> </tr> </table> | N | S |
| N   |   |   |
| S   |   |   |
| ♠ A   |   |   |
| ♥ AJ  |   |   |
| ♦ AQ10762   |   |   |
| ♣ AKJ7  |   |   |

The contract is 6♦ and the lead is the spade queen.

So what do you do?

If this were an event scored by IMPs (a teams event, or a Congress Swiss Pairs), it would be a no-brainer – in IMPs, you play

safe as a 20 point overtrick is worth almost nothing. So you should cash the ♦A first.

But this was matchpoint scoring, so the difference between a score of 1390 (13 tricks) and 1370 (12 tricks) could be significant. Nevertheless, the correct move was surely to play safe. The reason is that on a complicated hand like this, not everyone would be in 6♦. Indeed at the 20 tables this was played, the final contract was 6♦ only five times. Seven pairs played in game, four in 6♥, one in 7♦ and three tables saw a 6♠ sacrifice by E/W (down 1100). The gain in scoring an overtrick would have been miniscule compared to the cost of going down (which would then lose to the 10 tables where game or spades was played).

The full layout.

|           |   |         |   |        |
|-----------|---|---------|---|--------|
|           | ♠ 10  |         |   |        |
|           | ♥ KQ6542  |         |   |        |
|           | ♦ 954   |         |   |        |
|           | ♣ Q109  |         |   |        |
| ♠ QJ98432 | <table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 10px;">N</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 10px;">S</td> </tr> </table> | N       | S | ♠ K765 |
| N         |   |         |   |        |
| S         |   |         |   |        |
| ♥ 9       |   | ♥ 10873 |   |        |
| ♦ KJ      |   | ♦ 83    |   |        |
| ♣ 652     |   | ♣ 843   |   |        |
|           | ♠ A   |         |   |        |
|           | ♥ AJ  |         |   |        |
|           | ♦ AQ10762   |         |   |        |
|           | ♣ AKJ7  |         |   |        |

Of the five who declared 6♦, three went down for bottom scores. They must have gone all-out, finessing the ♦Q and then facing a total guess when they led a second diamond from dummy, finessing again.

They just didn't know enough about how to play a suit missing the king and the jack.

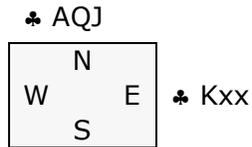
*To be continued ...*

A married couple are not speaking to each other after a horrible game and are driving home from a distant bridge tournament.

They pass by a field where there are many donkeys. The husband breaks the silence by asking the wife: "Relations of yours?" "Yes," she says, "In-laws".

**BLACK MAGIC**

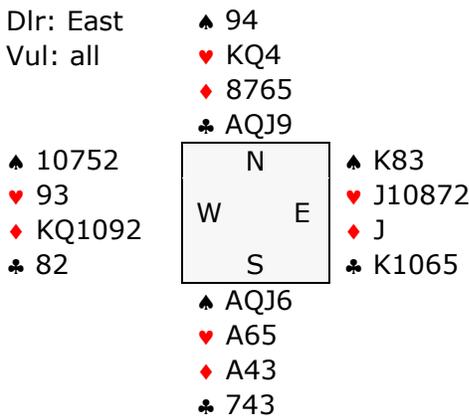
Have you seen this setup before?



Declarer, South, leads a club from hand and finesses with the queen.

It can be a good idea to let dummy win this trick, playing low smoothly. Declarer will think the ♣K is onside, and perhaps follow a losing line by returning to his hand to finesse again, and this time the finesse loses. Now declarer might not be able to take an alternative winning play.

Here's a deal where East followed this principle, *par excellence*.



| West | North | East     | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| Pass | 3NT   | Pass     | 1NT*  |
| Pass | 3NT   | All pass |       |

\* 15-17 HCP

West led the ♦K to South's 3NT. This won the trick, and declarer also let the continuation of the ♦Q hold, East discarding a heart. South then won the third round of diamonds, as East threw a small spade.

Declarer next played a club to the queen, finessing into the safe hand, and East followed our principle of letting that card win.

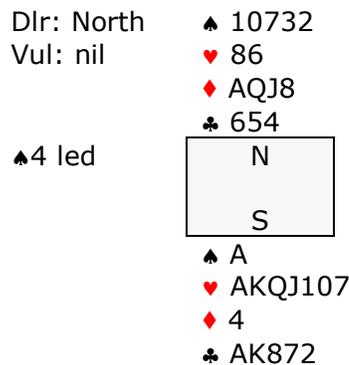
South returned to his hand with the ♥A, and repeated the club finesse: low club, low from West, jack from dummy. East found the magical play of letting that finesse win also, following with the ♣10!

