

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

October 2018

Editor: Bill Jacobs

THE SOAPBOX Ben Thompson



I'm writing this month from Orlando, Florida where I'm playing in the world championships. Many aspects of world championships are extremely impressive. Every table has screens and a full set of boards. There are directors, caddies, and scorers everywhere. There is something like a 2 meter gap in all directions around every table.

On the other hand, there are some gaps that would surprise any regular congress player in Victoria. For example, we're used to pre-printed scorebooks including match timing. At nationals, we're used to regulations that address points of obvious interest (such as how many teams/pairs will contest the event finals). Neither feature at world championships.

I've been taking the opportunity to talk with players and administrators from around the world about how bridge is organised, promoted, taught and played where they come from. Many things are unsurprisingly the same; others are surprisingly different. For example, sessions at the South American championships start ... when the players turn up! On the other hand, apparently everyone is very relaxed about "minor" infractions so an insufficient bid might get waved off with "try again".

The message for me is that in Victoria and in Australia we run exceptionally good tournaments by world standards. We can always improve and we should always try, but we should also be proud of how well we do.

CRAZY JACKS Bill Jacobs

Speaking of the world championships, there's lots of good bridge viewing to be had, despite the unsociable time of day.

The round-of-16 clash between Nickell, one of the pre-tournament favourites, and Mahaffey resulted in an exact tie after 56 boards. A 2-board playoff was required (which took about 40 minutes to play). The first board showcased just what a tricky and beautiful game bridge is.

Try it as a defensive problem.

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	2NT*
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦**
Pass	3NT	All pass	

* 20-21, balanced

** no 4-card major

Dlr: North	♠ Q1094										
Vul: nil	♥ A1095										
	♦ 874										
	♣ 42										
♠ 7	<table border="1"><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		♠ 63
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♥ K762									
		♦ J102									
		♣ QJ87									

At both tables, the first trick was ♠7, ♠4, ♠3 and declarer won ♠A.

At trick 2, both declarers played ♥J, ♥3, ♥5 and East won ♥K.

The fate of the match is now in your hands. Both East's took a long, long time to play their next card. What would you have done? The full deal and outcome is on page 8.

FOR STARTERS

In a matchpoint duplicate, you hold:

- ♠ J85
- ♥ J10974
- ♦ A9
- ♣ K76

Everyone is vulnerable and LHO is dealer:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
2♥	D'ble	Pass	?

West's 2♥ is a weak two: approximately 6-10 points, and a 6-card suit. Partner's double is for takeout.

Should you bid or pass, and if you do bid, what would you choose?

When deciding whether to make a penalty pass of a takeout double, there should be one question going through your mind:

"Do I have a nasty surprise for declarer?"

If the answer is "Yes!", then that points towards the pass. On this deal, your hearts, ♥J10974, will surprise declarer, both in length and in strength. If he started with, say, ♥AKQxxx, he would have been hoping to take 6 heart tricks, but in fact, can only take four.

You pass out 2♥ doubled, partner leads ♠A, and you see:

	♠ 97642					
	♥ A					
	♦ Q653					
	♣ Q54					
♠ A	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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	♠ J85	
N						
W E						
S						
		♥ J10974				
		♦ A9				
		♣ K76				

The ♠A wins, but when partner continues with the ♠K, declarer ruffs. Next comes ♦2 to the ♦7, ♦Q and your ♦A.

What is your next card?

Keep your fingers away from that third spade! It might be a safe return, but it allows declarer to win tricks with the small trumps that should be being lost to your middle trumps. Return a trump and let declarer do his own work from there. A diamond return is just as good.

The full deal:

	♠ 97642					
	♥ A					
	♦ Q653					
	♣ Q54					
♠ AKQ10	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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	♠ J85	
N						
W E						
S						
♥ 3		♥ J10974				
♦ J1074		♦ A9				
♣ AJ83		♣ K76				
	♠ 3					
	♥ KQ8652					
	♦ K82					
	♣ 1092					

A trump or diamond return will limit declarer to his three top trumps, a diamond and two ruffs, for down two.

However if you give declarer a second spade ruff, he can cash ♦K, cross to ♥A and play a fourth spade off dummy, and eventually, the ♥8 will turn into a trick.

Points to remember:

Suppose your hand had been:

- ♠ Jxx ♥ AK432 ♦ xx ♣ xxx

and the auction had started the same way: 2♥ on your left, double by partner.

