

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

April 2009

Editor: Bill Jacobs

VICTORIANS AT THE AUSTRALIAN TEAM PLAYOFFS

Well done to all Victorians competing at the Open and Women's team playoffs held this month in Sydney. There were some outstanding performances.

New dad Leigh Gold made the final in the Open section (playing with expat Jamie Ebery) – quite a feat as his team was four-handed. That won him a place in the Australian Open team to play in the PABF Championships in Macau.

As usual, Victorian women were dominant forces, playing in various combinations in the top three teams. When the dust had settled, Jenny Thompson, Paula Schroor and Rena Kaplan were losing semi-finalists. Eva Caplan, Helen Snashall and Cathie Lachman contested the final, and will therefore play for Australia in Macau.

Evergreens Felicity Beale and Diana Smart won the playoffs for the umpteenth time, and will represent Australia in the Venice Cup in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Victorian Bridge Association

invites you to the

2009 ANZAC Congress

to be held

**Saturday 25th April and
Sunday 26th April**

Enter online - www.vba.asn.au

Phone: 9530-9006

YOUR BID

1) With no one vulnerable, you are in second seat, holding:

♠ 852 ♥ K10432 ♦ 932 ♣ J6

The auction proceeds:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♥	D'ble	Pass	Pass
		Pass	??

Playing imps, how do you respond (if at all) to partner's takeout double?

2) Again no one vulnerable, at imps, you are in fourth seat with:

♠ AQ5 ♥ J1072 ♦ AKJ1074 ♣ -

LHO opens proceedings with 3♥, pass, pass to you. What's your poison?



Gold Points and Playoff Points New session times – No night play!

Thursday 4th June – Friday 5th June

McCance Seniors Swiss Pairs

VCC Women's Swiss Pairs

VCC Restricted Swiss Pairs

Saturday 6th June – Monday 8th June

Victor Champion Cup Swiss Teams

Charlie Snashall Trophy Restricted Swiss Teams

Venue: Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre,
Corner of Flinders Street and Spencer Street,
Southbank, Melbourne

Tournament Organiser: Sue Smith

Email: vcc2009@optusnet.com.au

Mobile: 0429 056 445

Home: (03) 9886 8809

Website: www.vba.asn.au/vcc2009

FOR STARTERS
Bill Jacobs

“How often have I said to you that when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, *however improbable*, must be the truth?”

... Sherlock Holmes, *Sign of the Four*

Vul vs not ♠ QJ6532
 ♥ 73
 ♦ A5
 ♣ J43

Playing for imps, you are vulnerable, they are not, and RHO deals and opens 1♥.

Are you prepared to take a bid? If so, what?

It's rather uncomfortable. You have a lot of losers: 8 by my calculation, and with those feeble spade spots, it could be even more than 8 if LHO is sitting over you with spades. Mr Cautious would pass 1♥.

Still, if partner has a decent hand with some spades, you could actually own the contract, and if you don't take a bid now, might find it hard to get into the auction later. It's a 6-card suit and Mr Maniac would make a weak jump overcall of 2♠.

The middle position is to make a simple overcall: this is much less likely to get doubled, and as long as partner doesn't take you too seriously, it achieves the twin objectives of getting into the auction, but not going out of the auction on a stretcher. Mr Compromise overcalls 1♠.

After your 1♠ overcall, the opponents have it to themselves:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		1♥	1♠
3♥	Pass	4♥	All pass

3♥ is explained as an invitational raise. Now you have to lead ...

Here are my ratings for the various suits:

	Score	Comment
♠	10	Build a spade trick
♥	0	Absolutely pointless
♦	8	Might get a ruff
♣	3	Shot in the dark

You might agree or disagree with the scores or comments – the opening lead is not an exact science. But when you are choosing a lead, try to be clear in your mind about what you are trying to achieve.

Leading a spade here is a nice mixture of safety and aggression. Being a long suit, it's a fairly safe lead, although if dummy comes down with K10x and declarer has Ax, you'll have to revise that. And it attacks as well, possibly setting up a trick in spades before declarer can get discards.

