



BRIDGE VICTORIA BULLETIN

MARCH 2025

EDITOR: CHRIS HUGHES



EDITORIAL – CHRIS HUGHES

For “The Interview” this month, I talk to Phill (Phillip) Fent. He contributes bridge lesson notes to the bulletin for which I am very grateful. However, the interview follows a different path than most of the rest that I have done. I shall present it as it was given to me. I shall leave it to the reader to determine where truth turns into fiction.

As Max Walker (the famous Australian cricket player, who sadly passed away nearly nine years ago) used to say, “Never let the truth spoil a good story”.

I met Max Walker’s father in an unusual way. Max Walker was known as ‘Little Max’ and his father was ‘Big Max’. Those of you that remember Max Walker will remember him as a tall strapping fellow affectionately called ‘Tangles’. However, his father was even bigger.

When we had our bathroom renovated, the builder doing the job was less than satisfactory. My brother-in-law, who was a senior member of the Master Builders Association, asked ‘Big Max’ to examine the renovation. The builder was in the bathroom when ‘Big Max’ arrived. ‘Big Max’ said that the job was of poor standard and jumped up and down in the bathroom to prove his point. The whole house shook and everyone expected the floorboards to give way (I was expecting to hear on the news that night about a report of a minor earthquake in Melbourne). Anyway, the builder decided that he had better do some running repairs free of charge rather than question this colossus.

Max Walker was a very popular speaker at many events. He is credited with a lot of famous quotes that were generated at these speaking engagements or in the books that he wrote.

Many of his quotes were general in nature and were good life messages. For example,

Life is too short to be taken seriously all the time.

Some could be more pertinent to bridge players as they strive to improve

Success is not final; failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts.

Don't be afraid to fail, be afraid not to try.



Above is a picture of Chris Hughes looking puzzled at home.

The best way to predict the future is to create it.

The only thing standing between you and your dreams is your fear.

Your mistakes do not define you, your resilience does.

Success is not about the destination; it is about the journey.

The true measure of success is how many times you can bounce back from failure.

Probably the most pertinent for the bridge addict

The harder you work for something, the greater you'll feel when you achieve it.

Submit all your input to the following email address

editor@bridgevictoria.au

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TEST YOUR DECLARER SKILLS MARCH

The following hand took place in a team event

NORTH

♠ A98643

♥ 5

♦ T973

♣ A5

WEST

♠
♥
♦
♣

EAST

♠
♥
♦
♣

SOUTH(D)

♠

♥ KT9863

♦ AKQ8

♣ KJ2

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
		1♥	p
1♠	p	3♦	P
6♦	p	p	p

With both sides vulnerable South opened 1♥ and, over North's 1♠, decide to make a strong reverse.

South bid 3♦. North thought about this for a few seconds holding two aces, a singleton and four ♦s.

North bid slam.

West led the ♦2.

Dummy came down.

North has shown great faith in your declarer play.

The first trick proceeds ♦T, ♦J and your ♦A.

Try and not let partner down.

What is your plan from here?

The answer is at the end of the bulletin.



BRIDGE HAND OF THE MONTH MARCH

EW are vulnerable and NS are not vulnerable.

West leads the ♣J.

It becomes immediately apparent why EW are not playing either a ♠ or a ♣ contract.

However, North has a much better hand than perhaps you deserve.

You play the ♣4. East plays the ♣Q and leads back a small trump.

What is your plan from here?

Answer in the next bulletin.

Send in your play to

editor@bridgevictoria.au

NORTH

♠KJ654
♥32
♦A4
♣K654

WEST

♠
♥
♦
♣

EAST(D)

♠
♥
♦
♣

SOUTH

♠3
♥AKQT876
♦JT97
♣8

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
	1NT	4♥	P
P	P		

East opens a 15-17 1NT as dealer vulnerable.

You notice on their system card that 1NT doesn't have a five-card major.