You have the same points and distribution as your actual hand, but now there are no nasty surprises for declarer. The ♥AK432 is only worth two tricks, and the weak-two opener was already budgeting to potentially lose tricks to the ace and king. Essentially you can contribute just two tricks to the defence, and require partner to have four tricks of his own in order to defeat the contract.

It would be very dangerous to pass 2♥ doubled with that hand. It would be far safer to respond 2NT, or even 2♠.

**VICTORIAN CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS
REFLECTIONS FROM GEELONG BC
Michael Stokie**

Geelong Bridge Club sent a full contingent of six pairs to the recent Champion of Champions match-point event at the VBA. A flying start on Board 1 helped settle my initial nerves:

Dir: North	♠ 102		
Vul: nil	♥ QJ7652		
	♦ K6		
	♣ 872		
♠ A98765	N	♠ QJ43	
♥ K1093	W E	♥ 4	
♦ 10	S	♦ Q53	
♠ 109		♣ AJ543	
	♠ K		
	♥ A8		
	♦ AJ98742		
	♣ KQ6		

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♦
2♠	Pass	4♠	D'ble
Pass	Pass	Pass	

I got the chance to bid a weak 2♠ and felt uneasy when my already-passed partner, an avid devotee of the Law of Total Trumps, raised to game which was promptly doubled.

The ♥Q lead was ducked by South to my ♥K and with a favourable clubs split, the contract rolled home with 11 tricks and a score of +690, an equal top with the eventual winners Prithiraj De Zoysa and Peter Hollands. Our good fortune dissipated as the event progressed and we were pleased to finish in 5th place.

The VBA's organisation, conduct of the event and hospitality were excellent but it was disappointing that only 20 pairs participated. Without a significantly larger field, it is hard to justify the current two-day format and the travel and accommodation demands that this places on country participants. It was notable that, apart from changes of order, the top five pairs remained the same from day 1 to day 2, suggesting that a one day event is sufficient for a robust result.

TEST YOUR BIDDING

Competing when they have a fit

all vulnerable

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

There is a saying that you shouldn't let your opponents play at the 2-level with a fit.

This concept has merit: if they have a fit but are bidding only to the 2-level, then your side must have some strength (since the opponents haven't tried for game), and one hopes, a fit of your own.

Still, it's sometimes easier said than done to dislodge your opponents from the comfort of the 2-level.

In this auction, you don't know for certain if your opponents are staying at the 2-level, but they might.

To dislodge them, you will have to rebid your suit or bid a new suit, which might be awkward. A takeout double (showing shortage in spades in this auction, and at least 3 cards in the other three suits) is a better way to compete. As for a 2NT bid, my advice is: don't do it, even with a strong hand. Partner probably has nothing.

Finally, remember that partner is still there for you, and he presumably also knows the saying about not letting them play at the 2-level.

OK, over to you ...

- (a) ♠ 4 ♥ Q92 ♦ AQ54 ♣ AJ1062
- (b) ♠ 104 ♥ Q92 ♦ AQ5 ♣ AJ1062
- (c) ♠ 104 ♥ AQ92 ♦ A5 ♣ AJ1062
- (d) ♠ AJ4 ♥ Q92 ♦ AQ5 ♣ AQ62
- (e) ♠ K4 ♥ A4 ♦ Q5 ♣ AKQ10654
- (f) ♠ 104 ♥ 2 ♦ AKJ4 ♣ AQ8642

Solutions over page.

TEST YOUR BIDDING - SOLUTIONS

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♠	Pass	2♠	1♣ ?

(a) ♠ 4 ♥ Q92 ♦ AQ54 ♣ AJ1062

D'ble. An example of where the 'saying' has merit. You would like to dislodge the opponents from 2♠, and a takeout double is the way to do it. Success is not guaranteed (give partner a weak 4432 hand for example: no fit and not enough power to beat 2♠), but double is a worthwhile proposition).

(b) ♠ 104 ♥ Q92 ♦ AQ5 ♣ AJ1062

Pass. A double might work, but this hand is too bland. Remember: partner is still there.

(c) ♠ 104 ♥ AQ92 ♦ A5 ♣ AJ1062

D'ble. Most imperfect, but your hand is too good to meekly give up. Double gives you the most possibilities to land on your feet. If partner responds 3♦ either pass and pray, or bid 3♥ and pray.

