

# Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

June 2022

Editor: Dee Harley

## VBA PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER LEACH



The latest edition of the ABF Masterpoint Centre newsletter, which is devoted largely to the current state of bridge club membership across Australia as at 30 April, makes sobering reading. Every state and territory except NT is showing a decline in membership compared to the already much-reduced April 2021 numbers, with national membership falling below 30,000 for the first time. This amounts to a national decline of 20% in a few short years, with Victoria having suffered a 6% decline in the past 12 months, which is slightly worse than the national average.

Of course there is, very largely, a one-word explanation for this phenomenon ... COVID. Bridge has ticked a lot of "wrong" boxes in regard to this infernal virus ... namely, a game played indoors with close personal contact, communal handing of cards and devices and

an ageing (and therefore more vulnerable) cohort ... seemingly, the worst of all worlds. Moreover, many of those not yet reappearing at our clubs have one or more health issues which magnify their potential susceptibility to COVID. It has been a tough gig for our clubs to battle these negatives and get members back to F2F play. In some cases, there is difficulty even to persuade people to re-sign as members, when they can personally envisage only online bridge stretching into the future, as COVID lingers and becomes endemic.

Yet, there are definite sources of hope. Positive messaging to members is very important. Clubs are still maintaining many excellent basic aspects of a COVID plan, a fact that should be continually communicated. Moreover, my experience is that those still wishing to wear masks are (wholly appropriately) not being in any way ostracized. Indeed, it should be made clear to all members that a decision to play masked is completely accepted at the club. Moreover, the N95 type masks are readily available in many pharmacies and give a very high level of protection, even more so to a vaccinated individual.

One issue I find that is very relevant to the situation at present, is that many people are understandably suffering from generalized "information overload" regarding COVID. Yet it is a vital element to facilitate the return of our members, that people are aware of how much has changed for the better regarding the prevention and management of the pandemic. There is no doubt that vaccinations and (if you are still unfortunate enough to catch COVID) new highly effective home treatments, have made a huge impact compared to two years ago and should be the major plus factors in everyone's risk assessment of F2F bridge. Indeed, on the basis of such information, many people have decided (correctly in my view) that COVID risks are reaching tolerance levels and it is time to get on with life. Such positive verdicts regarding the current

situation are vital for the rebuild of our memberships.

We all agree the last two years have been very tough. Yet, the legacy of the COVID period is not all negative. Many people have re-discovered the great human need for social contact, as well as for intellectual stimulation and that there is no substitute for being at the table with the cards in your hands, no matter how much we have been grateful to online bridge over the past two years. In short, we are in a different phase now and have a strong story to tell about F2F bridge again being a viable and safe pastime for the large majority of participants. Let's all responsibly get that message out and try to put a floor under our member decline.

On a similar positive note, we are delighted that, for the first time since 2019, our great Victorian national gold-point carnival, the Victor Champion Cup (VCC) is taking place "live" at a new and spacious venue over the Queen's Birthday weekend. I do encourage you to consider entering (via [myabf.com.au](http://myabf.com.au)). As I write, we are pleased with growing entries in the two main events, pairs and teams, but very keen to have more restricted players in the two restricted events. There is also, for the first time at the VCC, a mixed pairs competition which I would encourage you to consider. I look forward to seeing many of you there!

## STATE RESULTS

### The Victorian Online Open Pairs:

- 1 Bob Gallus & Stephen Weisz
- 2 Neil Ewart & Simon Henbest
- 3 Eva Caplan & Andrzej Krolikowski

### The Victorian Online Open Pairs (Plate):

1. Stan Klofa & Lindsey Robinson
2. Jeannette Collins & Margaret Yuill
3. Christopher Leach & James Coutts

### Thwaites Mixed Pairs:

- 1 Andrew Macready-Bryan & Di Smart
- 2 Eva Samuel & Pete Hollands
- 3 Stan Klofa & Jan Tunks

## ANC TEAM SELECTION

Team selection has been confirmed for the ANC this year to be held in Adelaide from July 2<sup>nd</sup>- July 14<sup>th</sup>

### Open:

James Coutts(Playing Captain), Justin Mill, Robert Fruewirth, Simon Hinge, Stephen Lester, Ben Thompson.