So let's say you lead ♠Q, and you see this dummy:

♠ 1094
♥ J92
♦ KQ874
♣ KQ

♠ QJ6532
♥ 73
♦ A5
♣ J43

Partner wins ♠A (declarer follows ♠7), and switches rather surprisingly to ♦3, declarer playing ♦2.

What's going on here? What do you do?

There are three possibilities, it seems to me:

- Partner is on drugs
- Partner wants a spade ruff
- Partner wants a diamond return

For the sake of argument, let's eliminate the first explanation.

As for the spade ruff, if partner has a spade singleton, he should return a high spot card in his minor suit switch. In the middle of a defence, switching to a high spot card in a suit is a signal that partner is in principle not interested in the suit.

So, frankly, both the drug and spade singleton options are *impossible*. And when

you've eliminated the impossible, what is left is the merely improbable.

You should win the diamond ace and return a diamond:

	♠ 1094		
	♥ J92		
	♦ KQ874		
	♣ KQ		
♠ QJ6532		♠ A8	
♥ 73		♥ K65	
♦ A5		♦ 3	
♣ J43		♣ 10987652	
	♠ K7		
	♥ AQ1084		
	♦ J10962		
	♣ A		

Spade ace, diamond ace, diamond ruff, and poor declarer cannot reach dummy for the trump finesse. Down 1.

Points to remember:

- When faced with a decision on whether to bid with a marginal hand, don't overlook the simple one-level overcall. Such bids don't show the earth, and are a relatively safe mechanism for getting involved in the auction.
 - Opening leads rarely come with any form of guarantee. Every session you are likely to be faced with blind opening leads like this one – the auction giving you little to go on. Experience helps, but thinking about why some lead might work can be fruitful. It can be as simple as:
 - Set up a trick in my long suit
 - Get a ruff
 - Cut down their ruffs
- If you can construct a viable reason like that, at least your selected lead has a chance of working.
- Declarer's 5-card diamond side suit was a surprise, but hardly impossible. There was really no other explanation for partner's ♦3 switch. Successfully following partner's defence is one of the most satisfying aspects of the game.

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: W	♠ KQ6		
Vul: Both	♥ 10		
	♦ A1043		
	♣ KQ765		
		♠ A98	
		♥ Q76	
		♦ 962	
		♣ 10862	
West	North	East	South
1♥	D'ble	2♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Partner starts ♥A, as you do from ace-king, and switches to ♠10, covered by ♠K. How are you going to defend?

Problem 2:

Dealer: E	♠ KJ1062		
Vul: N/S	♥ -		
	♦ 87		
	♣ KQ9875		
		♠ A8	
		♥ 10764	
		♦ A9642	
		♣ A10	
West	North	East	South
1♥	2NT*	1♦	Pass
4♥	4♠	3♥	3♠
		D'ble	All pass

* black suits, 5+ / 5+

Partner leads ♥A, trumped. Declarer leads ♠K, which you take, to force him again. He trumps and plays ♣K. Over to you.

Solutions on Page 5.



Trivia

Partner opens 1NT, showing 15-17 points. What are the odds that he has 15 points? 16 points? 17 points?

Similarly, partner open 2NT: 20–22 points. What are the odds on his having 20? 21? 22?

Are they all equally as likely?

10 DOWN
Bill Jacobs

Congratulations to Henri de Jong and Sam Arber, who won the Seniors Pairs (106 entrants) at the recent Gold Coast Congress.



Henri de Jong and Sam Arber

The following deal must create some sort of record for the most combined number of undertricks by a team in voluntarily bid undoubled contracts.

Dealer: W	♠ J742		
Vul: nil	♥ KQ		
	♦ 85		
	♣ AQJ93		
♠ 9		♠ K10863	
♥ A986543		♥ -	
♦ Q3		♦ 962	
♣ 1087		♣ K6542	
	♠ AQ5		
	♥ J1072		
	♦ AKJ1074		
	♣ -		

West	North	East	South
Francis	De Jong	Moren	Arber
3♥	Pass	Pass	Pass(!)

Sam's decision to take a bunch of 50s doesn't look too successful, with 6NT or 6♦ available, if played by North. Still ...

