

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

August 2020

Editor: Dee Harley

VBA PRESIDENT

It goes without saying how disappointing the latest Victorian government lockdown has been for the many bridge clubs which worked so hard in early June to prepare cogent COVID-19 plans and were just awaiting the advent of the 50 person allowance to re-launch their activities. Moreover, the one or two clubs that re-opened on the basis of the 20 person rules, did see a promising and enthusiastic emergence of their regular bridge players, keen to have the full social and mental experience which our incomparable game offers. At the VBA, taking advantage of our ample space availability, we had deep cleaned the premises, set up a series of large tables and incorporated many accompanying measures. We were looking forward to the resumption of club and (eventually) state bridge, with our internal trials showing us that our arrangements would work well and instil a high level of security in participants.

All this was in the context of the first ten days of June, when there were even a couple of days with zero community transmissions in Victoria. Of course, as we now know, the sky was about to fall in.

So... as I write, in the third week of July, the resumption of live bridge now looks like being September, assuming the community transmission is driven down to low levels (or extirpated) once again. It will be a long road back, but the "hard yards" planning already done will hold our clubs in good stead when the day finally arrives.

In the meantime, online bridge continues, with a great variety of options from both the VBA, the ABF and other clubs, all now master-pointed, to keep us occupied during this terrible time. There is also a wonderful teams event, the VBA Bulletin League, which is the brain-child of the Editor of this publication, Dee Harley, involving teams in three levels in weekly matches. This (like its online predecessor the VBA Bulletin Cup) has been very well-received and supported and gives

me the opportunity to thank Dee (and his partner Anna St Clair) for their amazing contributions to bridge in Victoria on many levels.

A number of readers were kind enough to get in touch regarding my April article concerning the cognitive and social benefits of bridge in the ageing. This year marks 30 years of research into the benefits of bridge in the fight against dementia and into its great contribution to retaining neural plasticity in all older people. The ABF recently forwarded me a summary paper, written by a Polish researcher, which collates the research into bridge over that time period and concludes with news of evaluations now proceeding in his native Poland, one of the world's greatest bridge-playing nations.

I conclude with two excellent quotes from the paper "Bridge: Dementia Therapy or Alzheimer's Prevention" by Marek Malysa. "Bridge is the one (and very last) mind sport where a computer program did not beat the World Champions" and "How can the molecular determinism of Alzheimer's be trumped by elderly people's card-playing? Using the mind (playing bridge) causes rewiring of the brain, sprouting new synapses.....it may cause the generation of new neurons."

These quotes go to the complexity, incomparable richness and wonderful benefits of our great game. We look forward to joining our confreres and consoeurs around Australia by playing it in person in Victoria in the not-to-distant future.

Until then, look after yourselves !

Christopher Leach

VBA BULLETIN LEAGUES

League positions as at 27/7/2020

Team	P	Imps	VPs
International	4	70	51.19
Half-Baked	4	91	48.03
Big Dills	4	12	42.05
Get Smart	4	9	41.61
Marks	4	-36	34.28
BuKkLe	4	-85	32.53
JEM in the ruff	4	-61	30.31

Team	P	IMPs	VPs
Milly	4	111	57.16
Glorious	4	47	48.65
Four desperados	4	48	47.69
Unhinged	4	14	43.29
T-Delights	4	13	42.9
Jerry, Elaine, George & Kramer	4	-87	23.77
The Four Belles	4	-146	16.54

Team	P	IMPs	VPs
Herded Cats	4	94	57.26
Bird Team	4	79	54.63
Sanhedrin Shpielers	4	36	46.27
Kill Bill 4	4	25	44.83
Veering	4	4	40.5
Mornington Madames	4	-106	20.77
Mister Slam & the Miss Bids	4	-132	15.74

There have been some exciting incidents. A few people have made the mistake of not putting in the player names before creating the match (I think the ones who did this only made this mistake once – since it is quite harrowing, and next time you try to create a match you are very careful not to repeat it.)