### Women:

Terri Kay, Kitty Muntz, Eva Samuel, Laura Ginnan, Margaret Klassen, Belinda Lindsay.

**NPC** Jenny Thompson

### Seniors:

Geoffrey Johnson, Alan Race, Kim Frazer, Andrzej Krolikowski, Stephen Weisz, Robert Gallus.

**NPC** Ben Kingham

### Youth:

Damon Flicker, Seb Wright, Alex Goss, Yip San Pui, Victoria Thompson, Xavier Fruewirth.

**NPC** Bec O'Reilly.

There was a restricted pairs event that was run on 7th May which qualified 2 pairs to play in the Restricted Butler at the ANC. The winners were Allan Hardie and Colin Jaspas and 2nd were Philip Young & Lynda Young.

## FUNDRAISER PAIRS

Entries are now open for the Youth Bridge Fundraiser Pairs to be held Tuesday Night June 21st. Join us at the VBA for a fun night of bridge, activities and meeting our current Victorian youth players.

## CONGRESS RESULTS

### Bendigo Swiss Pairs

1. Gus Ghali & Leo Saoud
2. Stan Klofa & Stephen Weisz
3. Douglas Newlands & Richard Lawrie

### Bendigo Swiss Teams

1. Douglas Newlands, Richard Lawrie, Gavin Bailey, Kirsten Bailey
2. Leo Saoud, Mohamed Ghatwari, Victor Zhang, Gus Ghali
3. Chelliah Arul, Prithiraj De Zoysa, Kae French, Penny Corrigan

## CONGRESS RESULTS

### Sale Congress

#### Swiss Pairs:

1. M Callander, J Norlyng
2. K French, S Hall
3. K Douglas, G Nicholson

#### Swiss Teams

1. George Campbell, Sandor Varga,  
Judy Banks, Anna Kearon
2. Maggie Callander, Jens Norlyng,  
Sue Beckman, Lindsay Young
3. Kevin Taylor, Marion Taylor,  
Mark Reynolds, Deb Reynolds

## VCC JUNE 9<sup>TH</sup>-13<sup>TH</sup>

It is with great pleasure that we announce that the Victor Champion Cup (VCC) will proceed "live" and face-to-face in 2022 after a three year hiatus. Venue searching has been difficult, especially with most appropriate sites still under Covid contracts, but we have found an affordable site that allows us to keep the entry fees under control. The new site in North Coburg is very large, on ground level, wheelchair friendly, well lit, comes with free onsite parking and is very close to Batman Station and a tram stop on Sydney Rd. The very large proportions of the room means that we will be able to accommodate any last minute Covid challenges.

We have hotel accommodation options for the interstate and Victorian country participants (see [MyABF](#)) and there will be onsite catering from a local café owner with everything from hamburgers to healthy options made to order on site. Plus lots of coffee with two coffee points available.

Please note there will be Covid protocols in place to protect the health and wellbeing of all participants. There is significant interstate interest already, as everyone is eager to get back to significant Gold Point events. [MyABF](#) website is up and running and we look forward to your participation.

## MASTER POINT PROMOTIONS

<b>Gold Life</b>	
George Campbell	Sale
<b>Silver Life</b>	
Penny Blankfield	Kooyong
<b>Bronze Life</b>	
Bill Jones	Geelong
Lisa Yoffa	Northern
<b>Silver National</b>	
Maryanne Bird	VBA
<b>Bronze National</b>	
Pam Brown	Dendy Park
<b>National</b>	
Peter George	Williamstown
Ann Gibbs	Bairnsdale
<b>Bronze State</b>	
Stan Rosenthal	Dendy Park
<b>State</b>	
Lalli Prochelle	Patterson Lakes
Sandy Peterson	Whittlesea
<b>Bronze Regional</b>	
Jilly Pettit	Bayside
<b>Regional</b>	
Sally-Ann Clarke	OZ
Michelle Ajzensztat	Gardenvale
Carl Davids	Knox
Wendy Dennis	Geelong
Margaret Krauze	VBA
David Dohrmann	Nagambie
Kym Fraser	Torquay
Elizabeth Chapple	Mornington
Cita Mieog	Bayside

## EDITORIAL

Things come in threes! After 2 recent health scares this year, I succumbed to Covid. We had to find a substitute for the Rothfield Teams, to allow me to self-isolate. My symptoms are very mild (almost non-existent) and I will be back next week with a clean bill of health!

