

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

December 2014

Editor: Bill Jacobs

THE SOAPBOX Ben Thompson



For a few weeks last month I had to use a cardholder. The one I used was incredibly simple (a varnished block of wood with an angled groove cut into it) and incredibly cheap (it was obviously homemade). And for me, incredibly helpful.

As we all know, the bridge community is on average somewhat older and wiser than the general population and we therefore have somewhat more health issues in our community.

At the VBA we try to help our injured, impeded and disabled members in a variety of ways small and not so small. For example, we have cardholders, lamps, small heaters and fans, different chairs, different bidding boxes, an accessibility ramp and an accessible toilet. And sympathetic directors and players.

The Sale Bridge Club community has been absolutely extraordinary in its support of a member with Motor Neuron Disease. If you don't know the story, watch the piece their local TV news ran at <http://youtu.be/PAB56MbdeAk>.

What do you do at your club for members with health issues? The best ideas are often so simple and so easy to implement that we all shake our heads in simultaneous awe of the brilliance and wonder that we didn't all think of it. Please share your club's brilliant solutions

with all of us. Email us at the VBA, or better yet write an article for this bulletin!

As I end my 2nd year as President, I would like to wish every bridge player in Victoria a happy festive season, and a very healthy 2015. And of course the perfect gift for a bridge player – the winning guess for a two-way finesse, redeemable at your convenience!

VICTORIAN WOMEN'S AND SENIOR'S TEAMS - 2015

In 2015, the entry to the playoffs to select the teams to represent Victoria in the Women's and Seniors' Interstate Championships will be determined by Victorian Qualifying Points, VQPs, as is the case for the Open playoffs.

Here are some more details.

1. The women's and seniors' playoffs will be pairs trials rather than teams trials, with the top three pairs being invited to represent Victoria.
2. All VQPs you earn in open events, even if won with a partner that does not qualify for the Women or Seniors category, will count towards your total.
3. In addition, VQPs will also be available for contestants of the Victorian Women's and Seniors' IMP Pairs Championships. These events will be held on Tuesday evenings: the Women's on 17, 24 and 31 March; the Seniors' on 24 and 31 March and 7 April (subject to sufficient entries). (Note: the different dates are to accommodate any seniors contesting the playoffs to select the Australian Seniors' team.)

The VQPs awarded in these events will only count towards the women's and seniors' playoffs respectively; they will not count towards qualification for any other playoff.

David Morgan,
Chair, Match and Tournament Committee

FOR STARTERS
Bill Jacobs

Playing in a Swiss Pairs event at a Congress, you are dealt:

♠ KJ9 ♥ K875 ♦ AK10 ♣ K93

Your side only is vulnerable, and your left-hand opponent, the dealer, opens 1♥. This is passed around to you:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♥	Pass	Pass	?

You are in the *balancing seat*. At least once, every deal, a player gets put in the balancing seat. LHO makes a bid, followed by two passes, and this player needs to decide whether to end the auction with a pass, or keep the auction alive with a bid.

How do you balance here?

Balancing decisions are somewhat different from decisions in the direct seat. To illustrate this, let's hypothetically remove the ♦K from your hand, so it is now:

♠ KJ9 ♥ K875 ♦ A102 ♣ K83

What would you do with this 14-point hand if 1♥ were passed around to you? You'd probably want to bid something, 1NT for choice, to avoid simply ending the auction in 1♥. Whilst in direct seat (a 1♥ opening on your *right*), such a hand should be passed, it's too darned final to pass out 1♥ in the balancing seat.

An excellent guideline when making these balancing decisions is to *mentally add 3 HCP* to your hand, and bid accordingly.

So with the hypothetical 14 HCP hand, you treat it as a 17-pointer, and balance with 1NT, a bid that in direct seat would indicate about 16-18 HCP.

