

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

May 2019

Editor: Dee Harley

VICTORIAN TEAM FOR THE ANC

In April, the final selection trials took place to determine the Victorian representative teams for the Australian National Championships (ANC). The ANC this year is to be held in Melbourne in July.

Open Team Selection

The Open team selection occurred on the weekend of the 6/7th April where the four qualifying teams played a semi-final on the Saturday after a random draw. The winning semi-finalists would contest the final on Sunday

VQP2: Chen Ding - Ming Zhang - Daoping Nie - Victor Zhang - John Yang - Michael Gurfinkiel

VQP1: Jamie Ebery - Leigh Gold - Peter Hollands - Justin Mill - James Coutts - Ellena Moskovsky

Butler: Rex Livingston - Paul Hill - Maxim Henbest - Christopher Leach - Annette Maluish - Andrew Mill

Pennant: Neil Ewart - David Beckett - Chris Hughes - Dee Harley - Simon Hinge - Jamie Thompson
(Jamie was on International duty, so Simon and Jamie did not play in the qualification)

Semi Finals:

VQP1 175 - 113 VQP2
Pennant 162 - 121 Butler

The Final

Pennant 154 - 152 VQP1

Open Team

Neil Ewart - David Beckett
Chris Hughes - Dee Harley
Simon Hinge - Jamie Thompson

Women/Senior Selection

The Women's and Senior trials occurred the following weekend and the events shared the boards and the event was played as a Pairs selection trial.

Women's Team

Thea Cowie - Erica Windmiller
Susie Hall - Belinda Pearson
Diana Smart - Anna St Clair

Seniors Team

John Yang - Michael Gurfinkiel
Arthur Robbins - Douglas Newlands
Stan Klofa - Lindsey Robinson

Youth Team

Damon Flicker - John Mai
Bec O'Reilly - Danni Fuller
Conor Hosking - (A. N. Other)

The Captains for each team are yet to be announced. Congratulations to all the ANC teams, and good luck in July.

MINI #4

Lead: South

♠ 2					
♥ QJ					
♦ AK					
♣ -					
♠ QJ10		N		♠ K9	
♥ -				♥ A	
♦ J		W		♦ -	
♣ A			E	♣ QJ	
			S		
				♠ A43	
				♥ -	
				♦ Q	
				♣ K	

South is on lead in a diamond contract. How does South make all 5 tricks against best defence?

(Check you have the full [solution](#) on P4)

ANC GRAND SLAM TALES
Dee Harley

The Pennant Team were contesting the final selection for the Open Team to represent Victoria in the Australian National Championships. When this board cropped up:

Dir: East ♠ AQJ9863
 Vul: All ♥ 62
 ♦ 965
 ♣ K

♠ - ♥ KQ87543 ♦ Q2 ♣ 8543	<table border="1" 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		♠ 102 ♥ - ♦ AKJ108743 ♣ J96	♠ K754 ♥ AJ109 ♦ - ♣ AQ1072
	N											
W		E										
	S											

Our table:

W	N	E	S
-	-	1♦	Dbl
Rdbl ¹	4♠	All Pass	

1 Rdbl showed 4+ Hearts

At our team mates table:

W	N	E	S
-	-	5♦	Dbl
Pass	6♠	Pass	Pass
7♦	Pass ²	Pass	7♠ ³
All Pass			

2 Forcing: hence suggesting that a Grand Slam may be on.

3 South has every reason to accept – with 3 first round controls and the delightful King of Spades.

Somewhat differing auctions! This hand was one of many very swingy hands in the final set, despite losing 17 imps on this board, our team squeaked home by a margin of a mere 2 imps.

