

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

October 2020

Editor: Dee Harley

**VBA PRESIDENT
CHRISTOPHER LEACH**



The VBA has been undertaking an internal process of review of its issues of "culture", with a strong emphasis on behaviour and the effect breaches of the various social elements required to make bridge function harmoniously have on the collective desire of people to return. The VBA is a special case in that, in addition to the normal duplicate bridge play that all bridge clubs share, it hosts the Victorian state events, which means that there is a lot of high-level play. I am very keen to see more and more advancing pairs come and join us on Wednesday nights and also dip their collective toes in the water with our Monday night events, which are at a slightly lower level. A heartening advance in this regard has been the number of up-and-coming pairs joining us during the COVID time online on Wednesday nights and in the new fortnightly Monday night red-point event. My message would be, if you are enjoying those outings online, then strongly pencil in participation in

person in the post-COVID time. But we recognize that the culture of the VBA needs to improve and when we reopen, the fruits of our endeavours in this regard will hopefully be on show.

One of the important elements in the advancement in bridge is achieving a growing level of familiarity with the rules, as well as the related, but more amorphous concepts of the etiquette. To invoke a somewhat old-fashioned perspective, bridge is a game that should be played in a gracious and gentlemanly spirit (I don't readily have a gender-neutral word for "gentlemanly", I'm sorry). Failure to do so, creates an environment that is unpleasant to all and may in more extreme cases merit disciplinary measures. At the VBA we are very serious about addressing these issues, while not wishing, of course, to be obsessive or to eliminate "characters" from the game. But we recognize people must feel comfortable and experienced players all have a responsibility to be welcoming and constructive.

When I first started to play bridge, I was part of a regular group that played every Tuesday. The standard of the bridge wasn't great and the desire to do the hard yards to improve was absent from almost all of the participants. But it was generally pretty congenial and we had a nice lunch afterwards. But what finally moved me on from the group was not the anomalous bidding and card-play, but the constant disregard for the etiquette of the game ... from declarers turning over a card to see what had been led on the previous trick, to wanting to change a call of a card, to the Dummy suggesting lines of play and many other shockers besides.

Many of these fellows present were golfers at top golf clubs. When I suggested that doing some of the things was as bad in bridge terms as improving the lie of your ball in the rough is at golf (which they would never do in a century), they were dismissive. But I still believe that to be true. Our game sets high standards, not only of difficulty, but of self-

control and good behaviour and the rules need to be known and respected.

To turn briefly to the current situation... two months have gone by since I wrote last in this newsletter ... and no idea still when we will see live bridge again in Victoria. The VBA is assisting the couple of clubs in real hardship as identified by our recent club survey. For the rest, as brutal and unimaginable as the current situation is, we will hopefully see a reopening by Xmas and a COVID-normal 2021 with (we pray) a vaccine to come early in the year. The good news is that many of you have your plans ready to activate from all the work done in July.

Finally, apropos of what I was saying above regarding the capacity of online bridge to entice players to try a level up, we are delighted by the participation in the Spring League and warmly welcome new teams that have appeared.

ONLINE BRIDGE

There are many options for playing online bridge these days, I was sent an email detailing all the options for playing online: I reproduce part of the email here:

(5) ACBL Duplicates

18 bds, 6 minutes per bd, 6 x 3 bd rounds. Anyone can play. No Multi 2D, no fancy systems, no odd-even signals. 10:15am or 11:15am or 12:15pm every day I think. BB\$1.75 per player. In ACBL World on BBO.

(6) Joust Teams at Bridgezone

Run by Cynthia Belonogoff in Perth and Hank Youngerman in USA.

Knockout matches of 28-64 boards every ten days. Next knockout event begins on 15th of each month.

Ref <http://www.bridgezone.org/logins/default.asp?Org=WB>.

(7) Reynolds Teams

Similar to Joust, but begins free monthly knockout teams events on 1st of each month. Email Jonathan.cohn@gmail.com if you want to know more.

(8) Schafer IMP Pairs

For world class players, juniors and a few of Walt Schafer's friends. About 6 tables, every

day from 10am to 1pm, 5 x 5 bds, imps, Danish Swiss pairs. Free, in Free Tournaments. A good place to kibitz experts like Kit Woolsey (userid kit) , Bart Bramley or Bob Hamman. If you think you are good enough to play in it, email me to ask for Walt's email address.

