

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

November 2018

Editor: Bill Jacobs

THE SOAPBOX Ben Thompson



The Australian National Championships are coming back to Victoria in July next year after an 8-year trek around the other states and territories. It includes Australia's oldest national event – the Interstate Teams Championship.

I always think the ANC fortnight is a great opportunity for the host state to show itself off to bridge players from all around Australia, and for all local clubs and players to get involved in a real festival of bridge. There are events for everyone – from events popular with players who mostly play club duplicates, through to the championship events where you'll find international representatives battling away.

We're very fortunate that Belinda Lindsay is our convener. But despite her boundless energy and enthusiasm, she can't do everything! I know she is looking for volunteers to help in a variety of areas in organising and running this unique and prestigious festival. We'll be holding it at the Bayview Eden; the same venue as we use for the VCC.

If you would like to volunteer, whether a little or a lot, please contact Belinda (belinda_lindsay@inet.net.au).

NEWS FROM THE COUNCIL

Victorian Bridge Association AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the VBA will be held in the VBA clubrooms on Monday November 19th commencing at 6.00 pm. Notices have been sent to all VBA members and a copy of the audited VBA financial accounts are available on the VBA website.

ANC 2019

The 2019 Australian National Championships will be held in Melbourne from July 13 to 25 at the Bayview Eden Hotel, Queens Road Melbourne. As mentioned in The Soapbox, the VBA has appointed Belinda Lindsay as Tournament Organiser for the event.



Sydney Spring Nationals

Hearty congratulations to Simon Hinge and Stephen Lester, who with one-time Victorian Ella Pattison and Nye Griffiths, took out the prestigious Spring Nationals Open Teams, comfortably defeating the number 1 seeds in the final.



Simon, Stephen, Ella, Nye

FOR STARTERS

A change of pace this month: let's do a quiz. It's important to know when partner's bid is forcing – meaning you have to make a bid to keep the auction open – and when it isn't.

There's nothing worse than having a strong hand, making a bid which you consider forcing, and seeing *pass pass pass*.

A basic principle, which is taught widely in this part of the world, is that if you change to a new suit in an auction, then that is forcing. As the simplest possible example, if you open 1♦ and partner responds 1♥, then that bid is unconditionally forcing. Partner could have anything, including 20 points, and want to conduct a bidding conversation with you to the best contract, whether it be a partscore, a game, a small slam or a grand slam.

The converse principle also applies: bidding an 'old' suit – a suit that has previously been bid by either partner – is not forcing.

Unfortunately, there is the odd exception to these principles, which is what we're about to explore.

Natural notrump bids are never forcing, although use of the word 'never' in relation to bridge is rather dangerous.

Now is the time to test yourself. In each of the following auctions, is partner's last bid forcing or non-forcing?

1.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		1♣	Pass	1♥
	Pass	1♠		
2.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
			1♦	1♠
	Pass	2♣		
3.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		2♣	Pass	2♦
	Pass	2♥		

4.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	Pass	1♣		
5.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		1♠	Pass	1NT
	Pass	2♦		
6.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		Pass	Pass	1♠
	Pass	2♦		
7.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
				3♣
	Pass	3♥		
8.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
				1♦
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
	Pass	3♣		
9.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		1♦	1♠	D'ble
	Pass	2♥		
10.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
				1♦
	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦
	Pass	3♠		

Answers.

1.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		1♣	Pass	1♥
	Pass	1♠		

Forcing. The classic 'new suit is forcing' situation. Old-fashioned players would consider this non-forcing, but the problem is that if they hold a very strong hand (say 18 or 19 points) they will have to bid 2♠ to force. This crowds the auction at the very time you need plenty of room to explore the hand.

Of course, once every seven or eight years, 1♠ will be your last making contract. Missing out on that possibility is a small price to pay for being able to unravel stronger hands.

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

Forcing. New suits from partner of the overcaller are best played as forcing. Again you can have a meaningful auction without the fear of being dropped in the middle of it.