In the Women/Seniors selection trial there was a hand which had an amazing spread of results:

Dir: East ♠ 1087532
 Vul: None ♥ Q10952
 ♦ Q2
 ♣ -

♠ J94 ♥ A8 ♦ - ♣ K10986432	<table border="1" 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		♠ AKQ6 ♥ - ♦ KJ10954 ♣ AQJ	♠ - ♥ KJ7643 ♦ A8763 ♣ 75
	N											
W		E										
	S											

East dealt and ideally becomes the declarer in a contract of 7♣. Note that if West declares then a spade lead will enable South to ruff and declarer will be held to 12 tricks. Interesting to note too that each of the four hands above has a void.

Not surprisingly there was a wide variety of results on this hand:

Contract	Result	Score	Frequency
5♥X by NS	=	650	1
7♣X by EW	-1	100	1
7♣ by EW	-1	50	1
5♥ by NS	-2	-100	1
6♥X by NS	-1	-100	1
6♣ by EW	+1	-940	3
6♣X by EW	+1	-1190	1
7NT by EW	=	-1520	1

You have to feel sympathy for the enterprising bidders who reached a contract of 7♣ played by West, as West would naturally be the first club bidder (artificial systems excepted). I also feel a little sad for the defenders to 7NT (I guess it was by West!) who failed to find the winning diamond lead.

TIP OF THE MONTH
Bill Jacobs

Some Memory Tips

I don't know about you, but I'm getting older, and my memory isn't what it used to be. The following ideas might help.

Counting suits

You need to keep track of the opponents' cards in a suit. This is always necessary in trumps, but can apply to any important suit. For example, in a notrump contract:

♠ 652

♠ KQJ7

To keep track of this suit, don't bother keeping count of the entire suit, count only the *opponents'* cards. Step 1 is to work out how many they have, in this case 13-7=6.

Then each time they play one, subtract 1. That way you know at all times how many are remaining.

You lead the ♠K, losing to LHO's ♠A, as RHO follows. So they have 6-2 = 4 remaining. Now the opponents play another suit for a while (you have to discard one of dummy's spades). But eventually you get the lead back.

Remember the 4? You play ♠Q, they all follow. 4-2 = 2 remaining. You play ♠J, LHO follows, RHO discards. 2-1 = 1. That remaining spade is *not a winner*.

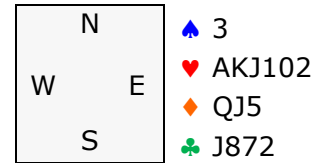
If you try counting suits any other way, you will get into a mess. For example, you don't want to have to keep track of the fact that you discarded a spade from dummy.

The opening lead.

Against a notrump contract, partner leads a 2. You *immediately* know that he has led from a 4-card suit. If he had a longer suit, then leading 4th best would mean there's a card below the 2 ... not possible! Similarly, if partner leads a 4, and you can see both the 2 and 3 (in your hand and/or dummy's) then again ... it's a 4-card suit.

Reconstructing the play.

Contract: ♠ 54
4♠, South ♥ Q73
♦ AK1054
♣ 643



West	North	East	South
		1♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Partner leads a heart, your bid suit, and you win ♥10. Next you play the ♥A and all follow again. What now?

(There is 1 heart outstanding ... you can use the counting method to work this out. You and dummy had 8, the others had 5, and they've both followed twice ...)

Damn. You have forgotten which heart partner led to trick 1. So you don't know what partner has signalled.

BUT, you can at least still look at the card he played at trick 2. It is the 4. That's pretty low ... so the odds are that partner has led high low from a doubleton. Play a third heart.

Or it might be the 8. So probably partner was not originally leading top of a doubleton. So don't play another heart – switch to clubs.

Testing *their* memory.

When failing to follow suit as a defender, typically to trumps, try to discard the same *colour* as the suit led: red on red, black on black. Perhaps declarer won't notice that you are discarding.

All's fair in love and bridge!



