

# Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

April 2020

Editor: Dee Harley

## CHRISTOPHER LEACH VBA CHAIRMAN

Hardly a month goes by without an article appearing in the press, or on the internet via popular medical sites, regarding preservation of mental capacity in older people and the related issue of the frightening rise of dementia, particularly in its most common form, Alzheimer's Disease.



Meta-analyses of large population groups and the many decades of data researchers now possess, provide increasing clarity as to the factors which may precipitate the development of this group of diseases in the elderly (and even middle-aged people) and therefore the things one can do to prevent (or forestall) that development. In this preventative context, bridge has a wonderful story to tell.

A very good article by an award-winning psychologist and science journalist named Sabrina Brennan, which appeared in January, neatly wove together the key elements of a "dementia prevention" strategy for people aged around 55 years or older.

A key element that bridge cannot assist should be dealt with first. We all need to move more. Physical exercise is an essential element of prevention of dementia, because the things

precipitated by lack of exercise... most notably high blood pressure... are strongly implicated in the development of cognitive disease as well. An article that appeared last year cited research linking decreased cognitive performance with lack of exercise. This has important implications for all bridge players but particularly for our older top bridge players.... keep fit and you will be better at the table. But I digress...

Just about everything else Sabrina cited is impacted positively by playing bridge regularly. We need to learn new things just as vociferously as when young. Learning enriches our lives and helps the brain to rejuvenate and build new neural pathways. So, learning a tough game like bridge is good for us, but even better for mental health is doing the hard yards to get better.

Don't be afraid to learn new card play techniques or new conventions. Play against better players occasionally and work on your defence.

The whole process of challenge that bridge presents is a valuable tool for keeping our brains in top gear. Think outside the bridge square of your current level and you will be both a better player and have done your brain a favour.

An interesting point Sabrina makes is about stress. Yes, it is stressful to sit at the table and have to figure out a tough line of play with three people watching you and hoping you'll just get on with it. But the recognition of stress you can handle, what Sabrina calls your "stress sweet spot" is very important to cognitive health.

Taking the challenge of bridge within parameters of manageable stress is fantastic for neuro-plasticity. So, don't be afraid to enter your optimal bridge stress zone and if that means moving up a level or two, that is going to be great for your neural architecture, to stay nothing of self-esteem. Of course, bridge is not a game we play in isolation. It is

a social game and that is vitally important to healthy ageing.

People who live socially engaged lives are more likely by far to avoid dementia. Being at the bridge club for a duplicate provides up to four hours of vital social interaction to go with the brain exercise. And, finally, Sabrina talks about attitude. People who are cheerful and positive are much more likely to see a boost in the part of the brain involved in learning and memory.

I will have much more to say about behaviour in the months ahead, but we all know how a positive friendly attitude both makes us better bridge players and much nicer to be around at the bridge club.

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For those of you interested in the work of Sabrina Brennan, the following contains many references:

<http://theinspiringtalk.com/sabina-brennan/>

Sabrina's website can be found here:

<http://www.sabinabrennan.ie/>

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Bill Jacobs recently retired from his dual roles as Chair of the State and VBA Disciplinary and Ethics Committees and on behalf of the Council I want to record our thanks for his great contribution over many years. Bill combined this distinguished service to Victorian bridge with his roles as a leading teacher, director and one of Victoria's best players.

After due consideration, the Council has approved Chris Hughes and Andrew Guy, respectively, as Bill's replacements on the VBA and State Disciplinary Committees. For further details on these appointments, please refer to the articles recently posted on the VBA website.

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## UPCOMING CONGRESSES & EVENTS

Upcoming congresses have been cancelled until the Corona virus situation is resolved.

Not just congresses, the PABF in Perth has been cancelled.

The ANOT in Adelaide has been cancelled.

The Felicity Beale Mixed Teams has been postponed.

Nobody knows when "normal bridge" will resume.

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## CONGRESS RESULTS

### Rye Swiss Pairs

1. Ishmael Gulec, John Yang
2. Melroy Decouto, Paul Edwards
3. Penny Corrigan, Kae French

### Swiss Teams

1. Leo Saoud, Gus Ghali  
Steven White, Ian Webb
  2. Bob Geyer, George Lovrecz  
Ming Zhang, John Yang
  3. Chelliah Arul, Tim Legge  
Christopher Leach, Michael Sullivan
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## VBA INAUGURAL PAIRS

The online VBA Inaugural Pairs was held last Wednesday (25<sup>th</sup> March), as a compensation for the club being closed.

