

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

July 2021

Editor: Dee Harley

VBA PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER LEACH



The great South African golfer, Gary Player, was once asked why he always wore black whenever he played. Player replied: "Because golf can be a game of sorrows." What I think he was referring to with this curious retort was that in any complex and difficult game, one is always on a razor's edge between glory and disaster. The same of course may be said of bridge..."if only I had stopped at the 5-level" ... "if only I had chosen a simple finesse over that demanding squeeze play" ... "if only I had put my ace on the table when I had the chance." Many are the disrupted sleeps after Wednesday night at the VBA and indeed all evening bridge, as the mind won't stop and the "early hours review" drones on in one's head. I know a lot of you avoid night bridge for that reason. None of us like reliving (at 2 a.m.) the favourite adage of one great Australian player to all but the best of his

peers: "If you are going to do something smart... don't!"

We need to get comfortable with the idea that we play a great and exacting game. And what adds a big layer of spice is that you must have a partner playing it with you. Which is why getting stuck into your partner at the table, after you perceive they have imploded, just doesn't wash. You are in this together! Hard as it may be to do, for goodness sake, save your chagrin for later (and by then, most often, a sense of perspective will have set in). Nobody is served by such disputation, least of all your unedified opponents. We need to have the Gary Player attitude.... this is a tough game, we will enjoy the highlights and stoically plough on through the lowlights. It is significant that the better bridge pairs are usually more emotionally disciplined at the table. Giving each other some slack, as we take on this great and demanding game, is something we should all aspire to.

The last month in Melbourne and across our state has been COVID-19 tough. We have had to postpone our national event, the Victor Champion Cup and were very fortunate to obtain another date both from the point-of-view of the venue, Marvel Stadium and its football schedule and that of the national bridge calendar, because the great Coff's Harbour congress regrettably had had to be cancelled. We are now on again from August 25-29 and bookings can be made on My ABF (those who were already booked and wished to stay put have been simply transferred to the new dates). The task of getting VCC 2 up and running was a big and taxing exercise, made possible by our wonderful Convenor, Geoff Schaller, who has been a tower of strength.

Finally, during July, we will have our Victorian teams in Perth for the Australian Championships. As I write, we have fingers and toes crossed that the teams can enter W.A. otherwise some form of online arrangement hopefully will be possible. We

wish all our team members every success in this demanding competition, which is the pinnacle of Australian team bridge. I want to thank our hard-working Match & Tournament Committee, very ably led by Jenny Thompson and also comprising Michael Phillips, Leigh Gold, Di Smart, Dave Thompson and Bec O'Reilly, for the extraordinary job they have done with the organization of our team selection and planning in a disrupted year, as they also do with every aspect of our state events. Their work is greatly assisted by Laurie Kelso, our "living treasure" with regard to every aspect of organization of bridge at a national and state level.

**INFORMATION FROM MATCH AND
TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE**

Australian National Championships - POSTPONED

ANC 2021 and Joan Prince Memorial Swan River Swiss Pairs, 10-22 July postponed

The ABF Board, the NECs, Chair of the Tournament Committee, and the ANC and Joan Prince Memorial Swan River Swiss Pairs Tournament Organisers, met today to take stock of the escalating border closures and lockdowns. It is with heavy hearts that we have made the decision to postpone the 2021 ANC and Joan Prince Memorial Swan River Swiss Pairs scheduled for the 10-22 July. The current restrictions and border lockdown make it impossible to run the event in this timeframe.

Robina McConnell has contacted the Perth Conventions Centre and confirmed the new dates 6-18 November, 2021.

The Joan Prince Memorial Swan River Swiss Pairs will be held on 6-7 November followed by the ANC Teams and Butler.

We look forward to seeing you in Perth. The positives are that the weather will be warmer and more people will be fully vaccinated.

We thank you all for your understanding.