South's eyes lit up. West clearly had started with ♣Kxxx in clubs, and the entire suit would produce 4 tricks – enough for the contract. So he used his final entry to hand by playing a spade to his ace, not risking a spade finesse into the danger hand.

When he played a third club, and West discarded, the scales fell from South's eyes, but it was too late to do anything about it. He won the ♣A, took his two remaining heart winners and forlornly played a spade, but East had the setting tricks with the ♠K, the ♣K and a winning heart.



**THE TWELFTH TRICK**



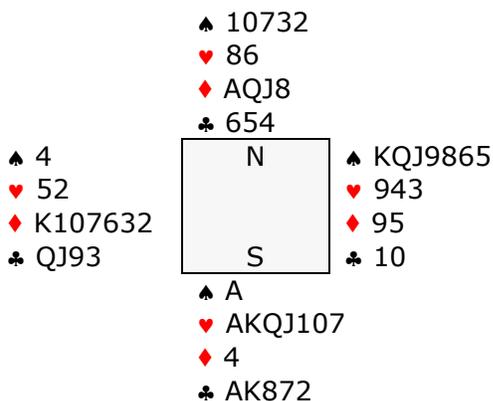
| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | Pass  | 3♠   | 6♥    |
| Pass | Pass  | Pass |       |

The ♠4 is led to your wham-bam slam. You start by drawing trumps. West discards a low diamond on the third round.

That's ominous. East has presumably 7 spades and 3 hearts. The chances of him being very short in clubs are high. So how do you play it?

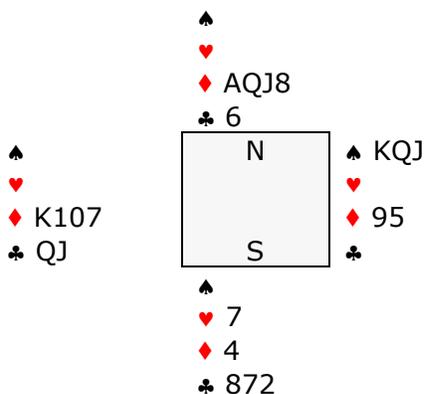
Solution over page.

**THE TWELFTH TRICK**



Begin by playing two more rounds of trumps ("just for lurkers"), leaving just one more trump in your hand. Your hand is a mystery to the defenders – perhaps someone will unwisely discard a club.

Next cash the club ace and king. If all follow, meaning clubs divided 3-2, then give up a club and claim your contract. But if as you suspected, West started with 4 clubs, the position is now:



As long as West has the ♦K, you are home and dry. Play your last trump. West can throw a club, as you no longer have the entry to your hand to set up a club. Discard a diamond from dummy, and take the diamond finesse, which you need to work.

Finally play a club from dummy, to endplay West into giving you another diamond finesse.

The most important card on this deal is dummy's ♣6. If at any point on the run of the hearts, you discard a club from dummy, the contract is doomed, as you will have lost your end-playing card.

**TIP OF THE MONTH**

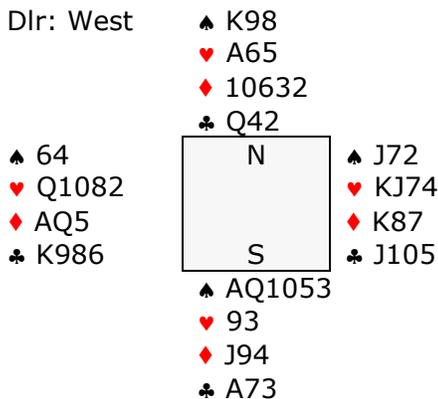


You are in 4<sup>th</sup> seat, and there are three passes to you. Should you open 1♠, or pass the hand out?

Here's a calculation to guide you: it's called the *Pearson Count*. Add your HCP to your number of *spades*. If it comes to at least 15, then go ahead and open (with your normal opening bid, which might not be 1♠).

The theory is that whichever side has the spades is likely to be able to buy the contract cheaply, as they can outbid the opponents without upping the level. Remember that this is almost certainly a low partscore hand, as everyone has around 9-11 HCP.

In this example you have 11 HCP and 5 spades. 11+5 = 16, so go ahead and open 1♠.



| West  | North | East | South |
|-------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass  | Pass  | Pass | 1♠    |
| D'ble | 2♠    | ?    |       |

West can double your 1♠ for takeout, but when your partner raises to 2♠, East has no good answer. He can either pass and let you make 2♠, or bid 3♥ and go down. Either way, your side gets a plus score, which is better than passing the hand out.

As an exercise, swap the major suits in all four hands. Now when the three passes come around to you, and you hold 2 spades and 5 hearts, your Pearson Count is only 13, so you pass. Check out what happens if you open 1♥.