

# Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

March 2021

Editor: Dee Harley

**VBA PRESIDENT  
CHRISTOPHER LEACH**



I am writing at the end of a difficult week when Melbourne and Victoria were locked down for five costly days. On a much brighter note, next week, the first vaccines will be administered across Australia and one hopes for a steady roll-out from that point onwards. Evidence is fast emerging that those countries where the vaccine programmes have been going strong for a few months, are seeing drastic drops in infection rates amongst the vulnerable, and, more and more, the signs of a steep drop in mortality. The indicators are good, even as new variants of the virus lower the overall effectiveness of the original vaccines in preventing illness, but not, according to our lawmakers and medical experts, their ability to protect against serious illness and death.

As a game globally at the front line of exposure to the COVID crisis due to our demographic skewed very heavily to over-60's, bridge officials and players the world over, are taking a keen interest in these

developments. Our game remains in pieces in Australia, especially in Victoria, due to the continuing tension between various factors, which only large-scale vaccination will really solve. Some of you with serious health issues, understandably, are wary about any return to "in person" bridge until fully vaccinated, others find masks a real turn-off and others are relaxed to a greater or lesser degree. Many still play on-line, but others are "over it" completely and crave the permanent return to the traditional social experience for which our game is so noteworthy. Many will "mix and match", even after vaccination.

Across the state, participation in online games is broadly dropping in line with the numbers returning to face-to-face (F2F) sessions. A quick verbal survey of clubs showed me that in metropolitan Melbourne the attendance numbers in some larger club are 50-60% of normal, with most owners awaiting a vaccination programme before anticipating an improvement on that, while in the country some clubs have virtually everyone back playing F2F.

Many issues remain, which will be played out over the months to come. Among these are the extent to which online bridge will remain a component of clubs' regular offerings. Furthermore, there seems to be a move to graduate away from the BBO platform to the more realistic and social Real Bridge, but, as with everything else in the COVID flux, this is not uniform, and I am told some club members are perfectly happy with BBO. Other questions which will resolve slowly as the year proceeds is whether all congresses in Victoria will return to F2F and, finally, what will occur on the national scene, with decisions regarding Victoria's premier event, the Victor Champion Cup (traditionally held in June) to be made over the next month.

Flux everywhere, but light at the end of the tunnel in the form of a vaccinated bridge cohort. Only then, can we properly assess what this terrible social upheaval has done to our great game. In the meantime, we have seen changes in some of our most successful

large clubs. At Dendy, Boris and Miriam Tencer have retired, leaving George Gaspar as sole proprietor, assisted by his wife Judy. At Bayside, our fastest-growing club over recent years, Peter and Jan Clyne are moving on. Gardenvale club is seeking new premises. Other changes will emerge elsewhere, I feel sure. The best wishes of the VBA Council are extended to these successful and longstanding contributors to our bridge scene who are retiring and to those taking the reins into a new era.

So...sic transit... and we look forward to the exciting year that is already unfolding, albeit with some trepidation.

### VBA BULLETIN SUMMER LEAGUE

#### League Tables Final Positions

Team	Played	Net Imps	VPs
Half-Baked	7	178	100.55
International	7	96	89.46
Geelong	7	35	76.44
Bloom	7	-17	66.40
Hidden Dragon	7	-56	62.14
Logans Runners	7	-76	55.33
LINKS	7	-84	55.21
Mac	7	-76	54.47

Team	Played	Net Imps	VPs
Marks	7	151	95.56
Northern Lights	7	99	87.64
bilski	7	68	82.15
Klofa	7	49	77.64
JEMM in the Ruff	7	-32	67.06
Four Desperados	7	-112	50.33
White	7	-114	49.89
T-Delights	7	-109	49.73

Team	Played	Net Imps	VPs
Lingua Franca	6	95	74.60
Veering	6	56	71.24
4Belles	6	54	69.90
Herded Cats	6	15	60.94
The gentry	6	-45	55.40
Young ones	6	-55	50.12
Social Distancers	6	-120	37.80

The VBA Summer league has reached its climax. Half-Baked who had a small lead going into the last round managed a big win, and have retained the green division title.

