

# Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

December 2022

Editor: Dee Harley

## FANTASTIC YEAR

On Sunday 30th October, James Coutts, won the Teams event at the Waverley Super Congress. This is a great achievement, but pales in significance when considered in the context of some other bridge that James has played and won during 2021 and 2022.

Here is a quick summary of some of the major winning events James has played in 2022, many backing up victories in the same events in 2021:

- 2022 Spring Nationals Mixed Teams (Sydney)
- 2022 Spring Nationals Open Teams (Sydney)
- 2022 Coffs Harbour Pairs
- 2022 Coffs Harbour Teams
- 2022 Australian Nationals Championship Butler (Adelaide)
- 2022 Victor Champion Cup (Melbourne)
- 2022 Autumn Nationals Open Teams (Adelaide)
- 2022 Gold Coast Open Teams
- 2022 NZ Open Pairs
- 2022 NZ Open Teams

James was a member of the Victorian Open Team which came second in this year's National Championships in Adelaide. He is currently helping the VBA working on revising regulations.

He was a member of this year's Australian Open Team playing in the Bermuda Bowl (World Open Bridge Championships) in Salsomaggiore, Italy.

There are many other events where James was runner-up or third – too many to list!

As at early November, he leads the 2022 ABF McCutcheon Trophy – awarded to the player who has won the most master points in Australia for the year. He has earned over 500 master points in 2022 – one of very few players ever to have done this.

James plays most often with Liam Milne from NSW and our own Justin Mill, from Victoria, but we are to lose him to NSW in the new year. This is a huge loss to Victorian Bridge, but we wish him well in his new environment and – despite being a Kiwi, we will still consider him a Victorian, gaining much vicarious pleasure from his ongoing performances.

Well Done James on a fantastic year!

## LAW 87 - FOULED BOARD LAURIE KELSO

A fouled board can be both an inconvenience to the Director and a disappointment for the players.

Law 87 says: "A board is considered to be 'fouled' if the Director determines that a card (or more than one) was displaced in the board, or if he determines that the dealer or vulnerability differed between copies of the same board, and the contestants who should have had a score comparison did not play the board in identical form for such reason."

From this definition it follows that just because a board does not conform to the hand record, does not necessarily mean that the board was fouled. Providing the players had a direct comparison in an identical form, the board can still be scored normally. However, if it is established that a board has been fouled, it then becomes necessary to find the point at which the cards changed, in order to divide the board into two groups. These two groups are

then scored separately in accordance with whatever the regulations of the tournament say.

Fouling occurs for a variety reasons. The most common situation is where more than one of the hands is removed from a board after play has been concluded and then incorrectly returned to a different pocket. I have even seen some players (when unsupervised) remove all four hands from a board and spread them on the table in order to discuss some aspect of the bidding or play. This seems most prevalent at sit-out tables and is the reason why Law 7C prohibits a player from removing even his own cards from a played board unless either the Director or an opponent is also present.

The (Law 7B) requirement to count one's cards before looking at the face of them is another attempt to ensure that hands with the wrong number of cards do not get played. Law 7C also stipulates that the players must return the same thirteen cards to the correct pocket of the board after play has finished.

Some players (and directors) have difficulties differentiating between the concept of a fouled board and that of an arrow-switched board. The latter involves the (accidental) placement of a board on the table such that it is orientated 90 degrees from its normal compass position. This is most likely to occur when wallets rather than boards are in use, since it is much easier to incorrectly place a square, rather than a rectangular object on the table. The nett effect is that the players scheduled to sit E/W and N/S actually end up holding each other's cards. Arrow-switched boards can still however be compared and scored against the other results because the correct cards were removed from the correct pockets and hence the dealer and relative vulnerabilities remain unaffected with respect to the actual cards held.

Sometimes arrow-switching can precede fouling in that one table removes the cards from the correct pockets and unknowingly plays the board arrow-switched before returning the cards to different pockets, whereupon the next table receives and then plays the board in a fouled condition.