## ANOT 2022 BY JAMES COUTTS

Although Juzz Mill and I have started playing quite a bit together in the last few months (and we are looking forward to representing Victoria in the ANC in July), you could hardly call us an established partnership. We were streets ahead of our ANOT teammates Justin Williams and Nick Jacob in that regard though, whose partnership experience consisted of 10 boards when they both happened to be around an international youth event in supporting roles in the mid-2010s and some youth players wanted a practice match. They did spend the eve of the ANOT teams travelling around South Australian breweries discussing some bridge agreements, although I think they were primarily just making me jealous while I was busy working.

We started well in the first round getting 20 VPs against a solid team of South Australian tournament regulars. In R2 we drew eventual 3<sup>rd</sup>-place getters MUNDELL (consisting of Victorians Jamie Ebery-Kim Frazer, with Giselle Mundell and Michael Courtney). Playing against Courtney is always interesting; you can be sure of some excitement, and that said excitement will happen quickly. Try this hand from his perspective:

W	N	E	S
Juzz	Giselle	James	Michael
-	-	-	1 ♠
2 ♠	Dbl	4 ♥	5 ♣
Pass	5 ♠	Dbl	All Pass

Dlr: South

Vul: N/S

♠ 104  
♥ QJ976  
♦ KQ1054  
♣ 7

<p>♠ J8 ♥ AK102 ♦ J8763 ♣ 53</p>	<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;">N</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;">W</td> <td style="width: 25%;">E</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;">S</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> </table> <p>♠ A65 ♥ 8543 ♦ A ♣ J9864</p>		N				W	E			S		
	N												
	W	E											
	S												
<p>♠ KQ9732 ♥ - ♦ 92 ♣ AKQ102</p>													

On Juzz's club lead which seems like an obvious singleton, and which went to the ♣3, ♣4 (suit preference), and ♣10, it looks like you have no chance of making your contract with no access to the ♥AK in dummy. How do you minimise your losses? Or if you prefer, imagine you are in 4 ♠ and see if you can make it.

From declarer's point of view: we're trying to avoid losing the ♠A, ♦AK, and a club ruff – on the surface that seems impossible. Courtney played a spade, I won the ♠A, cashed the ♦A, gave Juzz a club ruff, and he cashed his ♦K for a quick +500. Before the cards were back in the board though, Courtney had identified how he could have made 10 tricks. At trick 2, declarer could give Juzz his club ruff himself! That way, we can't untangle 2 diamond tricks when I have the singleton ace (nothing can be done if I have singleton K).

Nothing much interesting happened until a fascinating set of boards in R7, in which we played BUCHEN (Peter Buchen-George Smolanko, Arjuna de Livera-Andy Braithwaite-Nic Croft, with Andy sitting out this match). At this point we were priding ourselves on not giving our opponents many imps (and not worrying so much about how many we won ourselves), but this match certainly changed our average output.

How about starting off with a nice lead problem early in the match?

You're in 3<sup>rd</sup> seat (East) with everyone vulnerable. You hear your opponents bid uncontested as follows:

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

<sup>1</sup> artificial GF – 2-way checkback

<sup>2</sup> you might think north could be 4144, but North volunteered that he had 4054

<sup>3</sup> minorwood (optional?)