RECENT MASTER POINT PROMOTIONS

Silver Grand	
Maggie Callander	Mornington
Grand	
Greg Nicholson	Traralgon
Gold Life	
Richard Lawrie	Geelong
Silver Life	
Shannon Irwin	Geelong
Bronze Life	
Evelyn Stephenson	Sunbury
Jan Lonergan	Moonee Valley
Penny Blankfield	Kooyong
Julie Farmer	Mornington
**National	
Adam Peirce	Echuca
Sue Small	Dendy Park
*National	
Lillian Pearce	Waverley
Rosemary Polya	Northern
Susie Groves	Bayside
Bob Weaver	Phillip Island
Bryan Fuller	Echuca
Peter Bolling	VBA
National	
Gordon Collis	Ocean Grove
James Thomas	Waverley
Louis Cukierman	Bridge Fanatics Club
*State	
Christopher Dodgshun	Geelong
Helen Nicholson	VBA
Sue Casey	Waverley
Carol Witton	Moonee Valley
Christa Riedacher	Bairnsdale
Clare Stratton	Yarra Valley
Colin Jasper	Kings and Queens
Jan Williams	Traralgon
Frank O'Shea	Williamstown
Chris Scott	Frankston
State	
Jan Cooke	Warrnambool
Elly Poletto	Moonee Valley
Geoff Fletcher	Peninsula
Allan Hardie	Frankston
Brig Fitzpatrick	Geelong

Kerry Mills	Deniliquin
Joyce Deane	Yarra Valley
*Regional	
Margaret Murray	Echuca
Allan Martin	Dendy Park
Regional	
Sandy Kaplan	Kings and Queens
Margaret Yates	Echuca
Lawrie Hall	Macedon Ranges
Alan Sullivan	Waverley
Christine Walker	Kooyong
Ian Goedecke	Moonee Valley
Valerie Harmon	Berwick
Martin Strong	Melbourne
Tonny De Haas	Dromana
Naomi Carrick	Kings and Queens
Gill Minson	Kooyong
Sarah Acton	Kooyong
Judy Winikoff	Waverley

Solution to Mini #4 ([page 1](#))

South leads the ♠A and ruffs a small spade in the North hand, then he leads the heart from dummy and ruffs it in his hand. Poor West now must discard a winning spade or a winning club or underruff. It's a horrible choice. If he underruffs then South can ruff a spade (or a club) and the North hand is high, if West discards a spade, then South plays his spade squeezing West again out of his ♣K or forcing him to ruff, in which case North can overruff and claim the rest. Finally, it's a similar story if West discards his ♣A, South can play the winning club to squeeze West one last time. Poor West. He got trashed.

SUIT COMBINATION

How you handle suit combinations varies depending on how many tricks you want (or need) from the suit.

You: AJxxx Dummy: K9

How do you play if you need 5 tricks?

How do you play if you need 4 tricks?

How do you play if you need 3 tricks?

[Solution](#) on P8.

**XYZ (EX WHY ZEE)
DEE HARLEY**

Following a previous article on Walsh, I offer you a brief summary of XYZ. This is a skeleton on which you may wish to hang some skin and bones.

XYZ is short for 1X 1Y 1Z, where X is a minor, and 1Y and 1Z are any bids (at the one level). For now, we assume that the opponents pass throughout.

We have three new completely artificial bids available to us 2♣, 2♦ and 2NT:

- 2♣ is used for all invitational hands, or to sign off in Diamonds.
- 2♦ is used to force to game with any hand where you know game or possibly slam will be on.
- 2NT is used as a transfer to clubs.

The 2♣ response (XYZ)

2♣ is a request for partner to bid 2♦, after which, if we make a bid then it will be inviting partner to bid game (i.e. Invitational).

You hold ♠Jxxx ♥x ♦K10xxx ♣Qxx, if partner opens 1♣ we respond 1♠(Walsh) partner rebids 1NT(11-14), partner has denied 4♠, and shown a pretty weak opening hand, we can rescue this situation. We bid 2♣ and partner bids 2♦ and we pass. When partner rebids 1NT and you bid 2♣ he has NO OPTION other than to respond 2♦. He has already limited his hand and therefore must do as directed.

