

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

April 2010

Editor: Bill Jacobs

EDITORIAL: CUSTOMER CARE Bill Jacobs

Back in the last century, people who flew on airlines were referred to as passengers. They had to fasten their seatbelts when instructed, and generally obey the aircraft crew.

At some stage in the last 25 years, airlines discovered that they needed to treat travellers a bit differently in an era of open competition. People who flew suddenly became "customers". PA announcements changed to refer to customers rather than passengers. They still had to follow the crew's instructions, but staff were taught to have a customer focus, an absolute necessity for the airline's on-going business success.

Two incidents at the recent Summer Festival in Canberra caused me to wonder whether people who compete in bridge events are "players" or "customers".

Incident 1. In the final round of the Seniors' Swiss Pairs, a game score of 680 to E/W was inadvertently entered as a N/S game on the Bridgemate scorers. The E/W pair in question hung around for at least an hour after the finish of the match, but when scores were still not posted, they went back to their hotel to get a night's sleep in preparation for the main event the following day.

In the morning, they looked at their losing score in a match they thought they had won. The scoring error was discovered, but the pair was told that the correction period had expired, and the score could not be changed.

The director told them rather bluntly: "I had to stay up until after midnight – so could you. The score stands."

Incident 2. In a match of the South-West Pacific teams, a score slip was signed and entered. Within the score correction period, one of the teams told the directing staff that they had made one of the contracts that had been scored as down 1. At the table, all four players had agreed down 1, but declarer

subsequently decided that he had in fact made the contract. The hand record supported this position.

The match result was adjusted, but the captain of the opposing team stated that his team did not accept that the contract had made, and they stood by the entered and signed result. Despite repeated requests to directors that the matter be properly dealt with, presumably by a hearing – and a response by the directors that it was "under control" - nothing further was done, and the adjusted score stood. This adjustment eventually cost the opposing team a qualifying spot in the National Open Teams.

It is not the purpose of this Editorial to criticize the two scoring decisions, contentious though they may seem. Only one side of each case has been presented: a balanced opinion requires the hearing of both sides of an argument.

But what is self-evident is that the people involved were treated as "players", not as "customers". I have spoken to both the contestants on the wrong end of these decisions, and they are profoundly unhappy with *the way* they were treated. Directors were unsympathetic in the first case, and uncommunicative in the second. The staff could have effected the same score result in both incidents but leaving the players involved satisfied that their complaints had been properly and sensitively processed.

It's not a cheap exercise to play in national congresses. Those who play throughout the Canberra event will get little change out of \$2,000. Entry fees account for about \$500 and then travel and accommodation is added.

\$500 ought to buy you "customer" status. But tournament organizers and directing staff don't think that way, apparently. They should.

People who run bridge clubs as a business perform better in this area. They know they need to keep their customers happy,

otherwise their business will suffer. When I play at such clubs, I get a strong sense the staff are trying to ensure I have a good time.

Organizers and directors at non-profit clubs and at national congresses need to be imbued with the same spirit. Indirectly, the players are paying their salaries. The Summer Festival in Canberra is in decline: there might be multiple reasons for this, but my sense is that it is not a particularly friendly event to play in. There are other national events in which the customers are made to feel much more welcome.



FOR STARTERS
Bill Jacobs

Playing in a teams match, you are in third seat, and no-one is vulnerable. You hold:

♠ 7 ♥ AQJ10874 ♦ K5 ♣ AJ2

Partner and RHO pass, and it's your bid.

This is a situation where your position in the bidding counts for a lot. With partner being a passed hand, you really have no thought of slam. Slam could be a laydown – you might like to try constructing a normal hand for partner where slam is cold – but it's not a contract you are going to be able to bid with confidence, even if it makes.

Turning from thoughts of slam, could it be right to end in a heart partscore? Certainly. For example, you could open 1♥, and if your partner responds 1♠ or 1NT, rebid 3♥, inviting game. However, it must be said that such a rebid would be a tad conservative – as little as

♠ xxxx ♥ x ♦ Axxx ♣ Qxxx

gives you a laydown game.

More important is to think about the opponents. Maybe they can get together in spades, if you give them a chance.

To make it as hard as possible for the opponents, I would open 4♥. It seems weird to open a non-vulnerable pre-empt with such a powerful hand, but in third (or fourth) seat,

you don't have so much responsibility to your limited partner. 4♥ is the pressure opening.