<sup>4</sup> intended as 1 key card, taken as "I don't want to answer - optional keycard"

<sup>5</sup> intended as "re-keycard" following the 'no' response, taken as Q ask

<sup>6</sup> intended as no ♣Q

So you're on lead with:

♠ Q10874

♥ K

♦ J876

♣ 1097

North has a heart void, south presumably has a lot of (pretty good) hearts (you have 1, declarer has 0 and partner has declined to open the bidding). I hate leading trumps against slams, but everything else looked worse so that's what I did - led the ♣10. What if I was to tell you that there's only one lead to defeat the contract and it's the ♥K? The full hand:

Dlr: West

♠ AK62

Vul: Both

♥ -

♦ KQ543

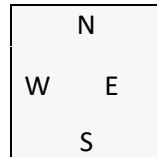
♣ 8654

♠ J3

♥ 1087652

♦ 1092

♣ K3



♠ Q10874

♥ K

♦ J876

♣ 1097

♠ 95

♥ AQJ943

♦ A

♣ AQJ2

Against us, declarer put in the ♣Q losing to the ♣K and Juzz switched to a spade. Nothing mattered with the ♥K coming down and declarer having 2 pitches available. Picture the play on the ♥K lead. Declarer does best to play ♣A then ♣Q, but when west wins the ♣K, East gets an unavoidable overruff with their remaining trump, with it being higher than the highest one declarer started with! 16 imps out there and more to come.

This time you are declarer as east, after the auction shown here:

Dealer N.	E/W	Vul		
	W	N	E	S
			James	
		Pass	1 ♠	2 ♠ <sup>1</sup>
	3 ♥ <sup>2</sup>	4 ♥	4 ♠	Pass
	Pass	Dbl	All Pass	

<sup>1</sup> 5+ hearts, 5+ minor

<sup>2</sup> good raise in spades

Dlr: North

♠

Vul: E/W

♥

♦

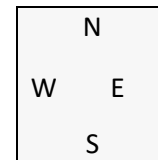
♣

♠ Q62

♥ AK962

♦ 82

♣ QJ4



♠ AK1094

♥ -

♦ AJ9

♣ 109532

♠

♥ Q

♦

♣

South leads the ♥Q. We can be certain that south has diamonds as their minor (if clubs, they'd have AKxxx and would lead one). North's double makes trumps 5-0 likely; although we only have 2 top losers, we need to both draw trumps and set up clubs. We don't want to get tapped when we play on clubs, so although we could pitch 2 diamonds on the AK hearts right now, that leaves us prone to the defence playing a third (and fourth) heart when we knock out the clubs. Rather than doing that, and especially given the ♠Q entry to pitch a diamond later, I chose to play a spade to the ♠9 right now. My heart sank when that unexpectedly lost to the ♠J, after which south switched to a low diamond to the K and my A. Now we're losing to the ♠J and the ♣AK but crossing to the ♠Q to pitch a diamond would mean I'd be just as prone to being tapped as I was before, with north holding 4 small spades.

After a very long consideration, I chose to minimise my losses and play for down 1 by starting on clubs now. That way if they keep playing diamonds, I can ruff the third round in dummy while keeping the remaining spade length in my hand. Imagine my horror when I led a low club towards the table and south threw away a diamond! The full hand:

Dlr: West	♠ 875				
Vul: Both	♥ 1073				
	♦ K7				
	♣ AK876				
♠ Q62		N		♠ AK1094	
♥ AK962		W	E	♥ -	
♦ 82				♦ AJ9	
♣ QJ4			S	♣ 109532	
				♠ J3	
				♥ QJ854	
				♦ Q106543	
				♣ -	

The defence had me for -500 if north cashed the ♣AK and gave their partner a ruff, but mercifully they erred and north gave their partner a ruff before cashing the second club honour. When they then persisted with diamonds I could pitch a club from dummy, ruff in hand, and then ruff clubs with the remaining 2 trumps (and pitch one on the ♥K). Not that it did much for my morale – I'd just gone down doubled in a completely cold vulnerable game with trumps breaking 3-2. Another 13 out.