(d) ♠ AJ4 ♥ Q92 ♦ AQ5 ♣ AQ62

Pass. 19 HCP but partner probably has nothing. Easily your best chance of a plus score is to defeat 2♠. If you bid 2NT here, partner will sulkily pass. How, pray tell, will you get anywhere close to 8 tricks? 3 tricks I can see, but the other 5?

(e) ♠ K4 ♥ A4 ♦ Q5 ♣ AKQ10654

3NT. I see 7 club tricks, a spade (when they lead one) and the ♥A. +600 thank you, next board. Yes, yes, I can see how it could go horribly wrong, but this is how you win.

(f) ♠ 104 ♥ 2 ♦ AKJ4 ♣ AQ8642

2NT. You should probably skip this paragraph, but this setup is where the 2NT bid (a most *Unusual 2NT*) makes sense. It shows long clubs and secondary length in a higher suit. If you think about it, it makes perfect sense, but it most assuredly is not for children.

CONGRESS RESULTS

Northern Territory Gold Festival

Congratulations to Christopher Leach, Peter Hollands, Andy Hegedus and Justin Mill who won the teams event at the Festival.



(l-r) Justin, Peter, Andy, Christopher

Phillip Island Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 L. Henbest – J. Rennie
- 2 S. Klofa – A. Czapnik
- 3 K. Frazer – J. Ebery

Swiss Teams

- 1 S. Murray-White, G. Whiting, P. Schroor, D. Sheather
- 2 J. Ebery, J. Coutts, D. Nie, M. Zhang
- 3 S. Klofa, A. Czapnik, R. Gallus, S. Weisz

Ballarat Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 D. Harley – N. Ewart
- 2 T. Ranasinghe, G. McRobert
- 3 S. Sharp – D. Sharp

Swiss Teams

- 1 J. Ebery, J. Thompson, S. Hinge, M. Zhang
- 2 C. Ding, D. Nie, G. Ghali, V. Zhang
- 3 S. Klofa, M. Gurfinkiel, D. Harley, A. St Clair

Mornington Peninsula Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 L. Robinson – C. Fernando
- 2 C. Shugg, W. Sieredzinski
- 3 S. Klofa – A. Czapnik

Donald Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 D. Poulton – N. Walsh
- 2 F. Vearing – M. Copland
- 3 G. Nicholson – J. Barbour

Queen's Slipper Nationwide Pairs*Event 17 (September 1)*

- 1 J. Kuiper – D. Anglim (Phillip Island)
- 3 A. Race – C. Parkin (Yarra Valley)

Bad Behaviour at Congresses

We've heard about a few incidents regarding poor behaviour at congresses recently where the player(s) on the receiving end didn't know what to do.

The Victorian State and Congress Disciplinary & Ethics committee is designed to investigate these sorts of problems – all you have to do is send an email explaining your complaint to secretary@vba.asn.au within 7 days of the incident and the committee will take it from there.

UPCOMING CONGRESSES & EVENTS**Albury Congress**

Saturday 6th October, 11 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 7th October, 9:30 am: Swiss Teams

Venue Commercial Club
 Deane Street, Albury

Contact: Richard Harman, 0413 010 478

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Warrnambool Congress

Saturday 13th October, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 14th October, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue Brother Fox Cafeteria
 Deakin University Campus
 Warrnambool East

Contact: Jan Cooke, 0438 724 609

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Bairnsdale Congress

Saturday 20th October, 12 pm: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 21st October, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue St Mary's Parish Centre
 Bairnsdale

Contact: Phillip Goode, 0417 738 406,

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Sunbury Congress

Sunday 28th October, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Venue Sunbury Recreation Reserve
 Riddells Rd, Sunbury

Contact: Michael Francis, 0400 737 005

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Waverley Congress

Friday 2nd November, 10 am: Graded Pairs
 Saturday 3rd November, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 4th November, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue Waverley Bridge Club
 21a Electra Ave
 Ashwood

Contact: Mary Elson, 9807 6502

Enter: <http://waverleybridgeclub.com.au>

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS**State**

Sue Beckman	Mornington
Teck Chan	Kooyong
Brian Hassett	MCC
Bob House	RACV
Jenny Tozer	Bayside
Kylie Wagner	Benalla

