

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

September 2020

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VBA BULLETIN LEAGUES

VBA Bulletin League - Final Positions

Team	Played	Net Imps	VPs
Half-Baked	7	200	95.23
International	7	107	88.30
Get Smart	7	82	86.13
Big Dills	7	-52	59.39
Marks	7	-85	57.36
BuKkLe	7	-131	53.56
JEM in the ruff	7	-121	50.03

Team	Played	Net IMPs	VPs
Milly	7	227	102.24
Glorious	7	36	75.50
Four desperados	7	-19	72.52
T-Delights	7	-16	66.57
Unhinged	7	-24	66.53
Jerry, Elaine, George & Kramer	7	-64	59.01
The Four Belles	7	-140	47.63

Team	Played	Net IMPs	VPs
Herded Cats	7	167	100.34
Bird Team	7	108	88.62
Veering	7	69	77.28
Sanhedrin Shpielers	7	35	77.03
Mornington Madames	7	-72	58.20
Kill Bill 4	7	-112	54.21
Mister Slam & the Miss Bids	7	-195	34.32

Three leagues with a complete set of matches. Thanks are due to my team-mates (Keith and Brigitte, and my partner Anna) for carrying our Half-Baked team over the winning line.

Team Milly always looked to be in control in league 2 and Herded Cats had a long and nervous wait until they finally heard the news of their success at the top of the 3rd league.

The promotion and relegation rules mean that Milly comes up above JEM in the Ruff, and that the four Belles will drop below Herded Cats.

The Spring league started on the 30th August

We have a few new teams, and some of the existing teams didn't make it into the spring league.

There are one or two new features in the Spring League. It is an ABF requirement that all competitions run under the auspices of a bridge club issue masterpoints. So, we are now offering Green points for the matches played in the VBA Bulletin league. In order to allay the cost of this, we have made a nominal charge of \$10 per team (Some teams got a bit excited and paid \$10 per player! – but they are due a refund). Given that we are having 8 matches this season it works out at about 40 cents per person per match. Great value!

Please also note that our view on allowing Kibitzers has mellowed a little. If both captains agree then Kibitzers may be allowed. Kibitzers should not however be allowed to talk to the players.

Details of the new Spring league are here: <http://vba.asn.au/vba-league-teams-spring-2020-2/>

HANDS FROM LEAGUE MATCHES

Here are some hands from recent league matches which have been sent in by readers. First, we have two hands submitted by TP demonstrating his principle of "Hidden treasures": When you have a hidden treasure, you need not tell everyone about it. Instead, keep it to yourself and take control.

The hand below is from the match between International and Get Smart.

MPs

Dlr: East ♠ K83

Vul: Both ♥ Q974

♦ 1083

♣ J82

♠ A9

♥ 1032

♦ K2

♣ AKQ1097

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J

♥ AKJ85

♦ AQ954

♣ 65

♠ Q1076542

♥ 6

♦ J76

♣ 43

Commentary from TP.

When my partner Gordon opened 1♥, I thought there is no purpose in showing my good club suit, as we have a fit and it is up to me to take control. I decided to bid 1NT (forcing for one round and unlimited), so that partner can further describe his hand. His response was not that encouraging. With my undisclosed hidden treasure, I thought to explore further, and we reached 6♥. Gordon did not have any problem in claiming 13 tricks. At the other table, the response to 1♥ was 2♣. After cue bidding ♠ and ♣, there was a Keycard misunderstanding and they stopped in 5♥.

Bidding: (TP's table)

W(TP)	N	E(Gordon)	S
-	-	1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣ (0 or 3)	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♥ (3!)	All Pass

Bidding: (TP's opponent's table)

W	N	E	S
-	-	1♥	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass

Explanation of bidding TP's opponents table: 3♠ was a 1st/2nd cue, neither showing nor denying extras.

4♣ was a 1st/2nd cue and showed extras (bypassing 3N, which would have shown a non-serious slam try).

4♠ was intended as RKC for hearts but interpreted as a cue.

4N was intended as RKC but taken as showing 1 or 4 keycards.

5♥ was a signoff but was interpreted as showing 2KC and denying the trump Q.