3.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		2♣	Pass	2♦
	Pass	2♥		

Forcing. New suit, right? I've seen this auction disastrously passed because the poor old 2♦ bidder has absolutely nothing. But this auction is not only forcing, it's best to play it as *game-forcing*. A 2♣ opening bid is a serious hand.

4.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	Pass	1♣		

Non-forcing. My legal department says this is not a 'change of suit'. Once again, there is a school of thought that says 1♣ should never be passed. This misconception is born out of the short club and the fear of playing a 2-2 fit or the like. But if you respond with nothing, say 2 or 3 points, the auction will likely get out of hand.

I've only got a limited time remaining to debunk bad concepts!

5.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		1♠	Pass	1NT
	Pass	2♦		

Non-forcing. Once again, the fine print says this is not a change of suit, because you're not bidding from a suit - you're bidding from notrumps. It's only when you go from a suit to a new suit that the bid is forcing.

6.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		Pass	Pass	1♠
	Pass	2♦		

Non-forcing. It's that little initial pass that makes this bid non-forcing. Easy to overlook, but the 2♦ bidder has limited their strength through their initial pass, and so their

subsequent bids cannot be regarded as forcing.

7.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
				3♣
	Pass	3♥		

Forcing. This one is included because usually the preempter is rather unhappy about this development, having nothing but clubs, and usually not heart support. In this auction, you're allowed to support hearts with just a doubleton.

8.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
				1♦
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
	Pass	3♣		

Forcing. Here is an exception to the rule that bidding suits already bid in the auction is non-forcing. You have responded at the 2-level (showing 10+ HCP) and partner has *reversed* (a bid of a new suit higher than 2 of their first-bid suit): this shows 16+ HCP. So your side has 26+ HCP, the auction is game-forcing and both of you should know it.

That makes 3♣ a forcing bid, showing extra length in clubs. So would other bids you could have made, such as 2NT, 3♦ or 3♠.

9.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		1♦	1♠	D'ble
	Pass	2♥		

Non-forcing. But it's a new suit, you cry. It really isn't. Your negative double showed hearts: indeed it acted as a surrogate 1♥ response. 2♥ merely supports the hearts you have already promised.

10.	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
				1♦
	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦
	Pass	3♠		

Non-forcing. Despite it being a jump bid, it's a bid of a suit already bid, and is therefore non-forcing. In this case it shows about 10-12 points and at least 6 spades. If partner has even more strength, with long spades, he will either have to bid 4♠, or choose a new-

suit bid (2♥ or 3♣) which would be forcing.

In summary. The principle of 'change of suit is forcing' stood up well in this quiz. The only exceptions were problems 6 and 8. In both these auctions, information from the earlier auction was used to override the rule.

CONGRESS RESULTS

Albury Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 S. McConnell – R. Brown
- 2 S. Klofa – A. Czapnik
- 3 T. Coyle – L. Nicholson

Swiss Teams

- 1 S. Klofa, A. Czapnik, D. Harley, N. Ewart
- 2 J. Carberry, K. Hart, I. Lisle, V. Lisle
- 3 C. Arul, R. Ellery, D. Sharman, I. Hamilton

Warrnambool Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 G. Ridgway – A. Robbins
- 2 F. Vearing – C. Arul
- 3 A. Park – S. Park

Swiss Teams

- 1 D. Newlands, D. Newland, G. Ridgway, A. Robbins
- 2 P. Frost, S. Irwin, J. Coventry, M. Glover
- 3 G. Nicholson, J. Barbour, F. Vearing, C. Arul

Bairnsdale Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 C. Manley – L. Seychell
- 2 L. Robinson – C. Fernando
- 3 K. French – L. Norden

Swiss Teams

- 1 P. Kahler, J. Collins, A. Farthing, J. Kahler
- 2 J. Rossiter-Nuttall, B. Rossiter-Nuttall, J. Farmer, S. Livingston
- 3 L. Grant, G. McCombie, S. Garrett, H. York

