

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

February 2022

Editor: Dee Harley

FROM OUR PRESIDENT



All of Victoria's bridge playing community will be only too aware that normality continues to escape us despite fervent hopes to the contrary. Late in 2021 the Omicron COVID wave hit with alarming rapidity and pushed us largely online once again, though, as I write, the case numbers are receding, and things are looking better. There is hope that the first scheduled national event, the Gold Coast Congress, will proceed F2F as planned. One can only hope that the combination of third and even fourth doses of vaccine, new anti-viral treatments and ever more people gaining natural immunity through exposure to the virus, we will see the desperately hoped-for normality returning as 2022 rolls out.

At the VBA, it may truly be said that 2021 was a momentous year, with a big step forward in the long march towards finding durable solutions to long-existent problems, despite a lively internal debate on the appropriate

manner to expedite the changes necessary. The VBA Council is holding a strategy retreat on 31 January and it is hoped the pathway to making 2022 the year of the long-awaited breakthrough will be laid down at that session.

In an important decision which recognises the increasing role of online bridge and the need to acknowledge the desire of people to play permanently online in some form, the VBA Match & Tournament Committee has elected to make all VBA Monday night competitions for 2022 online. The Monday night events are the VBA club championship events and are traditionally of a slightly less onerous standard than Wednesday evenings and therefore an excellent opportunity for aspiring pairs to dip their toes in the water and play at a better standard than usual. Given the ease of access to this competition now, I hope we will see lots of newcomers. Bookings for the moment are on the VBA website, but may move to My ABF at some point in time.

Finally, I want to advise that the national governing body, the ABF, is in the throes of a major "navel gazing" exercise to reform its internal structure and strategy. I am one of the two Victorian delegates. While our other long-serving rep, Kim Frazer, will retire this year after many years of wonderful service to the ABF, most recently as Secretary. I want to pay tribute to Kim's devotion and excellence and also to advise that a process will be notified to the clubs soon which will determine Kim's replacement.

BRIDGISMS

I'm not sure whether glory or master points is first on the list, but I know learning to play better is definitely last. (Eddie Kantar)

I'd like a review of the bidding with all the original inflections. (Anon)

The average defender operates in a fog of uncertainty. (H. W. Kelsey)

EDITORIAL

As this is the first opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year I will do so although with Omicron galloping though Australia and many of our games back on-line it does all feel as though we've all been here before.

That said I am rather a fan of on-line bridge. I like being able to make a cup of coffee as and when I choose to, and my home is the most comfortable place I know. I also like not having to travel and the inclusion that online bridge gives us – everyone can play even those too infirm or too financially challenged to go far from home can enjoy an online game. Yes, the downside is the lack of physical interaction with other players but when we are in this position, I see no point in moaning about what might be and instead enjoy what is.

This month I played in the Summer Festival of Bridge with one of my regular partners, Liz Havas, in both the Mixed Pairs and the South West Pacific teams without having to step a foot out of Emerald!

I felt I wasn't playing my best and the reason soon became apparent when I was whipped off to hospital to have a ruptured appendix removed.

A week later I am well on the road to recovery and looking forward to an exciting year of bridge ahead. Next month there are several Victorian congresses being played 'live' and the first large scale face to face event in years will held in the Gold Coast, I can't wait! Let us hope that this is the beginning of the end of all restrictions in the game we all enjoy so much.

SUMMER FESTIVAL BY CHRIS HUGHES

Victoria failed to shine in this year's Summer Festival, nominally from Canberra but played this time on the Real Bridge platform.

One exception was Chris Hughes (playing with Sydneysider Kim Morrison) and Neil Ewart (playing with Canberran Ian Robinson) who were narrowly beaten in the Seniors final by a heavy hitting team which included Ron Klinger

who had the added advantage of playing as a team of six.

This was a board that continues to haunt...

Dir: South	♠ QJ7											
Vul: Both	♥ QJ72											
	♦ J7											
	♣ AQ93											
♠ K632		<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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		♠ 9653
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ 4			♦ Q9862									
♦ AK1054			♣ K842									
♣ J107												
	♠ A109854											
	♥ AK108											
	♦ 3											
	♣ 65											

Bidding:

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

2♣ this was several things – either a balanced or natural game force or a 3-card spade raise [9+]

When 2♥ came back to North, North had to decide between a known 4 – 4 heart or a 5 -3 spade fit [where the spades could possibly be more than a 5-card suit but it would be difficult to definitively show the sixth spade as South will always be reluctant to play no trumps with no minor suit stoppers]. So, North selected the 4 – 4 fit which normally plays better than a 5 – 3 fit.