A sorry tale about the danger of forgetting agreements 😞

TP's second hand comes from International v Big Dills.

Commentary from TP:

When I was learning my basic bridge, I read somewhere that if you don't have a strong hand (reversing type) you have to suppress the longer minor and open the bidding with the major.

Following the advice "beggars can't be choosers", I decided to suppress my 6-card club suit and open 1♥ with my 5-card heart suit, with only 11 hcp, but 5 losers.

After partner bid 2♥ over opponent's double, it was not difficult for me to bid 4♥ and keep the contract with the help of "the hidden treasure" club suit.

Dlr: East

♠ 10754

Vul: N/S

♥ K3

♦ KQ643

♣ A2

♠ J9

♥ AJ842

♦ -

♣ KQ10953

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ AQ86

♥ Q109

♦ 985

♣ J86

♠ K32

♥ 765

♦ AJ1072

♣ 74

Bidding: (TP's table)

W(TP)	N	E(Gordon)	S
-	-	Pass	Pass
1♥	Dbl	2♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

At the other table the opening was 1♣. With our teammates entering the auction easily and bidding up to 3♦, our opponents didn't have the freedom to describe their hands easily and ended up playing in 5♣ down one.

Bidding: (TP's opponent's table)

W	N	E	S
-	-	Pass	Pass
1♣	1♦	1♥*	3♦
3♥	Pass	5♣	All Pass

*1♥ showed spades.

Now for a hand from the get Smart v BuKkLe match

Dir: South ♠ K5
 Vul: None ♥ 1084
 ♦ AKQ975
 ♣ AQ

♠ 76	N W E S	♠ A109
♥ 965		♥ AKQJ7
♦ J643		♦ 1082
♣ KJ53		♣ 87

♠ QJ8432
 ♥ 32
 ♦ -
 ♣ 109642

Lead: ♠ 6

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
-	-	-	2♠*
Pass	2NT^	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

- 2♠* ♠+ minor < opening
- 2NT^ - strong enquiry
- 3♣ - Minimum with clubs

Commentary from South (Simon Henbest):

I got a Spade lead and played wrongly played the ♠K at trick 1 but fortunately still made.

In the other room there was a similar auction, except East had bid 3♥ so there was an opening lead of the ♥6 from West. East won with ♥J and continued with ♥A, West followed with the ♥9, they play reverse count, East continued with the ♥K. South ruffed with the ♠8 and then led low to ♠K and ♠A. Now a 4th Heart gives a trump promotion and one off.

Admittedly declarer could have ruffed the third heart low and then ruffed the 4th round with the ♠8 to make.

But this is an instructive hand. How should you play to give yourself the best chance?

On a ♥ lead with three rounds of hearts you can ruff the third-round low.

You have 3 sure losers, ♥AK (already lost) and ♠A (to come), you can't pitch all your clubs on diamonds unless ♦JT come down in three rounds - highly unlikely!

You need the ♣ finesse and West needs to have ♣K, for East's bid he must have the ♠A. Any time LHO has three spades including the 10 or 9 you are going down because of the trump promotion.

Most people would play a low Spade to the ♠K at trick 4 and go down! (playing the honour in the short hand first) which is what Leigh Gold did and I essentially did at trick 1.

Any time LHO has two spades (♠Tx or ♠9x or ♠T9), you can make if you time it right.

You need the ♣ finesse to make this contract, so you take that at trick 4 to get to dummy, then you lead a low ♠ from dummy towards your hand.

If East rises with the ♠A and plays a fourth ♥ you can ruff low in hand, over ruffed by West and over ruffed by dummy's ♠K, ruff a ♦ low and draw trumps.

So, East has to duck the low ♠ from dummy and you win with the ♠Q (or ♠J), then lead a low trump to the ♠K and ♠A. On the fourth heart you now ruff low and as long as East started with three trumps and West with two you make.

The old adage of think before you play applies.

SUIT COMBINATION

You: QJ98 Partner: A432

How would you play this suit?

a) for 3 tricks
 b) for 4 tricks

You can assume you have plenty of entries

[Solution](#) on P6.