(9) OCBL, Alt and Bridge House Europe's top teams events. Time differences are severe. 30 players are no longer allowed to play in these three events due to ethical violations. You can. Live kibitzers are usually no longer allowed.

<https://ocbl.org/nexthevents/> (run by Italians)

<https://alt.bridgeresults.org/>

<https://www.netbridge.online/> (Alt events, run by Dutch)

<https://bridgehouse.club/1st-online-world-teams-championship/>

<https://www.facebook.com/bridgehouse.club/post/s/we-organize-vip-tournaments-on-bbo/148336656710933/> (run by Italians)

(11) Alternatives to BBO

(a) Stepbridge - not for Apple devices. Hugh Grosvenor and Tania Lloyd have moved to #1 and #2 in the McCutcheon annual ABF Masterpoints list by dominating here.

Ref <https://www.stepbridge.com.au/>

(b) Real Deal bridge, currently or about to be launched by Peter Hollands.

Ref <https://www.realdealbridge.com/>

(c) Real Bridge, currently or about to be launched by Graham Hazel from UK.

Ref <http://bridgewinners.com/article/view/realbridge-online-bridge-with-video-streaming/>

(d) Bridge Hackathon - Kiat Huang in UK, Adam Wildavsky in USA and perhaps Daniel Braun from Sydney are creating an online bridge platform which any bridge club or player can use for free, with improved robots, improved system cards and the like. Progress might be slow, but it apparently is slowly being constructed.

2021? Ref <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/bridgehackathon/bridge-hackathon>

VBA BULLETIN SPRING LEAGUE

League Tables as at 27/09/2020

Team	Played	Net Imps	VPs
Half-Baked	4	138	62.78
Get Smart	4	76	54.25
Milly	4	67	53.49
International	4	58	43.20
Klofa	4	-12	37.88
Marks	4	-35	33.95
Sandpit	4	-59	28.47
Hotties	4	-79	25.20
Lovrecz	4	-154	20.78

Team	Played	Net Imps	VPs
Four			
Desperados	4	79	53.42
JEMs	4	82	51.29
The Gentry	4	50	50.64
T-Delights	4	14	43.88
The Mad Maskers	4	-11	39.89
Bird	4	-16	36.71
Herded Cats	4	-17	35.89
Lola's Ladies	4	-55	31.39
FLG	4	-126	16.89

Team	Played	Net Imps	VPs
Sanhedrin			
Shpielers	4	111	57.26
MisFits	4	53	50.80
Veering	4	61	50.43
stepmates	4	8	40.92
The Four Belles	4	-4	39.93
The Young Ones	4	-12	37.33
QSSZ	4	-45	33.24
Mercargeosal	4	-51	31.67
ANSAHALI	4	-121	18.42

Hand of the month:

Keith Kat played an ambitious slam ("we like bidding slams" he says!) in the Half-Baked v Lovrecz match.

Keith and Brigitte bid to 6♠ by South and got a trump lead.

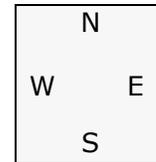
IMPs

Dlr: South

Vul: none

♠ AKQ
♥ AKJ10
♦ K42
♣ KJ8

♠ J104
♥ Q753
♦ Q98
♣ A75



♠ 83
♥ 98
♦ 1076
♣ Q109432
♠ 97632
♥ 642
♦ AJ53
♣ 6

Lead: ♠J

Contract 6♠

Keith took 3 rounds of trumps, East discarding the ♣2. Notice there are not many entries to hand! Keith led the ♣8 from dummy (away from ♣KJ) and East won with the ♣10.

East tried the ♦7 now but Keith played low from hand, and won in dummy with the ♦K.

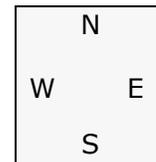
He cashed a top Heart, ruffed the ♣J and led his last trump. Leaving this end position:

Dlr: South

Vul: none

♠
♥ KJ10
♦ 42
♣ K

♠
♥ Q75
♦ Q9
♣ A



♠ 9
♥ 9
♦ 106
♣ Q94
♠ 9
♥ 64
♦ AJ5
♣

On the 9♠ poor West was squeezed in three suits. In the event she parted with the ♣A, and Keith threw a diamond and took the Heart finesse twice to land his slam. Awesome!