West led the ♦A and another diamond which South ruffed. With a normal 3 – 2 heart distribution, the hand looked easy. Play 2 rounds of trumps ending in dummy and take the spade finesse. However, the bad breaks in each major and careful defence made the hand impossible to make [in fact declarer went 2 down].

After ruffing the second diamond, a low spade from hand towards the North hand is a good safety play protecting against most distributions. However, if the defence is very

careful, this play still fails on the actual takeout. [It is a very interesting problem. West must duck the spade to the queen and East must not ruff to have any chance for the defence. Then East must be careful what they discard on this trick and then on the next two tricks when a spade to the ace and a third spade to the king is played].

It takes an initial club lead by West to beat 4♥ on this deal outright.

When the Thomson team were North – South they had a different auction and arrived in 4♠. West led ♦A and a diamond which South ruffed. With a sixth spade to protect against the diamond force from the defence, 4♠ made easily. It takes an initial singleton heart lead by West to beat the contract. Then, when in with the spade king, he must underlead his diamonds to partner's queen to get a heart ruff. The defence will then get the ♣K for their 4th trick. [this defence is from the 4th dimension of course and wasn't found].

In Summary, what is the moral of the story.

1. Play in the game that has the best chance of making -
2. Don't lead from a suit headed by the ace and king!
3. Try to have the Bridge Gods on your side!

Congratulations also to Jamie Thompson and Robert Fruewirth who were narrowly beaten in the National Open teams Championship semi-final.

REPRESENTATIVE BRIDGE

It isn't long until the trials for Victorian representation at the ANC begin. The women's and senior's are decided over the course of several weeks play and a final deciding weekend, but the open team selection is different. The winners of the Pennant make up one of the contending teams by right as does the Butler and highest ranking VQP team.

VQPs (Victorian Qualification Points) are the method for ranking teams that apply to enter the Victorian Open Team Playoff which is on April 2nd & 3rd, as the VQP team. The successful open team will be representing

Victoria in Adelaide in early July. VQPs are awarded for major placegetter in Congresses and Regional Championships.

The number of VQPs available for a given event depends on the strength and size of the event – with bigger events attracting more VQPs.

The points scheme is structured to enable the most successful Congress players to participate in the playoffs while ensuring the overall integrity of the selection process.

Anybody with VQPs is eligible to nominate for the VQP Team and you can team up with anybody else with VQPs. The entered team with the highest VQP total will be offered the nomination to contest the one-weekend play off to become the Victorian Open Team, competing against the Pennant Team, the Butler Team and a Pairs Qualified team.

Please refer to the VBA Website under the heading of INFORMATION for the 2021 list of points earned by congress players.

The VBA congratulates Ben Kingham and Sylvia Gluck who were the highest VQP earners for 2021. Please put your entry into mtc@vba.asn.au by 12th March 2022.

SUIT COMBINATION

This month you hold AJ53 opposite your partner's K942

How would you play this suit for 3 tricks?

What percentage of the time would you expect to make 3 tricks?

Assume you have plenty of entries to both hands.

[Solution on page 7](#)

PLAY PROBLEM #25 SOLUTION

Last month you were in an easy 4♠

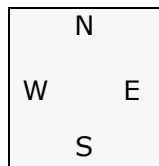
Dlr: South ♠ A1086543

Vul: E/W ♥ 43

♦ K107

♣ 6

♠ ?		♠ ?
♥ AKJ?		♥ ?
♦ ?		♦ ?
♣ ?		♣ ?



♠ QJ972

♥ 982

♦ AJ2

♣ AJ

Contract 4♠ Lead: ♥A

Bidding:

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

The defenders cash the ♥A and ♥K and lead a third round of hearts (the ♥Knave). East followed suit to the first two tricks with the ♥10 and then the ♥7 (playing standard carding). Over to you.

Well some things here are a given, namely; East started with only two hearts and there is only one outstanding trump, the spade king.

If I ruff with anything other than the ♠A and the ♠K sits with East then I will be forced later in the play to rely on a diamond finesse. I could play off all my winners and see if I get any hints on the opposition discards but there is one guaranteed way that I can make this contract.

On the play of the third heart at trick three I do indeed ruff with the ♠A then I play to my ♣A and ruff a club leaving me with my three diamonds in each hand and no clubs and no hearts. Now I lead a spade and whichever of my opponents holds the ♠K is tidily endplayed. If they lead anything other than a diamond I have a ruff-and-discard and if they lead a diamond both hands hold a tidy finessing position...simples!