Now imagine your hand is:

♠KQ10xx ♥x ♦QJx ♣Kxxx. You have a hand where game may make if partner has the right values, but also 3♠ may be too high – you show this type of hand with the following auction:

W	N	E	S
-	1♣	Pass	1♠
pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
pass	2♦	Pass	2♠

Now you have shown an invitational hand with 5 spades. If you had six spades with an invitational hand you would have bid 3♠

instead. Note that ANY bid you make after the 2♦ response to your 2♣ is invitational.

Let's try another auction. This one has partner bidding 1♠ after our 1♥ response to his 1♣ opener:

W	N	E	S
-	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	?		

You hold is ♠Qxx ♥KQJxx ♦KJx ♣xx. Your hand is worth an invite opposite a minimum opener. When opener rebids 1♠ his hand is not limited, therefore he has the option to show a hand stronger than 14 points by bidding anything other than 2♦. If partner does not bid 2♦ and you had an invitational hand, then the auction becomes game forcing, except if you bid 3♦ now as that would show a long diamond suit and a weak hand attempting to play there despite partner's extra values. Your poor partner will have to use his or her judgement to decide what to do next. Pass is an option.

Anyway, back to the hand shown above, Whether or not partner bid 2♦, you will bid ♥ at the lowest level to show your invitational hand.

The 2♦ response (XYZ)

You hold ♠AQxxx ♥KJxx ♦A ♣Kxx and your partner opens 1♣. You respond 1♠ and hear 1NT. You have no doubt that you want to be in game, but you do not know what the best strain is. Now you make the (completely artificial) bid of 2♦(XYZ) which is utterly Game Forcing. It says nothing about the diamond suit, it just says "partner we are going to game, tell me more about your hand". Your partner will now bid 2♥ to show a 4 card Heart suit, or 2♠ to show 3 card spade support if they have that, 3♣ would show a 5 card club suit and 3♦ would show 4+♦. I play 2NT as 2-3-4-4 shape with nearer 14 points and 3NT as the same shape but nearer 11 points.

In summary after a 2♦ (XYZ) game force you bid as naturally as you can – but you don't stop below game!

Continued on next page...

Watch out for this hand though...You hold ♠Kx ♥Qxx ♦AKJxx ♣xxx. You open 1♦ partner bids 1♠ you bid 1NT and partner bids 2♦. What do you bid?? If you slip into the old regime and pass you will not forgive yourself! Partner has made a game forcing 2♦ bid, so you better not pass. 2NT or 3♦ will do.

The 2NT response (XYZ)

First let's examine the 2NT bid after 1X 1Y 1Z. Notice that this CANNOT be invitational, as partner would have gone through 2♣ 2♦ and THEN bid 2NT Invitational, hence an immediate 2NT has another use entirely. It is a transfer to 3♣ (Usually to play but may have other uses). An example hand here would be ♠Jxxx ♥x ♦xx ♣KQJxxx. Your partner opens 1♦ you bid 1♠ (Walsh) and your partner bids 1NT(11-14). Note that you cannot play in 2♣, you have lost that possibility because you play XYZ, but you can bid 2NT (Transfer), partner must bid 3♣ and you can breathe a sigh of relief and pass happily.

Intervention over XYZ

If opponents intervene you should have a simple agreement in place. One such agreement is to completely ignore all doubles and play system on. You may also ignore some bids and play system on whenever you have made 3 bids at the one level. There are many [options](#), but it is safe to say that if they bid at the 2 level or above then you abandon XYZ completely and revert to natural bidding.