What happens when you do this is that hundreds (allegedly) of people attempt to join your match, and you cannot easily stop them. I myself have created a match with the wrong number of boards. In these cases the long and difficult solution is to enter one of the rooms, and set each board to "Passed out", then you have to do the same for the other room. It takes about 5 minutes in all. Does anyone have a quicker way to abort a match?

Here is a hand from a recent match between Get Smart and Marks which caused some bidding problems!

IMPs

Dlr: West

♠ J1042

Vul: None

♥ J8

♦ 96532

♣ 86

♠ 763

♠ Q85

♥ KQ6

♥ 943

♦ 107

♦ 4

♣ AKQ109

♣ J75432

♠ AK9

♥ A10752

♦ AKQJ8

♣ -

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
1NT	Pass	3♣	Dbl
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	6♦

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
1♣	Pass	3♣	Dbl
4♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Neil Ewart made 6♦ easily from the North hand when hearts broke 3-3. In the other room the Marks team were unable to make 4♠. Simon Henbest was South and when his partner showed no inclination to raise hearts after South showed a strong hand with at least 5 hearts, South knew that North had at most 2 hearts, and had at least 4 diamonds (probably 5), hence the diamond slam must at least have some play. Good decision! 14 Imps to Get Smart.

When setting up the matches, you have the option to allow Kibitzers, my recommendation for this is you don't allow Kibitzers, although in cases where you have total trust in your opponents, allowing Kibs is an option. Many of you will be aware of the recent articles on [bridgewinners](#) website about cheating via self-Kibitzing. I am of the opinion that this nasty disease has not spread to our league (yet), There have been the odd occasional personality clash, but I think that the spirit of the matches has been excellent.

REBECCA (BEC) O'REILLY AUSTRALIAN YOUTH TOURNAMENT

After the disappointing cancellation of the 2020 ANC the Victorian Youth Team were thrilled for the opportunity to play in the Australian Online Youth Tournament. The team chosen to represent Victoria consisted of:

The Muscle: Conor Hosking
Defence Queen: Rebecca O'Reilly
Stats Superstar: Damon Flicker
The Strategist: Seb Wright
Mastermind: Jamie Thompson
The Heart: Danni Fuller

Not to forget beloved NPC's Peter Hollands and Laura Ginnan who not only shared their bridge expertise but also did an incredible job keeping us all in line and accountable in what can only be described as an organisational nightmare.

The event consisted of 5 states battling it out in a double round robin of 16 board matches (and no undos, eep).

The first match started in typical youth fashion with IMPS flying everywhere, an average of more than 6 imps a board! Fortunately, most were coming Victoria's way and the team managed to settle their nerves with a strong 20 IMP win over ACT.

Round robin one ended with the team having 2 wins and 2 losses eager to get a few more wins on the board in the second round.

Match	VIC IMPs	Opp IMPs	Net	VPs
1	VIC 63	ACT 43	+20	15.00
2	VIC 44	SA 71	-27	3.74
3	VIC 33	NSW 28	+5	11.48
4	VIC 27	QLD 71	-44	1.45

A strong second round saw the Victorian team winning three out of the four matches. Unfortunately, heartbreak came in the second last match where the team faced their biggest loss for the event against SA and said goodbye

to any last hopes of making the finals. With this disappointment hanging over the players' heads going into the final match it would have been easy to lose focus. Persevering despite this they managed a 36 IMP win over tournament leaders QLD, getting one last bit of revenge after being defeated by them in the first round.

A fine effort from all with only a few unfortunate mis-clicks, finishing the tournament a very respectable 3rd place. A big thank you to Leigh and Bianca Gold for organising the tournament.

Match #	VIC IMPs	Opp IMPs	Net	VPs
5	VIC 44	ACT 15	+29	16.58
6	VIC 26	NSW 23	+3	10.91
7	VIC 20	SA 65	-45	1.34
8	VIC 52	QLD 16	+36	17.59

BBO CHAT

Had some interesting conversations with people about BBO this month.

Here are some things you may know – or not!

During a hand you cannot chat to your partner, but when the round is finished – you can! Simple click on their name and type your comments into the "Message" field at the bottom of the panel that popped up when you clicked on them.

During a hand you can chat to the table, or you can chat directly to one of your opponents and ask specific questions like "Does that deny a 4 card major?"

