

May 2020

Published by the SA Bridge Federation
<http://www.sabridgefederation.com.au>
email: barbara.travis@hotmail.com

BRIDGE DURING LOCKDOWN

At this stage, the ABF and State organisations cannot predict when clubs will open again.

State and Territory governments will make decisions at different times to lift current restrictions on gatherings. The ABF has decided that it will be up to State and Territory organisations and clubs to heed the advice of their government, and to consider the welfare of all staff and members, before resuming sessions.

In the interim, the ABF Management Committee has established a memorandum of understanding with BridgeBase (BBO) to enable the ABF to establish virtual bridge clubs, which can also award ABF masterpoints. The team led by Peter Cox and Matthew McManus deserve our thanks and appreciation, giving us online tournament bridge options within our own club framework. Some of our clubs will be launching their online virtual clubs from the beginning of May:

SA BRIDGE ASSOC.

Wednesdays and Thursdays at 1pm
Starting Wednesday 6th May
Contact: manager@saba.asn.au
(*Supervised / intermediate to follow soon*)

BRIDGE IN THE CITY (and GLENELG)

Mondays and Fridays at 12.45pm
starting Friday 1st May
Contact: suejohnp@tpg.com.au

BRIDGE AT BEAUMONT

Mondays and Fridays at 1.15pm
starting Friday 1st May
Contact: barbara.travis@hotmail.com

STEPBRIDGE (*already exists as an online affiliated club*)

4 sessions each weekday
3 sessions on Saturdays and Sundays
Website: www.stepbridge.com.au

An Online Teams League was introduced, essentially for those players from the SABF's Thursday night State competitions. Twelve teams have entered League #1, playing three 16-board matches each week, using BBO. This free tournament commenced on Monday 20th April, and will continue for 11 matches. The leading team at the end of the round robin will be the winner. Results are posted on the SABF website: <http://sabridgefederation.com.au/results/2020/teams/online.htm>

Assuming we are still in Lockdown, there will be a second league starting when this one finishes. In all likelihood, the format will be changing to two matches a week, on Monday and Thursday evenings (unless changed by agreement).

If you want further information, contact Sheila Bird by email: sheila.bird@bigpond.com

BRIDGE BASE ONLINE (BBO)

www.bridgebase.com

Feel free to email me if you want information about how to register for and use BBO: barbara.travis@hotmail.com

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS (ANC) : July 2020

The ANC for 2020, which was to have been held at Morphettville Racecourse, has been cancelled.

Adelaide will, instead, host the ANC in 2022. Adel Abdelhamid has agreed to continue as Tournament Convenor, and will be negotiating with Morphettville Racecourse regarding the dates in two years' time.

I will continue to publish a monthly Newsletter, rather than two-monthly, while the Lockdown continues. I hope you enjoy this bridge reading material.

Barbara Travis, Editor

SILICON VERSUS CARBON: IS BRIDGE NEXT?

Manny Rayner wrote this article in 2017.

Ke Jie, the world's undisputed best Go player, just lost 3-0 in his match against AlphaGo, the revolutionary new AI from Google's now world-famous Deep Mind team. What could this mean for bridge players? We try to draw a line from the past to the future...

People started thinking about chess computers very early on – Alan Turing, the father of computing, wrote a paper about the idea in 1953 – but it was a while before the computers started playing well. This resulted in some unfortunate predictions. The philosopher Hubert Dreyfus published a book in 1972 called *What Computers Can't Do*, where he argued that grandmaster-level chess was an example of a task that was impossible for a computer, even in principle. Dreyfus's reasoning wasn't as silly as it seems now. He looked at what human chess players did, and said that it wasn't a matter of following rules, but of using judgement and understanding: since computer programs can only follow rules and had no judgement or understanding, they can't play high level chess.

In fact, Dreyfus turned out to be wrong about chess requiring judgement and understanding. People play chess that way, because our brains are wired much better for judgement and understanding than for deep calculation, but as computer hardware got faster it turned out deep calculation was also a perfectly good way to play chess. The programmers found that every time the machine's hardware speed doubled, the program's Elo rating went up about 50 points. So for a while, they concentrated on building hardware that could calculate moves as quickly as possible. The culmination of this line of work was Deep Blue, the machine which won the famous match against Garry Kasparov in 1997.

Some people said Deep Blue played "just by brute force", which wasn't really fair. The programmers put in some clever ideas. The "evaluation function" (the program's rough estimation of position quality in a position with no immediate tactics) was learned from looking at tens of thousands of master games. Also, when the machine was following its opening book, it thought about how good the players were whose moves it was copying, and was allowed to vary from them if it thought it had calculated a better line.



Ke Jie visibly shaken after losing the challenge match to AlphaGo, May 25, 2017.

But in the end, Deep Blue was the machine that first beat the World Chess Champion because it could calculate more quickly than any of the others, so "brute force" wasn't totally unreasonable either.

ALPHAGO VERSUS LEE SEDOL AND KE JIE, 2016-2017

Strategy game players hated to feel that they were inferior to computers, so they quickly switched over to explaining that chess was the wrong test. It just happened to be the case that chess was simple enough that it could be done by doing a large search. But other games, like Go, wouldn't crack that easily. Things happen much more slowly in Go, there are far more possible moves at each turn, and the Dreyfus arguments about judgement and understanding got wheeled out again in a slightly different form. Here, Dreyfus seemed to have been right, at least up to a point: you couldn't play Go just by calculating, there was too much to calculate.

But in fact, Dreyfus was wrong, and in a much more interesting and fundamental way than had first appeared. As neural net programming made progress and the Deep Learning revolution started in the early years of the 21st century, it turned out that computers could in fact develop judgement and understanding. They didn't need to have their rules painstakingly programmed by human beings: a deep learning neural net in effect develops its own set of rules, by looking at data.

The AlphaGo program learned to play by watching master games, then by playing more games against itself and learning from them. Deep Blue had only learned to optimize an evaluation function which had been constructed by people, but AlphaGo went much further. It learned both the "evaluation function", this time more or less on its own, and also the "move generation function", the rules it uses to choose the next move. So AlphaGo thinks in quite a human-like way. It looks at the position, and using its accumulated experience (you might as well call it "judgement") it immediately sees that one of a small number of moves is likely to be the right one. It calculates out a small number of continuations, and at the end of each one it uses its evaluation function (more "judgement") to estimate how well it will be doing if it reaches that position. Then based on those carefully focussed calculations, it makes its choice.

The hard part is putting in the "judgement", which comes from the deep learning. The Deep Mind team, who are world leaders in neural net technology, were able to solve this extremely difficult problem and advance computer Go from weak master level to World Champion level. Last year, AlphaGo beat Lee Sedol, one of the world's three top players, by a decisive 4-1 score. It has just beaten Ke Jie, the undisputed top player, by a clean sweep.

?? VERSUS ??, 20??

Well: is bridge next? We can of course take the Dreyfus line and say that bridge is different because, unlike chess and Go, it requires real human judgement and understanding. But given what's happened so far, this seems optimistic.

From the point of view of the AI engineer, the thing that makes Bridge hard is that each player has only partial information, so the search space includes all the possible distributions of the unknown cards.

That means a lot more to think about. But as we saw with Go, a very large search space doesn't mean that machines can't do it.

There have been a couple of false starts. GIB, which every bridge player knows, was supposed to become the world's best bridge player a little after the Deep Blue breakthrough. GIB can basically do double-dummy analysis perfectly. It handles partial information by generating a hundred or so layouts that fit what it already knows, doing double-dummy on all of them, and then picking the choice which works in the largest number of layouts. It does bidding by using rules that tell it what the allowed bids are in a given situation, generating layouts that fit the bidding, then again making the choice that works in most layouts.