Thankfully we had enough other good boards to hold on and win that match by 16 imps, and I guess I can't help but admire Nic Croft's double which put me completely on the wrong track for the entire hand, although I hated it at the time! To be clear: I don't recommend trying that one at home – the hand so easily could have been different with us having more spades than we did and someone having a singleton club, in which case it's not hard to imagine -1190 even if no one musters up a redouble. After another good win in the final match of the swiss, we found ourselves comfortably in 1st place and had booked a place in the final against the DALLEY team (Paul Dalley-Tony Nunn, Mike Doecke-Will Jenner O'Shea, with both of their

established partnerships coming off strong results in the Australian pairs playoff the previous week).

We got off to a roaring start in the final (4 sets of 14 boards) – after the first 6 boards we were up 44-0 thanks to our opponents choosing to go for insufficient doubled compensation (+200) against their vulnerable game, a misadventure following Paul Dalley's psych of exclusion keycard, a tight game bid and made by us, and me mis-sorting my hand (I'm still not used to Realbridge not doing it for me). On my mis-sorted hand I might well have chosen to lead something else against a slam which our teammates made and our opponents did not when Tony Nunn took the correct percentage line after I hadn't led my singleton (which was a doubleton as far as I knew).

After a good start we certainly had our own share of misadventures though, some of which were missed opportunities and some of which were our opponents accurately punishing us for our errors. Here's a missed opportunity. What would you lead?

W	N	E	S
2♣	P	1NT	P
3NT	P	2♣	P
		P	P

S	WILLIAMS
♠ 74	
♥ AK74	
♦ 95	
♣ A9732	

It's hard to crime a low club lead from your 5-card suit. Especially when west has bid stayman, apparently looking for a heart fit. What about playing a top heart for a look at dummy though? It could be wrong and give up valuable tempo, but on this hand it was extremely right:

10 D	N JACOB	W N E S
	♠ J982 ♥ QJ6 ♦ 8 ♣ QJ1085	2♣ P 1NT P 3NT P P P
W DOECKE		E JENNER-O'S
♠ A65 ♥ 10983 ♦ AQJ742 ♣		♠ KQ103 ♥ 52 ♦ K1063 ♣ K64
	S WILLIAMS	
	♠ 74 ♥ AK74 ♦ 95 ♣ A9732	3NT E NS: 0 EW: 0
Other table: 5♠W= NS: Williams 46 IMPs EW: Dalley 10 IMPs		

Juzz and I had bid to the better, and cold, 5D EW (the defenders can take the first 9 tricks against 3NT!) but we lost an imp for our troubles. If I was to provide an overall summary of the match, the thing that stands

out for me is the number of doubled contracts. 17 in total, but in particular, in the first 24 boards, the contract of 3NT was doubled 4 times. The momentum was swinging back to our opponents towards the end of the second stanza. This was the last board of that set:

D 28	N Mill	W N E S
	♠ 6 ♥ 753 ♦ QJ103 ♣ 109643	1NT P 2♥ P 2♣ P 4♦ P 4NT P 5♥ X 6♣ P P P
W NUNN	E DALLEY	
♠ A54 ♥ K2 ♦ AK76 ♣ K852	♠ KJ10872 ♥ J84 ♦ 9 ♣ AQ7	
	S COUTTS	
	♠ Q93 ♥ AQ1096 ♦ 8542 ♣ J	
Other table: 4♠W+1 NS: WILLIAMS 60 IMPs EW: Dalley 49 IMPs		6♣ W NS: 0 EW: 0

Tony Nunn had an absolute monster for his 15-17 1NT opposite partner's self-splinter in diamonds. Unsurprisingly he simply bid keycard and was unconcerned about the lack of trump queen knowing his side had a minimum of 9 trumps. Nick Jacob as east in the other room contented himself with raising to 4S after he transferred and his partner did not super-accept.