***State**

Steve Briggs	Deniliquin
Rachel Judelman	Dendy Park
David Owen	Waverley
Shayne Wurf	RACV

Life

Maxine Porter	VBA
Ian Williams	Moonee Valley

Silver Life

John Adams	VBA
------------	-----

ETHICS FOR DECLARER

Issues of ethics are infrequent when you are declarer, as your partner the dummy is out of the game. But they do exist:

Playing too fast

It is unethical to win the first trick in your hand in a flash and fire out your singleton, with king-jack in dummy. Law 73 tells you to, as far as possible, maintain an even tempo, and also not to attempt to mislead your opponent by the haste of your play. You should use an even deliberate tempo in making your singleton play.

Playing too slow (Rip van Winkle Coup)

This is where you take so long to play a card as declarer that the defenders fall asleep, forget the details of the deal, and hand you the contract.

By all means think about your declarer play, but there are limits.

Comments and body language

This is one that I am sometimes guilty of, but I'm working on it. Partner puts down dummy and you see that you are in the wrong contract. All of the following actions are ethically suspect:

- disgusted shake of the head
- expletives undeleted
- comment on partner's bidding ("where's the hand you had during the bidding?")
- comment on your own bidding ("sorry, pard") – yes, rare I know
- slapping your cards down during the early tricks
- super-fast semi-random play

These actions are not done with an intent to gain advantage, rather they are normal human reactions to the impending catastrophe. However, they can have the side effect of switching defenders off ... it gives the impression that they have a good board however they defend. But on occasions, the bad contract makes because the defenders get careless. That will be an ethically corrupt result, and there is little the defenders can do to get redress.

BLACK MAGIC Bill Jacobs

The following deal was played in a team's match.

♠ 87	N	♠ J10932
♥ 1082	W E	♥ Q6543
♦ AK	S	♦ 6
♣ K87532		♣ J9
	♠ AQ64	
	♥ AKJ	
	♦ 8762	
	♣ Q4	

West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	All pass	1NT

At one table, West led the ♣5, to the ♣6, ♣9 and ♣Q. Declarer played a diamond. West won, and continued clubs, East winning the trick with the jack.

East had no more clubs to play, so declarer easily made 10 tricks, after playing another diamond. It all seemed very normal.

At the other table, the bidding and opening lead were the same, but here declarer went two down.

How?

Again the first trick went ♣5, ♣6, ♣9, ♣Q. And the second trick was also identical, winning a diamond honour.

But then West performed a sleight-of-hand. In with the diamond, he played a remarkable club king! This of course was conceding three tricks in the club suit, as partner's ♣J would fall, making dummy's ♣10 a third stopper.

But declarer didn't know that. He thought West had started with ♣KJxxx, in which case it was essential to hold up the ace, in case East had the remaining diamond honour. And West remained on lead to play the killing third round.

TIP OF THE MONTH

If you have ever played rubber bridge, you will know there is the concept of 'honours'. An honour in a suit is defined as any of the ace, king, queen, jack or ten. If you play in a suit contract, and you have four of the five trump honours, you can claim '100 honours': an automatic bonus of 100 points. If you have all five, you can claim '150 honours'!

The honours bonus is not part of duplicate bridge, but there is certainly a 'strength bonus' when you have lots of them. Here is a useful tip for utilizing that bonus:

If you have at least *four* of the five honours in a suit, bid it as if it is *one card longer*.

Such suits are playable as trumps even if partner is very short in that suit. So it is worth lying about your length in the suit in order to increase your chances of making that suit trumps.

Let's look at some examples of this.

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	?

♠ xxxx ♥ AQJ10x ♦ Jxx ♣ x

Repeat the hearts with a 2♥ rebid. In theory, this is a bad idea. Bidding and then rebidding a suit in most situations should promise at least 6 cards. For example, when partner rebid 2♣, he was showing 6 clubs (and denies spades). So you are confident that you have at least a 7-card club fit. There are no such guarantees in hearts: partner could easily have a singleton, or even a void.

Nevertheless, 2♥ should play well, even in a 6-card fit. You will probably be able to draw trumps losing just one trick in the suit. That's four tricks, and partner's opening bid may provide four more.

But take away one of those honours, even the ten, and the 6-card heart fit becomes rather unattractive. Play in the contract you know is acceptable: 2♣.