As GIB's inventor Matthew Ginsberg discovered, this doesn't give you more than a strong amateur player. But if you applied deep learning methods and the same kind of hardware as AlphaGo uses (it runs on a network containing hundreds of processors), I think you would see a huge increase in strength. There are plenty of online hand records to train the neural nets. The "move generation function" would be one net, which looks at the current situation and gives you the plausible candidates for next bid or play. The "evaluation function" would be another net, which looks at a layout and estimates how likely each contract is with single-dummy play – basing everything on artificial double-dummy play is one of the reasons why GIB's judgement has never been that great. If you have enough processors to use, you wouldn't just be limited to creating a hundred layouts to model what you don't know. You could create more layouts to model the other player's uncertainties too, and in effect think about what they are thinking.

Of course, this sketch is simplistic. Building a world-class bridge AI would probably be a big software project that required dozens of person-years of expert effort. But all the pieces now seem to be there. It took 54 years to get from Turing's initial paper on computer chess to Deep Blue, and it took another 20 years to get from Deep Blue to AlphaGo. My guess is that it will take significantly less than 20 years to get to the point where a deep learning system will beat the best human bridge players. It's mainly a question of finding someone who has a strong enough desire to make it happen and enough money to pay for the work. Well: it isn't hard to think of a person who's very rich, has access to hundreds of highly talented AI experts, and likes bridge. I'm starting to wonder why this hasn't already happened.

What might happen to the bridge world, if a world-class bridge AI emerges? Looking at what's happened in chess, it probably would be more good than bad. Since everyone who can afford a basic laptop now has access to a world-class chess player, chess has taken off in many countries where the game was hardly played before. All grandmaster chess tournaments are now broadcast online with reliable real-time computer commentary, so amateurs can follow what's going on.

And, a development that might interest bridge players, chess AIs are good at unmasking cheats. Since the machines know what the right move is in most positions, they can spot when someone is playing too well and give statistically significant evidence that something funny is going on.

The US chess master and computer expert Ken Regan has been a pioneer in this field.

In fact, when you think more about it, a strong AI might be exactly what bridge needs...

MORE ABOUT NEURAL NETS AND DEEP LEARNING

We were going to say that neural nets and deep learning are a highly technical subject that's impossible to explain in a few sentences. Luckily we have Randall Munroe's xkcd strip. He's pretty much nailed it.



Neural nets have been around for a long time. An early success, back in the 90s, was Neurogammon, a neural net backgammon program that became a world-class player. But other things didn't immediately work so well, and neural nets went out of fashion for a while, except in the field of image analysis. About 15 years ago, people found solutions to some technical problems that had been holding up progress, and then things really took off. Google played a large part in making this happen, and they now use neural nets with deep learning for most of their core business. In particular, it's given them very strong performance in machine translation (Google Translate), speech recognition (voice search) and image recognition (Google inverse image search). AlphaGo shows that they're still just starting to exploit this new technology. Another recent success is lip reading. A few years ago, most AI experts were saying that the famous scene from 2001 would be science-fiction for the foreseeable future. It turned out that they were too pessimistic.

Manny Rayner, Adelaide/Geneva

"GO" MASTER CONQUERS BRIDGE

This article, by Jerry Li (China), comes from the IBPA Bulletin, January 2020.

Nie Weiping is the most famous Go player in China; he is the master of masters. His most notable achievement was winning honours in the 1980s by defeating the previously-unbeatable Japanese.

Nie also loves bridge. He is fond of saying, "Go is a wife, but Bridge is a lover!"

Nie learned to play bridge about 50 years ago. He is a very good player, even from a professional player's point of view. Last issue, we saw how Nie, with:

```

♠ ---
♥ A K J 6 4 2
♦ ---
♣ A K Q J 7 3
    
```

bid just 6♣ after the opponents had bid 2♠ - Pass - 4♣, then carried on to 7♣ after the opponents sacrificed in 6♠. After he was doubled, Nie redoubled, appearing to the opponents that he was trying to get them to sacrifice at the 7-level. 7♣ was cold for +2660, and 19 IMPs, when at the other table his counterpart bid an immediate 7♣ over the 4♣ bid. His teammates then sacrificed in 7♣, doubled, for -500.

Here is another of Nie's deals from a top event in 2019.

```

Dir East      ♠ 6 2
Both Vul      ♥ Q 4 3
              ♦ A K 9 6
              ♣ K Q 10 2

♠ A K Q 4      ♠ J 10 9 8
♥ A J 10 8 5    ♥ K 9 7 6 2
♦ 8 7 2        ♦ Q J 10
♣ 8            ♣ 7

              ♠ 7 5 3
              ♥ void
              ♦ 5 4 3
              ♣ A J 9 6 5 4 3
    
```

West	North Fu Zhong	East	South Nie
3♥	4♣	Pass	3♣
Double	All Pass	4♥	5♣

5♣ was a very good sacrifice, since 4♥ was cold on the lie of the cards.

West led the ♠A, then ♠K. He tried to cash the ♥A, but Nie ruffed. 5♣ X, one off, was going to be a good result for Nie-Fu, but Nie didn't give up. He drew trumps, ruffed a spade in dummy, then played four more rounds of trumps. One of West's discards was a low diamond, an expensive mistake as it pushed his partner into a squeeze situation.

The last four cards, with East still to play were:

```

                ♠ ---
                ♥ Q 4
                ♦ A K
                ♣ ---

♠ ---
♥ J 10
♦ 8 7
♣ ---

                ♠ ---
                ♥ K 9
                ♦ Q J 10
                ♣ ---

                ♠ ---
                ♥ ---
                ♦ 5 4 3
                ♣ 3
    
```

East felt the pressure. If he discarded a diamond, Nie could cash the ♦A and ♦K, ruff a heart back to hand, and the ♦3 would be good. If, instead, East discarded a heart, Nie could play a diamond to dummy and ruff a heart, establishing the ♥Q, with a high diamond providing the re-entry to dummy. That was excellent declarer play!

The software AlphaGo has defeated the reigning World Number 1 Go players, and DeepBlue has defeated the reigning World Chess Champion, but no Artificial Intelligence bridge program has yet defeated any world bridge champion. However, perhaps Go Master Nie Weiping has conquered bridge.

HOW WOULD YOU BID?

Bid these hands with your partner.

WEST hands are in this column.

EAST hands are on the other side of this page.

WEST HANDS

HAND 1

Dealer: WEST

♠ void
♥ A K Q 10 6
♦ A 9 7 6 5
♣ A 3 2

HAND 2

Dealer: EAST

♠ A 8 6
♥ Q J 10 6
♦ A J 7 3 2
♣ K

HAND 3

Dealer: WEST

♠ A J 4
♥ J
♦ J 9 6
♣ A J 9 8 5 4

HAND 4

Dealer: NORTH. North opens 1♥

♠ K 6
♥ J 7 5 4
♦ 9
♣ Q J 10 4 3 2

HAND 5

Dealer: WEST

♠ 3
♥ A Q J 2
♦ Q 8 7
♣ K J 5 3 2

HOW WOULD YOU BID?

I recommend that, as you bid with your partner, you write down both players' bids.

EAST HANDS

HAND 1

Dealer: WEST

♠ K 10 9 4 3 2
♥ 9 4
♦ K 8 3
♣ 8 5

HAND 2

Dealer: EAST

♠ Q 7 5
♥ A 8 7 5 4
♦ Q
♣ A Q 8 5

HAND 3

Dealer: WEST

♠ K 9 8 7 3
♥ K 5 4 2
♦ A K 5
♣ Q

HAND 4

Dealer: NORTH. North opens 1♥

♠ Q 10 7 5
♥ A
♦ A Q J 7 2
♣ A K 5

HAND 5

Dealer: WEST

♠ K J 5 4 2
♥ 6 4 3
♦ K 10 9
♣ 10 6

RECOMMENDED AUCTIONS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 8.