I thought this hand was particularly rude for us, and came at a crucial point (board 11 in set 3, we were up by 17 imps):

D 11	N NUNN	W N E S
	♠ A43 ♥ A96532 ♦ Q963 ♣	1NT P 2♣ P 2♦ P 3♥ P 4♣ X P P P
W MILL	E COUTTS	
♠ KJ7 ♥ J95 ♦ Q84 ♣ AKJ7	♠ A10852 ♥ Q762 ♦ KJ7 ♣ 10	
	S DALLEY	
	♠ Q9643 ♥ K108 ♦ 10 ♣ 8542	
Other table: 2♠E= NS: DALLEY 74 IMPs EW: WILLIAMS 91 IMPs		4♣ W NS: 0 EW: 0

After our Smolen auction where I'd shown 5 spades and 4 hearts, Juzz bid the obvious 4♠ and Tony Nunn found a truly excellent time to double us with his 2 aces. His partner had a singleton diamond and the ♥K, so after Tony's ♦A lead and continuation, the defence very quickly took the first 5 tricks. In the other room, our opponents downgraded Juzz's hand out of a 15+ 1♣ and stopped on a dime in 2♠ opposite east's 10 count, making exactly 2. At

three-quarter time in the match, we were up by a mere 4 imps.

For the final set, we played against Doecke-Jenner-O'Shea for the first time since our qualifying match. On the second board, Doecke faced a crucial defensive problem in this position:

D 16	N JENNER-O'S	W N E S
	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	P 3♣ 3♥ P 4♥ P P X P P P
W MILL	E COUTTS	
♠ J7 ♥ KJ103 ♦ K963 ♣ QJ7	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	
	S DOECKE	
	♠ AQ42 ♥ A8 ♦ A10752 ♣ 106	
Other table: 4♠N-1 NS: DALLEY 94 IMPs EW: WILLIAMS 91 IMPs		4♥ E NS: 1 EW: 1

He'd led his ♣10 to the ♣7, his partner's ♣2, and my ♣A. At trick 2 I played a heart towards dummy, and he won his ♥A. Because of the trick 1 play, he knows I have 1 club and his partner has 7, otherwise I'd have covered his lead with one of dummy's honours. Doecke then thought for a long while before playing his ♦A. This was necessary to defeat the contract on the actual layout:

D 16	N JENNER-O'S	W N E S
	♠ 1098 ♥ ♦ QJ8 ♣ K985432	P 3♣ 3♥ P 4♥ P P X P P P
W MILL	E COUTTS	
♠ J7 ♥ KJ106 ♦ K963 ♣ QJ7	♠ K653 ♥ Q975432 ♦ 4 ♣ A	
	S DOECKE	
	♠ AQ42 ♥ A8 ♦ A10752 ♣ 106	
Other table: 4♠N-1 NS: DALLEY 94 IMPs EW: WILLIAMS 91 IMPs		4♥ E NS: 0 EW: 0

If he doesn't take that ♦A right now, my diamond loser is disappearing on the clubs after a successful ruffing finesse. After that hand and another couple of sketchy boards, it really felt like we were under the pump.

I'm not much of a believer in downgrading hands. It had worked for our opponents on the previously-mentioned board 11, but it did not work for them again here. After I opened what I considered to be a completely routine 1NT, Juzz bid 2NT asking for 5-card majors, and after I bid 3♣ (no 5M) he bid 3NT which made easily on this layout:

D 21	N JENNER-O'S	W	N	E	S
	♠ A83 ♥ J96 ♦ 9 ♣ K98632	2NT 3NT	P P	1NT 3♣ P	P P P
W MILL	E COUTTS				
♠ Q106 ♥ K54 ♦ Q1076543 ♣	♠ J74 ♥ A1082 ♦ KJ ♣ AQ74				
S DOECKE					
♠ K952 ♥ Q73 ♦ A82 ♣ J105					
Other table: 2♥W+2 NS: DALLEY 112 IMPs EW: WILLIAMS 114 IMPs		3NT E NS: 0 EW: 0			

Unfortunately, the ♦7 is the beer card instead of the ♣7, as I made the ♣7 for my 3<sup>rd</sup> club trick from AQ7x opposite void at trick 13 when north and south both thought they needed to keep the majors. At the other table, Paul Dalley seemingly didn't like his 15-count and opened 1♣ with my hand, after which he played in 2♦ following a transfer response/checkback sequence (1♣-1♠\* 1NT-2♣\*, 2♦\*).