The play went: diamond to the king, diamond ace, third diamond ruffed and overruffed, club ace, club queen, covered and ruffed, diamond ruffed and overruffed, club jack, spade to the queen and another diamond.

Declarer's head must have been swiveling from side to side by now. He ended up six down, the defence having taken 5 of their 6 trumps.

At the other table Michael Chrapot also opened 3♥, and Theo Antoff and Albert Simpson now had a complex auction finishing in 6♦ by North, in theory a making contract. But after Traian Chira's spade lead¹ ran to the jack, declarer took the diamond finesse, losing to the queen.

Then, wham, heart ace, heart ruff, spade ruff, heart ruff, for four down, the defence having taken 4 of their 5 trumps.

+300 and +200 for a total of 10 down added up to an unusual 11 imps for the Victorians.

The Gold Coast Congress is Australia's largest. This photo depicts *part* of the vast playing area:



Well done also to Juliet and John Pettitt, who were members of the team that won the Mixed Teams event.

The Mixed Teams is often a minor side event in such congresses, but at the Gold Coast, there were 70 entries! And not just any 70 entries, but teams including world champions such as Geir Helgemo, Tor Helness, Dano de Falco and Kate McCallum. In company like that, a win is not to be sneezed at.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

¹ Please note Traian's avoidance of a trump lead, which would have cooked his goose. See "For Starters" – what could the trump lead achieve? Nothing, unless you have placed a bet on the opponents.

THE TWELFTH TRICK

IMPs ♠ Q87632
 Dealer: W ♥ K93
 Vul: Nil ♦ J
 ♣ AK4
 ♠ A5
 ♥ A4
 ♦ AK76
 ♣ Q8763

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads the club 5. Plan the play.
 Solution on page 7.

YOUR BID

♠ 852 ♥ K10432 ♦ 932 ♣ J6

Responding to partner's takeout double of 1♥, most top pairs play that 1NT shows a decent hand, around 7-10 points, with a heart stopper. This hand doesn't qualify, and a 1NT response will likely drive your side too high. It's unpleasant, but the expert bid is 1♠, on the 3-card suit.

But in the final night of the Pennant qualifying, several players who faced this problem did in fact bid 1NT. They were raised to 3NT by partner – I told you, you would get too high.

The opening lead is ♥8 (fourth best):

♠ AKQ
 ♥ Q
 ♦ KQ7654
 ♣ A97
 ♠ 852
 ♥ K10432
 ♦ 932
 ♣ J6

That dummy is perhaps more than you deserve. Anyway, dummy's ♥Q holds the trick, RHO following ♥7.

Your play. More on page 7.

SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS
Ian McCance

Problem 1:

Dealer: W	♠ KQ6		
Vul: Both	♥ 10		
	♦ A1043		
	♣ KQ765		
♠ 10		♠ A98	
♥ AK8543		♥ Q76	
♦ K952		♦ 962	
♣ A9		♣ 10862	
	♠ J75432		
	♥ J92		
	♦ K1053		
	♣ J43		

This ♠10 is a very big spot. You can promote your ♠9 by forcing dummy to trump twice. Win ♠A and return ♥Q. Partner will need to have ♣A (and not seven hearts), but after all he opened the bidding. He will win ♣A and play ♥K.

[From Ron Klinger's blog at the 2009 NOT. RDK sat North. The Norwegian East did not find this defence.]

Problem 2:

Dealer: E	♠ KJ1062		
Vul: N/S	♥ -		
	♦ 87		
	♣ KQ9875		
♠ 943		♠ A8	
♥ AKQJ63		♥ 10764	
♦ QJ		♦ A9642	
♣ 62		♣ A10	
	♠ Q75		
	♥ 982		
	♦ K1053		
	♣ J43		

Why would declarer embark on a risky line, starting his side-suit without drawing trumps? Does it occur to you that partner might have started with 3 trumps? If it does you can perhaps see to duck this club, denying South communication in clubs to ruff the next heart in one hand and draw trumps from the other.

In the post-mortem you would point out to partner that your Double was not closing and that his aversion to being pushed to the 5-level must have limits...