A RARE FEAT

From the July 2019 issue of the IBPA Bulletin. Jan Jansma wrote up this hand played by his partner, Chris Willenken.

On the following hand my partner, Chris Willenken, performed a feat I'd never seen before.

<p>♠ 8 3 ♥ 9 5 3 ♦ A K 8 2 ♣ Q 9 5 3</p> <p>♠ 10 7 5 ♥ A K Q 6 ♦ Q 10 9 3 ♣ 10 4</p>	<p>♠ Q 9 4 2 ♥ J 7 2 ♦ 6 4 ♣ K J 6 2</p>	<p>♠ A K J 6 ♥ 10 8 4 ♦ J 7 5 ♣ A 8 7</p>
--	--	---

In the other room, South opened the bidding with a weak 1NT and played there, making 7 tricks.

West	North	East	South
Double	Redouble	1♠	1♣ (1)
Pass	2♣ (2)	Pass	Pass
All Pass		Pass	2♦

(1) 12-14 HCP balanced, or 18-19 HCP balanced, or 15+ HCP with clubs, or any 18+ HCP hand

(2) Reluctant to re-open with double in case partner bid 2♥

West led three rounds of hearts, then shifted to a spade: 5 – 3 – Queen – Ace. From the tempo of East's final pass, Willenken, South, was inclined to believe he had a few values, and those seemed likely to include the ♠K. Accordingly, at trick 5, he led the ♠7 and ran it – East winning with his Jack. Back came a low club in an attempt to get declarer to rise with the Ace, but Willenken trusted his judgement and let it run to the Queen. He then cashed his two spade winners and led the fourth spade.

Had West pitched his heart, he'd have been endplayed on ruffing the third club, so he ruffed in with the ♦10. Willenken over-ruffed and had reached this ending:

<p>♠ -- ♥ --- ♦ A 8 2 ♣ Q</p>	<p>♠ -- ♥ -- ♦ 6 4 ♣ K 6</p>	<p>♠ -- ♥ -- ♦ J 7 5 ♣ A</p>
---	--	--

Willenken now led a diamond to the ♦7, his second intra-finesse of the deal! West won and returned the last heart, but Willenken could over-trump the ♦6 with the Jack, then finesse in trumps for his contract – and a flat board. He lost just 1 diamond and 1 club, along with the 3 hearts at the start of the hand.

Jan Jansma, The Netherlands

AN UNUSUAL AUCTION

I can't recall ever seeing this happen before (from the IBPA Bulletin, January 2020).

<p>Dlr East EW Vul</p> <p>♠ void ♥ K Q 9 7 6 4 ♦ 9 5 4 ♣ Q J 6 2</p>	<p>♠ A K 10 9 6 5 2 ♥ A ♦ A 10 6 3 2 ♣ void</p> <p>♠ Q J 4 ♥ J 10 8 2 ♦ K Q 8 7 ♣ 8 7</p>	<p>♠ 8 7 3 ♥ 5 3 ♦ J ♣ A K 10 9 5 4 3</p>
--	---	---

In the English selection event for their team to play the European Open Teams, Alex Hydes and Ben Handley-Pritchard showed some class on their way to second place. On this hand they achieved a rare bidding coup. Each passed at his first turn to call. Handley-Pritchard, South, also passed at his second call. That was a slow start, but they ended up reaching a grand slam and making it.

West	North	East	South
3♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
Pass	5♣	4♥	Pass
Pass	7♦	Pass	6♦
		All Pass	

Why didn't Hydes, North, come in directly over 3♥? He probably should have done, but was concerned that 4♣ would be taken as showing both majors, even though West had bid hearts. Tactical bids on non-suits are not unknown in response to pre-empts, albeit much more common non-vulnerable.

West's 3♥, Hydes believed, was a one-round force, so East could not pass it. East's raise and West's pass cleared up the situation, so 5♣ now described a big spade-diamond two-suiter.

With support for both suits and four working honours, South jumped to 6♦ and North, with his monster, promptly bid 7♦.

There was nothing to the play. South took the ♥K lead with the Ace and cross to the ♦K, in case all four trumps were with West. When both followed, he could claim, drawing trumps. Out of the 8 tables in play, no one else bid the grand slam.

One wonders if West had raised clubs directly, rather than introducing hearts, what would have happened? Typically, when West raised to 5♣, North bid 5NT as a two-suited takeout bid, then corrected to 6♠ over whatever South bid, showing an ultra strong 6♠ bid. South may well have raised, but everyone passed.

Occasionally, simplest is best!

HOW WOULD YOU BID: Solutions

HAND 1

Dealer: WEST

♠ void	♠ K 10 9 4 3 2
♥ A K Q 10 6	♥ 9 4
♦ A 9 7 6 5	♦ K 8 3
♣ A 3 2	♣ 8 5

1♥	1♠
2♦	2♣
3♦	Pass

2♦ is the right rebid, though you are on the stronger side.
 2♣ shows 6+ spades and 6-9 HCP.
 3♦ shows about 16-18 HCP, 5-5 shape, and 0-1 spade. (With 12-15 HCP, West should pass 2♠.)

HAND 2

Dealer: EAST

♠ A 8 6	♠ Q 7 5
♥ Q J 10 6	♥ A 8 7 5 4
♦ A J 7 3 2	♦ Q
♣ K	♣ A Q 8 5

2NT	1♥
4NT	3♦ or 4♦ (shortage)
6♥	5♥

2NT is a Jacoby 2NT, showing 4+ hearts and a game forcing hand.
 East should show the singleton in diamonds (whatever the methods are) and now West looks for slam.

HAND 3

Dealer: WEST

♠ A J 4	♠ K 9 8 7 3
♥ J	♥ K 5 4 2
♦ J 9 6	♦ A K 5
♣ A J 9 8 5 4	♣ Q

1♣	1♠
2♣	2♥ (forcing, 5-4 in the Majors)
2♣	4♣

After the 2♣ rebid, a new suit is forcing (one round force, not game forcing).
 West rebids 2♣ to show the 3-card support, having already denied 4 cards in spades.
 East should settle for game, given partner's 2♣ rebid (minimum hand).

HAND 4

Dealer: NORTH. North opens 1♥

♠ K 6	♠ Q 10 7 5
♥ J 7 5 4	♥ A
♦ 9	♦ A Q J 7 2
♣ Q J 10 4 3 2	♣ A K 5

3♣	1♥	Double	Pass
4♣	Pass	3♦ (forcing)	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
5♣ (0 key cards)	Pass	4NT	Pass
		6♣	All Pass

3♣ is appropriate opposite a double, knowing there is a fit.
 3♦ - bidding your own suit after a double shows a good hand and must create a game force.
 West could rebid 3NT, but J-x-x-x is a dubious stopper, so 4♣ is a 'better' rebid.
 4♥ and 4♠ were cue bids, agreeing clubs, so now East heads to slam.

HAND 5

Dealer: WEST

♠ 3	♠ K J 5 4 2
♥ A Q J 2	♥ 6 4 3
♦ Q 8 7	♦ K 10 9
♣ K J 5 3 2	♣ 10 6

1♣	1♠
1NT	Pass

West rebids 1NT (2♥ is a reverse, showing a stronger hand).
 East settles in 1NT - minimum hand (rebidding 2♣ should show 6+ spades).

ENGLAND UNDER 20 TALENT

In the IBPA Bulletin, January 2020, Michael Byrne wrote up this hand of interest.