With your *actual* hand, 17 actual HCP, you mentally add 3, and it is now treated like a 20 HCP hand. Such a hand is too strong for a 1NT overcall: instead you should double first, and then bid notrumps over partner's response.

Here's how the auction continues:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♥	Pass	Pass	D'ble
Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

LHO leads the ♥Q, and this is what you see:

♠ 654	
♥ A	
♦ 943	
♣ A97654	
♥Q	N
	S
	♠ KJ9
	♥ K875
	♦ AK10
	♣ K83

You win the ace, performce, and stop to count your top tricks. 2 in hearts, 2 in diamonds, 2 in clubs = 6. You need 3 more, and clearly clubs is the place to find them. Even if you have a club loser, you should be able to develop the suit for 5 tricks, which will bring your total to 9.

Usually the right way to develop tricks in a suit where you have length in one hand and relative shortage in the other is to clear out any honours from the short side, before crossing over to the long side. In this case, you play to the ♣K at trick 2: RHO follows with the ♣10 and LHO with the ♣2.

Then you play a second club from your hand, LHO pops up with the ♣Q, and you ...?

There's only one club to be revealed, the ♣J. Who has it? If RHO has it, and is about to have to play it, then you can win ♣A, and take all the rest of the clubs: 6 club tricks will deliver you an overtrick in your 3NT.

But if LHO has it, and was trying to fool you a little by playing the ♣Q first, then winning the ♣A will be a disaster. You would then have to lose the next club trick to LHO, and those 3 winning clubs in dummy are stranded, with not an entry in sight to reach them with.

Playing *low* on the second round of clubs is the safe approach. You will lose this trick, but then dummy's clubs will be good, and you will have a carefully preserved entry to them, via the ♣A.

This was necessary, the full deal being:

♠ AQ8	♠ 654	♠ 10732
♥ QJ1093	♥ A	♥ 42
♦ Q5	♦ 943	♦ J8762
♣ QJ2	♣ A97654	♣ 10

♠ KJ9	N	♠ 10732
♥ K875	W	♥ 42
♦ AK10	E	♦ J8762
♣ K83	S	♣ 10

Points to remember:

- After 1 of a suit is passed around to you, mentally add 3 HCP to your hand, and then bid as you would have in the direct overcalling seat. For notrump bids, you call as follows in the balancing seat:

12-15 HCP	Bid 1NT
16-18 HCP	Double, then bid notrumps next
19-21 HCP	Jump directly to 2NT (abandon the unusual 2NT)

Similarly, you can make overcalls and takeout doubles with a little less than the normal required strength.

- To compensate, your partner needs to mentally *subtract 3 HCP* when reacting to your balancing bid.

Take the actual North hand on this deal: a nice 8 HCP hand with a long suit. But North subtracted 3 HCP and treated it as a 5-count, and hence the simple minimum response to your takeout double. But when you then showed 16-18 HCP, North was happy to try for game.

- Treat your entries with tender loving care.

TEST YOUR BIDDING

The Balancing Seat

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♦	Pass	Pass	?

As we saw in "For Starters", the rules are changed when in the balancing position, in particular after LHO's opening bid is passed around to you.

Partner might have had to pass with quite a good hand, potentially up to as many as 15 HCP. With no 5-card suit, nor the appropriate distribution for a takeout double, he is forced to pass, and it is your job to "protect" his position, by making a bid on possibly less than the normal required strength.

The normal guideline is to mentally add 3 HCP. We have seen how this affects the ranges for your notrump bids. It also means that overcalls at the 1-level might be on as few as 5 or 6 HCP, and overcalls at the 2-level can be made on about 8 HCP as a minimum.

Takeout doubles can be shaded in both strength and distribution. With the right shape, you only need about 9 HCP. And if you have an opening hand, without a stopper in their suit, you might have to double even though you don't have the appropriate shape.

Finally, *jump* overcalls are no longer weak: there's little point in pre-empting when the opponents have already settled at the 1-level. Instead, jumps show intermediate strength: about 13-16 HCP and a good 6-card suit.