BRIDGE ACROSS VICTORIA

Donald Bridge Club



If you want to play bridge for masterpoints in the Wimmera, then Donald Bridge Club is the place to go: it is the only affiliated club in a 150 km radius. A 3.5 hour drive from Melbourne, you can discover more about Donald at <http://www.donald.org.au/>.

The club was established in 1986 after two separate sets of lessons were held. One group began in Birchip with teacher Nancy Brocklebank and others, and coincidentally in Donald at the same time, with teacher Dianne Nievaart who was from St Arnaud, but previously a member of the Essendon Bridge Club.

Dianne stayed with us for many years and directed sessions of about twelve players. She ran other lessons as needed, and the current membership consists of many of her pupils of twenty years ago. Sadly, Dianne passed away about six years ago.

Donald Bridge Club has 19 ABF-registered players but about 25 members in all. Average table numbers are 5 in spring and 3 tables in the middle of winter. We have a very loyal car-load of players from St Arnaud and another car from Birchip, helping us to maintain our numbers. We play at the Donald Senior Citizens Centre on Tuesdays at 7.30 pm.

Visitors are welcome. We can guarantee you a game on ANY Tuesday: the only exception is Christmas Day! Bridge stops for nothing (even power blackouts), but we know that this is the case for bridge clubs everywhere.



Senior Citizens' Clubrooms at Donald

We are a club with ONE office bearer, Wendy Sands (pictured right), who has collected the \$1 per player per night for the last 20 years: and 20 years ago, the fee was also \$1 – no inflation here!



We previously played "inter-town" matches with Echuca, Horsham and Bendigo players.

We affiliated with the ABF three years ago. It has been a positive experience – giving our members confidence to go beyond our own pool. Many have played in other places – Ballarat and Bendigo at first, and also Geelong, Warrnambool etc. and we have had a good return of players to Donald for our "Baby Boomers" tournament. We had hoped to make the 2009 tournament into a 2 day congress this year, but have had to fall back on a one-day Pairs event, on Sunday April 26, because of a clash of events in our town, with all accommodation booked well ahead.

Tournament entries are being taken by Brian Brasier (bebrasier@bigpond.com) and the tournament is directed by Dr Eric Ramshaw from Ballarat. Some private billets can be arranged and we would welcome players from across Victoria. It's a great day – fantastic catering and just \$20 entry fee per player.

Jan Corrie – Masterpoint Secretary

Venue: Senior Citizens' Clubroom
Hamilton Street, Donald

Duplicates: 7:30 pm, Tuesdays

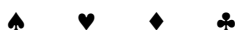
Contacts: Jan Corrie: 5497-1480
jecorrie@optusnet.com.au

Congress: Sun 26 April (Pairs)
Donald Golf Club
Entries to:
bebrasier@bigpond.com
Enquiries to Jan Corrie on
0409 334 021



Sale Congress

Weekend of 23rd – 24th May
Sale Greyhound Club Convention Centre
Entries via www.bridgeunlimited.com



YOUR PLAY

	♠ AKQ	
	♥ Q	
	♦ KQ7654	
	♣ A97	
♠ 1094		♠ J763
♥ AJ985		♥ 76
♦ A		♦ J108
♣ KQ84		♣ 10532
	♠ 852	
	♥ K10432	
	♦ 932	
	♣ J6	

Don't tell me you fell for that line about "♥Q holding the trick".

In 3NT you should overtake the ♥Q with the ♥K to lead a diamond up. You will make 3NT if LHO has ♦A singleton or the suit is 2-2. Even with your cavalier play of the heart honours, it is *impossible* for the defenders to take 4 heart tricks after winning their ♦A.

But if you fail to take advantage of the offered entry to your hand, you are forced to lead diamonds from dummy, and are likely to go down by leading an honour.

THE TWELFTH TRICK
Bill Jacobs

	♠ Q87632	
	♥ K93	
	♦ J	
	♣ AK4	
♠ 104		♠ KJ9
♥ J876		♥ Q1052
♦ 9432		♦ Q1085
♣ 1095		♣ J2
	♠ A5	
	♥ A4	
	♦ AK76	
	♣ Q8763	

You have to assume clubs break 3-2. Then if spades are also 3-2, you have a sure thing by winning the trump lead with the queen and playing a *low* spade from your hand.