The Gambling 3NT convention, though not cropping up that often, is well-known as a pre-emptive toy and most defenders are familiar with the standard defensive technique of attempting a quick cash out. Leading an ace is the most common way to achieve this, as the sight of dummy normally gives the defence a good idea of what is in declarer's hand and, if they can't cash the suit they have led, they must try an alternative.

This deal was played at a Junior Training event for the England Under 20 team and featured a point of technique rarely seen at the table:

	♠ K Q 8 3 ♥ 10 6 ♦ 9 7 6 ♣ 6 4 3 2		
♠ J 10 7 2 ♥ A J 9 5 3 2 ♦ 5 ♣ K Q	♠ A 9 6 ♥ Q 8 7 4 ♦ 4 3 ♣ A J 10 9	♠ 5 4 ♥ K ♦ A K Q J 10 8 2 ♣ 8 7 5	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i> Pass	<i>East</i> 3NT (1)	<i>South</i> All Pass

(1) Showing a solid 7-card minor, with no outside Ace

South was Henry Rose, at 16-years-old, one of the youngest players on the squad.

Rose led the ♣A, no doubt hoping to find partner with the King over dummy's Queen, and was disappointed with the sight of dummy. With declarer now marked with at least nine tricks (7 diamonds, ♥A and ♣K), there was only one suit to attack and that was spades.

The lead of the Ace would get three tricks at most since, even when declarer has a singleton or void, you can't regain the lead to play another one through the dummy. A low spade is a better shot since, if partner has the King-Queen to length, then declarer will have a guess on the third round.

However, the right card to switch to is the ♠9, which Henry duly found, leaving declarer powerless. He chose to cover with the Jack and Jasmine Bakhshi won with the Queen, returning the ♠3 to the Ace. Now the ♠6 through the 10-7, with North holding the King-8, left declarer with no recourse. (Note that switching to the ♠6 leaves the suit 'blocked' on the third round – try it and see.)

What a classy play from a 16-year-old!

DOUBLE DUMMY

From the IBPA Bulletin, December 2019

This interesting play and defence hand arose during the 18th European Champions' Cup, November 2019. The top ten nations from the European Open Teams Championship plus the defending champions and the host country compete.

	♠ J 2 ♥ A K Q 9 6 2 ♦ 8 ♣ Q 9 7 5	
♠ 10 7 6 ♥ 7 ♦ 9 5 4 3 2 ♣ J 10 4 3	♠ K 9 8 3 ♥ J 10 4 ♦ A 7 6 ♣ A K 2	♠ A Q 5 4 ♥ 8 5 3 ♦ K Q J 10 ♣ 8 6

In the semi-finals, three of the four teams reached 6♥ after North opened and East made a takeout double.

The Dutch declarer won the diamond lead, crossed to hand with a trump and immediately led the ♠2. East rose with the ♠A and played a second diamond. Declarer ruffed, cashed another high trump and advanced the ♠J, which East had to cover with the Queen. When declarer then played a third spade from dummy, the ♠10 appeared from West. That was ruffed and declarer could now claim 12 tricks, with the fourth club being discarded on dummy's high ♠8.

As you have probably noticed, declarer can never legitimately make two spade tricks from this combination if East plays low on the first round of the suit. Declarer has to win with the ♠K. Now the defenders have enough high spades between them to ensure that declarer cannot make the second spade trick.

This line of play and defence was found when the English North declared 6♥ too.

Only Graham Osborne (England) got the spades right from the East seat. Alas, it didn't help his cause, as Franck Multon embarked on the only line of play that would make the contract against any defence given the lie of the cards – a dummy reversal.

Necessarily, Multon ruffed a diamond at trick 2. He then cashed one high trump from his hand and led his low spade. Osborne accurately played low and dummy's ♠K won. Now declarer ruffed dummy's last diamond high and exited with the ♠J. Multon won the trump return in dummy, ruffed a spade, returned to dummy with a high club, then ruffed dummy's last spade with his final trump. Now a club to dummy allowed declarer to score his seventh trump trick with dummy's ♥J, drawing East's last trump in the process. The ♣Q scored declarer's twelfth trick at the end, for 1430 from a superb piece of declarer play.

Ed: A dummy reversal is when you trump using the long hands trumps, then manage to draw trumps with the short hands trumps. Declarer managed 7 heart tricks by trumping 4 times in his hand, then drawing trumps with dummy's 3 trumps!

DOROTHY HAYDEN-TRUSCOTT'S BOLSTIP: SMITH PETERS

Against No Trumps, defender's first spot card, unless it is essential to give count, should indicate attitude to the opening leader's suit. (Bear in mind, this article uses 'natural' signalling: high = encouraging, low = dislike.)

"Suppose West leads the ♠4 against 3NT and sees this:

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>North</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 9 7</p> <p><i>West</i></p> <p>♠ A 10 8 4 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>East</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ J played</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>South</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ K played</p>
---	--

Who has the Queen? West can't tell. If he gets the lead in some other suit, should he try to cash his spades or should he wait for partner to get to lead the suit?

My Tip is this: Against No Trumps, defender's first spot card, unless it is essential to give count, should indicate attitude toward the opening leader's suit.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ 9 7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♥ Q 10 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♦ 7 6 5 4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♣ A K Q J</p> <p><i>West</i></p> <p>♠ A 10 8 4 2</p> <p>♥ 9 8 7</p> <p>♦ K 3</p> <p>♣ 9 7 3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q J 5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♥ K J 6 4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♦ 10 9 8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♣ 10 8 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ K 6 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♥ A 5 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♦ A Q J 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♣ 6 5 4</p>
--	---

South is playing in 3NT. West leads the ♠4 and declarer wins the Jack with the King. He leads a club to dummy (in order to take the diamond finesse). East should play the ♣10 on this trick, meaning: "I love your lead, partner. Please continue with spades." (If you play reverse signals, then East plays the ♣2 to indicate encouragement.)

Declarer takes the diamond finesse and, when West wins the ♦K, he cashes four spade tricks (♠A with East throwing the Queen), for one down.

Now suppose that the East and South cards were slightly different:

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ 9 7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♥ Q 10 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♦ 7 6 5 4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♣ A K Q J</p> <p><i>West</i></p> <p>♠ A 10 8 4 2</p> <p>♥ 9 8 7</p> <p>♦ K 3</p> <p>♣ 9 7 3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">♠ J 6 5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♥ A J 6 4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♦ 10 9 8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♣ 10 8 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ K Q 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♥ K 5 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♦ A Q J 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♣ 6 5 4</p>
--	---

Once again, West leads the ♠4 against South's 3NT contract, and the play progresses as before.

This time, when South leads the club to dummy, East does not want a spade continuation from partner (unless they hold A-Q-x-x-x), so he contributes the ♣2. (If you play reverse signals, then East plays the ♣10 to discourage a spade continuation.)

Declarer takes the diamond finesse, losing to the ♦K. West now knows that he can't afford to continue spades from his side of the table, so exits with the ♥9. East grabs the trick to return the ♠6, and the contract fails by two tricks.

Note that in both these cases, West would have been on a guess without the 'attitude' signal. And if he had guessed wrongly, declarer would have made the contract.

The opening leader should also use the same attitude signal. In the situations already given, he should play the ♣9 (playing natural signals) on the second trick to emphasise that he wants the suit to be continued.