W	N	E	S
-	1♣	Pass	1♠
Dbl	1NT	Pass	2♣ ¹
pass	2♦		

W	N	E	S
-	1♣	Pass	1♥
1♠	Pass or X or 1NT	Pass	2♣ ¹
pass	2♦		

1 = System on

Other Bids with XYZ

Having covered invitational and game forcing bids the way is now clear for you to make other bids. Rebidding your major (for example) now becomes "To Play" as in 1♣ 1♥ 1NT 2♥ (not invitational). Or 1♣ 1♠ 1NT 2♥ is passable showing 5♠ and 4+♥, but less than invitational values. You can also play jumps as forcing but especially shapely e.g. 1♣ 1♠ 1NT 3♠ sets the trump suit as ♠ and invites Cue Bids (AKQJ10xx Kxx A Qx) or 1♣ 1♠ 1NT 3♥ is at least 5-5 in the majors; game forcing (♠KQJ10xx ♥AQJxx ♦- ♣Ax) 1♣ 1♠ 1NT 3♣ should be game forcing with very good clubs (5+) and 5+ spades.

A summary of XYZ then: after 1X 1Y 1Z then 2♣ is either to play in ♦ or the start of an invitational sequence. 2♦ is used to force to game (usually with a somewhat balanced hand), and 2NT is used to transfer to clubs at the three level. Jumps over 1X 1Y 1Z are exceptionally distributional game forcing hands.

You should agree with your partner what you do about the auction 1♥ 1♠ 1NT – what do 2♣ 2♦ and 2NT mean now?

Finally you might agree with your partner what this auction means:

W	N	E	S
-	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣		3♠

I play it as showing an invitational hand with a very weak 6 card spade suit. Going through 2♣ then bidding 3♠ would show a Good 6 card spade suit (Invitational).

If you play transfer responses to 1♣ opening, then XYZ works surprisingly well – as long as you spend time with your partner going over the options.

Be aware that XYZ is not the same thing as Checkback. Checkback is a different regime, used primarily for determining whether your partner has 3 card support for your major. In Australia, many people play a version of 3-way checkback which is similar to XYZ, but it tends to only apply after a 1NT rebid.

CONGRESS RESULTS

Whittlesea Congress

Swiss Pairs

1. C. Ding, D. Nie
2. R. Kingham, A. Rose
3. E. Samuel, P. De Zoysa

Gardenvale Easter Congress

Saturday IMP Swiss Pairs

1. D. Sharp, D. Roseman
2. I. Gulac, S. Ozenir
3. H. Stewart, M. Allison

Sunday MatchPoints Swiss Pairs

1. R. Berlinski, S. White
2. I. Gulac, M. Allison
3. S. Groves, A. Lowe

Monday IMP Swiss Pairs

1. R O'Dell, M. Allison
2. G. Hill, L. McKenna
3. M. Bird, A. Hardie

UPCOMING CONGRESSES & EVENTS

Bayside Bridge Club

Sat. 4th May, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
Sun. 5th May, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: Beaumaris Bowls Club,
Martin Street Beaumaris

Contact: Jan Clyne

Email: jan@baysidebridge.com

Sale Bridge Club

Sat. 18th May, 11.30 am: Swiss Pairs
Sun. 19th May, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: Greenwattle Racecourse, Sale

Contact: Helen Gault

Email: hmgault@bigpond.net.au

Bendigo Bridge Club

Sat. 25th May, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
Sun. 26th May, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: The All Season's Resort Hotel
171-183 McIvor Road, Bendigo

Contact: Paul O'Hare

Website: www.bendigobridge.org.au

Phone: 0419 345 240

To enter any of the above visit
[BridgeUnlimited](http://BridgeUnlimited.com).

COMING SOON!

Victor Champion Cup

Victoria's flagship Teams competition will take place from 6th to 10th June. There will be a reduction in the entry fee for those who enter before 12th May.

Here is a link to the Website:
<http://www.abfevents.com.au/events/vcc/2019/>
Where you will be able to view the programme of events, and enter online
(See also Page 12)

Australian National Championships

This year, the ANC will be taking place in Victoria on July. You will have read earlier in this bulletin about the selection of the Victorian teams, but there will be competitions which all can enter to play along with the State teams.