PLAY PROBLEM #10 - SOLUTION

Last month you had to try to make 3NT on the lead of the ♥3

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

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

♠ Q106
 ♥ K104
 ♦ AKQ
 ♣ KJ42

Lead: ♥3

Did I ever mention that I don't have solutions to these problems? In case you didn't realise, I have about a hundred problems with no solutions!

When I set this problem, I asked you for a sure-trick solution. I hadn't analysed it fully! I believe that there is no 100% solution to this problem, since I believe you can always defeat the contract by arranging the cards as declarer plays the cards.

If however I tell you that the diamonds do not break 6-0, then you are able to guarantee the contract by playing the ♥A at trick 1, unblocking the three top diamonds, then playing a club to dummy. In dummy you can cash the ♦J, and then continue clubs overtaking dummy's last club. This will net you 2 heart tricks, 4 diamond tricks and three club tricks to make the contract. What's more when in with the ♣A the opponents cannot claim more than 2 spades 1 diamond (potentially) and the club trick they deserve.

If diamonds turn out to be 6-0 you will need to reconsider your options.

Most of those who sent me a solution found the right line, but Lindsey was the only one to spot the potential diamond issue. Well done Lindsey!

PLAY PROBLEM #11

How will you play this grand slam? There was no opposition bidding.

IMPs
 Dlr: East ♠ AJ643
 Vul: Both ♥ AJ102
 ♦ Q54
 ♣ 9

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

♠ 9
 ♥ KQ93
 ♦ AKJ
 ♣ AJ652

Lead: ♠K
 Contract 7♥

South put on his or her rose tinted spectacles and boldly bid the grand slam. What is your best chance to make 7♥

Send me your solution please:
dee_harley@hotmail.com

BRIDGE TERMINOLOGY – THE FINESSE

With AQ in dummy opposite xx in hand you would lead low from hand and when lefty plays low you play the Queen.

That is a finesse, but how would you complete this sentence? "I finessed the...?"

Technically here, you are finessing the Queen, so the correct version would be "I finessed the Queen."

but equally valid would be "I finessed **for** the King."

There is no confusion!

**BRIDGE BASE ONLINE
ETIQUETTE**

Playing team matches online in the VBA Bulletin League, we had an interesting incident where an UNDO request was not granted.

The case involved an appeal and we had to ask Laurie to resolve the issue.

For the record, my recommendation is that ALL UNDO requests should be granted. Everytime.

If you feel that the request was unfair or that you have been damaged, then you must record all the details, (BBO hands along with the bidding and play can be easily copied from your history page), record any conversations (copy/paste into a text document) and send me the details of your claim.

Having said that – I would like to emphasise that you should only claim an UNDO if you have accidentally pressed the wrong bid, or played the wrong card. (It is easy to do, and anyone can have a rogue mouse-click (or a rogue touchpad click, which is even more likely!))

If for example you bid 2♣ but you hadn't noticed your opponent had bid 1NT after your partner's bid, then you just have to wear it! That is not a mis-click – that is an error – you should not request an Undo.

Or if you forgot the system when you made the bid, and you suddenly remember it – that is not a reason to request an undo. Again, you just have to get by without requesting an undo. What you can do here is update the explanation of your bid (by clicking on it), to say that you forgot the system when you made that bid, - you meant it as Natural but in your agreed system it is a transfer (or whatever). That way, your opponents will be aware of what has happened, but your poor partner will still be in the dark!

I think we should be informing our opponents of everything.

Alerting is another key area where I feel we could improve. Before clicking the final bid, you should (in my opinion) fill in the "Alert

box" all the information pertaining to the bid you make. Take for example, a 2NT opener. Some people play strange meanings of this opening bid, but even if your bid is natural – you should state the range and hand shape e.g. 20-22 balanced (may include a 5-card Major).

Some may see that description as overkill, since that would be the default explanation and many people just don't bother to offer that description. I think you should! The point about this is that you cannot give too much information about your bid. Giving none or too little information is not acceptable.

Now one of my pet hates is when someone makes an artificial bid of some sort and then 5 seconds later, they alert it. That is NOT ACCEPTABLE. You must fill in the Alert box information BEFORE you make your bid.