However, sometimes West will want to discourage partner from pursuing the suit originally led:

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ 5 4 3 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♥ 9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♦ A Q J 10 7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♣ A J 4</p> <p><i>West</i></p> <p>♠ A Q 10 6</p> <p>♥ J 8 6 4 2</p> <p>♦ 9 6 2</p> <p>♣ 5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">♠ K 7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♥ A K 7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♦ 8 5 4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♣ K Q 10 9 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">♠ J 9 8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♥ Q 10 5 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♦ K 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♣ 8 7 6 3</p>
--	--	--

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

West leads the ♥4 against 3NT. Declarer takes the Queen with the King and tried the diamond finesse. If West wanted hearts returned, he would play the ♦9 on this trick. If he were lukewarm about the issue, he might play the ♦6. With his actual hand, however, West wants a spade shift, so should play the ♦2. (Playing reverse signals, the ♦9 discourages hearts and the ♦2 encourages a heart return.)

East wins the ♦K and can defeat the contract with a spade shift. If he blindly continues hearts, declarer will make 11 tricks."

Dorothy Hayden-Truscott (USA)

SMITH PETERS by Warren Lazer

This was a lecture by Warren Lazer, provided to members of the NSW Bridge Association in 2018.

WHAT ARE THEY?

Smith Peters are a way to signal your attitude to the opening lead. Like attitude and count signals, you can play 'natural' or 'reverse' Smith Peters. These notes will cover 'reverse' Smith Peters (i.e. low = like the suit, high = hate the suit).

HOW DO THEY WORK?

When declarer is first on lead, a small card in the suit declarer plays says that you like the opening lead suit. Conversely, a high card says you don't like the opening lead suit. This signalling method applies to both defenders.

OTHER COMMENTS

A Smith Peter is often the first signal you will get to make on a hand, before much is known. The sooner you can make a useful signal, the better your partnership will defend.

Although many pairs only use Smith Peters when defending against No Trump contracts, they can be used against suit contracts just as effectively. The occasions when a count signal is absolutely essential and takes precedence are rare and obvious.

"Safe" opening leads (e.g. from 3-small or 4-small) rather than traditional (i.e. from your longest and strongest suit) are becoming more popular, so you need a way to tell your partner that a switch is (or is not) required.

EXAMPLE 1

(from *Deadly Defence* by Izdebski, Krzemien and Klinger, p171)

♠ 9 7
♥ Q 10 2
♦ 7 6 5 4
♣ A K Q J

♠ A 10 8 4 2
♥ 9 8 7
♦ K 3
♣ 9 7 3

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	2NT (13-15)
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

You lead the ♠ 4. Partner plays the Jack and declarer wins with the King. Declarer crosses to a club and takes the diamond finesse. You win with the ♦K and have to decide what to do. Should you play for Layout 1:

♠ 9 7
♥ Q 10 2
♦ 7 6 5 4
♣ A K Q J

♠ A 10 8 4 2
♥ 9 8 7
♦ K 3
♣ 9 7 3

♠ Q J 5
♥ K J 6 4
♦ 10 9 8
♣ 10 8 2

♠ K 6 3
♥ A 5 3
♦ A Q J 2
♣ 6 5 4

Or should you play for Layout 2?

♠ 9 7
♥ Q 10 2
♦ 7 6 5 4
♣ A K Q J

♠ A 10 8 4 2
♥ 9 8 7
♦ K 3
♣ 9 7 3

♠ K Q 3
♥ K 5 3
♦ A Q J 2
♣ 6 5 4

♠ J 6 5
♥ A J 6 4
♦ 10 9 8
♣ 10 8 2

If East plays the ♣2 at trick 2 (a low club = likes spades), play for Layout 1. Continue with a small spade, and take four spade tricks.

If East plays the ♣10 at trick 2 (a high club = dislikes the opening lead suit), play for Layout 2. Continue with the ♥9 (high to deny an honour), so partner can win the ♥A and return a spade through declarer's Q-x.

West, on the other hand, should play the ♣3 when South leads the club, to tell East to continue the spade attack should they get the lead.

EXAMPLE 2

(from *Deadly Defence*, p172)

♠ 5 4 3 2
♥ 9
♦ A Q J 10 7
♣ A J 4

♠ J 9 8
♥ 10 6 5 3
♦ K 3
♣ 8 7 6 3

West	North	East	South
2♦ (1)	Double	2♥	3NT
All Pass			

(1) Weak with both Majors (at least 4-4)

West leads the ♥4 – 9 – 10 – King. At trick 2, declarer takes the diamond finesse, losing to East's King. What should East play at trick 3?

Should East play for Layout A?

♠ 5 4 3 2
♥ 9
♦ A Q J 10 7
♣ A J 4

♠ Q 10 7 6
♥ A Q 7 4 2
♦ 9 6 2
♣ 5

♠ J 9 8
♥ 10 6 5 3
♦ K 3
♣ 8 7 6 3

♠ A K
♥ K J 8
♦ 8 5 4
♣ K Q 10 9 2

Or should East play for Layout B?

♠ 5 4 3 2
♥ 9
♦ A Q J 10 7
♣ A J 4

♠ A Q 10 6
♥ Q 8 7 4 2
♦ 9 6 2
♣ 5

♠ J 9 8
♥ 10 6 5 3
♦ K 3
♣ 8 7 6 3

♠ K 7
♥ A K J
♦ 8 5 4
♣ K Q 10 9 2

If West plays the ♦2 at trick 2, play for Layout A. Continue with the ♥3.

If West plays the ♦9 at trick 2, play for Layout B. Continue with the ♠J.

EXAMPLE 3

Australian Open Team Playoff, Semi Final, November 2016

♠ A Q
♥ J 9 8 5
♦ A Q 4 3
♣ K J 10

♠ 9 8 6 3 2
♥ 7 6
♦ 9 7
♣ A Q 9 3

♠ K 10 5 4
♥ A Q 10 3 2
♦ 10
♣ 8 6 5

♠ J 7
♥ K 4
♦ K J 8 6 5 2
♣ 7 4 2

West	North	East	South
2♠	2NT	2♦ (1)	Pass
All Pass		Pass	3NT

East leads the ♥3, fourth-highest. North studies dummy for a while, then calls for the ♥K, before leading a club. Obviously, he is trying to steal his ninth trick, so you rise the ♣A. Do you play a spade – playing partner for A-Q-x-x – or just return to your heart?

If partner played the ♣5 at trick 2, return your heart.
If partner played the ♣8 at trick 2, switch to a fourth-highest spade.

You can see the ease with which you can work out the defence (solve your defensive problems) by the simple use of Smith Peters.

Warren Lazer

RESPONSIVE DOUBLES

This article is reproduced with the permission of Phil Gue.

Consider these problems in competitive bidding. You are South with the given auction:

HAND 1
♠ K J 6 4
♥ Q 8 5 2
♦ 9 3
♣ Q 7 6

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	2♦	?

HAND 2
♠ A J 6 4
♥ K J 5 2
♦ 3
♣ 9 8 7 6

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	3♦	?

HAND 3
♠ 6 4
♥ A 8
♦ J 8 7 6 2
♣ K 7 6 2

West	North	East	South
1♥	Double	2♥	?

In all three cases I would double. This double is known as a responsive double.

When partner has doubled for take-out and your right-hand opponent raises (pre-emptively) before you have a chance to respond, you are sometimes faced with the problem of which suit to bid. Murphy's Law states that whichever suit you bid is bound to be wrong. With this in mind, the responsive double works well. A double by the responder to the take-out double, after a raise from the opposition, is also for take-out. This treatment should work at the 2-level and 3-level. It shows the values to compete at that level and asks the take-out doubler to choose the longer of the remaining suits.

Over a sequence such as
1♦ Double 2♦ Double
the responsive double is major-oriented (asking for the longer major).

However, the sequence
1♥ Double 2♥ Double
is minor-oriented. If you had spades you would bid 2♠, so the responsive double in this sequence should show length in the minors.