Victor Champion Cup

Due to the move of this event to August an online super congress was run very successfully on The Queen's Birthday weekend. Results of The Queen's Birthday Online Swiss Pairs were :

- 1st Martin Bloom & Nigel Rosendorff
- 2nd Kim Frazer & Jamie Ebery
- 3rd Niek Van Vucht & Graham Wakefield.

On Sunday the winners of The Queen's Birthday Online Swiss Teams were:

- 1st Ian Robinson, Andrew Braithwaite, Neil Ewart, Arjuna De Livera;

- 2nd Dave Thompson, Robert Fruewirth, Pauline Gumby, Warren Lazer;

- 3rd: Daniel Mao, Ming Zhang, Charles Huang, John Yang.

VBA Calendar

With the move of the VCC to August there will be some changes to the competition VBA calendar. The Victorian Open Pairs, which commence on 28th July will now be changed to a 5-week event instead of 6.

There will be 3 weeks of preliminary play followed by 2 weeks of finals. This format has recently been used in the Thwaites Mixed Pairs.

This change leaves the Wednesday night before the VCC free of state bridge to allow set up of the venue for the organisers.

In addition, there may be some change to Congresses previously planned for August and the GNOT final date will need to be moved.

Any changes will be advised as soon as confirmed.

RALPH'S COLD BOTTOM

Ralph drew my attention to this hand from the VBA Open (Matchpoint) Pairs:

Dir: West	♠ AQ54		
Vul: Both	♥ 752		
	♦ AJ		
	♣ AKQ10		
♠ 732			♠ 98
♥ A94			♥ KQ86
♦ K962			♦ Q753
♣ 953			♣ 764
	♠ KJ106		
	♥ J103		
	♦ 1084		
	♣ J82		

Look at the North/South hands and decide which contract you would like to be in.

If the defenders don't cash 3 rounds of hearts on the first three tricks then your contract should be 4 spades, if they do cash hearts then 4♠ should fail and your best hope is to play in 3NT, hoping that the Heart break is not too bad, or maybe the suit is (or will be) blocked, or maybe the suit won't be led at trick 1.

Given that the North South hands are flat I would think it more likely that the hearts break evenly, so 3NT is a reasonable choice having seen the hands.

If North opens 2NT then the South hand is so very flat, I think a raise to 3NT is the sensible option (perhaps checking for a 5 card Major first).

So, it was unfortunate for Ralph that he chose 3NT and got a cold bottom. Every other pair bid and made 4 spades. 9 tricks (but only 9) tricks can be made in NT and obviously those defending 4♠ did not cash their hearts so ten tricks were made.

Such are the vagaries of a pairs Matchpoints tournament.

COMING THIS MONTH

Saturday 3rd July 2021
Kattery Congress Matchpoint Pairs
Keith Kat, +61428130844,
Email: keithkat64@gmail.com

Sunday 4th July 2021
Kattery Congress Sunday Swiss Pairs
Keith Kat, +61428130844
Email: keithkat64@gmail.com

Saturday 10th July 2021
Rye Beach & Dromana Swiss Pairs
Margaret Morgan, 0447806699
Email: mjmorgan@bigpond.net.au

Sunday 18th July 2021
Dendy Park Swiss Pairs
George Gasper, 0417 052 246
Email: dpbridge.com

Friday 23rd July 2021
Yarrowonga Aline Cooper Matchpoint Pairs
Jan Hackett, 0429 017 822
Email: hackett5@bigpond.net.au

Saturday 24th July 2021
Yarrowonga Swiss Pairs
Jan Hackett, 0429 017 822
Email: hackett5@bigpond.net.au

Sunday 25th July 2021
Yarrowonga Swiss Teams
Jan Hackett, 0429 017 822
Email: hackett5@bigpond.net.au

EDITORIAL
DEE HARLEY

In the Hills at Emerald, on a Tuesday night in June we had some weather you wouldn't ever want to see again! The rain lashed and the wind howled and blew down a few trees in our street, but we were very lucky, there was no significant damage done to our property. We did troop down to our near neighbour's houses to help remove trees which had run amok.