You will know that you cannot see your partners explanation during the play of the hand. However, when play is finished, and you look at history – you are able to see what alert explanation all players gave (including your partner).

Marvellous!

PLAY PROBLEM #9 - SOLUTION

Last month you had to try to make 4♠ on the lead of the ♥K

IMPs

Dlr: North ♠ Q1096
 Vul: None ♥ A85
 ♦ A3
 ♣ Q632

♠ ?		♠ ?									
♥ K?		♥ ?									
♦ ?		♦ ?									
♣ ?		♣ ?									
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	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ KJ875										
	♥ 632										
	♦ J42										
	♣ AK										

Lead: ♥K

I should have mentioned that there was no opposition bidding. North South smoothed their way into 4♠ to be played by South.

It is possible that West has 6 hearts headed by the KQ, but if that were the case we may have heard from him in the bidding.

I think we should be ducking this lead in case West switches to another suit (give him the chance!). If he continues, then we play the ♥Ace and hope it wasn't a six-card suit he started with.

Now before touching trumps we realise that there is an inescapable diamond loser, and inescapable spade loser (the Ace of Trumps!), and therefore we cannot afford to lose two heart tricks. Here is where you hope that the Wild Distribution Gods have been sleeping when this hand was dealt! You need hearts 5-2 or better (now) and you need clubs to break 4-3.

Unblock those top clubs, then cross to dummy with a diamond, and play the ♣Q throwing your last heart. Then you can tackle the trump suit. One other (almost negligible) hope is that if clubs are 5-2, then the short hand has to ruff with his singleton Ace of spades.

Maggie very nearly got it right.

PLAY PROBLEM #10

An easy 3NT for you... or is it?

IMPs

Dlr: South ♠ J87
 Vul: Both ♥ A65
 ♦ J765
 ♣ Q109

♠ ?		♠ ?									
♥ ?		♥ ?									
♦ ?		♦ ?									
♣ ?		♣ ?									
	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ Q106										
	♥ K104										
	♦ AKQ										
	♣ KJ42										

Lead: ♥3

If you like you can treat this as a sure trick problem, - can you make 3NT on any lie of the cards on perfect defense?

Send me your solution please:
dee_harley@hotmail.com

SUIT COMBINATION

You: AK9832 Partner: J4

How would you play this suit:

a) for 6 tricks
 b) for 5 tricks

You can assume you have plenty of entries

[Solution](#) on P6.

GIVE THE OPPONENT'S A LITTLE BIT OF ROPE....KEITH KAT

It is an extremely rare occurrence to see declarer play the two minor suit Kings on the last trick...whilst the opponents are playing their minor suit aces!! But that is exactly what happened on this hand from a team's match recently.

Here is the hand in question:

	♠ K73	
	♥ Q8732	
	♦ KQ3	
	♣ 106	
♠ A964		♠ Q85
♥ 1065		♥ J94
♦ 109		♦ A8762
♣ A742		♣ 83

	♠ J102	
	♥ AK	
	♦ J54	
	♣ KQJ95	

South finished in 2NT on the lead of the ♠4. The first three tricks were uneventful. East won the first trick with the ♠Q, West the second with ♠A and dummy the third with the ♠K.

The defence now has a winning spade trick plus the two minor suit aces so declarer should make just their contract of 8 tricks. **Yet the defence made only one more trick!**

This is how declarer gave the defenders a little bit of rope...

At trick four, declarer led the ♣6 to the jack. Not wanting to play his ace just yet West played low. The ♣5 was now led towards dummy's ♣10. What would you do as West? Worried that his partner held an honour, West played low and dummy's ♣10 won the trick.

A heart was now led to the ♥K, both opponents playing a high card, which signalled an odd number. Deducing hearts to be 3-3, declarer continued with the ♥A and then a diamond to the queen. This was allowed to hold, so declarer continued with the ♥Q.

This was the position when the ♥Q was led.