The sequence
1♠ Double 2♣ Double
would need partnership discussion. If your take-out double of 1♠ promises four hearts, then the responsive double would be for the minors. If the original take-out double does not guarantee four cards in the other major, then the responsive double is looking for the best fit in any of the remaining suits.

Phil Gue

ACES ON THE ASTRAL PLANE by David Lusk

Reprinted from Australian Bridge, August 1996

"Ooh! Brilliant!" crooned The Imp as he leapt upon the Plane Table and danced with glee. "I'm sure you now all agree that I'm the best."

"Well, you're certainly the best of all the imps!" responded Olaf, who had been watching the action with his usual critical eye. Momentarily, the back-handed compliment was lost on the dancing demon.

Here is the hand which precipitated the chaos:

Dealer South	♠ Q 8 6 4		
NS Vul	♥ Q 9 6 5		
	♦ A 7 5		
	♣ J 6		
		♠ 9 3	
♠ K J 10 7 2		♥ A 10 8 7 2	
♥ void		♦ J 6 4	
♦ Q 10 8 3 2		♣ 10 7 5	
♣ A 8 3			
	♠ A 5		
	♥ K J 4 3		
	♦ K 9		
	♣ K Q 9 4 2		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
<i>F. O'Loughlin</i>	<i>Mystrala</i>	<i>Paxacotl</i>	<i>The Imp</i>
1♠	Double	2♠	1♣
3♠	4♥	Double	3♥
			All Pass

"What does the insubstantial one's double mean?" asked the Aztec, before making a standard unsound raise. "Positively negative," The Imp replied with a hideous leer.

The remainder of the auction was routine, with East's reverberating double ending hostilities for the moment.

Father O'Loughlin led the ♠J, which brought the ♠Q from dummy, a glare from the Aztec and an infuriating cackle from declarer. The Imp's next move was to lead a small heart from dummy. When he covered East's ♥2 with the ♥J and Father O'Loughlin produced a low diamond, The Imp turned tiredly to Paxacotl on his right.

"Haven't you taught this bridge illiterate to follow suit yet? Tell him he must follow suit."

"If I had a heart I would have played it," the priest replied rather stiffly. "And I'd rather be illiterate than illegitimate."

The riposte only served as encouragement for The Imp to consider a minor spell to trick his way out of the mess. On reflection, however, a legitimate line might still be available.

Declarer's next play was a club towards dummy's ♣J. On cue, West rose with the Ace and returned a low spade which was snared by the ♠A in hand.

"I knew I should have redoubled," announced The Imp to Mystrala, who had most certainly grasped the gist of the hand at this point. "I must say, I thought that the savage had raised on a singleton, and not for the first time, I might add."

"This banter won't help you, my little newt. Let's play cards," growled Paxacotl.

The Imp cashed the ♠J in dummy and led a small spade. Paxacotl considered ruffing this, but eventually decided to discard his last club instead. The Imp ruffed low and cashed the top diamonds, ending in dummy, before successfully ruffing a diamond in hand. At this stage, four cards remained:

	♠ 8	
	♥ Q 9 6	
	♦ void	
	♣ void	
♠ K 10		♠ void
♥ void		♥ A 10 8 7
♦ Q		♦ void
♣ 8		♣ void
	♠ void	
	♥ K	
	♦ void	
	♣ K Q 9	

The Imp fixed the Aztec with a frightening grin and led his trump King. A worried frown had replaced Paxacotl's earlier look of eager anticipation. Finally he contributed the ♥7.

"A second refusal, savage?" The Imp was referring to Paxacotl's earlier decision not to ruff on the third round of spades. "Will we see a third refusal?" he asked rhetorically, as he spun a random club on to the table and called for the ♠8. "No we won't, because you have to trump this."

The Aztec's ♥8 took the trick, and he was forced to lead away from his ♥A-10, conceding the tenth trick to dummy's ♥Q.

"I'm good! I'm GOOD!" screamed The Imp, as he performed his victory dance.

"You're an Imp," observed Father O'Loughlin. "You find good abhorrent."

"All right," agreed The Imp. "I'm WICKED! Wonderfully wicked."

David Lusk

A GAME AT THE CLUB by Barbara Travis

Oh gosh, where do I start? Today's session had so many interesting hands to share.

You, North, hold:

♠ void
♥ A Q 5
♦ K Q J 9 7 6 2
♣ J 10 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	1♠	Pass
2♣	3♦	3♠	Pass
Pass	?		

Would you bid 4♦ or Pass? Does the vulnerability affect your decision? (Everyone is vulnerable.)

Since 3♠ seemed to be competitive, rather than an attempt for game, it seemed plausible that partner had a few useful values for me, so I opted to bid 4♦. If the opposition bid on to 4♠, there was also the option that partner might have some good spades and be able to double. I actually planned to double 4♠ because: the auction could have died in 3♠, I may have been making 4♦ (130, so I needed 200 to beat the score), and I had 'forced' them there – for better or worse.

4♦ was passed out and dummy was just what I hoped for:

♠ void	♠ 8 6 3
♥ A Q 5	♥ K 9 8 3 2
♦ K Q J 9 7 6 2	♦ 10 8
♣ J 10 3	♣ Q 7 2

I ruffed the ♠A lead and started work on drawing trumps. East ducked the first diamond and won the second. I think she should now have tried cashing the ♣A to get a signal, because leading another spade, as happened, allows me to ruff. Now I was able to make 11 tricks, discarding two clubs on the hearts.

This hand was interesting to me. The auction started:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣

What did 2♣ mean? I thought it was Drury, and had a hand suited to bidding 4♠ regardless:

♠ A Q J 7 6 4
♥ J 3 2
♦ K
♣ A J 7

so that's what I rebid.

I then discovered that partner didn't play Drury – not that it mattered – and that 2♣ was essentially natural, her hand being:

♠ K 9
♥ A Q 4
♦ Q 7 3
♣ 9 8 4 3 2

4♠ made 10 tricks, but the interest in the hand was more about what her best response was, as a passed hand. Before our discussion started, we agreed that we were not playing Drury!

I then proposed that a new suit at the 2-level by a passed hand is a maximum pass and at least 5 cards, and that you don't mind playing in the suit opposite a doubleton (if partner has opened on a weak hand and wants to pass). This hand didn't really qualify for a 2♣ on that basis. The question remained: what is the 'best' response? If you play no frills as a passed hand, then you should probably respond 2NT. If you play any frills (for instance, I play that 2NT shows 4-card spade support with a singleton, with 3♣ asking about the shortage), then you will be stuck responding either 1NT (if it can be wide-range) or 2♣. Isn't this why we love bridge? So often, there is no hard and fast answer about what you should do!

If you play Drury, you have to respond 1NT (wide-ranging) on these hands. The other thing to keep in mind when playing Drury is the need to open hands with good clubs – either 1♣ or 3♣ - so you don't have responding problems.

What would you bid after a weak 2♥ opening bid holding:

♠ J 9 4
♥ void
♦ K J 10 9 7 3
♣ A K Q 6

My opponent overcalled 3♦, but I would prefer a takeout double. The hand is playable in three suits, and you'd like to bring all of them into the picture. A double makes it easy for partner to bid the game in spades when they hold five good spades but, with a poor fit for diamonds, our West passed over my partner's pre-emptive raise to 3♥, fearing a poorly-fitting hand.

Mind you, I would still have been bidding 3♠, given that partner who had overcalled 3♦ must be very short in hearts. The other hand was:

♠ A K Q 8 6
♥ Q 9 3 2
♦ 4
♣ 8 5 2

You can see, though, that it is useful to bring all the suits into the picture when you are playable in all three unbid suits.