Each of the states are invited to send representative teams for the categories:
Open, Senior, Women, Youth.

These teams then play each other (within their category) in a series of round robin contests from Sunday (13th July) until Wednesday (inclusive) then the top two teams will emerge to play each other in the finals on Wednesday evening Thursday.

Meanwhile there are plenty of opportunities for you to come along and play in the events which run alongside the Interstate matches.

Details of the whole event can be found here:
<http://www.abfevents.com.au/events/anc/2019/>

♣♣♣ **KNAVE OF CLUBS** ♣♣♣
AVOIDING MANY FINESSES

This deal is from a local teams game and only one declarer made four spades. The hand offers finesses for the three side suit kings and, with all of them offside, it is important to not take the unnecessary finesse. One unsuccessful declarer took West's opening lead of the queen of diamonds with the ace and returned the suit. East won the second trick and shifted to a club. Declarer was forced to finesse and West won the king of clubs. As both major-suit kings were wrong, the contract failed by one trick. The other unsuccessful declarers ducked the opening lead but failed at trick two when West shifted to a heart and they called for dummy's queen of hearts. East took his king of hearts and shifted to a club and, as West held both black kings, the contracts finished one down.

Against the same ♦Q lead, the successful declarer paused to form a plan. Clearly, there are 4 tricks in each major suit even if the major finesses are offside. With two minor suit aces, there are 10 tricks easily available as long as you don't lose a trick in each suit

Dir: North ♠ QJ96
 Vul: All ♥ AQJ103
 ♦ 53
 ♣ Q10

♠ K5	N	♠ 42
♥ 964	W E	♥ K75
♦ QJ96	S	♦ K872
♣ K852		♣ 9763

♠ A10873
 ♥ 82
 ♦ A104
 ♣ AJ4

	W	N	E	S
		1♥	Pass	1♠
	Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠

All Pass

Lead: Q♦

Clearly, declarer must avoid being forced to take the club finesse and so must formulate a plan based on keeping East off lead while

either the king of trumps or the king of hearts remained unplayed. If East played the ♦K at trick one, this declarer planned to win the ace and return the ten of diamonds. However, East followed with the eight of diamonds and declarer allowed the queen of diamonds to hold the trick. West saw little point in continuing the attack on diamonds as it was clear that declarer held the ace of diamonds. So, he shifted to a heart. This declarer kept to his plan and called for dummy's ace of hearts and then ran the queen of trumps to West's king. There was nothing the defence could do now. A heart exit sets up the hearts on which to discard the club losers. The actual nine of diamonds exit was won by declarer with the ace, who then drew trumps and knocked out the king of hearts making four trumps, four hearts and the minor-suit aces.

Solution to Suit Combination ([page 4](#))

AJxxx (North) opposite K9 (South):

Needing 5 tricks: You need to hope for a 3-3 break with the Queen in the West hand. That's pretty unlikely (3-3 break 35.53% so half of that (about 18%) for the Queen to be onside). Anyway, that's what you need so cash the King and finesse the knave.

Needing 4 tricks: you are advised to lead towards the 9. Anytime East has the 10 you will make 3 tricks (that's 50% to start with), then anytime the Q drops in 3 rounds ups your chance of success to 68%.

Needing 3 tricks: Funnily enough it is back to cashing the King and finessing the knave, this time you need the suit to break 3-3 or 4-2, or for the Queen to be onside. Healthy chances of this happening! (94% - calculated by combining the chances of a 6-0 or 5-1 break (excluding singleton Q), then halving it (for the Queen to be offside) - then subtract it from 100)

**CAN YOU MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE?
KEITH KAT**

Firstly, a defensive problem for you to consider. You are East.