### Results:

#### North-South

1. Gus Ghali & Victor Zhang
2. Keith & Brigitte Kat
3. Dee Harley & Anna St Clair

#### East-West

1. Peter Holland & Eva Samuel
  2. Terri Kay and Kitty Muntz
  3. Robert Drew and Cathy Lachman
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**PLAY PROBLEM #5 - SOLUTION**

Last month you were in 3NT on the lead of the ♣Q.

Dir: East                    ♠ AK  
 Vul: All                    ♥ J986  
                                   ♦ AKQ3  
                                   ♣ J102

♠ ?	N	♠ ?
♥ ?	W                    E	♥ ?
♦ ?	S	♦ ?
♣ Q?		♣ ?

♠ QJ102  
 ♥ 1074  
 ♦ 742  
 ♣ A93

East opened the bidding with 1♣ and South ended up in 3NT.

You can count four spade tricks (if you can unblock spades and get to dummy afterwards) Three diamonds and two clubs. That makes nine by my arithmetic!

So, the only problem is how to guarantee a late entry to dummy

On the ♣Q lead you MUST unblock the ♣J (or the ♣10), and you MUST NOT win the trick. If West continues with clubs, you play the ♣10 from dummy. If East plays the ♣K your ♣9 will be an entry later, if not you will be able to use the ♣A as a later entry.

If, instead East switches to (say Hearts, but anything they lead now will enable you to make the contract). When you regain the lead you unblock you AK♠ and play a small club towards the ♣A9, winning economically. If East has the ♣K, he can do nothing to stop you from making your contract.

If you won with the ♣A at trick one, East can deny you an entry to dummy (by letting the ♣10 hold or by playing the ♣K on the ♣2.

Simon Henbest, Edna Matheson, and TP correctly specified the line to make. Several other people got close, but didn't quite nail it.

**PLAY PROBLEM #6**

Dir: East                    ♠ KQ86  
 Vul: All                    ♥ 42  
                                   ♦ KJ10  
                                   ♣ 7543

♠ 2?	N	♠ ?
♥ ?	W                    E	♥ ?
♦ ?	S	♦ ?
♣ AJ?		♣ K6?

♠ AJ1097  
 ♥ AJ105  
 ♦ A5  
 ♣ Q2

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
-	-	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

West somehow finds the lead of the ♣J, East wins the King and returns a club back to West's Ace, West now switches to the ♠2. What is the best line of play to try to make this contract?

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

**SUIT COMBINATION**

Try your spider senses with this combination...

1.You: AQJ9xxx	Partner: x
x stands for any card below the 8 here	

You should ask how many tricks are required? How do you play for:  
 a) 7 tricks  
 b) 6 tricks  
 c) 5 tricks

[Solution](#) on P8.

## VBA BULLETIN CUP/PLATE

Bridge clubs all closed? How on earth do you get to keep playing?

One of the things I admired about bridge in Scotland was the format of the Scottish Cup, and since we are in dire straits with covid19, I thought we may recreate that format here in Victoria, and call it the VBA Bulletin Cup.

It will be played entirely online. Entry is free of charge.

It will be contested between teams of exactly four players.

Matches will be played using BBO Teams match format (scored in IMPS).

Each team is guaranteed to play in at least two matches.

Teams will consist of four players, one of whom is designated Captain.

A team will be drawn against another team, one will be designated the Home team, and the other team the Away team.

The Captains agree a date and time for the match to be played which MUST be played in the specified week.

If no time/date can be agreed the match will be decided by coin toss. The next match either team plays will start the match with a penalty 12 Imps. I do not expect this to ever happen.

A match will consist of 24 boards, to be played in two sets of 12.

After 12 boards, the Home team must switch seats (from North/South to East/West) and the Away team will retain their seats. This will ensure you play different opponents in the second half.

The winning team should notify me of the result.

The draw for the next round will be made available on the VBA Website.

Imagine that 16 teams enter, we would have 8 first round matches in week one, 4 second

round matches (Quarter finals) in week two, 2 third round (Semi-finals) in week three, and a final during the fourth week. We may agree to play more boards in the final (two lots of 16 boards?). I would imagine that we could showcase the final, allowing Kibitzers to entertain themselves by watching.