Congratulations to Anna St Clair, Elizabeth Havas, Keith and Brigitte Kat and Dee for winning a hat-trick of titles now.

Marks, in the guise of Martin Willcox, Kevin Chan, Andrzej Krolikowski, Shirley Collins, and Ron Lel cleaned up the blue division.

Lingua Franca (Kumara Nainanayake, Sena Hasthanayake, Adrian Beaumont, Dell MacNeil, and Warren Cousins) came with a late run to win the yellow league in a close finish.

Thanks to all competitors for playing in such a good spirit this league.

What is next? – I think we are returning to live bridge, and in that vein, I propose to stop organizing the VBA Bulletin competitions to allow live bridge the chance to recover (see [editorial](#))

### VBA BULLETIN SUMMER LEAGUE HANDS WHICH CAUGHT MY EYE

One of the joys of BBO is being able to search for hands played and to be able to replay them using the Bridge Movie option.

I had a look at some recent matches and came across some fascinating material.

This next hand was taken from the match between Hidden Dragon against Mac.

You hold ♠K10986 ♥K ♦KJ ♣AKJ42. Nice hand thanks you! You are 4<sup>th</sup> in hand vulnerable against not. The bidding gives you a problem however as it goes 1♥ p 3♠ to you! 3♠ is described as 8-11 0-1♠ (A splinter bid). You mull this over and then realise that your system has the solution! Your system states that 4♣ shows clubs and spades (non-leaping Michaels style).

South rudely ignores you and bids 4♥ which is passed round to you. Now I can hear the white angel on your left shoulder saying "enough already! We are vulnerable and I have told my hand to partner who is a sound judge of such situations."

You lean forward to click on Pass when the wee red devil on your right shoulder pipes up: "look at those solid spades! And the wonderful club suit! And just perhaps partner did not recognise my 4♣ bid for what it was...bid one more to clarify the position absolutely" hmmm. Partner only needs something like ♠Qxxxx ♥xxx ♦Qxxx ♣xx and we have an easy ten tricks?

Who do you listen to? What would you do? This hand I found in the hand records from Mac v Hidden Dragon 4♠x -4 was worth 1100 to Mac, in the other room 4♥ drifted two down.

The full hand was:

Dlr: South      ♠ 5  
 Vul: Both      ♥ A942  
                   ♦ Q653  
                   ♣ Q765

♠ 732	N	♠ K10986
♥ J87	W      E	♥ K
♦ 10987	S	♦ KJ
♣ 1083		♣ AKJ42

♠ AQJ4  
 ♥ Q10653  
 ♦ A42  
 ♣ 9

Bidding (Room1):

	W	N	E	S
				1♥
	Pass	3♠	4♣	4♥
	Pass	Pass	4♠	Dbl
	All Pass			

Lead: ♥A

Bidding (Room2):

	W	N	E	S
				1♥
	Pass	2♥	3♠	4♥
	All Pass			

Lead: ♦10

I really feel for the Hidden Dragon who listened to the wee red devil...

Bridge is all grasping the slightest opportunities. Peter Gill showed his class on the following hand playing for Bloom against Half-Baked:

Dlr: South      ♠ AQ86  
 Vul: Both      ♥ 1098763  
                   ♦ A  
                   ♣ A4

♠ K4	N	♠ 9752
♥ QJ42	W      E	♥ A
♦ QJ7654	S	♦ 1032
♣ 9		♣ QJ732

♠ J103  
 ♥ K5  
 ♦ K98  
 ♣ K10865

Bidding (Room1):

	W	N	E	S
				Pass
	Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
	All Pass			

Lead: ♦6

Bidding (Room2):

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

Lead: ♦6

I held the North hand and opened 1♥. Partner bid 1NT - up to 10 HCP and absolutely denying 3♥. I had a pessimistic moment - failed to appreciate the strength of my hand and passed. Partner took the 8 tricks and we thought no more about it...Meanwhile there was more action in the other room as West chipped in with a wee red devilly 2♦ bid. This launched South (Peter Gill) into 3NT. The lead was taken by the ♦A and Peter played ♣A and another club to the King when East split honours (wishing to play a diamond through perhaps...) and West pitched the ♦4. The ♣10 brought a ♠4 discard from West, East winning and playing a second diamond which was ducked. Peter won the third round of

diamonds and played the ♠J covered by the ♠K and ♠A leaving this position

Dlr: South      ♠ Q86  
 Vul: Both      ♥ 1098  
                   ♦  
                   ♣