Here's a defensive hand. The auction:

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♥ (spades)	3♥	1NT
Pass	4♠	All Pass	3♠

You are West, with:

♠ 5
♥ 6 3 2
♦ 8 4 2
♣ A Q J 4 3 2

You lead the ♥2, low showing length in partner's suit when you haven't supported them. Partner wins the ♥A and switches to the ♣5.

TIPS ON HOW TO IMPROVE

From North Shore Bridge Club Newsletter.

Anita Curtis does a lot of 'Improver' coaching at North Shore Bridge Club. Here is some good advice from her:

PRACTICE: Practice, practice! Playing bridge at least twice a week keeps you 'in the groove'.

REVIEW: At the end of each session, sit down with your partner and go over any problem hands. If you can't agree on the best bid/play/defence, ask someone!

COMPARE: Have a look at Pianola and see which boards you did well/badly. Look at what happened at other tables.

LEARN: Keep your eye on what lessons are available and sign up for anything helpful.

READ: Read a bridge book. (I didn't read a bridge book for a long time – I found them boring!) However, I have discovered some authors who are very clear and concise and who keep me interested... She names a few: Eddie Kantar, Pat O'Connor, Barbara Seagram.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF: I can't emphasise this one enough. You won't improve if you do the same things session after session. That means when you are doing consistently well in a 'restricted' section, move to a higher section. When you feel comfortable there, it's time to move up again! The more you play against better players, the more you will learn, and your bridge will improve – even though your results will initially suffer. Be a little fish in a big pond rather than the reverse.

FOCUS: Get used to cutting down on 'chat' until you have finished the round. This means that you won't run behind, which makes you feel pressured to play too quickly, without considered thought.

PLAN each hand as declarer or defender. Don't play a single card until you have thought about what is going to happen.

THINK ahead. As defender, if you have an Ace, decide early on when you are going to win the trick and what you are going to lead when you get in. If you have a Queen or King, decide whether you are going to cover dummy's honour or duck smoothly.

GO ONLINE and practice with a program – such as BBO (Bridge Base Online).

Most of all: enjoy your bridge and be pleasant to your partner and opponents.

Anita Curtis

Here are your hand and dummy:

Dummy

♠ A 7 6 4 3

♥ J

♦ K J 10 9 5

♣ 10 6

You

♠ 5

♥ 6 3 2

♦ 8 4 2

♣ A Q J 4 3 2

You win the ♣J and cash your ♣A, partner discarding a heart. What should you lead now?

Despite leading into declarer's ♣K-9, you should do so. You are hoping to promote a trump trick for partner should they hold as little as the ♠J-10-x (ideally the J-10-9). Declarer would have to trump with dummy's ♠A, and then they would have to guess the spade position, even if partner just had ♠J-x-x. As it happened, partner only held ♠10-9-2, so there was no trump promotion, but it never hurts to try.

A few people struggled with this hand after this auction:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	2♦ (natural)	?

South

♠ A Q J 10 5

♥ K J 10 6 5

♦ 8 6 5

♣ void

You can't bid 2♥ or 2♠ because they are natural and non-forcing. You could bid 3♣ which is natural and game forcing, but then you may have to introduce your hearts at the 4-level. Furthermore, with those small diamonds, you would really prefer partner to play the hand, so that the lead comes around to any diamond honours they may have.

The solution is to bid 3♦. This cue-bid of the opponent's bid after partner's 1NT opening acts like Stayman. It asks partner to bid a 4-card major if they have one. (They may even bid a 3-card major if they don't have diamonds stopped!)

On this hand, partner will bid 3♥ and you'll reach 4♥ from the right side.

Should partner bid 3NT instead, you now rebid 4♦! This repeats your request to bid a major, implying your 5-5 hand shape. Mission accomplished – your partner plays the hand in your best fit.

What's a double of the natural 2♦ overcall? That is a matter of partnership style. You may choose to play it as penalty, which works particularly well when playing Lebensohl. Alternatively, some like to play takeout doubles, which also work well. The only issue is that responder cannot make a penalty double of a natural overcall, so opener must re-open with a double when holding a weak doubleton in the overcalled suit.

That's enough for now, but the hands from this session will continue in the next article.

Barbara Travis

APPROACH AT THE TABLE

These notes from the NSW Bridge Association website, Expert Talks program, and was presented by Nigel Rosendorff.

About 200 years ago, Benjamin Franklin decided to improve his character. Each week he stressed one virtue that he wished to acquire. For example, one week he focused on being frugal. The next week he would concentrate on avoiding idle gossip. When he finished his long list of self-improvements, he repeated the list many times over. He knew from personal experience that vague attempts to improve several behaviour patterns simultaneously would not work.

The trick is to work on one aspect of your game at a time then, when you are happy with that aspect, move on to another. Here is a list of improvements to make you are better player.

- Be a good partner. We are all striving to do the right thing. When we make a mistake, it is not up to partner to correct what you have done wrong. Be a good partner and don't say a word. Get on with the next hand.
- Show no emotion when dummy comes down. Never comment when putting down dummy!
- Detach your emotions from the previous hand. Treat each hand as though it is the first hand of the session.
- Think and plan before playing to trick 1.
- Bid and play in an even and confident manner. The worst bid or play will often succeed if done confidently. Develop a confident, professional and well-mannered table presence.
- Concentrate properly. The ability to concentrate is a vital bridge attribute. We are all limited as to how much intense concentration we can muster when applying ourselves to any task. The secret to playing well is not to be 'wound up' all session long. Concentrate only when you need to. Several ways to conserve energy are:
 - As dummy, relax and perform dummy's simple duties. Do not scrutinise everyone's play or fret about the contract. Relax and recharge.
 - Incessant rehashing of hands between deals is counter-productive and energy-consuming. No post-mortems.
 - When playing in a tournament, relax and recharge between sessions. Go for a walk, get away from your partner. Do not rehash hands or plays unless there is a partnership misunderstanding that needs to be addressed. Learn to concentrate properly, drink water, avoid alcohol.
- Protect your cards.
- Do not be intimidated. Learn to play the cards, not the people.
- Be a tough competitor.
- Act decisively.
- Stick to your system. If a bid is not in the system, then don't make that bid.
- Be selective in using and choosing conventions. When choosing a convention to use, you should consider:
 - Is the convention easy to remember?
 - Do both players understand and know the continuations and what to do if opponents intervene?
 - Does the convention occur frequently enough to warrant the effort to remember it?
 - Does the convention have technical merit?
 - Only use a convention when no natural bid is available. The simple bid is often the best bid.

- Do not lose interest when holding a terrible hand. Always look attentive.
- Develop a killer instinct. Bridge is intended to be a competitive game. Doubles and other maximum score tactics are the very heart and soul of bridge. You can and should be a friendly, courteous competitor both at and away from the table – but while a hand is in progress, develop a killer instinct.
- Develop a positive mental attitude. If you are defending, always assume the contract is defeatable. If you are declarer, assume the contract is makeable.
- Strive to improve. Ask questions of better players. Read worthwhile books. Participate with and against the strongest players possible. The game will be more stimulating and interesting if you strive to improve.
- Be a practical player. Bridge is an imperfect game, played by humans! You cannot expect to land on the head of a pin every hand. The auction is an estimate of the trick-taking potential of the hand. It is not an exact science. When the bidding indicates that some contract has a reasonable chance of success, the practical player will just bid what he thinks he can make.
- Don't waste time between hands, especially with post-mortems.
- Improve your bridge etiquette:
 - Be courteous to partner and the opponents at all times.
 - Avoid remarks or actions that might annoy or embarrass another player.
 - When necessary, a call for the director should be made in a manner that is courteous to the other players and to the director.
 - Don't take offence at inadvertent or ignorant breaches of etiquette by other players, especially inexperienced ones.
 - Maintain a pleasant demeanour.
 - Refrain from unnecessary talking during a hand or between the boards of a round.
 - Be a good sport – compliment your partner or the opponents when it is deserved.
 - Avoid gloating after a good result.
 - Avoid griping after a poor result.