Other types of problems can arise during the dealing process where multiple copies of the same board are produced via a dealing machine. If the undealt boards were stacked out-of-order, then the wrong hands can sometimes end up being dealt into the wrong numbered boards. In the worst-case scenario, a whole set of boards can be dealt in this offset condition. The end result is a series of non-comparable results.

In this situation, even though the cards from one incorrectly-dealt board might be identical to those of another, there still can't be a valid comparison between the two data sets. This is because both the vulnerability and dealer are different on the board in question, which in turn makes the ensuing auction incompatible with what was possible at other tables. Law 87 specifically includes changes of dealer and vulnerability when defining what constitutes a 'fouled board'.

The illegal practice of taking the board off the table, after the cards have been removed, is a further source of error. All too frequently the empty board is later returned to the table in the wrong orientation (i.e., upside-down). The resultant 180° shift in position means a different hand has become dealer and hence the board is once again defined as 'fouled'. Law 7A addresses this issue by requiring that the board be "placed in the centre of the table where it shall remain, correctly orientated, until play is completed."

Most players have, at some time, had the experience of seeing what was an unbelievably good result evaporate simply because the board had previously been fouled and thus not played in a similar configuration by anyone else. The Laws do allow the Director to award the innocent parties a favourable adjustment (usually average plus), but it doesn't always seem quite enough. Hence (in certain specific teams-play situations) Law 86B actually allows the Director to take into consideration the result achieved at the other table (i.e., he can now award a 'real score', rather than the arbitrary +3 IMPs).

## EDITORIAL DEE HARLEY

Four years ago I took over the editorship of the VBA bulletin and I have really enjoyed producing it each month.

Since I started, we have seen some things happen which we would not have believed. It is like we have been living a science-fiction book. Lockdowns, mandatory mask-wearing and online bridge competitions within bridge clubs...all sounding like great story material, yet it actually happened.

At the height of the Covid pandemic we ran the VBA Bulletin Cup, - an online knockout competition with 30 teams of four entering.

Following that we have the VBA Bulletin League Team competitions where we had entries from all over Australia. That was fun to play and I can tell you it was even more fun to administer!

Thanks from me go to:

- the ♣♣♣ Knave of Clubs ♣♣♣ for his regular contributions,
- Occo - for collating the interesting problem hands,
- Neil for reviewing and uploading the finished bulletin each month
- all readers and contributors
- most importantly, to Anna who has been a great inspiration and help during my tenure.

Chris Hughes has been designated to take over the role and I wish him the best of luck. His first bulletin will be out on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023.

## GARDENVALE BRIDGE CLUB

Gardenvale Bridge Club is running a Bridge Festival from December 26 - January 5.

There will be Swiss Pairs and Declarer Play masterclasses at the Theodor Herzl Club in North Caulfield and tournaments on BridgeBase Online.

For the full program and entry instructions visit <http://www.gvbridge.com.au>

## CONGRESS RESULTS

### South Gippsland Swiss Pairs

1. Stephen Weisz, George Lovrecz
2. Chelliah Arul, Steven White
3. Jan Hackett, Tom Hackett

### South Gippsland Swiss Teams

1. Stephen Weisz, George Lovrecz, Kim Frazer, Jamie Ebery
2. Alan Johnston, Clive Hope, John Currier, Anne Gibson
3. Maggie Callander, Jens Norlyng, Steven White, Chelliah Arul

### Kooyong Swiss Pairs

1. Robert Ellery, Chelliah Arul
2. Mohamed Ghatwari, Leo Saoud
3. Hafizur Khan, Melroy Decouto

### Dendy Park Swiss Pairs

1. Eva Samuel, Pete Hollands
2. Simon Hinge, James Coutts
3. Maggie Callander, Penny Corrigan

## STATE RESULTS

### Victorian State Teams (Pennant)

1. Douglas Newlands, Denny Newland, Arthur Robbins, Stephen Lester
2. Kim Frazer, Jamie Ebery, Kitty Muntz, Leigh Gold, Ben Kingham, Sylvia Gluck

## CHRISTMAS CHEER

A jockey was riding at a furious pace in the Christmas Stakes race, when out of the blue he was struck on the knee by a turkey. Nonplussed he continued, but seconds later a jar of cranberry jelly pinged his arm. He went faster but was soon smote on the ear by a flying jar of mincemeat. Somewhat stunned he staggered on, but when hit by a bottle of Port in his stomach his pace flagged, and he finished the race in second place.