VIEW FROM THE RESTRICTED ZONE
TONY GEORGESON

Bridge sure is a journey....

But we are very fortunate that there is a mind-boggling treasury of books, articles, lessons, hints of wisdom, both in print and with web resources from 'wise owls' who generously provide their knowledge to us 'greener' players. They guide us on this journey.

What strikes me about Bridge is that there are quite starkly seven distinct variables involved which fall into 'knowns' and 'unknowns' (to plagiarise Donald Rumsfeld a bit). Things you can influence or control, and things that you absolutely cannot influence or control. As you play Bridge you come to enjoy the interaction of these seven variables because these 'things' make Bridge the spiciest pursuit of all.

First the 'unknowns' which are things you cannot control.

1. If sitting NS for example, what happens at the other tables with NS is outside your control. So how well your opposing NS plays is outside your control.
2. Also, at the other tables, how well the EW pairs who they face play, is outside your control.
3. At your table how well your EW opponents who you face play, is outside your control.

Next the 'knowns' or things you do have some influence over.

4. (Competitive Bidding) How you bid can influence the ability of EW to find the best contract and can prevent them if they are defending, to find the best defence when you are playing a contract.
5. (Defence) How you defend against a contract which EW have secured is very much under your control.
6. (Bidding) How cleverly you bid to secure the optimum contract is largely within your control, and has become an art form in itself.
7. (Declarer Play) When you secure a contract, how well you play the cards you have in your hand and dummy is completely under your control.

We tend to lump beneficial outcomes from the first three as being down to 'luck'. Which surely must be true? 'Chance' is the deciding factor.

'Bidding' i.e. variable number six logically appears to get the most attention from the 'wise owls'. It gets quite sophisticated and a favoured combination of 'bids' or communications prevails over time. Things which you and your partner feel comfortable with.

Variable number four is related to this. Bidding is competitive, as it can be a smoke screen and can place the EW pair at a disadvantage.

Variable number five is clearly something you must have control over to ensure a good level of success. If your defensive skills are inadequate, all is lost.

But is it variable number seven in which you must perform with maximum skill because it is the only variable that is completely 'yours to own'? The objective must be to secure every possible trick without jeopardizing your contract. Without allowing the risk/return to be imbalanced.

One conundrum is to know what portion of the final scoring percentage is attributable to the above seven variables?

Many times I have played a session and felt that 'we did not do much wrong' but received a percentage that disappointed. What I have noticed though is that it appears easier to perform better in defence when hands with some useful HCP are held. And I have noticed that in sessions where you play the hands as declarer well, a much better percentage result is achieved.

The puzzle still lies out there for me to solve.

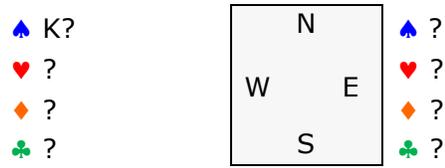
'A Bridge Player who has now reachedThe Restricted Zone'.

PLAY PROBLEM #11 - SOLUTION

Last month you had to try to make a grand slam on a hope and a prayer.

IMPs

Dlr: East ♠ AJ643
 Vul: Both ♥ AJ102
 ♦ Q54
 ♣ 9



♠ 9
 ♥ KQ93
 ♦ AKJ
 ♣ AJ652

Lead: ♠K
 Contract 7♥

Robert sent me this elegant assessment:

Do we need diamonds to break 4-3 (62%) regardless of the line?

Line 1. Let's say we tackle clubs to get an extra trick or two: ♣ to A, ruff a ♣ low, ♦ to A, ruff a ♣. If they break 4-3 and no KQ dropping, we still need to play a ♦ back to J, ruff the last club high (defender with 3 clubs will throw a ♦ - might be their last). Do we over take the ♥ and play for trumps 3-2 (68%) or cash in dummy and play a diamond (seems too risky).

Line 2. Trying the spade suit is not as welcoming as we only have 1 diamond entry back - we definitely require spades to be 4-3 and hearts 3-2 (as we need to ruff a club back after ruffing 3 spades and using 1 heart as an entry).

Line 3. Just play for diamonds 4-3 and both black suits not 6-1 appears to be the correct line - win spade, play 3 rounds of D immediately, ruff a spade low, club to A, ruff a club low and then claim on a high cross ruff.