Sunbury Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 C. Senior – S. Lester
- 2 C. Ding – D. Nie
- 3 A. Hegedus – J. Mill

Queen's Slipper Nationwide Pairs

Event 19 (October 6)

- 1 J. Stewart – N. Holmes (Ballarat)
- 3 M. Baker – L. Carroll (Echuca)

Event 20 (October 21)

- 2 B. Romeijn – J. Day (Berwick)

UPCOMING CONGRESSES & EVENTS

South Gippsland Congress

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

Venue Dakers Centre
 23 Smith St, Leongatha

Contact: Neville Chapman, 0427 392 979

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Kooyong Congress

Saturday 18th November, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Venue Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club
 489 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn

Contact: Maria Campbell, 0411 133 133

Enter: <http://www.bridgewebs.com/kltcbridge/>

Tivoli Congress

Saturday 24th November, 10 am: Butler Pairs
 Sunday 25th November, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Venue Waverley Bridge Club
 21a Electra Ave
 Ashwood

Contact: Leeron Branicki, 0412 884 446

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Dendy Park Congress

Sunday 2nd December, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Venue Brighton Bowling Park
 Breen Drive, Brighton

Contact: Boris Tencer, 0414 353 996.

Enter: <http://www.dpbridge.com/entry.php>

VBA Summer Congress

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

Venue VBA
 131 Poath Rd, Murrumbena

Contact: Andrew MacReady-Bryan,
 0417 543 076

Enter: <http://vba.asn.au/entries/enter-an-event/>

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

State

Alan Godfrey	MCC
Kerry Hosking	Frankston
Jo Leslie	Traralgon
Marie Sands	South Gippsland
Judith Varlamos	Kooyong

*State

Alan Farrington	Waverley
Florence Gibbons	Geelong
David Hudson	Sale

National

John Campbell	Ballarat
Susan Lipton	Kings & Queens

*National

Else Bailey	Sale
Graham Davies	Waverley

**National

Honor Middleton	Dromana
Kumara Nainanayake	Waverley

Life

Sarah Livingston	Dromana
Jan Rothlisberger	Waverley
Ming Zhang	VBA

Bronze Life

Melroy Decouto	Waverley
----------------	----------

Silver Life

Barbara a'Beckett	Dendy Park
Wendy Fletcher	Peninsula
Moira Hecker	Traralgon
Dorothy Read	Geelong

Gold Life

Janet Hill	Philip Island
Helen McKnight	Ballarat

The best bridge players are smart enough to understand the game, but dumb enough to think it's important.
... Zeke Jabbour

IF YOU THOUGHT YOU'D SEEN IT ALL

This deal occurred some years ago in the Grand National Open Teams.

Dlr: South	♠ 76543									
Vul: N/S	♥ 8									
	♦ KQ10832									
	♣ 6									
♠ 9	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <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								
♥ J4	♠ K10									
♦ 954	♥ K7									
♣ AKJ10753	♦ AJ76									
	♣ Q9842									
	♠ AQJ82									
	♥ AQ1096532									
	♦ -									
	♣ -									

One North-South achieved a spectacular result to go with the spectacular layout. They played 7♠ redoubled, making for +2940. Sadly, there is no postcode to go with that score.

At the other table, N/S declared 6♥ which happened to make when West led his singleton spade - a good score. But it was not good enough!

Here's a question for you. What is the par contract on the deal - the contract that will be reached if both sides can see all the hands?

Solution on page 8.

About the Blackwood convention ...

The most dangerous of the lot! Blackwood is much too simple and too addictive. Anyone can get hold of it and swallow an overdose. It's responsible for more fatalities than any other drug on the convention card.

... Victor Mollo's Hideous Hog

Of course there is no such thing as patenting a bid and collecting a royalty on it, but if Blackwood had a nickel for every time his bid was properly used, he'd be a wealthy man; if he had a nickel for every time it was *misused*, he'd be a multi-millionaire.

... Richard Frey

TIP OF THE MONTH

On Aggression

Bridge is war. You have to go into battle, take risks and hope for victory, realising you might die in the attempt.