Pressure or not, everyone passes over your 4♥ without much angst. The opening lead is the club king and you see this motley lot:

♠ AQ65
♥ 52
♦ 9764
♣ 764

♠ 7
♥ AQJ10874
♦ K5
♣ AJ2

On the club lead, RHO follows with the 8. What do you do?

Play low, leaving LHO on lead. You would welcome a club continuation, and a switch to a red suit would be nice as well.

LHO goes into a brown study, and eventually emerges with a low heart. Thank you! RHO puts up the king, and you swallow this up with the ace and draw a second round of trumps, all following.

You are up to 9 tricks: 7 hearts and 2 aces. A 10th trick could emerge from a spade finesse, or finding the diamond ace onside, or maybe some other way.

You need some inspired guesswork. Are you feeling inspired?

Before launching into a do-or-die finesse, you might want to consider some general techniques.

First, when in doubt, run your long suit. You may be able to read the hand better on seeing your opponents' discards. Maybe someone will feel squeezed and do something silly. You never know.

Another idea to try is to play ace and jack of clubs, exiting to LHO. He didn't like having to lead to trick 2, maybe he won't like it again. For example, he might play on diamonds. It's unlikely he started with ♣KQ doubleton, but if so, your contract is delivered then and there.

But in all likelihood, and despite these manouvres, you are probably going to have to choose whether to take the spade or diamond finesse. And there's a subtle reason why the spade finesse is very likely to work.

Think back to LHO's play to trick 2, where he obliterated his partner's heart king. He must have known that switch was dangerous – why didn't he play through dummy's strength in spades?

The reason might be that he has the spade king. Perhaps he didn't like to lead away from it in case you held ♠Jx or ♠Jxx, in which case a spade switch would cost dearly.

So I would recommend playing a spade to the queen, even though it risks an extra undertrick. Here is the full deal:

	♠ AQ65	
	♥ 52	
	♦ 9764	
	♣ 764	
♠ K94		♠ J10832
♥ 63		♥ K9
♦ A1082		♦ QJ3
♣ KQ53		♣ 1098
	♠ 7	
	♥ AQJ10874	
	♦ K5	
	♣ AJ2	

Points to remember:

- Opening bids in 3rd and 4th seat don't follow the normal rules of engagement. Use the knowledge that partner has less than opening bid values to play mind games with your opponents.

One well-known strategy is to open light – you can always pass partner's response. A heavy pre-empt is a less well-known but equally useful tactic.

- Why make a mistake when you can get your opponents to make their own? Leaving your opponent on lead to trick 2 is a good example. And since he's already depressed about the defence, putting him on lead again is sound strategy.

- Whilst waiting for LHO's play to trick 2, you were surely expecting a spade to come through. When it didn't, it was just a matter of asking: "why?"

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: E ♠ J1052
 Vul: All ♥ J1062
 ♦ K
 ♣ AJ75

♠ A3
 ♥ 743
 ♦ AQ105
 ♣ Q982

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♦	1♦	D'ble
Pass	4♥	Pass	2♥
		All pass	

Partner leads ♣3, and your ♣8 draws declarer's ♣K. Next comes ♥8, which holds the trick. Partner takes ♥K with ♥A and continues ♣6, dummy's ♣A winning, declarer following with ♣4. Dummy's ♥J draws your trump. Now comes ♠J and you have to work out what to do.

Problem 2:

Dealer: N ♠ A6
 Vul: N/S ♥ KJ3
 ♦ QJ1083
 ♣ AQ6

♠ KJ1084
 ♥ AQ104
 ♦ 62
 ♣ 94

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	1♠	1NT
	3NT	All pass	

Partner leads your suit, ♠9, and declarer plays low. It would be a mistake to duck this to declarer's ♠Q because even if partner can dislodge ♠A for you, you won't have an entry - South's tricks are coming from the minors. You win ♠K and continue?

Solutions on page 5.

BRIDGE APHORISMS – VII
LEAD THROUGH STRENGTH AND UP TO WEAKNESS

The simple things in life are often the best. And it applies to bridge as well. This is a simple and effective acronym.

“Excellent guideline for defence” ... Ben Thompson.