PLAY PROBLEM #26

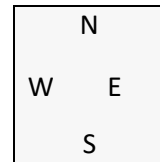
Dlr: West ♠ J4

Vul: E/W ♥ J6542

♦ Q876

♣ 82

♠ ?		♠ ?
♥ ?		♥ ?
♦ ?		♦ ?
♣ ?		♣ ?



♠ AKQ10532

♥ -

♦ K4

♣ KJ43

Contract 4♠ Lead: ♥A

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	1♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads the ♥K and you ruff in hand. How do you intend to make the contract?

PLAY A HAND WITH KEITH KAT

Dummy

♠ 985

♥ AJT65

♦ J

♣ KJ32

You

♠ AK764

♥ Q4

♦ 852

♣ A76

South is declarer in 4♠ after the bidding went:

South North

1♠ 3♠

4♠ All pass

West leads a small club on which you place the ♣J which holds. [Solution on page 5](#)

UPCOMING CONGRESSES

February 5th Yarra Valley Swiss Pairs
 February 6th Yarra Valley Swiss Teams
 Bayswater Senior Citizens Hall 10am start
 \$40 per player per day

February 12th ERBA Swiss Pairs
 Sale Bridge Club 12 noon start
 \$35 per player

February 13th ERBA Swiss Teams
 Sale Bridge Club 10 am start
 \$40 per player includes lunch

February 13th Dendy Park Swiss Pairs
 Dendy Park Bridge Club 10am
 \$50 per player includes Lunch

All entries may be made via the [BridgeUnlimited Website](#) or by contacting the clubs

PLAY A HAND WITH KEITH KAT - SOLUTION

Contract 4♠, West leads the ♣5. You play the ♣Jack, which wins. What next?

It seems a simple matter to play off the ace and king of trumps, and then take the heart finesse.

You will only go down if East has the heart king and the third trump, but in that case they'll draw dummy's third trump and then cash three diamond tricks.

You can guard against that happening by drawing just one round of trumps before taking the heart finesse. Now the tempo is with you. If East wins the king of hearts and leads a second round of trumps, you win and play on hearts, discarding your losing diamonds on dummy's winning hearts.

If instead East attacks with diamonds, you still have trumps in dummy with which to trump the second round of diamonds. After trumping the second round of diamond, you can then draw one more round of trumps before playing your second heart to dummy's ten...and discarding your third diamond on one of dummy's winning hearts.

(ed: What if the heart finesse wins -(first time?)

TRAINING WITH THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN

It takes a lot of skill to play for Australia, but what some people perhaps do NOT realise is that it takes considerable time and effort and dedication. As NPC I have provided some examples of situations where players should know what a double means.

I have a sheet of 75 or so doubles which may arise in everyday play, and have tasked the women to agree with their partner the meaning of each double.

I will show just four of these here to give you the idea – try with your regular partner and see if you agree what the final double means. The only right answer is where you and your partner agree. Contact [me](#) if you would like to see the full list. Be aware it may take hours to complete!

What does the final double mean? Answers should be takeout (state whether it shows two places to play), penalty, values, or something more descriptive.

1	W - Pass Dbl	N - Pass	E - Dbl	S 1♥ 2♥
2	W - Dbl Dbl	N - 2♥	E - Pass	S 1NT (12-14) Pass
3	W - Dbl Dbl	N - 2♥	E - Pass	S 1NT (15-17) Pass
4	W - Dbl	N 1♠	E Dbl	S 2♠

COVID CLUB CRISIS BY GEOFF SCHALLER

Yarra Valley Bridge club recently experienced its own little Covid Crisis and came out the other side, not much worse for the wear. But I think what we learned along the way might offer some comfort and direction for other clubs that experience something similar.

We started last year with full table screens costing several thousand dollars and cards played in Barometer so that they weren't passed around. Then as time went by, the screens departed, normal movements took over, and gradually, more and more members discarded the masks (I did). Everyone had to be double vaxed to play, bikkies were jettisoned, members QR scanned, temperature checked and questioned on the way in. Social distancing applied, so were safe. Weren't we?

One Wednesday recently, one of our more sociable ladies visited her daughter and grand-children up country a bit. She then played Bridge Thursday night and Friday afternoon. Naturally she must say hello to everyone and single handed, keeps the club gossip trail alive. Well, she set this one bristling! On Saturday she was feeling off so smelling a rat, she took one. Nothing. Hmmm. On Sunday, full blown cold symptoms so she took another test and it showed weakly positive. (I digress to explain that later on Sunday day she took a PCR test which came back the day after, strongly positive.) This in fact was the first lesson: RAT tests are no good until Day 3-4 and you are symptomatic. Thank goodness we had the weekend to discover all this!