What should you do if you need more information about a bid? One thing you can do is click on the bid in question. This prompts the person who made the bid to provide (more) information about the bid. There is a possibility of Unauthorised Information (known as UI) because should your partner also click on the bid, they will see a message along the lines of "East is currently answering a query on this bid". So you know that your partner has asked for information.

An alternative is to send a private message to the bidder (say it was East) – by clicking on their name and asking for whatever detail you require to know.

East can send you back a private message, so no one else at the table will be aware of the interchange.

If East realises that his description is inadequate as a result of this conversation, he should of course update it.

We are playing Online bridge for a number of reasons. To keep in practice, to stay alert to compete and to have some fun in these miserable lockdown days. Please go out of your way to make the experience enjoyable for you opponents. You can beat them, but at least let them enjoy it!

Thank you!

♣♣♣ **KNAVE OF CLUBS** ♣♣♣
AN INFERENTIAL GRANNY

When there is a competitive auction, it is very difficult to bid slams with any accuracy. The hand shown, from a recent club session, is such a hand. Looking at the hand, we see that EW would like to reach 7♥, which is an excellent contract and does not need the club finesse. On the other hand, NS would like to sacrifice in spades over both 6♥ and 7♥ with the latter penalty of 1100 being much cheaper than the vulnerable slam. Still the hand seems to have caused considerable problems since two pairs played 4♥, three played 5♥ and only one played 6♥. Most Easts will open 1NT with their partners announcing 15-17. South probably overcalls 2♠ showing spades and a minor. West will bid 3♥ which is game forcing (competitive heart bids will start with 2NT, Lebensohl). North, with a weak hand, will make a LoTT-based raise to 3♠ since NS appear to have a 9 card spade fit. East has a clear 4♥ bid and South, with a sixth trump, bids 4♠. South feels very safe since the long club suit should be easy to develop.

Teams:

Dlr: East

♠ K1065

Vul: Both

♥ 8742

♦ 1093

♣ 98

♠ -

N
 W E
 S

♠ J98

♥ Q9653

♥ AKJ10

♦ AKJ72

♦ Q86

♣ K43

♣ AJ5

♠ AQ7432

♥ -

♦ 54

♣ Q10762

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
-	-	1NT	2♠
3♥	3♠	4♥	4♠
5♦	Pass	5♥	Pass
6♦	Pass	6♥	6♠
Pass	Pass	7♥	All Pass

Lead: ♠A

West now has to show some insight. It is likely partner has no high cards in spades since the

opponents obviously have 10+ between them. Thus, in the other 3 suits, West knows that EW have a minimum of fifteen plus thirteen points. This is a minimum of 28 of the 30 points in those three suits so at most a queen is missing and there are no spade losers. It should be clear to West to bid the small slam emphasizing diamonds on the way. When West passes over 6♠, it shows no first round loser and East can revalue the ♦Q and bid the grand slam. Now we return to how to play 7♥. The lead will be a spade ruffed in dummy. Since the trump and diamond suits are completely safe, the best line is a dummy reversal. Cross to ♥A, ruff another spade, ♥K, ruff the third spade high, finish trumps and claim 4 hearts, 3 spade ruffs, 4 diamonds and 2 clubs.

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

You: QJ98 Partner: A432

It may look simple, but there are plenty of views on this one - [here](#)

For 4 tricks: Start by leading the Queen, if covered you win the ace and lead towards the remaining J98. Now you must guess whether RHO started with K10 doubleton or not, so you either finesse for the 10 or play to drop it. Surprisingly, to me, SuitPlay says play for the drop.

If the Queen is not covered and holds the trick then declarer has a nasty guess. Suitplay says now play the Knave, attempting to smother the 10.

Defensively that means with K2 for example you must not cover the Queen with the King. Play small. So when the Queen wins, declarer now needs to decide whether to play the Knave or the 9 next.

If the defender will usually duck with Kx or Kxx, it now means that when RHO covers the Queen, you have much better odds of his original holding being K10 doubleton which may be why SuitPlay says to drop the 10!

For 3 tricks: Lead the Queen, if covered you are guaranteed at least three tricks now by winning the Ace and trying to drop the 10.

If the Q loses you need to guess who may have started with a singleton and play appropriately.