If you lose your first match then your team will go into a secondary competition called The Plate, which would mirror the Cup in detail. (quarter-finals, semi-finals, Final).

The competition is open to anyone who lives in Victoria.

### **Entry**

It would be best if you can enter as a full team of four. Nominate the captain, the Captains email address, the names of the four players, and an appropriate Team Name.

Entries should be emailed to me at [dee\\_harley@hotmail.com](mailto:dee_harley@hotmail.com), I will acknowledge each entry as I get it. Entries should be submitted before the 15<sup>th</sup> April (Deadline).

I am willing to try to match some players together if you don't have a full team. Please contact me if you seek teammates.

### **Schedule**

The draw will be issued on the 16<sup>th</sup> April.

The first week of competition will start on the following Sunday – the 19<sup>th</sup> April.

Since it is unlikely that we will have exactly 16 teams, we are likely to have to play some preliminary matches, so some teams are likely to have a Bye in the first week.

I'm calling the tournaments the Cup and the Plate, I do not as such have a cup or a Plate to offer.

### **Ethics**

This is an online competition, and we are well aware that cheating would be easy to do. I am just trusting that we all have enough respect for the game not to do so.

If you are playing in the same venue as your partner for example you should ensure that you are in different rooms – out of sight and out of earshot from each other.

**MASTER POINT PROMOTIONS**

<b>Life</b>	
Joan Kermond	Ravens
Terry Nadebaum	Paynesville
<b>**National</b>	
Sally Thornton	Frankston
Kay Leeton	Waverley
<b>*National</b>	
Carlin Bruce	Benalla
Sena Hasthanayake	Waverley
Nancy Heffernan	Kooyong
<b>National</b>	
Barbara Barr	Traralgon
Bron Sund	Phillip Island
<b>*State</b>	
Elizabeth Jonson	RACV
Rosemary Kinna	Ballarat
Marion Scambler	Geelong
Marisa Milito	Bairnsdale
<b>State</b>	
Kayoko Greenwood	Dendy Park
Cynthia Batten	Gardenvale
Meredith Landale	Deniliquin
<b>*Regional</b>	
Reit Heuzinkveld	U3A Knox
<b>Regional</b>	
Tony Ni	Ballarat
James Tulloch	Kooyong
Carol Barber	Rye Beach
Joe Taylor	Traralgon
Arthur Barber	Rye Beach
Liz Jones	Rye Beach
Rico Fernandes	Berwick
Jenny Finn	Waverley
Carl Jenkins	Sale
Joanne Wilson	Bayside
Karen Lamaro	Bendigo
Geoff Carr	Gardenvale
Anthea Bickford	Royal South Yarra

**EDITORIAL  
DEE HARLEY**

Life has changed. Corona Virus may affect everyone in the world. I am left wondering if I will ever again play in a big tournament. (I have played in some very large tournaments in the United States – with about 10,000 tables all told!). Our lives have changed beyond recognition. We are self-isolating and social-distancing, and playing bridge has taken a bit of a back-seat.

But still, we have played in a few online sessions.

One of the very few improvements I think that Australian bridge could make would be to adopt a national (or state-wide) knockout tournament. In Scotland they have the “Scottish Cup” which is the premier teams tournament. There is a draw - usually starting with about 32 teams, and they play knockout matches of 32 boards on a date agreed by the captains (within a specified timeframe) and at a venue somewhere between the two teams homes. So, we who lived in Edinburgh may travel to Dundee to play a team from Aberdeen. The Dundee bridge club would provide the facilities at a minimum cost. We would play 16 boards, stop for a meal, then play another 16 boards. The winning team would travel back to their hometown cock-a-hoop, and the losers would similarly bemoan their plays or choices in the auction on the way home. A great day out for all.

There is a fixed date for the grand final which is played over 64 boards and is shown live on BBO.

Well we don't have such a competition here in Australia, but since we have an unknown respite from normal times, I have put forward a [suggestion](#) for the VBA Bulletin Cup (and Plate) modelled loosely on that format.

Please let me have your views (and your entries).

**BIDDING: 5 OF A MAJOR**  
**DEE HARLEY**

You get no better score for making 11 tricks in 5♠ than you do for making the same 11 tricks in 4♠ so why take the risk and bid 5?

There are several reasons why it is right to bid 5 of a Major (5M) but how do you know which kind of bid is being made? Here is my home-made priority categorization which should tell you what the bid means (This is my own interpretation, so you are welcome to come up with something different! I accept no blame for your disasters on any bidding based on my recommendations.)