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	?

♠ KQJ10xx ♥ xx ♦ xx ♣ AQx

Rebid 4♠. Here you are bidding the 6-card suit like a 7-card suit. You couldn't give a toss what partner's spades are: this suit will work as trumps. Even a void with partner won't discomfort you.

But replace any of those honour cards with a small card, and transfer any missing points to another suit, and you must bid it differently. For example, with:

♠ KJ10xxx ♥ Qx ♦ xx ♣ AQx

spades might not be the best spot. In that scenario, you would try 4th suit forcing (2♥ in this auction) to have a more investigative auction. If partner bids 2NT, or 3♣ or 3♦, now you can rebid the spades, to show a long suit, but not insisting on spades as the final destination.

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		1♥	?

♠ AKJ10 ♥ Axx ♦ xxxx ♣ xx

OK, this one is a bit controversial, because it's hammered into us from the cradle that an overcall shows a 5-card suit. You can make your own judgment, but there are several ways a 1♠ overcall can work here (allowing effective competition, helping partner with an opening lead). And yes, there are also ways where it could end in tears.

If you look at all these examples, you will see that the ten, when working in partnership with higher honours, is a valuable resource.

Andrew Mill and David Astle

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ho0zMHyQn8> is where you can listen to this enjoyable radio interview. The 'one piece of advice' that Andrew offers towards the end is well worth waiting for.

CRAZY JACKS The Outcome

This was the full deal in the first tie-break hand in the World Open Teams Championship Round of 16.

	♠ Q1094										
	♥ A1095										
	♦ 874										
	♣ 42										
♠ 8752	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	N			W	E			S		♠ 63
N											
W	E										
	S										
♥ 83		♥ K762									
♦ Q63		♦ J102									
♣ A1053		♣ QJ87									
	♠ AKJ										
	♥ QJ4										
	♦ AK95										
	♣ K96										

Let's work through it, as no doubt the two Easts did. Partner has led a high spade, so has nothing there – declarer has lots of tricks coming to him in the majors.

So we must play a minor, but which one? We will probably need the next four tricks to defeat the contract.

For diamonds to work, partner will need ♦AKxx or ♦AQxx. For clubs to work, partner will need ♣AKxx or ♣A10xx. Either of these seems equally likely, so perhaps it's a toss of the coin.

Did partner have an opportunity to signal? Maybe ... he did play the ♥3 on declarer's lead of a heart: his lowest heart. This perhaps, at the very highest of levels, might be a suit preference signal for the lower suit, clubs in this case. And after all, we *are* playing at the very highest of levels.

So, in the comfort of my room ten thousand miles away, I would say that the winning ♣Q switch is indicated, which will defeat the contract and get your team into the quarter-finals of the world championship.

Gary Cohler, East for Mahaffey, went the other way switching the ♦J. Declarer won gratefully, went to dummy and ran a second round of diamonds to West (protecting the club king), resulting in an effortless overtrick.

Bobby Levin, East for Nickell, did even worse, if that is possible. He switched weirdly to a crazy jack of *clubs*. Declarer covered with the ♣K, and West after some thought, let that card win! West placed declarer with ♣KQx, and hoped partner might have the ♥Q as a second entry – declarer's lead of the ♥J, rather than the ♥Q, was anything but crazy.

So declarer now had 10 tricks, and then when both West and East discarded a diamond, it turned into 11.

This was an epic fail for both Easts, but one had to emerge victorious. The Nickell team gained two overtrick imps on the second hand, giving them a 1-imp victory in the tie-breaker.

Department of Dubious Assertions

Norman McCance writes in the Australasian, 3rd February, 1934:

As far as can be foreseen, contract bridge has reached perfection and is likely to remain standardised in its present form. It appears to have reached that perfection with surprisingly few conventions.

More than 90% of the opening bids are in 'one' in a suit and a whole session of keen play may pass without a single demand or forcing takeout, or overcall in an opponent's suit, which constitute three of the so-called 'American conventions' of the approach-forcing system. There are only one or two others, including the contentious slam invitation.

Australian players do not appear to find it taxing their mental powers to master these conventions in a few lessons and to apply them to the greater enjoyment of the game which in spite of overseas criticism is so far from being 'killed' by these simple conventions that its popularity increases in Australia every day.

... from Cathy Chua's 'History of Australian Bridge'