How do you balance with each of the following hands?

- (a) ♠ Q943 ♥ Q102 ♦ 85 ♣ AJ105
- (b) ♠ Q3 ♥ AJ32 ♦ AQ6 ♣ 10864
- (c) ♠ K10543 ♥ 72 ♦ A65 ♣ 763
- (d) ♠ 72 ♥ Q9865 ♦ K43 ♣ J86
- (e) ♠ 104 ♥ A9 ♦ K42 ♣ AQJ976
- (f) ♠ K1054 ♥ 3 ♦ Q542 ♣ K763

Solutions over page.

TEST YOUR BIDDING - SOLUTIONS

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♦	Pass	Pass	?

(a) ♠ Q943 ♥ Q102 ♦ 85 ♣ AJ105

D'ble. Balancing bids are rarely things of beauty. This one is no exception – you make this double mentally holding your nose. But do you think you will get a good score by letting them play 1♦? Adding 3 points gets you to 12, and the shape is right for double.

(b) ♠ Q3 ♥ AJ32 ♦ AQ6 ♣ 10864

1NT. 13+“3” = 16: check. Balanced: check. Diamond stopper: check. This is a clear 1NT balance. As long as partner is singing from the same hymn-sheet, all will be well.

(c) ♠ K10543 ♥ 72 ♦ A65 ♣ 763

1♠. Another uninspiring hand that nevertheless doesn't want to sell out to 1♦. As you've doubtless gathered, this balancing thing only works out if your favourite partner also reads the VBA Bulletin.

(d) ♠ 72 ♥ Q9865 ♦ K43 ♣ J86

Pass. There are limits to balancing, and this one has crossed them. The strength is truly marginal, and you have every right to fear that the opponents might just switch successfully into spades, should you keep the auction open.

(e) ♠ 104 ♥ A9 ♦ K42 ♣ AQJ976

3♣. A prototype for the intermediate jump overcall: good 6-card suit and around 13-16 HCP. If you catch partner with decent values, he may be able to bid 3♦, asking for a diamond stopper – and you will be happy to oblige.

(f) ♠ 4 ♥ Q3 ♦ KQ1065 ♣ K10942

Pass. It's a decent hand, but you need to let sleeping dogs lie here. Where are the majors? Partner didn't bid one, so it's a fair bet that the opponents have a fine fit in at least one of them. Let LHO enjoy his time playing 1♦.

CONGRESS RESULTS**Waverley Congress***Swiss Pairs*

North-South

- 1 P. Bolling – T. Johannsen
- 2 R. Greenfield – K. Pearson
- 3 C. Arul – I. Inpanathan

East-West

- 1 R. Quirk – J. Quirk
- 2 P. Blankfield – S. Read
- 3 T. Tanasinghe – L. Saoud

Restricted Swiss Pairs

- 1 L. Gorham – M. Munro
- 2 R. Davies – L. Yoffa
- 3 A. Robins – J. Norwood

Swiss Teams

- 1 J. Yang, Y. Jian Lu, K. Zhang, D. Nie
- 2 F. Vearing, D. Sampson, D. Hollands, R. Jacobs
- 3 A. Braunstein, S. Lester, A. Branicki, L. Branicki

South Gippsland Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 M. Obenchain – A. Talbot
- 2 C. Senior – G. Mealyea
- 3 G. Johnson – C. Chakravorty

Swiss Teams

- 1 S. Klofa, R. Gallus S. Weisz, M. Gurfinkiel
- 2 M. Callander, S. Collins, P. Hill, J. Hill
- 3 L. Griffiths, M. Clarke, D. Clarke, K. French

Kooyong Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 A. Mill – J. Howard
- 2 S. Lester – E. Hynes
- 3 A. St Clair – D. Harley