It's a doubtful metaphor, but winning players, particularly in matchpoint duplicates, take calculated risks.

Here are two examples from a recent duplicate.

♠ 843 ♥ Q ♦ AK873 ♣ AQJ4

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

Partner has made a negative double, showing length in both majors. What's your choice (both sides vulnerable)?

North took a calculated risk in passing, converting the negative double into penalties. He could see a couple of diamonds, at least two clubs, and partner should help somewhere.

In fact there were zero diamond tricks to be had, as this was the layout:

Dir: West
Vul: all

♠ 843
♥ Q
♦ AK873
♣ AQJ4

♠ A52	N	♠ J97
♥ J32	W	♥ A1096
♦ Q10542	E	♦ -
♣ 85	S	♣ K109632

♠ KQ106
♥ K8754
♦ J96
♣ 7

The diamonds didn't yield anything, but there were plenty of tricks elsewhere. Declarer did well to go just one down, but -200 was a bottom for E/W, and a top for the N/S.

Sometimes it's worth speculating. North could have bid 2NT (for an above average score) or 2♦ (for a below average score), but pass was best.

♠ KQ9 ♥ J4 ♦ 1076 ♣ J9875

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

This time no one is vulnerable. Partner opens a 15-17 HCP 1NT, you correctly pass it, and LHO balances with 2♥, passed back to you. Your call.

Don't pass! You have a majority of the points, and cannot afford to let the opponents steal the contract when they are not vulnerable.

The best bid is double. The best bid is often double. It's for takeout, and provides many possibilities, including a final contract of 2♥ doubled.

Dir: East
Vul: none

♠ J75
♥ 109862
♦ AKJ8
♣ 3

♠ KQ9	N	♠ A82
♥ J4	W	♥ AK73
♦ 1076	E	♦ 53
♣ J9875	S	♣ KQ102

♠ 10643
♥ Q5
♦ Q942
♣ A64

After West's double, East could bid 3♣ for a top score. Or East could pass the double (like on the other deal), converting to penalties. 2♥ doubled would go two down, also for a top score.

Conversely, meekly passing out 2♥ (for two down, +100) will get you a near bottom, as almost everyone else was scoring 120 in 1NT.

What do you think of North's 2♥ bid? Was it brave or foolhardy? A bit of both, I would say, but it was only remotely plausible *non-vulnerable*. And when E/W went wrong, N/S got a top.

The bottom line: be brave when fighting at low levels!

MY FAVOURITE SUIT COMBINATION
Bill Jacobs

There's been a dreadful accident. You've bid yourself into 7NT, of all contracts, and West has led the ♣Q.

♠ AQ108
♥ J32
♦ J32
♣ 432

N
S

♠ 432
♥ AKQ4
♦ AKQ4
♣ A5

It seems you will need four spade tricks. You win the ♣A and play four rounds of hearts. On the fourth round, both opponents throw a club. It can't be put off any longer: you lead a spade from hand, and West plays the ♠5.

What do you play from dummy?

Putting aside the possibility that East has a singleton king or jack of spades, you will need West to have both king and jack.

But what about the 9? If West has it, then you need to play the ♠8 here, and take three finesses in the suit. If East has it, you must play the ♠10, and hope that spades divide 3-3 (or that East has the ♠9 singleton).

In the light of this discussion, will you change your decision?

If you chose initially to insert the ♠10 (I bet you did), then yes you should change your decision. The ♠8 is the correct play.

The only way to successfully make the right percentage guesses in these situations is to count holdings. Let's do it here.

In how many original layouts is the ♠10 the winning play? Exactly 4: East with singleton ♠9, and West with ♠KJ5, ♠KJ6, ♠KJ7. Four winning cases, no others. (West with ♠KJ9 tripleton is of no relevance, as you always make in that happy scenario.)