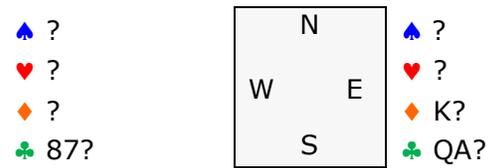
Line 3 appears the best shot - probably high 50%.

PLAY PROBLEM #12

Here is a 4♠ contract for you to play.

IMPs

Dlr: East ♠ K94
 Vul: Both ♥ A8532
 ♦ A52
 ♣ J5



♠ AQJ10873
 ♥ 7
 ♦ 984
 ♣ 92

Lead: ♣8

Contract 4♠

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
-	-	1♣	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

West leads the ♣8, East wins the ♣Q and cashes the ♣A before switching to the ♦K.

What is the best chance of bringing this contract home?

Send me your solution please:
dee_harley@hotmail.com

SUIT COMBINATION

This month we have a two-part Question

You: A10987 Partner: Q43
 How would you play this suit for 4 tricks

You: A10987 Partner: Q432
 How would you play this suit for 5 tricks

You can assume you have plenty of entries

Note that in both cases you want to restrict this suit to one loser at most.

[Solution](#) on P6.

♣♣♣ **KNAVE OF CLUBS** ♣♣♣
EXTRAS

This hand is from the pairs event in a Warrnambool congress. South opens a standard 1♠ and North shows 11+hcp with the two-level response. When South rebids 3♣, it is showing extras. "Extras" is usually interpreted as a king or ace more than the minimum you have shown so far. Thus, South has shown 15+hcp and four clubs and the auction is forcing to game. With less than 15, South would just rebid 2♠. When North supports spades, South shows slam interest (more extras, if you like than the 15 hcp shown so far) with a cue bid of 4♣.

A simple raise to 4♠ would deny any more extras. If North assumes partner has the ♠AK and that the hearts split, North can see 11 major suit tricks and most of partner's values remain in the minors. It is easy for North to see there is a slam and, when RKC reveals four keycards, North bids 7♠. There are clearly 13 tricks even if one of the hearts needs to be ruffed. The ♥8 is led.

Teams:

Dir: East
Vul: Both

♠ J743	♠ Q952		
♥ 85	♥ AKQ743		
♦ Q73	♦ K2		
♣ K1063	♣ Q		
		N W E S	♠ -
	♠ AK1086		♥ J10962
	♥ -		♦ J9864
	♦ A105		♣ 972
	♣ AJ854		

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
-	-	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
Pass	7♠	All Pass	

Lead: ♥8

South has to take care with the play. If the hearts are 3-3 or 4-2, one ruff will set them up and it is safe to take it now. Next South notices that they can take care of a 4-0 trump split on either side and cashes the ♠A leaving a trump finesse both ways. The last problem is that the ♥8 lead suggests the hearts may be 5-2 and it will be necessary to ruff another heart. Lead the ♠10 which holds. Then lead the ♠8 overtaking with the ♠9. Ruff another heart with the ♠K. When both follow the contract is safe. Lead a diamond to the ♦K, draw the last trump and claim 13 tricks.

Those of you who like to analyse things more deeply should be able to find that there is a defence to beat this contract, but I will leave that to you. The important thing is that this contract is about 88% which makes it an excellent grand slam. You should discuss how you would bid this with your partner. The other important concept here is that of "extras" and which bids show extras and which deny them.

Solution to Suit Combination ([page 5](#))

Restrict the suit to ONE loser:

Part 1:

You: A10987 Partner: Q43
Run the Queen, if it loses to the King then finesse the 7 (i.e. finesse for the Knave)
You succeed anytime your LHO holds the King or the Knave (which is a 75% shot) and also anytime RHO holds Knave singleton.
Suitplay tells me you have a 76% success rate overall.

Part 2:

You: A10987 Partner: Q432
Just one card different! The lowly two has been added, now the recommended line is play the 10 (or 7, 8 or 9) and run it (unless LHO plays the Knave in which case I'm sure you will know to cover!)
Assuming the 10 loses to the Knave, you now cash the Ace, hoping to drop the King.
Suitplay here tells us it is 81% success rate.

So two very similar holdings – you play a completely different strategy!