Good bridge etiquette will make you a popular player and enhance the reputation of the game.

We are all ambassadors for the game of bridge.

Habits are hard to change. To be a better player takes time. One step at a time!

Nigel Rosendorff

The logo for PENLINE, featuring the word "PENLINE" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font with a registered trademark symbol (®) to the right.

This article, from the Queensland Bridge Association Bulletin and written by Peter Busch (Tournament Director and player) first appeared in the Sunshine Coast Tri-Club Newsletter, "Bridge Matters", in 2014.

There are things that really annoy me at the bridge table. However, I know I am not alone. I bet everyone reading this will share at least one of my pet hates and some may share them all. I've listed them in order from the most annoying first – your priorities may differ, or you may agree that I'm just a grumpy old man.

THANKING THE OPPONENTS FOR DOUBLING OR PUSHING YOU TO GAME WHEN YOU MAKE IT:

No matter how much you mean it in jest, your opponents will feel uncomfortable and may be annoyed with themselves if they've doubled a making contract or pushed you into a making game. Making a gratuitous comment at this point only adds fuel to the fire. If this happens to you, consider yourself lucky, but say nothing.

MAKING GRATUITOUS COMMENTS AFTER SEEING YOU ACHIEVED A GOOD RESULT:

It is the nature of bridge that a good result by one pair at the table equates to a poor result for the other pair. So, when you get a top board and announce, "Top board, partner," it is equivalent to telling the opponents they got a bottom. Say nothing. If you like, pass the BridgeMate to your partner or the opponents if they seem interested.

FIDDLING WITH THE BRIDGEMATE OR PERSONAL SCORER BEFORE MAKING THE OPENING LEAD:

After the auction period, the whole table is waiting for the player on lead to make their opening lead. If you have other duties, such as entering the contract into the BridgeMate or writing on your personal scorer, make your lead first. When you have more than one task to do and the players are waiting on the lead, it's good manners to lead first. The same applies to dummy – spread dummy before using the BridgeMate.

NOT CLAIMING AS DECLARER WHEN THE OUTCOME IS OBVIOUS:

If you are near the end of the play of a hand and it's quite clear you have all the remaining tricks, it is poor manners – and, in fact, contrary to the Laws – to continue playing. You waste time, especially if you make the opponents discard, and they take a while when it doesn't matter.

Of course, don't claim if you are in doubt and, if you do claim, ensure you state what you are going to do.

ASKING QUESTIONS DURING THE AUCTION WHEN YOU HAVE NO INTENTION TO BID:

The Laws allow players to ask questions about the bidding at their turn to call. However, if you don't intend bidding, regardless of what the meaning may be, don't ask. It slows down the auction. You are entitled to a full explanation of the auction at the end of the bidding, so your rights are protected. In fact, asking needless questions can have a downside. Firstly, the bidder's partner will hear the answer and they will know whether they are on the same page. Secondly, expressing interest in a particular bid, especially an alerted one, suggests to your partner that you have an interest in that suit and, under the Laws of Unauthorised Information, this may limit their options when on lead.

SAYING 'HAVING NONE' WHEN YOU TRUMP AN OPPONENT'S SUIT:

This happens typically when you are trumping and the opponents aren't expecting it. It is unnecessary. Of course, the partner of the player who trumps can, and should, ask, "No spades, partner?", as this serves a purpose.

PUTTING PEN TO PAPER / TOUCHING THE BIDDING CARD IN THE BIDDING BOX WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT YOU WANT TO BID:

Bidding often requires thought. While you are thinking, the other players will also be thinking about their next move. When you start bidding, everyone instinctively looks across to see what you are doing. Firstly, it may convey information to your partner. Secondly, if you act like you plan to bid, then stop, it can cause your LHO to think you have passed, and then they may bid out of turn.

Hmm... that's quite a list. Anyway, I'm sure everyone agrees with at least some of these. It all comes down to being aware of how your actions affect others – a good policy at the bridge table, and in life generally.

*More next issue,
Peter Busch*



PLAY YOUR CARDS **RIGHT**

**TONY BEMROSE
INSURANCE BROKERS**

www.tbib.com.au

POETRY

Linda Alexander was sent a funny poem by a friend in England.

I'm normally a social girl
I love to meet my mates
But lately with the virus here
We can't go out the gates.

You see, we are the 'oldies' now
We need to stay inside
If they haven't seen us for a while
They'll think we've upped and died.

They'll never know the things we did
Before we got this old
There wasn't any Facebook
So not everything was told.

We may seem sweet old ladies
Who would never be uncouth
But we grew up in the 60s -
If you only knew the truth!

There was sex and drugs and rock 'n roll
The pill and miniskirts
We smoked, we drank, we partied
And were quite outrageous flirts.

Then we settled down, got married
And turned into someone's mum,
Somebody's wife, then nana,
Who on earth did we become?

We didn't mind the change of pace
Because our lives were full
But to bury us before we're dead
Is like a red rag to a bull!

So here you find me stuck inside
For 4 weeks, maybe more..
I finally found myself again
Then I had to close the door!

It didn't really bother me
I'd while away the hour
I'd bake for all the family
But I've got no bloody flour!

Now Netflix is just wonderful
I like a gutsy thriller
I'm swooning over Idris
Or some random sexy killer.

At least I've got a stash of booze
For when I'm being idle
There's wine and whiskey, even gin
If I'm feeling suicidal!

So - let's all drink to lockdown
To recovery and health
And hope this bloody virus
Doesn't decimate our wealth.

We'll all get through the crisis
And be back to join our mates
Just hoping I'm not far too wide
To fit through the flaming gates

IF YOU JUST SMILE....

At first I was afraid, I was petrified,
There were no loo rolls down at Aldi and I nearly cried.
Oh, I spent so many nights just thinking how you did me
wrong,
I used to wipe, and now I'm forced just to drip dry!

No anti-bac, no bloody soap,
And if you think you're buying pasta -
well you've got no bloody hope.
I would have bought that box of eggs,
I would have rationed out my bread,
If I'd have known for just one second
that everyone would lose their head.

Go on now, go, walk out the door!
All you bloody stockpilers, you are not welcome anymore.
Weren't you the ones who just bought all the sodding beans?
You selfish gits - I hope you spill them down your jeans!

Oh no, not I! I won't panic buy!
As long as I have alcohol, I know I'll stay alive.
Though I can't buy my usual cheese,
This will not bring me to my knees.

And I will survive,
I will survive!!

It took all the strength I had not to fall apart,
There were just apples and a carrot in my shopping cart.
And I spent hours walking round just feeling sorry for myself,
The empty store, with boxes strewn across the floor.

And you'll see me,
somebody who cannot buy anything she came for,
And it's all down to f***ing you,
And Reg from down the road is such a selfish blimmin' git
Because he stockpiled all the loo rolls
so nobody else can have a s**t!!

Go on now, go, walk out the door!
All you bloody stockpilers, you are not welcome anymore.
Weren't you the ones who just bought all the sodding cakes?
Can't you make a crumble,
do you people not know how to bake?

Oh no, not I! I won't panic buy!
As long as I have alcohol, I know I'll stay alive.
Though I can't buy my usual cheese,
This will not bring me to my knees.

And I will survive,
I will survive!!

*From BridgeWinners, but also BridgeClubLive
(and perhaps Facebook)*