Nearby Olinda is a bit higher up in the hills, and they appear to have had the worst of the storm. We were not totally unscathed, we were left without power, without Internet and without a phone signal. Luckily, we have a generator, so we were able to power the fridge, and some ultra-bright lights which Anna borrowed from her daughter, and amazingly, the television, which worked seamlessly as we have a satellite dish which provided the signal we needed. Not at all too bad really, although cables running across the floor meant you had to be nimble on your feet.

We were a bit worried as we had entered the Queen's Birthday bridge competition to be held at the weekend. They say love will find a way. Well we found a way to play real bridge from a camper van located at a nearby house which had electricity, but no internet – Our camper van internet had to suffice.

The conditions were less than ideal, and the later in the day it was, our over-pressed internet could not cope with the flow of bids and bytes, and our responses blossomed into minutes rather than seconds, even just playing a card defeated the system. We did get through to the end of the day, but I am going to blame the conditions for our less than spectacular performance.

Covid has been an ever-present danger for about 18 months now, and still we are suffering. As part of the build up to the ANC, we have had to sign up to G2G (Good to go) which will allow us entry to Western Australia, but even as I write we do not know whether we will be able to make the journey, and preparations have been made to allow us to compete using Real Bridge at the VBA instead of travelling to Perth to play face-to-face.

As well as preparing for the ANC, I like to play bridge challenges. I have a regular 4 who play on a daily basis. This facility in BBO is under Challenges, and is a Group Challenge. You select the BBO Names of your players and you will be included automatically. Issue the challenge and off you go. You have 72 hours in which to complete the set (we usually have 8 boards). Each person logs in individually and undertakes the challenge, when the last person has completed the last board, then the results are issued. The robots do some strange things in bidding and in play, but you kinda get used to it. The results appear under History, so you can see your progress. Here is a typical hand from today's challenge.

Dir: South	♠ 1083	
Vul: Both	♥ 63	
	♦ KJ863	
	♣ J32	
♠ KQ9754		♠ 62
♥ KJ108		♥ Q9542
♦ 10		♦ A54
♣ 105		♣ Q64
		♠ AJ
		♥ A7
		♦ Q972
		♣ AK987

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
			1♣
2♠	Pass	Pass	2NT
All Pass			

too strong for 1NT I opened 1♣ West Robot bid a pesky 2♠ described as "Aggressive weak jump overcall 6+♠, 4-10 HCP". Being stuck for a bid I invented 2NT and got to play there. West Robot found the indiscernible lead of the ♥J which I won and played a diamond. East won that and naturally played a spade through. I hopped up ♠A and cashed the diamonds and led the ♣J from dummy, East Robot obligingly covered with the ♣Q and when the ♣10 dropped I emerged with 11 tricks. That was a fun hand! Should have bid game!

PLAY PROBLEM #19 - SOLUTION

This was a nice small slam for you to make:

Dlr: West ♠ 543
 Vul: E/W ♥ KJ10543
 ♦ A8
 ♣ 32

N
W E
S

♠ ? ♠ ?
 ♥ ? ♥ ?
 ♦ ? ♦ ?
 ♣ ?10 ♣ ?

♠ AQ
 ♥ A
 ♦ K76543
 ♣ AKQJ

Lead: ♣10

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
Pass	2♥ ¹	Pass	2NT ²
Pass	3♦ ³	Pass	6NT

All Pass

1 weak

2 forcing relay

3 non-minimum, ♦ high-card feature

To make this slam, you must do things in the right order. You will need diamonds to break 3-2 or to find (rather luckily) the doubleton Queen of Hearts. The sequence to be followed is win the club lead and cash the ♥A, then play a small diamond from hand and play low from dummy. If East wins the diamond and returns a spade (best defence) you win the ♠A, cross to the ♦A and cash the ♥K. By now you will know your fate! The diamonds will have broken or the ♥Q dropped on the second round of hearts, or you are going down...Note that it could be fatal to win the ♦A on the first round as you would not be able to safely cash the ♥K and subsequently lose a diamond trick giving the defence the opportunity to now cash the ♥Q.