You hum and hah for a few seconds wondering what to bid. Thinking that EW might have a ♠ or a ♣ contract either as a part score or at a game level, you decide to exert the maximum pressure and bid 4♥.

Nobody else as anything to say.



THE INTERVIEW

THIS MONTH THE INTERVIEW IS WITH PHILL (PHILLIP) FENT



Caption: Phill (centre) being held up by the winners of the Wally Scott Open Swiss Pairs in 2023 (a gold point event with a strong field of Australian players in the Victor Champion Congress). Dominic Kwok, one of Phill's students, is on the left and his partner, BJ (Bijan Assaee) is on the right.

Editor:

Where and when were you born?

Phill:

When Moses was still in short pants, I was born into a family of inveterate gamblers and con men. My earliest memories are of being in my crib, with my older brothers, Doug and Dinsdale, teaching me to stick matchsticks into a triangular piece of wood with holes. Every Saturday morning, Mum, an up-and-coming MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) fighter, and I would pore over the Form Guide and tune into 3-Way Turf Talk on the radio before heading to the races.

Editor:

Where did you go to school?

Phill:

Twice a week, I'd go to the dogs with Dad—Monday nights at Olympic Park and Thursday nights at Sandown, when he was out on parole.

On Wednesdays, I'd often skip school to join Dad at mid-week country races in Victoria, and Friday nights were poker nights. I'd play with Dad and his mates at the Commercial Travellers Association on Flinders Street in Melbourne until three or four in the morning.

Editor:

I hope this isn't read by a school teacher. There are various ways to get a well-rounded education – this might not be at the top of the list. 😊

Did you play card games or something similar at home?

Phill:

As a family, we were always playing cards—Euchre, Canasta, 500, up and down the river—but mainly poker.

Editor:

What other interests did you have as a child?

Phill:

During the Christmas holidays, we'd find a house to squat in Sorrento. The winner of each night's poker game had to buy ice creams at Slips on the main street.

By my late teens, I'd discovered women—and I've been enchanted by them ever since. This was the end of my gambling for a while. Luckily, when I started studying optometry at Melbourne Uni, my two main passions realigned.

The Science Student Society had a common room in the chemistry building, where I'd spend 12 hours a day playing cards, drinking bad coffee, and filling the room with smoke, before shuffling off to Naughtons Hotel for nights of debauchery. In bridge, bluffing and deception are key. If anyone wants to improve their bluffing, poker is a good start. But to really up your game, play Cheat with a group of highly caffeinated university students for hours. That will transform your ability to deceive!

Editor:

When did you get involved in the local bridge scene and what prompted you to start playing?

Phill:

After returning from my first optometry job in Darwin, and to escape gambling debts, I had an epiphany. We'd dabbled in bridge at Uni, but discovering duplicate at Andrew Mills' club in Kew changed everything for me; as Jake told Elwood —"I have seen the light." —a life-altering experience that's kept me hooked ever since.

Editor:

Do you have any tips?

Phill:

To improve your results in bridge, it's simple: find the best player you can and convince them to play with you.

Editor:

Did you have a regular partner initially?

Phill:

In recent years, I've been fortunate to play with Dee Harley, a Scottish international, whenever his wife, the vivacious Anna St Clair, allows. I've managed to keep him playing with me mainly through humour, distracting him from my constant mistakes with atrocious dad jokes and obscure pop culture references.

Editor:

Obviously, mental awareness is important but do you believe that physical well-being is a significant factor in doing well at bridge and in the administration arena as you age?

Phill:

I certainly believe in maintaining fitness to play well, so I insist Dee goes to the gym three times a week to be strong enough to carry me through each session.

Editor:

Do you have any goals set for your bridge game?

Phill:

Getting older is a challenge. Now, I've resorted to playing with only one shoe on so I can use my toes to count to thirteen.

Editor:

How did you get into the teaching of bridge?