Bridge at Tivoli Congress*Swiss Pairs*

- 1 M. Gurfinkiel – C. Hughes
- 2 L. Saoud – T. Ranasinghe
- 3 R. Stewart – A. Krolkowski

Queen's Slipper Nationwide Pairs*Event 21 (November 1)*

- 3 B. Pollard – E. Farren (Frankston)

TOWARDS A FINER CONGRESS SATURDAY Bill Jacobs

In the 1980s, I played Congresses. The best of them was the Geelong Congress, played over the Queen's Birthday weekend. Saturday was the Pairs: qualifying and final. In the qualifying, we were seeded into sections to play a matchpoint duplicate session, Mitchell movements.

The top two or three pairs in each direction of each section would qualify for the final, the next group for the plate, and so on for the consolations. The final was a barometered Howell (I have memories of a huge sheet of paper hanging over the interior balcony to display the current rankings), and prizes were available for placegetters in all sections.

It was a splendid format, because even if at the halfway point of the event you were out of contention (having failed to qualify for the final) there was still plenty of play for: you could win the Plate or one of the Consolations.

But in recent decades, this format has been discarded and replaced by Swiss Pairs: typically six 8-board matches, with IMP scoring against a datum. The opaque Australian masterpointing system is the reason for this change: there are many more masterpoints available from these matches than from playing matchpoint duplicate movements. People like masterpoints!

For example, if you score 50% in a matchpoint duplicate, you will probably get zero masterpoints. But if you have 3 wins and 3 losses in your 6 Swiss Pairs matches, you may earn around 0.50 masterpoints. The discrepancy is huge.

Swiss Pairs with IMP scoring is a loathsome form of the game. It is driven primarily by luck. If you don't hold good cards, or are the victim of an opponent's dodgy making slam, you can kiss the match goodbye. Over half the deals of a match are irrelevant: you will be swapping 2 or 3 imps at most depending on the partscore outcome. The swingy games and slams will determine the result.

After one or two matches like that, you will start to wonder if your Saturday could have been spent more enjoyably elsewhere.

Matchpoint scoring does not have this problem. Each hand counts equally, and even with a poor hand, you may be able to earn an excellent score by holding down the overtricks. And that lucky slam bid by the opponents? A near-bottom perhaps, but it's just a single board – it won't ruin your day.

So it is wonderful news that the ABF Masterpoint scheme has been updated to address the anomaly between Swiss Pairs and matchpoint duplicates. Now if you play in a congress matchpoint event, and score 50% in both the qualifying and final sessions, you can expect to earn around 0.50 masterpoints: in fact you will earn something as long as you score at least 45% in a session. And outright awards will be added to that, with the top half of the field earning outright masterpoints.

Congress organizers take note! Switch your Congress Pairs event to a matchpoint qualifying and final. It will make for a smoother operation: no frenzied scoring and re-seating between matches; far fewer boards to replicate.

And if nothing else, it will get me back to the table.

UPCOMING CONGRESSES

VBA Summer Congress

Saturday 6th Dec, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
Sunday 7th Dec, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue: Victorian Bridge Association
 131 Poath Road
 Murrumbeena

Contact: Cathie Lachman, 9530 9006

Enter: <http://vba.asn.au/>

Kings & Queens

Friday 26th December to Friday 2nd January

Venue: 20 Spink St
 Brighton

Contact: Stephen Lester, 9530 6622

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

THE DEFAULT
Bill Jacobs

Dealing with their transfers

Transfer bids are the best thing since sliced bread. They are so commonly played that the transfer bid is taught to intermediate players, or even to those who have recently come out of a beginner course.

What tends to get lost in all the enthusiasm is that transfer bids do have a downside. They provide the opposition with an extra option. Consider this auction:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1NT	Pass	2♥	?

The 2♥ bid is alerted, and to absolutely no one's surprise, is explained as a transfer: showing at least 5 spades. With your favourite partner, what is your agreed meaning for a *double* of 2♥? Or for a bid of 2♠?