He appealed to the race officials that he had been hampered.

<b>LETTERS TO THE EDITOR</b>
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No bridge today my partner's gone away

Some of you may remember this song from the 60's. ([No milk today - Herman's Hermits](#))

So how does it relate to bridge? It does indeed. Many clubs insist that you must come with a partner. Imagine your regular partner is going overseas for 6 weeks. Everyone else has a regular partner so there is no chance of getting a game. You love playing twice a week as it takes you out of the house and you can socialise with friends.

You decide to do a U3A course in English literature. It is so fascinating.

Learning French has always been a desire so you sign up for a beginners course.

You meet some lovely people and begin to realise that bridge is not the only way of enjoying life.

So how can this inherent problem be solved. Clubs have to change their approach. The obvious solution is to allow members to come without a partner. Players should be on standby to be called in if required. Not only would they have a free game. They would also receive a voucher for a free game in appreciation for coming in.

There are numerous ways we can try to keep players from leaving their club.

One of the best ways is to offer more incentives. Committees should consider this as a priority. We all love this game so we should do everything possible to attract new players as well as keeping our regular members happy.

In the event of no one being available (a rare occasion with 4 people on stand-by) the director would have to play rather than sending someone home.

Greg Quittner - Bridge Columnist American Bridge Teachers Association 1991-1992

Dear Editor,

I write to you today not from a position of financial impecunity, but rather in the spirit of fiscal curiosity.

I recently received an email inviting me to participate in the VBA Summer Congress.

I enjoy congresses, particularly if they are reasonably local as I can spend a fun day out with my friends, partake of some (usually) excellent refreshments and be back home in time for dinner.

However, this year the VBA Congress is once again to be held online and its appeal waned somewhat.

Then I looked at the cost. The price for a game at the clubrooms is currently \$14. The cost of the Congress is \$40. Two sessions admittedly but why the disparity? So, I did some more checking. The current online Monday pairs event also costs \$14 per night, \$42 for three sessions and, if the results table is to be believed, last week they played 30 boards.

It seems odd that the cost of online bridge and clubroom bridge is the same. I imagine that the cost of online bridge is made this high to induce people back into the clubrooms as numbers are so low as to be a loss-making concern once the cost of directing is factored in.

The summer congress will be 56 boards per day with the additional \$12 for what exactly? To cover the additional cost of master points?

Which led me to do some more research.

The Real Bridge cost per head for an event of 30+ boards is \$1.33. As there are to be no refreshments provided, no need to pay for heating or lighting. No boards need to be dealt and with no additional Directors costs it made me wonder if this event is simply a revenue garner for the club.

However, if I understand correctly, the long-drawn-out negotiations with the Dendy Bridge Club are finally concluding and the current club rooms will be sold netting the VBA a handsome profit in the region of four million dollars.

The club clearly is not in financial straits so why are the loyal members being penalised financially and why is the event not face to face? A well-managed and well catered event would do more to induce members back than any amount of begging emails will.

Just a thought.

Name withheld

**MASTER POINT PROMOTIONS**

<b>Silver Life</b>	
Ian Wright	Yarra Valley
<b>Life</b>	
Maryanne Bird	VBA
Jerzy Krysiak	Waverley
<b>Silver National</b>	
Rosemarie Schwabegger	Paynesville
<b>Bronze National</b>	
Helge Pedersen	Northern
Raman Jegathesan	Northern
<b>Bronze State</b>	
Jane Brougham	Royal South Yarra
John Robertson	Williamstown
Margaret Ziffer	Sale
<b>State</b>	
Penny Cory	Whittlesea
Maria Mactaggart	Traralgon
Robert Geschke	VBA
Valerie Sercombe	Geelong
Rico Fernandes	Berwick
<b>Bronze Regional</b>	
Johanna Fitzpatrick	Moonee Valley
Ian Hanmer	Moonee Valley
Lorraine Pitman	Waverley
Jane Silagy	Waverley
<b>Regional</b>	
David Carruthers	Waverley
Lyn McFarlane	Ocean Grove
Sue Taylor	Geelong
Tim Watford	Bairnsdale
Judy McDonnell	Kooyong
Anne Wilkinson	Ocean Grove

**WATCH MY SIGNALS PARTNER!  
GREG QUITTNER**

This deal is from my collection of interesting hands.