“A fuzzy attempt to replace judgment with a rule, even if it’s a good one” ... Ian McCance

“Usually more information is available” ... Robert Freuwirth

“The auction mostly tells me how to defend” ... Cathie Lachman

Oh well, my correspondents weren’t particularly enthusiastic about this “simple and effective” acronym.

The science behind the acronym is clear enough. By leading up to weakness, you give your side the best chance of developing tricks in the suit. Leading through strength is the flip side of the same coin.

West could have used the tip in defending the “For Starters” hand on page 2. Do you think a spade switch (leading through strength) would have defeated 4♥? More about this on page 8.

Here is an example of the aphorism at work.

	♠ K1087		
	♥ J54		
	♦ 1073		
	♣ 764		
♠ 53		♠ 6	
♥ K762		♥ 1098	
♦ KJ95		♦ 864	
♣ QJ8		♣ A109532	
	♠ AQJ942		
	♥ AQ3		
	♦ AQ2		
	♣ K		

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	4♠	All pass	2♠

You are East and ♣Q is led to 4♠. Your ace wins the trick, dropping the singleton king.

As East you haven’t a clue about the actual layout. Robert Freuwirth is right that *“usually more information is available ...”*, but not this time.

There is little point in continuing clubs, but you can take the opportunity to lead up to dummy’s weakness. And dummy’s diamonds are weaker than the hearts.

As it turns out, declarer has identical holdings in the red suits, but the diamond switch is the only play that defeats 4♠.

THE TWELFTH TRICK

Matchpoints ♠ A632
 Dealer: S ♥ 4
 Vul: nil ♦ 987643
 ♣ J2

♠ KQ75
 ♥ AJ93
 ♦ AQ
 ♣ AK3

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

* Puppet Stayman

Against 6♠, West leads ♣10, covered by ♣J, ♣Q and ♣A.

Plan the play. Solution on page 8.

Victorian Bridge Association
 invites you to the
2010 ANZAC Congress
 to be held
Saturday 24th April and
Sunday 25th April

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IF YOU THOUGHT YOU'D SEEN IT ALL

This deal occurred in the semi-finals of last year's Grand National Teams finals at Banora Point.

Dealer: S	♠ 76543	
Vul: N/S	♥ 8	
	♦ KQ10832	
	♣ 6	
♠ 9		♠ K10
♥ J4		♥ K7
♦ 954		♦ AJ76
♣ AKJ10753		♣ Q9842
	♠ AQJ82	
	♥ AQ1096532	
	♦ -	
	♣ -	

Sitting N/S, Victoria's Andrew Mill and Simon Hinge achieved a spectacular result to go with the spectacular layout. They played 7♠ redoubled, making for +2940. Sadly, there is no postcode to go with that score.

At the other table, N/S declared 6♥ which happened to make when West led his singleton spade - a good score. But it was not good enough!

Here's a question for you. What is the par contract on the deal – the contract that will be reached if both sides can see the full hand?

Solution on page 8.



SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS
Ian McCance

Problem 1

Dealer: E	♠ J1052	
Vul: All	♥ J1062	
	♦ K	
	♣ AJ75	
♠ 976		♠ A3
♥ A5		♥ 743
♦ 98743		♦ AQ105
♣ 1063		♣ Q982
	♠ KQ84	
	♥ KQ98	
	♦ J62	
	♣ K4	

Declarer seems about to make 4 tricks in hearts, 3 in spades and ♠AK, a total of 9. You are sure to make 3 aces, and the remaining trick is in the balance. What you don't want is the lead. This is double unblocking time. Take ♠A, cash ♦A and exit in spades, otherwise a second spade to your ♠A (or, later, a diamond to your ♦A) leaves you endplayed. Partner does NOT hold ♦J.

You aren't out of the woods yet. You will have to discard twice on spades. The first is easy, ♦5, but the second depends on where the lead will be. You must follow the spade spots carefully – you are gripped in a memory squeeze. If dummy will win the last spade, discard ♦10. If declarer, ♣9.

Problem 2

Dealer: N	♠ A6	
Vul: N/S	♥ KJ3	
	♦ QJ1083	
	♣ AQ6	
♠ 93		♠ KJ1084
♥ 862		♥ AQ104
♦ A954		♦ 62
♣ J1087		♣ 94
	♠ Q752	
	♥ 975	
	♦ K7	
	♣ K532	

You don't have much in high cards and presumably partner has a useful card somewhere, but there is not much point in continuing spades - declarer must have ♠Q and there won't be time to develop them.