One sensible scheme is:

D'ble: hearts, at least 5 of them
2♠: takeout of spades: short in spades and support for the other 3 suits

Other schemes are possible: for example you could play that the double is takeout of spades, and 2♠ is like a Michaels cue-bid, showing 5-5 shape in hearts or a minor.

And yet another approach, which makes sense if your opponents are using a weak 1NT, is to have double showing simply an opening hand, with 2♠ as takeout of spades.

Whatever choice you make, it is probably sensible: the key being that you and your partner are on the same 'sensible' wavelength!

Where does the default come in? Well nowadays you may run into *this* auction:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♣	Pass	1♥	?

1♣ is announced as 2+ clubs, and 1♥ is alerted¹ and explained as showing at least 4 spades. This raises the question of how you should deal with this particular transfer.

Transfer responses to 1♣ are gaining a lot of traction. They offer tremendous advantages by putting an extra step into the auction. But like their cousins – the transfer responses to 1NT – they do also give an extra option to the opponents. There are a couple of popular schemes for dealing with transfer responses to 1♣. One of them, after 1♣ - 1♥, is:

D'ble: hearts, at least 5 of them
1♠: takeout of spades: short in spades and support for the other 3 suits²

And there is your default: it is perfectly sensible to play the same defensive methods over transfers after 1♣ as you do over transfers after 1NT. That way, you only have to learn and recall one set of methods.

To be sure, this might not be the optimal way to play. There are differences between the 1NT transfers and the 1♣ transfers: for example in the latter case, the transferrer may only have 4 cards in the major, not 5. So some choose to play that "accepting" the transfer is actually a natural bid.

But if you want to get started defending against the 1♣ transfer, the default is the way to go!

This concludes the series on defaults. Here are the other defaults in summary:

- *When in doubt, treat partner's bid as forcing*
- *Unknown 5NT bids mean: "pick a slam"*
- *When an artificial bid is doubled, an immediate return to our agreed trump suit shows the weakest possible hand*
- *Doubling them when they have bid and raised a suit is never for penalties below the game level*
- *After our natural notrump bid, 4NT is quantitative (asking partner to bid 6NT with a maximum), not ace-asking*

¹ In fact, it should be pre-alerted: you should be informed of the use of transfer responses to 1♣ before the start of the round

² Including clubs, even though opener started with 1♣. 1♣ transferrers usually promise only 2 cards for their opening bid, and some nouveau players will even open 1♣ on a singleton, so that their 1♦ opening can promise 5 cards.

**MELTON BRIDGE CLUB
INTERCLUB WITH SUNBURY
Rosemary Hare**

Melton Bridge Club was affiliated only last year and has eight members so far. We are keen to encourage people to play in the Melton area and have recently gained a grant from Melton Council to assist us to do this.

Back in May, the Sunbury Bridge Club invited us to an interclub event as they also are a quite small club. We were keen to reciprocate but our club rooms at the time were unsuitable to host another club. We have however now moved to new premises in the Arnolds Creek Community Centre in Melton West and felt that we would be able to arrange an evening.

So on Tuesday 18th November we got together and we managed to get 5 tables and so played a five table Howell. It was a great night with Michael and Terry from Sunbury taking out first place.

We would like to thank the Sunbury Club for assisting us with the idea for the grant in the first place and for help with the process and ongoing technical help.

It's great that the smaller clubs can help each other and would like other smaller clubs perhaps to also think about a night where we could get together.



Melton Bridge Club meets on Tuesday evenings, 7 pm, at Arnold's Creek Community Centre, Claret Ash Boulevard, Melton West. For more details, phone Rosemary Hare on 5368 7228, or email at rosegreen2@fastmail.com.au.