Dir: East                      ♠ AQ62  
 Vul: N/S                        ♥ 65  
                                       ♦ KJ4  
                                       ♣ A653

♠ 84	N W       E S	♠ J1093
♥ KQ1072		♥ 943
♦ Q1032		♦ 95
♣ K10		♣ QJ87

♠ K75  
 ♥ AJ8  
 ♦ A876  
 ♣ 942

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
	1♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

- POINTS TO REMEMBER:
- ♠ South's 2NT response promises 10-12 HCP and denies a four-card major.
  - ♥ North has maximum so he is happy to raise to 3NT
  - ♦ When West leads the KH East plays the 9H asking partner not to continue the suit.
  - ♣ If West continues with hearts declarer makes 9 tricks.

**INTERNATIONAL VICTORIANS**

Congratulations to Jamie Thompson and Robert Fruewirth for making the Australian Open Team In a thrilling final trail they were victorious over the Hans Team which included James Coutts.

**REFLECTIONS ON A DECADE  
ANNA ST CLAIR**

Ten years ago, Dee and I made the extraordinary decision to move to Australia. This was never a forever move; it was for now, for a while, for a year which turned into another year which eventuated in residency, then citizenship until one day we looked at each other in disbelief that it had been ten years since we had left Scotland.

Dee loved it from the start. He embraced Aussie rules football, loved the climate and settled into the local bridge club.

I was less sure. I cringed at the accents, floundered in this new society where I didn't understand the rules and missed everything European; the ease of travel, the culture and my friends.

I longed for home.

Then slowly and insidiously a love for this country crept under my skin so stealthfully that I didn't even notice it.

The weather helped. We loved that we could plan an outdoors event and not automatically have to provide umbrellas and thermal underwear to our guests. We basked in the sunshine.

Then we bought a house in Emerald, unaware of the dangers of fire, the prevalence of snakes and the size of the spiders. We bought chickens, were gifted a cat and planted tomatoes.

And we had bridge.

It was this game that had first brought us together, my all-ladies team beating Dee's top seeds and him having to man up and congratulate us.

Some years before our move here, we travelled to Australia to meet our new grandchild and took the opportunity to play in the Waverley congress. The bridge was slickly managed and though we didn't understand a word anyone said it is a game that doesn't require words, and we were amazed that there

were so many tables in play and how friendly the people were to two foreigners utterly perplexed by what should have been a shared language.

When we then made the Big Move bridge was our mainstay, the one thing that we were sure of in this new society. We lived in Melbourne then and though vastly different from our beloved Edinburgh it is a city that we felt we could adapt to, great shopping, beautiful parks and the sea just a tram ride away.

Then Stan took us to the country and the cultural shock was so great that I retreated hermit-like into my writing.

I write in many guises and the following story came from that trip. I titled it An Addict in the Hinterland and it was never published in Australia but still I apologise (slightly) to the people along the Murray.....

*Bridge: Yarrawonga*

*Two words which should dismay the mainstream population and yet here I was, enthused and eager as we set off on the arduous trek up the Hume Highway.*

*I play Bridge which in its purest form is a social enterprise undertaken by four like-minded individuals for the enjoyment of all but which in truth is far from this ideal. The delight of intellectual gameplay is, in reality, a duel interspersed with arguments, disagreement, occasional cheating and populated by dull, inarticulate, social misfits. A day of bridge starts early and finishes late fuelled by copious quantities of alcohol and acrimony.*

*There are many bridge clubs in Melbourne but every weekend we leave our well-known haunts, forgoing the usual religious observances to make pilgrimage to far flung outposts of the State – this weekend it is Yarrawonga.*