**If the opponents have bid a suit:**

If the opponents have bid a suit at some point, then this is the most common and best use of 5M. It specifically says I have a good hand, am interested in a slam but I have (at least) two top losers in "Their" suit. Responder now must now decide how to proceed:

- a) With two top losers, responder should pass.
- b) With a singleton, or with a protected king (either KQ.. or the responding hand will be declarer and has Kx say).
- c) With a void or the Ace in "Their" suit then do not be lazy! Do not bid 6M! You should indicate to partner that a grand slam is an option here by cue-bidding, or by bidding 5NT, or at the very least bid 6 of their suit (assuming their suit is not spades!)

An example may show what I mean:

N: ♠75 ♥AKJ10743 ♦AK4 ♣A

S1: ♠43 ♥Q65 ♦Q1096 ♣KJ94

S2: ♠K3 ♥Q65 ♦Q1096 ♣J942

S3: ♠A3 ♥Q65 ♦Q1096 ♣KJ94

I have shown a North hand with three possible South hand. North opens 2♣ and in each case East overcalls with 2♠ and South doubles to show "values"

**Auction North with S1:**

W	N	E	S
-	2♣	2♠	Db1 <sup>1</sup>
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	5♥	Pass	Pass

1: Double shows values

**Auction North with S2:**

W	N	E	S
-	2♣	2♠	Db1
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♥

**Auction North with S3:**

W	N	E	S
-	2♣	2♠	Db1
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠ <sup>1</sup>
Pass	4♣ <sup>2</sup>	Pass	4♥
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♣ <sup>3</sup>
	6♦ <sup>4</sup>	Pass	7♥ <sup>5</sup>

- 1: Too good to just raise to 4♥
- 2: Forward going. Likely control.
- 3: First round Spade control, and a club control
- 4: I hear ya! I am interested in a Grand slam AND I have 1<sup>st</sup> round diamond control. Have you any reason to bid the grand?
- 5: Oh yes. I love watching you play grand slams.

**If the opponents have been silent:**

If there has been not a peep from the opposition and there has been a constructive auction of some sort, then 5M is a very specialised request. It says EITHER:

1. Do you have good trumps in the context of the hand already shown

OR

2. Do you have good controls in the context

Usually the 5M bidder will have either a very good suit, but lacking controls (Aces), or they will have a poorish suit with great outside controls.

**Example:**

N: ♠A432 ♥AKQ2 ♦KJ ♣A54

S: KQJ109763 ♥8 ♦Q10 ♣Qx

N	S
2NT	3♥
4♣ <sup>1</sup>	4♥ <sup>2</sup>
4♠	5♠ <sup>3</sup>
6♠ <sup>4</sup>	Pass

- 1: 4♣ = good hand for spades with a ♣ control
- 2: 4♥ is a re-transfer
- 3: 5♠ now says: have you great spades or great controls? If so bid 6.

...continued on the next page



6♠ – happy to oblige (you must have solid spades here, and I have no suit where they can cash two tricks, so I have great controls.

If North had held one more point:

N: ♠A432 ♥AKQ2 ♦KJ ♣ KQ54 then he would have declined the offer of a slam and passed the 5♠ bid.

Notice that whilst South can bid 4NT to find out how many keycards North has, it may give him the answer he wants, but it may not help. If North holds this hand:

♠A432 ♥AK2 ♦J987 ♣ AK4

there are two diamond losers. He would decline a 5M bid, but his keycard response for aces would be the same as the first hand I gave him (3 Aces) where the slam is cold.

**5M can be a pre-empt**

If your partner opens a weak 2♥ and you hold ♠ - ♥A6432 ♦ QJ9853 ♣ J8

You will realise that 4♥ may well make, but you also know that the opponents are likely to treat your 4♥ as a transfer to 4♠, whereupon you will have to bid 5♥. So why not do it now and make it more difficult for the opponents to diagnose their potential slam? (I would make this bid regardless of the vulnerability!)

What do you think? Please email me your views at: [dee\\_harley@hotmail.com](mailto:dee_harley@hotmail.com)

**ONLINE RESOURCES**

The ABF have recently offered a daily column with Ron Klinger. You can find it here:

[www.abfevents.com.au/abfdbc/](http://www.abfevents.com.au/abfdbc/)

Nick Fahrer has offered a digital package to see us through Corona virus:

<https://bridgewinners.com/article/view/social-distancing-heres-a-digital-care-package/>

**VBA INAUGURAL PAIRS**

The online VBA Inaugural Pairs was held last Wednesday (25<sup>th</sup> March), as a compensation for the club being closed.