Whatever happens on this trick, you can subsequently cash the spade ace, draw trumps ending in dummy and ruff a spade to establish the suit. ♥K is your entry.

Cashing the spade ace first won't work. If trumps are outstanding, East can win the second spade and play a third one, establishing a ruff for West. And if you draw trumps first, you lack the entries to set up the spades in the above layout.

If any other line offers a better chance than that unusual spade play, I am all ears.



(Useful) Trivia

Perhaps surprisingly, when partner opens a 15-17 point 1NT, he is almost twice as likely to have 15 than 17! Here are the odds:

15 points:	43%
16 points:	33%
17 points:	24%

The 20-22 point range is even more stark:

20 points:	51%
21 points:	31%
22 points:	18%

You probably already knew that "partner never has a maximum". Now you know why. More on this next month.

RECENT RESULTS

Victorian Master Pairs

Section A - Championship

- 1 R. Szabo-Bencze – J. Selwyn
- 2 S. Gerdan – M. Balint
- 3 S. Klofa – R. Livingston

Section A - Plate

- 1 E. Samuel – J. Fust
- 2 M. Chrapot – M. Tencer
- 3 G. Pick – A. Branicki

Section B - Championship

- 1 E. Linton – E. Matheson
- 2 J. Selwyn – M. Granovsky
- 3 K. Muntz – T. Kay

Section B - Plate

- 1 M. Weinberg – A. Halmos
- 2 L. Allgood – P. Havlicek
- 3 J. Percil – J. Flynn

Section C - Championship

- 1 J. Hare – J. Quayle
- 2 C. Macquarrie – D. Sharman
- 3 J. Hoff – K. Hoff

Section C - Plate

- 1 J. Savage – E. Windmiller
- 2 C. Whiddon – M. Allison
- 3 M. Fogelgarn – J. Shapiro

Ailsa Tandy Eclectic Pairs

- 1 L. Gold – D. Davis
- 2 A. Murray – C. Whiddon
- 3 M. Ohlson – R. Parker

Frankston Congress 31st Congress By The Bay

Weekend of 18th – 19th April
 Saturday : Swiss Pairs; Sunday: Swiss Teams
 St Francis Xavier Function Centre
 Cnr Baxter and Davey Streets, Frankston
 Entries to Yvonne Minton:
 (03) 9787 1208 / 0418 348 264

SYSTEM CORNER: PUPPET IN PUPPET Bill Jacobs

Partner bids a strong 2NT, and you have a moderate hand with 5 spades and 4 hearts. This shape has always been a bugbear: it seems impossible to construct a method that allows a choice between 3NT, 4♥ and 4♠.

If you transfer to spades, then you cannot then show the hearts without bypassing 3NT. But if you use Stayman, you cannot easily locate a 5-3 spade fit.

Some players "solve" this dilemma by defining the auction 2NT-3NT as showing 5/4 in spades/hearts. This is a bit like getting rid of nuclear waste by firing it into space: it is a method which entails an obvious risk. And even if you remember it, the simple 2NT-3NT auction is replaced by 2NT-3♣-response-3NT, which unnecessarily reveals data about the 2NTER to the defence.

If you play Puppet Stayman, the problem can be resolved with a small modification. The responses after 2NT-3♣ become:

- 3♦: some 4-card major
- 3♥: no 4 or 5 card major
- 3♠: 5 spades
- 3NT: 5 hearts (partner can bid 4♦ to transfer back into 4♥).

So essentially, the 3♥ and 3NT responses to Puppet Stayman are switched.

If opener responds 3♥, the case of interest if responder has the dreaded 5-4 hand, responder's followups are:

- 3♠: puppet to 3NT (a puppet within Puppet)
- 3NT: shows 5 spades, 4 hearts: opener can choose the contract

This gadget has plenty going for it: it gets the strong hand to declare in all the common scenarios; moreover it is less prone to being forgotten than the radioactive 2NT-3NT=5/4 method.



The recommended approach for getting in touch with the editor is to use email: the address is bill.jacobs@quest.com.