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 975      ♠ 975  
 ♥ A      ♥ A  
 ♦      ♦  
 ♣ 73      ♣ 73

♠ 103  
 ♥ K5  
 ♦ -  
 ♣ 86

♠ -  
 ♥ QJ42  
 ♦ QJ  
 ♣ -

A spade to the 10 followed by the ♣8 then the ♣6 threw East in the lead into the spade tenace for 9 tricks. Nice play! In retrospect 4♥ is a pretty good contract, although as the cards lie it can go down on a club lead and eventual club ruff.

I suspect that the white angel was quite vocal in this hand from International v Geelong:

Dlr: East      ♠ K4  
 Vul: N/S      ♥ J96  
                   ♦ KQ76543  
                   ♣ 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q3      ♠ Q3  
 ♥ AK8432      ♥ AK8432  
 ♦ 8      ♦ 8  
 ♣ A1062      ♣ A1062

♠ A1098752  
 ♥ -  
 ♦ AJ9  
 ♣ J87

♠ J6  
 ♥ Q1075  
 ♦ 102  
 ♣ KQ954

Bidding (Room1):

W	N	E	S
		1♥	1♠
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Lead: ♠A

Bidding (Room2):

W	N	E	S
		1♥	1♠
2♣	2♦	3♣	3♠
4♥	4♠	5♥	5♠

All Pass

Lead: ♣K

The auctions started the same way, but rapidly diverged. International ended up making 5♠ in one room and 4♥ in the other for a double-game swing of 14 IMPs.

**RETURN TO LIVE BRIDGE  
JENNY THOMPSON**

Please note that the following events are being played "live" in the club:

The **women's and seniors qualifying** event starts on March 1<sup>st</sup> for three consecutive Mondays.

The **Felicity Beale Mixed Teams** on Wednesdays for 3 weeks starting 10<sup>th</sup> March

This will be followed by the **Butler Open Pairs** on 31<sup>st</sup> March to 21<sup>st</sup> April.

On a Monday night there is a state red point 2-week **Board a Match** event.

Bec O'Reilly is running **youth bridge** at the VBA on Tuesday nights if anyone is interested please contact Bec on [Rebeccaoreilly7495@gmail.com](mailto:Rebeccaoreilly7495@gmail.com).

**EDITORIAL  
DEE HARLEY**

So the vaccine has finally started to roll-out. Covid-19 will always be with us but life is starting to return to a new kind of Normal!

I have been thinking about how to follow up from the VBA Bulletin competitions which I have been running, and I have had some great feedback from the players.

Very many players told me that they have enjoyed the competition, which is heartening.

I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to the captains who managed to arrange each and every single match (sometimes in the most trying of circumstances).

I have also had some negative feedback:

"There are no Prizes"

"It's getting boring now."

"There should be a repechage to allow teams who have been knocked out (of the cup) to get back in..."

"You should organise a RealBridge competition"

Well, I understand that we didn't have prizes

- a) No one provided any
- b) I don't want to encourage people to use underhand methods.
- c) The prize is the joy of playing.

Boring? Hmm I don't understand that one! How can bridge be boring?!

I will add that I spent several man-days programming my computer to cope with the league results and fixtures and to present the "simple" layout of the league tables. I enjoy that sort of thing, but I do not plan to continue at the moment, as live bridge is returning to our lives.

I would suggest that those of you who wish to continue to play online matches – select one of your opponents against whom you had a good and enjoyable match – and play them again – on a weekly basis if you like.

I have been involved in a couple of such regular matches and they really are great fun. Especially if you use "Barometer" scoring as it shows your results on each board as soon as it is complete.

Online bridge is as real as the face-to-face version, but it is fantastic that we are able to meet up in the clubrooms again.

Bridge is a great game. I love it, whether it be online or face-to-face, so I would encourage you all to play as often as you can.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, or would like to share a hand or two..