Shortly after, I found myself in a delicate 5♦ where it turns out our opponents were playing 3NT again, and this time their contract was probably better:

D 24	N JENNER-O'S	W	N	E	S
	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	1♣ 2♦ 4♦ P	P 2♠ P P	1♦ 3♠ 5♦ P	1♠ P P P
W MILL	E COUTTS				
♠ 9 ♥ J83 ♦ K83 ♣ AK4	♠ A2 ♥ AQ9 ♦ A976 ♣ 9753				
S DOECKE					
♠ ♥ ♦ ♣					
Other table: 3NTW+2 NS: DALLEY 113 IMPs EW: WILLIAMS 127 IMPs		5♦ E NS: 0 EW: 0			

Doecke led a spade to Jenner-O'Shea's ♠J and my ♠A. I drew 3 rounds of diamonds with Doecke having ♦Qx. I then played a heart to the ♥Q as without the heart finesse I have no chance. What's the best way to continue from here?

If north has ♥Kx we can play ♥A and set up a heart discard for our losing spade since we have the 9 and 8, losing only a club trick. But on a lot of other layouts this is no good. Clearly hearts 3-3 isn't good enough as we will lose a trick in each suit apart from diamonds, since

they've led a spade. The distribution is not clear (spades might be 6-3 or 5-4 – it's too difficult to deduce the rest of the shapes of north and south) so I thought my best chance was a partial elimination – at this point I played 2 rounds of clubs and exited a spade. I'm not sure what's best percentage-wise, and as it was when I lost the spade to north and they could play 2 more rounds of clubs I had to fall back on ♥Kx in north anyway. I was relieved with +400 knowing that at least it wasn't lots of imps out.

Soon after that, Juzz made a clutch 4♠x when he put the opponents under the maximum amount of pressure he could and they misstepped at tricks 2 and 3. After that +790, and then on the last board stealing the contract in 2♠, 3 off and -150 with us favourable, when the opponents have 25 points and can make 3NT with relative comfort (or double us in 2♠), I was optimistic. It turns out that we had done enough to win the match by 20, but I must issue a sincere "well played" to our opponents who put us under maximum pressure at all times.

Although my otherwise very generous host Mike Doecke kept threatening to poison me, if he did then my immune system was seemingly up to the task. Let's hope our next trip to Adelaide is as successful, with the Victorian open, women's, seniors, and youth teams heading west in early July to contest the ANC.

**COMING CONGRESSES**

**Geelong Congress**

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June - Swiss Pairs 10 am  
 Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June - Swiss Teams 10 am

Venue: Venue: Highton Bowls Club  
 corner Roslyn & North Valley Roads, Highton  
 Contact: Denny Newland 0407532498  
 Email: [newland202@gmail.com](mailto:newland202@gmail.com)

**Geelong Restricted Congress**

There will also be Restricted Pairs and Teams at the same venue and on the same dates as above.

Entries to the above can be made via the [BridgeUnlimited](http://BridgeUnlimited.com) website



**PLAY PROBLEM #29 SOLUTION**

Last month you were asked to make 3NT  
On the ♠J lead...

Dlr: South            ♠ 76  
Vul: Both            ♥ Q92  
                              ♦ Q32  
                              ♣ K9876

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

♠ AKQ  
♥ J653  
♦ AKJ10  
♣ Q10

Contract 3NT    Lead: ♠J

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
Pass	3NT	All Pass	2NT

I really liked this one and I got good responses from readers (thanks!)

Looking at dummy’s lovely club suit we realise we are strapped for entries – we only have the ♦Q as a guaranteed entry. All we need is 2 club tricks or 1 club and 1 heart.

A plan is to lead the ♣10. If either defender wins the ♣A we have our 2 club tricks.

If West covers the ♣10 with the ♣J we play the ♣K and lead another ♣, making at least 2 club tricks regardless of when they take ♣A.

If the ♣10 loses to the knave, we can win the return and lead the ♣Q – overtaking with the ♣King so we can set up the clubs.