*It is an unbecoming little town with an unbecoming name which bursts into a*

*semblance of jollity during the summer months when hordes of lower middle-management families descend upon it filling themselves with a surfeit of sun, mud and Murray River.*

*There was no semblance of jollity on a cold, wet, winter weekend.*

*But bridge players are undeterred by drab, grey outlooks. Not for us the whining of inclement weather, for we are insulated from the outside elements by the warmth of our self-absorption, by the surety of our intellectual superiority and by the burning desire to win.*

*Weekend bridge is a mixed affair of averagely good and averagely bad players roughly in a ratio of 1:6. As we congregate and wait for the off, we comment cattily on the quality of the cakes, the accessibility of the coffee and the frigidity of the lavatorial facilities. Those players who just manage to keep their heads above the effluvial flow of the Asperger's smitten mainstream make small-talk about their grandchildren or the weather but each and every player displays the skin-itching-desperation of the addict as we wait impatiently for the start.*

*Immediate relief comes with the first cards in hand and then we are off, floating in our own competitive haze of euphoria until we come down with a crash as we realise our signals were misinterpreted, our leads not returned and though not a word is spoken, the icy stare, the sudden rigidity of posture is as eloquent as any screamed tirade which we know from instinct and experience is only six hands away.*

*And so the weekend progresses – highs and lows followed by the debilitating flatness of spirit once the event is over, and we face the long Sunday night drive home again with all our hopes quashed. We rile at our partners and team-mates. We blame them whilst*

*secretly knowing we could have done better ourselves and drive back in icy silence swearing that this time we'll stick to the promise we made to quit.....*

*Next weekend we'll do it all again – Philip Island here we come!*

Dee and I have both loved our time playing bridge in Australia, enjoyed being part of a team in congresses, state, national and international events and teaching the game on to others.

Though I play a lot less now than I once did and Dee is handing the baton of the Bulletin onto more than capable hands we will continue to play and observe this glorious game that we all love so much.

See you at the table!

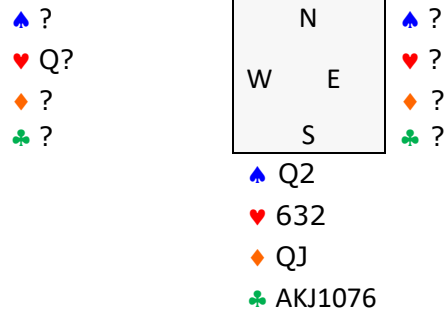
<b>ABF ONLINE BRIDGE TASK FORCE</b> <b>JENNY THOMPSON</b>
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The ABF Online Bridge Committee, which was set up to investigate all matters relating to online bridge in Australia, will shortly be sending out a call for nominations for interested parties to join a Task Force to work alongside our committee. Following this we will be engaging with all the bridge community to get feedback on the future of bridge, both online and face to face. We have been talking the New Zealand Bridge Online Working Group and they are also working through this issue with their bridge community, and we will continue to liaise with them going forward. Our committee is planning to prepare an initial strategic plan to be presented to the ABF Board for their consideration in time for the AGM in May next year.

**PLAY PROBLEM #35 SOLUTION**

IMPs

Dlr: South      ♠ A J 10  
 Vul: All        ♥ A K 5 4  
                   ♦ A 10  
                   ♣ Q 9 8 5



Contract 6♣    Lead: ♥Q

You land in 6♣ with no opposition bidding. West leads the ♥Q and East will follow suit.

Win the heart in dummy and draw trumps ending in hand. Now play the ♠Q. If it is covered by the ♠K, you win the ♠A in dummy and cash your top spades throwing a heart. Then, top heart and ruff a heart. If hearts broke 3-3 you may discard your diamond on the thirteenth heart for an overtrick, if West started with 4 (or more) hearts you run your clubs until he is forced to come down to a singleton diamond (a show-up squeeze). If it was the ♦K he started with you still have an overtrick, if not then settle for making the slam.

If West doesn't cover and the ♠Q holds the trick, you can repeat the finesse, and play on as above when it wins a second time.