	♠ -	
	♥ Q87	
	♦ K3	
	♣ -	
♠ 9		♠ -
♥ 10		♥ J
♦ 10		♦ A876
♣ A7		♣ -

	♠ -	
	♥ -	
	♦ J5	
	♣ KQ9	

Both opponents followed as declarer threw the ♦5. Dummy's two remaining hearts were cashed, East discarding two diamonds, declarer two clubs and West a club and a spade.

On the lead of the ♦3, East was in the same dilemma as West had been on the second lead of clubs. Hoping that partner held the Jack, East played low.

And so it came to pass. South won the jack of diamonds and these cards made up the very last trick.

♣K ♣A ♦K ♦A

Declarer was Keith Kat, who along with his wife Brigitte, own and run the Kattery Bridge Club.

The Covid lockdown has seen them redesign their website and create "[The Brain Gym](#)", where you take your brain to exercise.

In the Brain Gym, there are courses where you can do bidding and opening lead quizzes, join Keith as he analyses bidding sequences or takes you through the play of a hand...and you can practice making your plan as the declarer or interactively work out your opening lead.

You can also book Keith for an exhilarating one hour of online bridge; this is guaranteed to put excitement back into your bridge as he has many ideas which will help you become a more dynamic bridge player. New workshops are being added all the time: **Modern Structured Raises – Part one** is extremely popular. And the online beginner's course starts on Tuesday August 11th. There is something for everyone.

Go to [The Brain Gym](#) to find out more.

♣♣♣ **KNAVE OF CLUBS** ♣♣♣
When to lose it!

Many players avoid 4-3 trump fits because they find them difficult to play and their partner seems to find it impossible!

Sometimes, there is no real option but to raise on three card support even if you would really like four card support. In the hand shown, North has an awkward rebid. A club rebid would suggest 6 cards and a 1NT rebid would show a diamond stopper. Pass is impossible since partner's bid is forcing and so the three card raise is made. This bid will work well when partner has five hearts and will be playable when partner has 4 goodish ones. South has a clear raise to four hearts and no alternative game contract is in consideration.

West leads the ♦3. East wins with the queen and switches to the ♠Q. If the hearts split 3-3, South can win two spades, four hearts and five clubs to make the contract with an overtrick.

It might seem that South will only make one less trick if there is a heart loser but watch what happened to one unwary declarer.

Teams:

Dir: North

Vul: Both

	♠ K83					
	♥ 764					
	♦ 95					
	♣ AKQ54					
♠ 7542	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 10px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ QJ0	
N						
W E						
S						
♥ J983		♥ 102				
♦ J43		♦ AKQ106				
♣ 98		♣ 763				
	♠ A96					
	♥ AKQ5					
	♦ 872					
	♣ J102					

Bidding:

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

Lead: ♦3

The ♠Q was won with the ace and three rounds of trumps drawn. Leaving the ♥J out, declarer started to run the clubs intending to discard the third diamond and the third spade. When West ruffed the third club, there were two more diamond tricks to lose since there is no trump left on table.

All that is required is to realize that a trump must be lost if the suit splits 4-2 (and that is the most common split, 48% compared to 36% for 3-3). There is no reason that it cannot be lost early rather than late. So after winning the ♠A, declarer can simply play a small heart from hand. Now the hearts in dummy protect against the third round of diamonds and declarer can draw three rounds of trumps before running the clubs and discarding one diamond and one spade. This plan will produce ten tricks (even if Hearts are 3-3). This theme of losing a trump trick early rather than late is very common in playing 4-3 fits.

Solution to Suit Combination ([page 4](#))

You: AK9832 Partner: J4

For 6 tricks you are advised to run the knave initially. If it is covered by the Queen, win the Ace and then you have a choice! You can lead the 4 and finesse the 9, or you can attempt to drop the 10. Apparently, your chances are the same 16% whichever of these evils you choose.

For 5 tricks, again we have a dichotomy. The Bridge Players Encyclopedia advises you Either to lead low to the knave, then cash the Ace and King
 Or
 Run the knave, cashing the Ace and King if it loses, or guessing (as above) what to do if it is covered.

SuitPlay, interestingly doesn't suggest either of the above! It tells you to cash the Ace, and then run the knave.

Why do we have differing lines? I have no idea! But I think I prefer Suitplay's suggestion for 5 tricks.