Phill:

Back at university, I supported my caffeine, nicotine, and gambling addictions by tutoring math—the only subject I really enjoyed in school. When I moved to the Blue Mountains in New South Wales, I rediscovered the joy of teaching something I loved, which led me to become a bridge teacher. I genuinely love teaching bridge. It's incredibly rewarding. Moreover, unless we bring new players into the game, we'll all suffer in the long run, as there won't be anyone left to play against in 10 years due to natural attrition.

Editor:

What are your goals for the future?

Phill:

As for the future, my goal is simple: keep convincing top players to play with me, or else I'm doomed. My main objective? To remember to count to twelve... or is it fourteen?

Editor:

Ripley might need to be consulted on some of the above (believe it or not).

A disclaimer:

The views and opinions expressed by Phill (Philip) Fent are his own and they do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Education or Bridge Victoria.

Any content provided is not intended to suggest that a person can become a successful optometrist or bridge player by following the guidelines expressed by the interviewed. 😊

However, Phill does raise an interesting point.

Liam Milne, a top Australian player, gave a talk at the Gold Coast Congress. The subject was "How to get a silver medal in the teams at a major US bridge congress". I didn't attend but how long would it take to say

"Play well, have some good luck and get excellent team mates".

Thank you, Phill for taking part in the interview.

I am certain that the readers will find it entertaining.

PHILL'S PHILOSOPHIES

GERBER AND MODIFIED KEYCARD GERBER AFTER WE PRE-EMPT

GERBER 4♣

The Gerber convention is a 4♣ response to a bid of 1NT or 2NT. Like Blackwood, it is a slam investigation bid that asks partner how many aces they hold.

The difference from Blackwood is that Gerber is only used for no-trumps. This is because 1NT-4NT is natural, inviting partner to bid 6NT.

When does Gerber apply? Here are some standard rules:

- An immediate 4♣ response to any no-trumps bid is Gerber.
- A jump rebid of 4♣ in response to a natural no-trump bid is Gerber.

Agreements vary widely, so make sure to discuss it with your partners. For example, some play 4C over 1NT as a Texas Transfer, and I play this as Optional Minorwood !!



RESPONSES TO 4♣

Response	Meaning
4♦	0 or 4 aces.
4♥	1 ace.
4♠	2 aces.
4NT	3 aces.

After hearing partner's response, the Gerber bidder can bid 5♣ to ask for kings. Use this ONLY if the partnership has all 4 aces.

RESPONSES TO 5♣

Response	Meaning
5♦	0 or 4 kings.
5♥	1 king.
5♠	2 kings.
5NT	3 kings.

EXAMPLES

Opener Responder

1NT (15-17) 4♣

Responder's hand:

♠ K53
♥ AJ
♦ K3
♣ KQJ1073

Adding partner's 15-17 HCP to their own 17 HCP, responder knows that their side has 32-34 HCP. A small slam in no-trumps is possible, but the Gerber 4♣ bid can check if partner holds at least 2 aces.

Opener **Responder**
2NT (20-21) 4♣

Responder's hand:

♠ K3
♥ KQJ1098
♦ KT
♣ Q43

Responder is interested in 7♥ but worries about missing an ace. If partner shows all 4 aces, responder can bid 5♣ to ask for the ♣ king, which would make 7♥ (and 7 NT) cold.

MODIFIED KEYCARD GERBER AFTER OUR PRE-EMPTS

This is a great way to keep the bidding low when you don't have enough of the right cards for slam. The modified Keycard Gerber convention is a 4♣ bid after any pre-empt by partner (except when partner opens 3♣, when you use 4♦) (Note this must be done immediately, and does not apply after any other bidding)

Response	Meaning
4♦	No Ace or King of Trumps.
4♥	1 Ace or King of Trumps
4♠	1 Ace or King of Trumps plus the Trump Q
4NT	2 Aces or an Ace plus the King of Trumps
5♣	2 Aces or an Ace plus the King of Trumps plus the Trump Q (e.g. AKQ of Trumps)

EXAMPLE 1

Opener **Responder**

3♥ 4♣

Responder's hand:

♠ A853
♥ 543
♦ KQ
♣ AKQJ

A small slam is possible, but the Keycard Gerber 4♣ bid can find out about partners trump quality below 4♥. For example, you can stop in 4♥ if partner doesn't have the ♥ Ace or King.