In how many layouts is the 8 the winning play? A bit harder, that one, but there's quite a few. Let's list them. West with:

♠KJ95
♠KJ96
♠KJ97
♠KJ965
♠KJ975
♠KJ976
♠KJ9765

Seven of them! Why it's a no-brainer ... the 8 is the right play. In fact, it's a little closer than it looks, because each of the 3-3 breaks are a tiny bit more probable than the 4-2, 5-1 or 6-0 breaks.

Counting the winning layouts between two options and going for the one with the larger number is the way to go.

Oh and one other thing: don't get fooled into eliminating layouts that are no longer possible once a player has played a random low card (in this example, West's ♠5). That will lead you into the murky world of restricted choice. You don't want to go there: people have been known to never get out. Just count the original winning and losing layouts: that will lead you to the right play.

And one final piece of good news ...
... not to be continued

THE TWELFTH TRICK

Dlr: South ♠ 65
Vul: all ♥ 973
IMPs ♦ 874
♣ Q8432

N
S

♠ AKQJ98
♥ A
♦ AK6
♣ A65

West	North	East	South
			2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads the ♥Q. Plan the play. Solution over page.

THE TWELFTH TRICK

	♠ 65	
	♥ 973	
	♦ 874	
	♣ Q8452	
♠ 103	N	♠ 742
♥ QJ1042		♥ K865
♦ Q103		♦ J952
♣ J106	S	♣ K9
	♠ AKQJ98	
	♥ A	
	♦ AK6	
	♣ A73	

Whatever precise plan you have made, it needs to involve withholding the ♣Q until the third round of the suit. Technically the contract can only be made by setting up the clubs, and you need that queen as the entry. One of the opponents will need to have king-doubleton.

What about inducing a defensive error – always a handy backup plan. There are two ways you might do this:

Sub-plan A. Win the ♥A, and immediately play a low club (planning to play low in dummy). West, holding three clubs to the king, might clatter up with the king, for fear of losing it. (For example, if South held ♣Ax and ♦AKxx, that would be the only winning defence.)

Sub-plan B. Win ♥A and rattle off 5 rounds of trumps, hoping that a player with ♣Kxx discards one of them in an attempt to cling on to some other suit.

Give yourself full marks if, not only did you see that you had to hold back the ♣Q, you chose one of the two plans to make life hard for the defenders.

Solution to Par Contract (page 5)

The par contract is 7NT doubled by East, four down, -800. 7NT is not quite so good when played by West – it won't take a single trick.

Have you ever seen a real-life deal where the par contract was 7NT, bid as a sacrifice? I haven't: and I thought I'd seen it all.

BLACK MAGIC Bill Jacobs

I enjoy writing up deals for the Black Magic series - there is no shortage of them. It rams home to me the apparent infinity of weird and beautiful cardplay positions that can occur with just 13 tricks in a deal.

Some deals involve deception - the magic is one of illusion, but others are more pure wizardry. And of course, the simpler the more satisfying.

This hand falls into the latter category. West leads a club to South's 4♥ contract. The question is whether declarer can make that contract. What do you think?

	♠ AK972	
	♥ 4	
	♦ AJ876	
	♣ K6	
♠ J83	N	♠ Q1065
♥ 10753	W E	♥ K6
♦ K932	S	♦ Q104
♣ 74		♣ AQ52
	♠ 4	
	♥ AQJ982	
	♦ 5	
	♣ J10983	

The defence starts with 3 rounds of clubs. If West ruffs with the 5, that will be their last trick. Declarer finesses in trumps, finding a lucky layout to take the rest.

Discarding on the third round of clubs won't help ... declarer finesses in hearts, losing just the one heart trick.

West has an amazing counter. He ruffs the third round of clubs with the *three*, allowing a cheap overruff with dummy's singleton four. Now when declarer ruffs to his hand to play ace and queen of trumps, East can give West a club ruff for the setting trick.

But wait just a minute! Declarer has a counter counter. If West does find the ♥3 play, declarer can refuse the Greek gift of a free trick with the ♥4 and coolly discard from dummy, allowing West to have his little ♥3. Later he can draw trumps with a finesse and live magically ever after.