TP got it right I suppose, but he didn't specifically mention the opportunity of the ♥Q dropping, but he played the cards in the correct order and said use "common sense". Not something most bridge players are renowned for!

PLAY PROBLEM #20

Here is another small slam for you to make:

Dlr: West ♠ J632
 Vul: E/W ♥ AQ2
 ♦ A6
 ♣ KQJ2

N
W E
S

♠ 8 ♠ 109
 ♥ 4? ♥ ?
 ♦ K? ♦ 7?
 ♣ ? ♣ ?

♠ AQ754
 ♥ K9
 ♦ 985
 ♣ A109

Contract 6♠

Lead: ♦K

There was no opposition bidding.

The play to the first three tricks is as follows:

T1: Win the ♦A (East follows with the ♦7)

T2: ♠2, ♠9, ♠Q, ♠8

T2: ♠A, ♥4, ♠3, ♠10

So, East has a guaranteed trump trick. Can you still make this?

Send me the best line please:

dee_harley@hotmail.com

Suit Combination:

This month you hold AQ32 opposite your partner's 7654

How would you play this suit for 3 tricks?

Assume you have plenty of entries to both hands.

Decide how you would play before peeking at the [Solution](#) on [P6](#)

♣♣♣ **KNAVE OF CLUBS** ♣♣♣
ELIMINATION CHALLENGE

When playing a hand, the presence of extra trumps in both hands, after the opponents' trumps have been drawn, is a sign to look for an elimination play. In that theme, today's hand has a 100% safe line of play, but it is hard to find (that is your challenge!).

The auction was made difficult for South by the 4♠ preemptive raise. With only three apparent losers, South took the push to 5♥ and received a spade lead.

Before reading on, you might like to see if you can find the sure trick line for 11 tricks.

At the table, declarer trumped the spade, played a trump to the jack, ruffed the last spade and drew the last trump. When ace, king and another club failed to set up a third club trick, the last club was ruffed, and declarer lost two diamonds.

Teams:

Dlr: East

♠ 86

Vul: All

♥ J1073

♦ Q72

♣ J852

♠ Q10754

♠ AKJ932

♥ 84

♥ -

♦ J965

♦ K84

♣ 93

♣ Q1064

♠ -

♥ AKQ9652

♦ A103

♣ AK7

Bidding:

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

Lead: ♠5

If you don't ruff the club but throw a diamond instead, the king and jack of diamonds will be

in the other hands so two clubs and one diamond will be lost. With extra trumps, it looks right to try an elimination play but not the obvious one.

Have you spotted it yet?

After ruffing the lead, draw trumps and cash the ace and king of clubs. Now play a trump to dummy and lead the last spade discarding a club. If East wins and returns a club, discard a diamond. If West has the ♣Q, the other diamond will be discarded on the ♣J. If East wins and returns a diamond, just play small to ensure only one diamond loser. If West wins the spade and leads a small diamond, just run it round to the ♦10. If he leads the ♦J cover it with the queen and again you are safe. If West wins and returns a club (not possible on the layout shown, but may happen on a different layout, then you would have a guaranteed club discard available. Try all the minor suit layouts to see that this line is 100%.

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

This month you held AQ32 opposite your partner's 7654

Needing 3 tricks You obviously need to find the King onside and the suit breaking 3-2. I think I'm missing something, as SuitPlay offers you the play low towards low (from either hand), or play the Ace, then lead up to the Queen.

On the low to low line - If you lead the 2 from dummy, with a holding like K8, RHO will be tempted to play the King, but I don't agree with leading low from hand and playing low from dummy - even if it is a singleton King you still only make 2 tricks in the suit. At least make 2 tricks that way instead of only one if you took the immediate finesse and lost to the singleton King, but this this question is about making 3 tricks and you need the suit to break 3-2 with the King onside - or a misdefence.

So my answer is lead the 2 from dummy and then play low to the Queen.