On the Sunday she had the good sense to contact the club President, who quickly contacted all the Thursday and Friday players and the committee. Bloody hell. What should we do? Well, we took to the "A" word. Out of an Abundance of caution, we cancelled Monday night and then used the "A" word a second time. We sought an Abundance of advice. How should we react, what should we do to the club rooms? Cards? How do we go about this?

The Senior Citizens Committee was no help. They wouldn't answer the phone in case we transmitted the bug to them by osmosis. So we rang the local Council. Their advice was swift and direct. Go to the supermarket and buy regular disinfectant and scrub the place. Should we hire people to do this? No was the answer, we were more likely to do a better job. Hmmm. The only piece of technical direction they gave was that the active ingredient should be 4% or stronger. So this is what we did:

Washed all the door handles, knobs, hat stands, window-sills and anything that protruded.

We thoroughly wiped down any horizontal and vertical surfaces that were exposed,
Took away and washed all the table cloths
Changed over all the cards
Told the members to play on-line for one week

The cards aren't an issue. Our sets change over monthly and the virus cannot live that long out of a host. All the cups and things went in the dish washer, inside of which nothing can live, once it is turned on. Four other ladies became symptomatic on Tuesday (note the lag in timing) and later tested positive by PCR, but no-one else. The source lady and these other four were vehement anti-maskers and were not wearing masks on the two days in question. No-one else caught the bug. I think there is a solid lesson here. Wear a mask!

So if you find yourselves in the same situation as us, remember the advice of Douglas Adams: "Don't panic!". There is a simple way through all this.

The cleaning took us a few hours initially but now we do a 20 minute top-up at the end of each session. We have also mandated masks or you don't play Bridge. Most of us are at an age where sickness like this can have consequences, especially if you are diabetic.

We can survive this Covid frustration with a bit of effort.

♣♣♣ **KNAVE OF CLUBS** ♣♣♣
**ON RELIGIOUSLY APPLYING THE
 MORTON'S FORK**

The auction in this hand was rather agricultural but reached a good contract. North showed 16-18 and a good club suit and then asked for help in hearts for 3NT. At this point, South has only promised enough to make 3NT opposite the 16-18 hand and has considerable unshown extras. To show these, South bid 4NT suggesting a slam. With a long, good club suit, North was happy to accept the invitation. It is easy to make 6NT on a non-spade lead but West led the 9S (clearly either a singleton or top of a doubleton) to the queen and you have to find a way to twelve tricks. While you are thinking about it, I will remind you of John Morton who was the Archbishop of Canterbury in the 15th century. Apart from his higher calling, he also collected taxes from unwilling locals. His attitude to their situation was simple. If they were living frugally, they must be saving money and could, thus, afford to pay taxes. If they were living well, they obviously had plenty money and, therefore, could afford to pay taxes!

Dlr: North ♠ 42
 Vul: E/W ♥ A10
 ♦ KQJ
 ♣ AQJ1092

♠ 98 ♥ 9732 ♦ 98 ♣ K8643	N W E S	♠ KQ73 ♥ J865 ♦ 10542 ♣ 7
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♠ AJ1065
 ♥ KQ4
 ♦ A763
 ♣ 5

Contract 4♠ Lead: ♠9

Bidding:

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

There was no escape for the luckless citizens who were metaphorically impaled on Morton's

fork where both choices led to a bad outcome. What does that mean for this hand? There are only nine top tricks, and you need to develop three and these can come from either clubs or spades. Do you have a plan? Declarer should win the ace of spades, unblock the ♦KQJ and lead a spade towards hand. Now we see East faced with the fork! If he rises with the king, declarer has developed three extra spade tricks. If he ducks, declarer can switch his attention to clubs and drive out the king of clubs knowing that the spade communication between the defenders' hands is broken. The ace of hearts provides the late entry to the club suit. If one was attending to fine detail, one might play the AC then the QC since West has too many clubs for the finesse to be relevant and one might drop a singleton king offside. A Morton's fork coup is unusual in no trumps but here is a heavenly example.

Solution to Suit Combination ([Page 3](#))

This month you AJ53 opposite your partner's K942

Needing 3 tricks: You may think you need to cash the king and take the finesse but there is 100% play in this suit combination for 3 tricks

If you cash the King first there is no way to pick up a 5-0 break on either side and even if both opponents follow to the K you may not recover.

You should make the safety play of cashing the Ace first and then play small to the 9 if both follow. There is no holding that the opposition can hold that can stop you making 3 tricks.