If the spade finesse loses at any point, then you win the return, discard a heart on the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of spades and then ruff a heart as before. If hearts 3-3 then your diamond goes on the 13<sup>th</sup> heart. If not you have a show-up squeeze if west has long hearts and the ♦K.

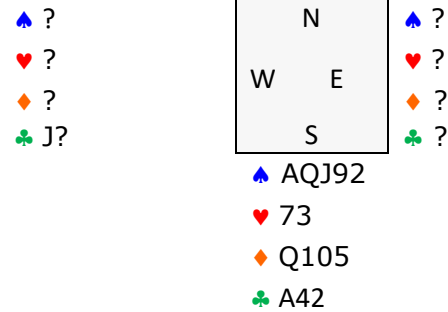
If East started life with the ♦K and the ♠K you are down unless hearts are 3-3.

For Kitty: If either finesse works you are home so that is 75% - now add the 3-3 heartbreak to make it about an 83% slam!

**PLAY PROBLEM #36**

IMPs

Dlr: South      ♠ K 8 6 3  
 Vul: All        ♥ K 8 2  
                   ♦ A J 9 8  
                   ♣ Q 5



Contract 4♠    Lead: ♣J

Bidding:

W	N	E	S
			1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Can you see a way to make 10 tricks?

Send [me](#) your solution if so. Since there will be a new bulletin editor next issue, I will reply directly to emails sent to me on this topic.

**SUIT COMBINATION**

You(South): A2    Partner(North): Q10987

You need 4 tricks from this suit playing a No Trump contract

How do you play? – estimate your chances of success

You have plenty of entries to both hands.

Decide how you would play before peeking at the [Solution](#) on [P9](#)



♣♣♣ **KNAVE OF CLUBS** ♣♣♣  
**A DIFFICULT DISCARD**

Playing in a teams contest, games are bid aggressively and not a few of them require good play. In this hand, East opened a weak 1NT and South's interference removed any science from the auction. West doubled to bring both majors into consideration and, when East showed the heart suit, West bid the game. Since the spade and diamond suits are not attractive, the lead seems to be a trump or club and one might avoid the club since the 1NT bidder is more likely to hold the ♣K.

After a trump lead, the contract is easy to make as the cards lie, losing only one club and two spades. As it happens, the ♣A lead is much more dynamic. Since everyone can see the ♣K on table, partner will signal natural count rather than attitude. It is easy to continue with the ♣Q to the king and a ruff.

Looking at dummy, it is clear to switch to a small spade (promising an honour) and declarer will rise with the ace. It is difficult to see where ten tricks can be made while avoiding two spade losers.

Dealer: East      ♠ Q1053  
 Vul: EW          ♥ 43  
                     ♦ J109854  
                     ♣ 2

♠ 9842 ♥ A10972 ♦ A ♣ K83	N W     E S	♠ A76 ♥ KQJ5 ♦ Q632 ♣ 84 ♠ KJ ♥ 86 ♦ K7 ♣ AQJ10765
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Bidding:

W	N	E	S
		1NT	3♣
Dbl	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

For there not to be two spade losers, the suit needs to be blocked and South needs to be stripped of all red cards before being endplayed. Thus, declarer needs to play ♦A, trump to hand, diamond ruff, draw last trump, ruff a club, and exit a spade. Then when South wins the ♠K, he has only clubs left, and dummy can ruff while declarer sheds the last spade.

While the line of play might seem difficult to find, it is forced upon declarer by the need to avoid losing two spades. There are two more wrinkles though. The defenders can beat this line if South can manage to play the ♠K under the ♠A so that North can win two spade tricks when declarer tries the spade exit. Further, if South misses this chance, declarer must not play the ♦Q and ruff a diamond before exiting with a spade because South gets two more chances to dispose of the ♠K before it embarrasses him!

Disposing of the ♠K needs South to realize that contract can only be defeated if North has the ♠Q10.

**SOLUTION TO SUIT COMBINATION**

You(South): A2    Partner(North): Q10987

Needing 4 tricks:

Run the Queen (if not covered)

If it loses to the King, then hope to drop the doubleton knave.

Your percentage chance of success playing this line is 44%



Merry Christmas