This hand was a bit challenging:

Dlr: North                    ♠ K9  
 Vul: E/W                    ♥ A2  
                                      ♦ 106532  
                                      ♣ J763

♠ 10764	N W                    E S	♠ QJ83
♥ 10		♥ J7543
♦ 98		♦ Q
♣ AQ10984		♣ K52

♠ A52  
 ♥ KQ986  
 ♦ AKJ74  
 ♣ -

Bidding at our table

	W	N	E	S
	-	Pass	Pass	1♥
	2♣	2♦	Pass	6♦
	All Pass			

North has a difficult bid after 2♣. Double would suggest spades and clubs, but Anna didn't have the spades for that. 2♥ was another option she rejected, and she finally plumped for the off-beat 2♦ bid – which we play as non-forcing, but showing some values.

Well my flabber was truly gasted. I considered bidding 5♣ which we play as Exclusion Keycard (also known as Voidwood) - a keycard type bid which asks for Keycards, but excluding the ♣A in the responses. I thought it may get messy so I just settled for the practical 6♦. When trumps broke, Anna emerged with the 13 tricks for an 84% score.

Should we be bidding a grand slam here? Maybe next time we will.

The competition was organised and hosted on BBO by Neil Ewart. Thanks to him for a great job well done.

**♣♣♣ KNAVE OF CLUBS ♣♣♣**  
**Whoopsie and recovery**

Bidding after partner opens a weak two seems to be a problem for many players. They count their points to try to estimate what to do when it is much easier to count tricks. When partner makes a weak two bid, assume they have two of the top three honours to six cards. This is basically the playing strength that a weak two promises. There should be little outside as a weak two simultaneously shows little in the way of defensive values. While it is certainly true that many weak twos don't meet these guidelines, it still offers a good estimate of what to bid since a missing trump honour will be replaced by a side suit honour. In the hand shown, most Easts opened an off centre weak two and West placed them with ♥AQxxxx. West can then see 6 heart tricks, 3 club tricks and one diamond trick with 3 top losers and so bids 4♥. This contract appears to have 4 losers but watch what happens. In most matches, South led the ♦A intending to play for a third round ruff.

Teams:

Dir: North	♠ A10954	♠ KQ									
Vul: None	♥ Q5	♥ J108762									
	♦ 853	♦ J764									
	♣ 1032	♣ 5									
♠ 86	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ KQ
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K4		♥ J108762									
♦ KQ92		♦ J764									
♣ AKQ98		♣ 5									
	♠ J732										
	♥ A93										
	♦ A10										
	♣ J764										

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
-	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Despite the strong clubs in dummy, most defenders continued diamonds and East discarded his spades on the club suit. Declarer can now ruff a spade and lead a heart towards the king and make the contract. However, it is still possible for the defenders to beat the contract. South can see that if East has the

♥Q, there is no way to beat the contract (remember that in teams you must try to beat the contract). It is, thus, proper to place that card in partner's hand. Having done that, South can see that East cannot over-ruff North when the fourth club is led. South needs to rise with the ♥A and play the fourth club. North can see the need to ruff with the ♥Q and knows that South started with two diamonds, else there was no sense in continuing diamonds at trick two. So, North can return the third diamond which South ruffs with the ♥9 furnishing the setting trick

**Solution to Suit Combination ([page 3](#))**

What is the best play?:

1.You: AQJ9xxx      Partner: x

**For 7 tricks** you need to find Kx or K10 onside so play towards hand playing the Queen optimistically.

**For 6 tricks** you just need a 3-2 break or a singleton King or ten so you cash the Ace and lead the queen (optimistically!)

**For 5 tricks** if K10xxx are offside, your goose is cooked. If K10xxx are onside you need to lead towards hand and play the 9 in case the next hand shows out.

**FEEDBACK**

I have had several comments in response to my editorial on discussing hands at tables. Most people shared my horror of hearing things happening at other tables. Only one dissenter thought that constructive discussion could happen at the table at the time, whilst I can see this viewpoint, I have to ask how on earth do restrict this to those with non-carrying voices, and ban those whose whisper is louder than a roaring train from doing the same. I stand by my guns!