[dee\\_harley@hotmail.com](mailto:dee_harley@hotmail.com)

**PLAY PROBLEM #15 - SOLUTION**

Kitty, TP and Denny sent me correct solutions.

Dlr: South            ♠ AJ76  
 Vul: Both            ♥ Q109  
                           ♦ A32  
                           ♣ K42

♠ 93?	N	♠ 2
♥ ?	W            E	♥ 4?
♦ Q?	S	♦ 4?
♣ ?		♣ ?

♠ KQ854  
 ♥ K82  
 ♦ 765  
 ♣ A7

Lead: ♦ Q

TP however came up with something I did not expect: His solution:

Play 3 rounds of trumps, eliminate ♣ suit by playing ♠AK and ruff the last ♣. Now exit with a ♦. If they cash 2 tricks in ♦, you are through as you will get ♥ or a minor suit return. Either way there will be only one ♥ loser. You need not guess the location of ♥J.

On the other hand, if the defenders cash only one ♦ trick and play a ♣, forcing you to remove one of the 2 trumps remaining, you can ruff in the hand and discard a ♥ loser from the dummy. Now you must play a heart to set up a heart trick. If you play a diamond instead, you will be forced with a minor suit which will cost you your last trump. You will lose control.

There is another way. If you receive a club continuation after cashing only one diamond trick. Adopt "discard and discard" technique. Discard a ♦ from hand and discard a ♥ from dummy (or discard a ♥ from the hand and a ♦ from dummy). There is no room to go wrong now.

Nice one TP.

**PLAY PROBLEM #16**

Time for a slightly more challenging problem for you. This time you must make 6 ♠ on the lead of the ♥K. You win and draw 2 rounds of trumps with West discarding a diamond on the 2<sup>nd</sup> trump. Can you see how to make your contract now?

Dlr: South            ♠ AKQJ10  
 Vul: Both            ♥ 8  
                           ♦ 64  
                           ♣ Q10987

♠ 7?	N	♠ 32
♥ K?	W            E	♥ J?
♦ 2?	S	♦ 4?
♣ ?		♣ ?

♠ 654  
 ♥ A643  
 ♦ AK75  
 ♣ AK

Lead: ♥K

Summary: the trump suit has broken 4-1 with East having the length – this might mean he has shortage elsewhere...If I told you that East was not void in any suit can you guarantee to make the contract?

Send me your solution please:  
[dee\\_harley@hotmail.com](mailto:dee_harley@hotmail.com)

**SUIT COMBINATION**

A suit combination came up in the VBA Bulletin Summer League. This answer surprised me.

You: AK82    Partner: 1094

How would you play this suit for 3 tricks (i.e., for 1 loser)?

Assume you have plenty of entries to both hands.

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

**WHEN TO UPGRADE  
ANDRZEJ KROLIKOWSKI**

When should you upgrade your hand? The following hands were played in a recent tournament:

HAND 1: You are East holding:

♠Kx ♥Ax ♦AJTxx ♣AQxx

Partner opens 1♠ you bid 2♦ and you hear 2♥ from partner. You bid 3♣, fourth suit forcing to game and opener bids 3NT.

Your bid..... and how do you justify it?

At our table East bid 4NT obviously quantitative and opener (rightly) passed.

Making 12 tricks playing in 4NT was a flat board.

Here are the full hands:

Teams:

Dir: West

♠ 976

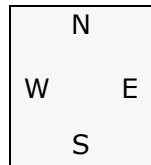
Vul: None

♥ J982

♦ K965

♣ 82

♠ QJ1032



♠ K8

♥ KQ103

♥ A5

♦ 4

♦ AJ1082

♣ K103

♣ AQ54

♠ A54

♥ 764

♦ Q73

♣ J976

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	Pass	?	

Did you consider that opener bidding 3NT showed values in ♣ so your ♣AQ54 are looking like maybe 4 tricks. Your Major cards are excellent fillers and your 5 card ♦ suit could also be an asset – although it sounds as if it may be opposite shortage. Playing in a suit contract there would be no losers if partner has a singleton... perhaps he has 4 clubs – in which case 6♣ should be a good spot, or a singleton ♦ honour would make 6NT a likely spot. Here is where a 5NT bid should say “pick a slam” partner. Knowing that East must have great controls and at least one top spade honour West might decide to try 6♠ which appears to be a fine contract.