That’s all very well...unless the Hearts are ♥Hx with West and ♥H107x or ♥H108x with East. If East also started life with the ♣AJ then, when in with the ♣J, East switches to a small heart (won and returned by West). Although we win a heart trick, we fail to make any clubs before the defence has claimed 2 club tricks and 3 heart tricks. Shame! There is no guaranteed solution! Only TP gave me the fully correct plan along with pitfall.

**PLAY PROBLEM #30**

Dlr: South            ♠ A1097  
Vul: Both            ♥ J104  
                              ♦ AK654  
                              ♣ A

♠ ?	N	♠ ?
♥ ?	W      E	♥ ?
♦ ?	S	♦ ?
♣ 3?		♣ 2?

♠ KQJ8  
♥ A2  
♦ 832  
♣ J754

Contract 6♠    Lead: ♣3

Bidding:

East-West passed throughout.

North-South went overboard...or did they?

East follows to the first trick. Can you see any way to 12 tricks?

Send [me](#) your solution if you can see one.

**SUIT COMBINATION**

Make a Grand Slam (if you can):

You(South): KQJ75 Partner(North): A86.

You bid to a grand slam and have plenty of tricks but the trump suit is as shown above.

Are you going to make this?

How do you play?

You have plenty of entries to both hands.

Decide how you would play before peeking at the [Solution](#) on [P10](#)

**♣♣♣ KNAVE OF CLUBS ♣♣♣**  
**UNUSUAL ACTION**

The Unusual NoTrump is a commonly met convention. When the bidder can actually have the values for a NT overcall, it is assumed to be natural but, when they cannot have such values, it is assumed to show a hand which is at least 5-5 in the minors. Because it is in regular use, you must know what you are doing over it. In today's hand, West would overcall 1NT with 15-18 flat and double then bid NT with a stronger hand. Because of this, the jump to 2NT is not required in a natural sense and so it is "unusual". When the 2NT overcall occurs, North has a problem. The North hand has only 6 losers and a bid of 3♥ shows 8 losers and one of 4♥ shows 7 losers and, typically, less high cards than this. Clearly, North should not be bidding any number of hearts here but what should be bid? There are a number of conventions of varying complexity which are on offer to handle this situation.

Teams

Dir: South	♠ QJ1062		
Vul: E/W	♥ AK102		
	♦ 6		
	♣ J52		
♠ 7		N W     E S	♠ 843
♥ 65			♥ 97
♦ K10952			♦ Q742
♣ KQ1087			♣ A943
	♠ AK95		
	♥ QJ843		
	♦ AJ8		
	♣ 6		

Contract 6♦    Lead: ♦3

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
			1♥
2NT	4♦	5♦	6♥
All Pass			

The simplest is to note that West has, in effect, bid both minors and that there are two cue raises available. One can differentiate the two cue raises by strength or by length of trump

support. Another alternative is to use the jumps to four of a minor as splinter bids with heart support and values beyond those needed for a direct heart bid. That would certainly work well here as South would remove the two diamond losers from his assessment and see a four-loser hand after hearing the 4♦ splinter. Since the splinter bid promised more than a raise to 4♥ it shows less than seven losers. South will have no difficulty bidding 6♥ over the 5♦ bid or even a more adventurous 6♦, although double might be safer at teams. The most complex method is "unusual over unusual" where 3♦ would show a good heart raise and 3♥ a merely competitive one. Similarly, 3♣ would show a forcing spade bid while 3♠ would be a long, competitive spade holding. If you play competitively, you need to adopt some of the methods discussed to avoid unusual problems.

**SOLUTION TO SUIT COMBINATION**

You(South): KQJ75 Partner(North): A86.

Needing all 5 tricks: The unthinking automatic play might be to cash the K, Q or Jack first but that would be disastrous!

Here the only danger can come from a 5-0 break and if the 5 is in the West there is nothing you can do to make this. However, if the 5 trumps are in the East you can cash the Ace first and then pick up the 109 by leading twice towards your hand.

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Saturday July 2nd and Sunday July  
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Matchpoint Pairs**

**Sunday July 3<sup>rd</sup> Online Swiss  
Pairs**

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Keith and Brigitte

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