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

State

Susan Dunstan Kings & Queens

***State**

Sybil Bowman Geelong
Gillian Campbell Moonee Valley
Denis Upsall Bendigo

National

Margaret Barrett Geelong
Jill Haworth Rye Beach

Life

Edward Hynes Kings & Queens
Alan Johnston South Gippsland
John Puusepp Moonee Valley

Gold Life

Hal Gordon Frankston
Jeremy Rosen Bridge Fanatics

Grand

Chelliah Arul Waverley

Cute bridge terms

finette: a finesse of an 8 or 9
honorific: all the finesses are failing

THE TWELFTH TRICK

Dir: South ♠ 10
Vul: All ♥ A1053
♦ A862
♣ J632

N
S

♠ AQJ752
♥ Q4
♦ 5
♣ AKQ8

West	North	East	South
			2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

Playing in the Victorian Pennant, aggressive bidding has landed you in 6♣. West leads ♦Q.

Plan the play. Solution over page.

THE TWELFTH TRICK Bill Jacobs

	♠ 10				
	♥ A1053				
	♦ A862				
	♣ J632				
♠ K964	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 83
N					
W E					
S					
♥ K98		♥ J762			
♦ QJ109		♦ K743			
♣ 74		♣ 1095			
	♠ AQJ752				
	♥ Q4				
	♦ 5				
	♣ AKQ8				

You don't want to think about what might happen in clubs divide 4-1: let's give ourselves the best chance should they divide 3-2.

Win the ♦A and run the ♠10 at trick 2. If West takes ♠K, win the return, draw trumps and claim. You have 5 discards you can make from dummy on the spades: that will be 3 hearts and 2 diamonds. Dummy's remaining diamond will be ruffed in your hand. Simple!

If ♠10 holds the trick, come to your hand with a trump and ruff a spade low. Play another trump to your hand and ruff another spade with the ♣J. Now ruff a diamond to your hand, draw the last trump, and take the rest of the spades, conceding a heart trick at the end.

STATE EVENT RESULTS

Victorian Pennant

- 1 B. Thompson, W. Jacobs, L. Gold, J. Ebery
- 2 A. Krolikowski, E. Moskovski, R. Stewart, A. Czapnik
- 3 K. Kat, B. Kat, A. St Clair, D. Harley, J. Magee, T. Strong

Country Teams Championship

- 1 G. Ridgway, A. Robbins, D. Newland, D. Newlands
- 2 J. Barbour, J. Kuiper, G. Nicholson, A. Drury
- 3 M. Wylie, J. McTaggart, B. O'Dea, B. O'Dea

Victorian Individual

- 1 Phillip Knightley
- 2 Larry Attwood
- 3 Eva Samuel

GETTING TO KNOW THE LAWS Bill Jacobs

All About Dummy

Aside from being given an insulting name, we Dummies have remarkably few rights. It's a good thing it only happens to us a quarter of the time!

Here is the sum total of what Dummy is allowed to do during the play of the hand:

1. Prevent declarer from playing from the wrong hand.
2. When declarer fails to follow suit to a trick, ask declarer whether he has any cards in that suit.

That's about it. *After* play has been completed, dummy can draw attention to an irregularity, for example a revoke.

The list of what dummy is not allowed to do is longer:

1. Dummy may not draw attention to an irregularity during the play.
2. Dummy may not initiate a call to the director during the play.
3. Dummy may not participate in any way in the play, nor communicate anything about the play to declarer.
4. Dummy may not look at a defender's hand (if a defender *shows* dummy his hand, then that is ok).
5. Dummy may not inform declarer that he has an earlier trick turned incorrectly (however dummy may correct declarer's mis-turning at the time that trick was completed).

Oh and one more thing. Once the auction is over and you are destined to be Dummy, if there has been some faulty explanation of your bidding by your partner, now is the time to volunteer the fact, before the opening lead has been made. This includes partner failing to alert one of your artificial bids. Say something like: "my 2♥ bid should have been alerted: it was a transfer."