A second look at dummy's hearts provides the solution. Return ♥4¹. When partner gains his entry with that useful card, we hope in diamonds, a heart return will get you up to 5 tricks.

Declarer could have done better. Ducking trick 1 was a mistake. If he rises ♠A he can set up diamonds and later lead towards ♠Q for his 9th trick. Even if partner switches to hearts after taking his trick in diamonds you would have only 2 tricks there.

¹ So much for leading up to weakness! This deal supports a bridge aphorism not previously mentioned: "there is no such thing as a bridge aphorism that works all the time". If anyone believes *this* aphorism is wrong, then please let me know. ... BJ

INTERVIEW WITH EDGAR KAPLAN

Edgar Kaplan (1925-1997) was one of the most influential bridge players ever, as a player, writer, theorist, analyst, commentator and lawmaker.



We have printed vignettes of Kaplan in this newsletter. He was a key architect of many of the improvements to the laws of bridge made over the years; in particular relating to the 1989 scoring change for doubled non-vulnerable undertricks – the genesis of which was a single deal from the 1981 Bermuda Bowl final.

Kaplan gave a short but interesting interview as part of his induction into the ACBL Hall of Fame:

Edgar, thank you for joining us today. The Kaplan – Sheinwold partnership is probably one of the greatest that the 20th century has known. What characteristics did Freddy Sheinwold have that you found so attractive, and vice versa? What was it about that partnership that made it work? What did you two have in common?

EK: I would think the first major factor was that we were friends. We had similar interests. I was friendly with Freddy and I was friendly with his wife Betty, who later became my wife, so we became very friendly. In fact we exchanged lessons when we first met: she was a flute teacher, and I was an incipient flute player. Freddy sang in a choir, and in fact the three of us did a lot of music together – we had a lot of shared interests, and that helped our bridge partnership to a great extent.

Did you think one player was better than the other?

EK: Well, I don't know. I think that I was better, naturally – all bridge players tend to think that. I know one partnership from Canada: Eric Murray and Sami Kehela, perhaps the greatest Canadian partnership. I think their strength was that although they didn't much care for one another,

each one of them thought the other was better than he was, and that is a marvellous basis for a partnership.

Did you and Freddy look at the game from the same viewpoint?

EK: Yes we did, and the system we devised was probably the avenue through which American bridge turned from 4-card majors to 5-card majors. We wrote a book together. It was published by the publisher who did his bridge column. We told him that this is not the sort of book that will sell – he said to us: “you worry about writing the book, I'll worry about selling it”. And it turned out he was right, although we thought he was a fool. He gave it a generic title: “How to play winning bridge”, which had nothing whatever to do with the content of the book, but the book was in fact astonishingly successful.

Here is the deal that changed the scoring, from the final of the 1981 Bermuda Bowl between USA and Pakistan:

Dealer: W	♠ AK	
Vul: N/S	♥ AQ	
	♦ J9	
	♣ AK109642	
♠ J9862		♠ 103
♥ 854		♥ 973
♦ K4		♦ Q97632
♣ J53		♣ Q8
	♠ Q764	
	♥ KJ1062	
	♦ A105	
	♣ 7	

The Pakistanis bid the hand as follows:

North	South
Munir	Fazli
2♣	2♥
3♣	3♥
4♥	4NT
5♠	6♦
7♥	Pass

This was a brilliant auction to the 7-card heart fit: 7♥ being the only grand slam that makes.

But the auction wasn't over. In the passout seat, Jeff Meckstroth looked at his balanced 5 count and decided to bid 7♠!

7♠ was doubled and taken down 9, for a score of 1,700 in 1981. In fact, the defence lost a trick – it could have been down 10 for 1,900, but even that score is a lot less than the 2,210 that Pakistan “deserved”.

To add insult to injury, the Americans in the other room also bid to 7♥, so the USA picked up 11 absurd imps. Kaplan subsequently wrote in the Bridge World: “this is the one aspect of bridge scoring that is askew”. He did something about it.