HAND 2:

Another example where you need to consider the evidence available, your holding and your features.

Teams:

Dir: East

♠ K942

Vul: E/W

♥ 103

♦ 963

♣ K1064

♠ J5



♠ AQ63

♥ K9652

♥ AQJ

♦ A542

♦ KQJ8

♣ A5

♣ 87

♠ 1087

♥ 874

♦ 107

♣ QJ932

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
		1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♥	Pass

So what evidence was not considered? Both players missed an opportunity.

1. The opener should have asked why is my partner forcing to game by bidding 3♣ when I have the strong hand?

2. Is opener bidding 4♥ as a shut-out bid? 3♥ would have been a better bid? Obviously forcing and leaving some room for further investigation.

3. The responder should also have considered further action because of the fit shown and the fact that opposite a STRONG hand responder held 3 Key Cards in Hearts. Responder should have moved to investigate slam.

A better auction might be:

W	N	E	S
		1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

East describes his balanced hand with 2NT showing 18-19. 3♣ asks and 3♥ shows 3 hearts. Cue bids and Keycard can get you to the good heart slam.

**♣♣♣ KNAVE OF CLUBS ♣♣♣  
HAVING NO OPTIONS**

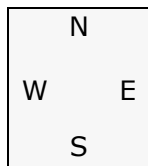
When this hand was played in a club game, the field was mainly in 4♥. This is the correct place to play the contract but about one third of the field failed to find the eight-card heart fit and played in 3NT. Those who played 3NT from the North side were successful probably due to a spade lead. Those who played it from the South side failed as West has no problem finding the killing diamond lead. In the normal contract of 4♥, there are two leads which can defeat declarer. A club lead will allow East to play both the queen and ace of clubs Then a diamond back to West will allow the killing club ruff. However, nobody should lead anything other than a spade when partner has bid them. Notice that the 1♠ overcall is perfectly normal. The suit has sufficient intermediates to stop any danger from a bad break and penalty double and there are enough high cards even if though this is near the bottom of the range for an overcall. It is important to bid the spade suit if at all possible and partner will often draw inferences from the failure to bid spades when one might.

Pairs:

Dlr: North  
Vul: E/W

♠ Q54  
♥ AQ6  
♦ K4  
♣ K10843

♠ 72  
♥ J85  
♦ A10972  
♣ 652



♠ K10986  
♥ 72  
♦ 8653  
♣ AQ  
♠ AJ3  
♥ K10943  
♦ QJ  
♣ J97

Bidding:

	W	N	E	S
		1♣	1♠	2♥
Pass		3♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass				

Lead: ♠7

On the ♠7 lead, dummy should play small since playing the queen has no advantage with

the king known to be with East. East also plays small and declarer wins the knave. Declarer follows the standard declarer plan of drawing trumps first with the third round being won by the king. The knave of clubs is now led and run to East's queen. East knows exactly what the spade position is and needs to get West in to lead another one through the queen. The only hope is to lead the ♦8 (to suggest not returning a diamond) and, fortunately, West can win with the ace. It is clear to West to return another spade. Even if it is unclear what is happening in spades themselves, the defenders clearly have no diamond tricks because of the lead of the ♦8 and declarer is playing clubs so the defence does not need to. Thus, even a defender, who is only half awake, should find the spade return setting up the defensive spade trick before the ♣A is knocked out.

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

How do you best play this suit for three tricks?

You: AK82    Partner: 1094

One player finessed twice – 75% shot or thereabouts right?

A line which occurred to me was cash Ace and King, and playing a third round to the 10 which caters for any 3-3 break, and any doubleton or singleton honour.

Neither of these lines is correct...Apparently it is correct to run the 9. When it loses then you cash the Ace and then run the 10 (or finesse the 8 if you decided to unblock the 10 on the previous round. This line only loses to QJx(+) offside and the chance of 3 or more tricks is a whopping 77.6%.