4♠ by S
Dir S

♠ Q97
♥ K876
♦ 32
♣ AQ103

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ 32
♥ QJ1095
♦ KJ9
♣ 654

The Bidding

S	W	N	E
Pass	1♦	Dbl	1♥
4♠	All Pass		

Partner leads the ♥A, cashes the ♦A (you play the ♦9 which is sadly discouraging) and plays a second heart. Dummy plays the ♥7 and declarer trumps your ♥Q (a belated signal from you to try to tell partner that you DO HAVE the ♦K).

Declarer leads a spade to the nine and continues with the ♠Q, partner winning the ♠A. Hooray! Sadly, partner plays another heart to dummy's King, declarer discarding the ♦8. Declarer now cashes two more trumps; partner following to the 3rd round, and on the last trump, dummy's ♦3 is discarded.

South plays the ♣9 to the ♣10, drops the ♣J under the ♣Q and the ♣K under the ♣A. When the ♣3 is led this is the end position.

4♠ by S

♠ -
♥ 8
♦ -
♣ 3

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ -
♥ J
♦ K
♣

If I told you that declarer has the ♦Q, what is your discard?

This time you are South

Dir: North
Vul: NS

♠ QJ5432
♥ 76
♦ 5432
♣ 2

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ A9876
♥ AJ8
♦ KQJ10
♣ 3

W	N	E	S
1♣	Pass	4♣	4♠
5♣	5♠	Dbl	All Pass

Lead: ♥K

Yes, yes, I know, you don't agree with the bidding and nor do I, but at the time...C'est la vie.

Well....it's only 300's, hey?

One heart loser, one diamond loser and one club loser and then you have to decide how to play the trumps.

Can you make the impossible, POSSIBLE?

Well, there's no chance unless West can be induced to play a second heart...and for this to be you have to let them win the trick. After all, you have a heart loser, may as well as lose it now as later.

Happiness when West continues with the Queen of hearts. Win the Ace, play the Jack to discard dummy's club and then trump your club in dummy. And now for the moment of truth...lead the ♠Q. East follows with the ♠10. Do you let it ride...or do you play your ♠A?

This is an easy one to deal with.

If you get it wrong you will only lose 200 for going one down which is a good score if the opponents can make 5♣. With a definite

heart loser and most likely a diamond loser, if they have a spade loser as well, 5C has no play.

So play the ♠A. If West is void, they make 5♣ and you go one down, -200 versus -400. If West has the singleton ♠K, you make your contract, +850 versus +50.

Back to our defensive problem. Did you throw a heart and keep the ♦K? Yes, that is what my defender did as well.

The full hand:

Dir: North	♠ Q97		
Vul: NS	♥ K876		
	♦ 32		
	♣ AQ103		
♠ A54		♠ 32	
♥ A43		♥ QJ1095	
♦ A10765		♦ KJ9	
♣ 108		♣ 654	
	♠ KJ1086		
	♥ 2		
	♦ Q84		
	♣ KJ92		

I followed to the 3 of clubs with the 2 and dummy's 8 of hearts took the last trick.

THE SECRET SHOPPER

Ballarat is a Man's Town. A town where material success translated into civic excess. Red brick buildings abound and speak volumes of the level of wealth once enjoyed. From the wedding cake fire station to the ambitiously named Royal Hotel and the splendid Town Hall, Ballarat is not a place that is shy about displaying its accumulated prosperity from below ground.

I drove through the parched and dusty countryside while Three regaled me with Ballarat's historical happenings via Wikipedia. We were excited to learn that Three was born exactly 100 years after gold was discovered there, we muttered about government greed as we learned about the Eureka uprising and were happy that I too could claim centennial

connections with the arrival of the railway in 1862.

As we drove into the city we were shocked by the sudden greenery that lined the road interspersed by flashes of bright flowerbeds.

The council has poured vast quantities of money - and water - to make the gateway to Ballarat as pretty as possible and we exclaimed dutifully on how nice it all looked. We drove up the broad high street admiring the buildings and then obeyed, the by now frantic girl, in Google maps and turned into the side streets towards the bridge club.