Under the current scoring, down 9 is 2,300, down 10 is 2,600: no value against even a vulnerable grand slam.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣



Youth bridge

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

RECENT RESULTS

Ailsa Tandy Eclectic Pairs

- 1 D. Davis - L. Gold
- 2 S. Pick – G. Pick
- 3 P. Hemmingway – E. Windmiller

Victorian Master Pairs

Section A

- 1 M. Tencer – M. Chrapot
- 2 S. Klofa – R. Stewart
- 3 R. Greenfield – K. Pearson

Section B – Championship

- 1 D. Jacobs – B. Lindsay
- 2 D. Carter – G. Carter
- 3 T. Cowie – J. Masters

Section B – Plate

- 1 E. Windmiller – J. Savage
- 2 M. Fogelgarn – J. Shapiro
- 3 S. Pick – G. Pick

Section C – Championship

- 1 F. Shapiro – J. Shapiro
- 2 M. Tauman – B. van Eijk
- 3 I. Webb – A. McGregor

Section C – Plate

- 1 F. Engleman – A. Gedge
- 2 B. Ehrlich – G. Sandor
- 3 K. Trolland – C. Karliner

Open Butler Final

- 1 B. Kingham – J. Rosen
- 2 J. Magee – T. Strong
- 3 D. Morgan – J. Stark

Victorian Open Team Playoff

- 1 B. Kingham, J. Rosen, J. Magee, T. Strong,
D. Morgan, J. Stark
- 2 B. Thompson, W. Jacobs, L. Gold, C. Hughes

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

Vu-Graph quotes from Edgar Kaplan:

“East’s 3♥ bid on Qxxx showed great fortitude. Personally, I’d rather have fiveititude.”

“The best one can say for this contract is that it has not yet gone down.”

“Declarer led the ace of trumps and it held. So now he must reconsider his options.”

“The modern fashion in cuebids is not to show anything in particular but to cast a rosy glow over the whole auction.”

FOR STARTERS - REPRISE

Dealer: N	♠ AQ65	
Vul: nil	♥ 52	
	♦ 9764	
	♣ 764	
♠ K94		♠ J10832
♥ 63		♥ K9
♦ A1082		♦ QJ3
♣ KQ53		♣ 1098
	♠ 7	
	♥ AQJ10874	
	♦ K5	
	♣ AJ2	

What happens if West, defending 4♥ and winning ♣K at trick 1, switches to a spade through dummy's strength?

Assuming everyone plays correctly, would 4♥ make or go down?

On a spade switch, declarer must grit the teeth and put in ♠Q. To refuse the finesse is to play for a minor miracle in the other suits.

When ♠Q holds, the club jack is discarded on ♠A, and now declarer is in dummy for the last time and must take either the heart or diamond finesse.

It's correct to play a diamond to the king. If the diamond ace is on-side, then you are home. And even if it's not, you have the small chance (12%) that the heart king will fall singleton.

Playing the heart finesse is far inferior – you need the king to be doubleton or singleton onside, which only happens about a quarter of the time.

Bad luck on this layout, but it just goes to prove: West should have remembered the acronym about leading through strength!

SOLUTION TO PAR CONTRACT

For the deal on page 5, the par contract is 7NT doubled by East, four down, -800. 7NT is not quite so good when played by West – it won't take a single trick.

Have you ever seen a real-life deal where the par contract was 7NT, bid as a sacrifice?



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THE TWELFTH TRICK
Bill Jacobs

	♠ A632	
	♥ 4	
	♦ 987643	
	♣ J2	
♠ J98		♠ 104
♥ K76		♥ Q10852
♦ K102		♦ J5
♣ 10984		♣ Q765
	♠ KQ75	
	♥ AJ93	
	♦ AQ	
	♣ AK3	

The diamond queen is a fatal distraction here. Avoid the distraction by getting it out of your hand at trick two!

You can win the return, take ♦A, draw trumps ending in dummy, and ruff the diamonds good. This requires both spades and diamonds to split 3-2 and nothing else.

Other lines are inferior. Playing ace then queen of diamonds risks a third diamond being played for an uppercut or promotion. Playing to ruff losers in dummy and take the diamond finesse requires that finesse plus trumps 3-2 and good breaks elsewhere.

Need more GOLD points?

Then come to the Victor Champion Cup Bridge Festival – June 10-14, Melbourne