What an immediate disappointment. Away from the resplendent centre is the reality of a town that saw its last gold mine close in 1918 and which has been trying to reach that level of wealth ever since. The tired, drab buildings row upon row devolved finally into a bowling cum bridge club.

We had arrived.

The squat building stockaded by cyclone fencing and the odd bush is entered via a curious switchback affair, no doubt to keep out the wind, into an L shaped club room dominated by a vast bar.

There were long trestle tables where people were sitting jammed together drinking from mismatched cups whilst waiting for the game to start.

Ballarat was hosting a Festival of Bridge. As the Festival takes place from Tuesday to Friday it is not the most overly attended bridge event in the state but due to some fraternal assistance it manages to attract a few couples from Canberra which gives the locals some different opposition from the usual souls they generally play.

The shock of our entry was noticeable - clearly this event is not expected to attract much outside interest and as it was Thursday afternoon for a short session of bridge I could understand why. However, I was here incognito as the Secret Shopper and looked around me with a quizzical eye.

We were welcomed into the club by the president and the indefatigable Director, Graham Hill. The others looked upon us

quizzically as though we were some odd foreigners who had lost their way and having taken a wrong turn arrived at some private event that we weren't really a part of. However, no one was unfriendly and before the game commenced a cake was dragged out of the kitchen and we all sang Happy Birthday to Olga. I liked that and joined in effusively.

This place is a marvellous resource for local bridge enthusiasts, but I sat thinking about how the folk of Bendigo would love a building like this. A club house of their own is their dream and I wondered if the good people of Ballarat realise how lucky they are. The club room itself would benefit from a little love – a pair of dispassionate eyes to rejuvenate and bring new life to the tired interior. Olga celebrating her 60th was one of the very youngest players I saw that day and bridge clubs need to attract new, younger players to keep the game and places like this going.

When you go to play in the same place week after week one no longer notices the drab interior, the tired pot plants in the corners wilting slowly, the mishmash of dreary art on the walls and the disappointing lavatorial facilities. If Ballarat bridge Club did a drive for new members and were as successful as Bendigo, how many I wonder would walk into the club and stay?

On my occasional forays into club bridge I play at the VBA which is as soulless a place as any I've been to so maybe it's time for everyone to take stock of their surroundings.



(Ballarat Bridge Club)

Clubs all over the state should consider their environment with open eyes and see how the

places could be improved. Some paint and a fresh carpet is a start, comfy chairs and good art on the walls. Make it attractive, make it welcoming.

Ballarat might be a Man's town, it has a great and thriving bridge club which though wonderful and welcoming would benefit from a Woman's touch.

EDITORIAL

We have issued the bulletin slightly early this month to be able to showcase the VCC competition and to allow you to get your earlybird entries in in time.

This is an awesome time of year for Victoria, with the VCC and the ANC taking a lot of planning and organisation. Hopefully too these events will be a lot of fun too. Bridge is a serious business, but it is a great opportunity to meet friends and socialise.

Staying polite to your opponents is often easier than staying polite and friendly with you partner, but I think that the French say it well with "Toujours la politesse". I was reading one of my many bridge books (Boris Schapiro on Bridge) - the other day and came across another applicable French quote – after an appalling misdefence the offender's partner exclaimed:

"Tu es mon meilleur ami. C'est la seule raison pour laquelle j'accepte de m'asseoir a une table de bridge en face de toi. Je supporte beaucoup de choses ... mais ca vraiment, pour les nerfs, c'est trop."

(You are my best friend. That is the sole reason why I agree to sit opposite you at the bridge table. I endure many things ... but this, for the nerves, is really too much.)

So if your partner errs a little, just say "Tu es mon meilleur ami..."

Victor Champion Cup 2019

Festival of Bridge

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