Opener's hand:

♠ 4
 ♥ QJ109876
 ♦ J74
 ♣ 103

Opener Responder

3♥ 4♣
 4♦ 4♥

EXAMPLE 2

Opener Responder

2♠ 4♣

Responder's hand:

♠ K763
 ♥ KQ8
 ♦ AKT5
 ♣ A32

Responder is interested in 6♠ but worries about missing 2 aces and the Trump Q. Bidding 4♣ allows you to explore Slam below the level of Game; while allowing you help work out the best slam when it is right to do so.

EXAMPLE 3

Opener Responder

3♣ 4♦

This IS Keycard, ONLY after a 3♣ opening (4♣ is just a raise). Responses are the same steps: 0, 1, 1+Q, 2, 2+Q

Response	Meaning
4♥	No Ace or King of Trumps.
4♠	1 Ace or King of Trumps
4NT	1 Ace or King of Trumps plus the Trump Q
5♣	2 Aces or an Ace plus the King of Trumps
5♦	2 Aces or an Ace plus the King of Trumps plus the Trump Q (e.g. AKQ of Trumps)

SUMMARY

4♣ Keycard after pre-empt responses are 0, 1, 1+Q, 2, 2+Q. No matter what convention you elect to use, remember it comes at the cost of replacing the normal meaning of what the bid used to mean.

E.g. a jump to 4♣ is often used as a Splinter, so make sure you discuss with partner if this convention will suit your partnership.

BRIDGE HUMOUR



A GENEROUS GESTURE

Janet and Jessica were keen bridge players. They both learned to play at a beginner's lesson organised at their local club in Omaha Nebraska. It was six years ago since they completed the course and this was closely followed by a session in a supervised play environment at the club.

They played with their husbands normally but they also played together a lot when their husbands were unavailable. Their husbands agreed that both women had improved immeasurably over the last few years. Moreover, they had fostered some strong friendships with other keen bridge players at the club.

A poster on the wall of the club mentioned that the "Omaha Regional Teams' Championships" were to be held in two weeks. The women looked at each other and they both thought that such a large tournament should test just how competent they were at the game they loved. They each went home and spoke to their respective husbands about playing in the event.

The husbands agreed to play with their wives. Moreover, the wives had a further request. Rather than play with their respective spouses, they wanted to play together to see how they fared in this competitive environment. This further stipulation was agreed upon by the men.

The first match started at the regional event. Janet and Jessica played against two men. On the first hand, Janet was dummy and she politely asked the two men if she could get them a coffee each. They replied in the affirmative and they offered to pay but Janet would have done none of it.

At the end of the match, Janet and Jessica went back to the table to score up with their husbands. The men asked them how they felt in their first serious hit out. Janet said that, as a kind gesture, she bought the two gentlemen a coffee as they looked like they needed one and probably were a little short of cash.

The husbands asked if they knew who the gentlemen were. They said that they didn't. However, they seemed like





BRIDGE RESULTS

BRIDGE RESULTS FOR FEBRUARY

- VICTORIA

YARRA VALLEY CONGRESS

Saturday 15th February

34 pairs contested the Pairs and the placegetters were

1st	Paul Ruan	Chen Ding
2nd	Jack Huang	John Yang
3rd	Serhat Ozenir	Chris Hughes

YOUTH FUNDRAISER CONGRESS

Saturday 22nd February

This event was run at the Waverley Bridge Club and, as the name suggests, it was held to raise money to help support Victoria's youth players. Moreover, people, who could not play on the day, were able to donate funds as well and several generous people took advantage of this opportunity.

26 pairs contested the event and the placegetters were

1st	Neil Ewart	David Beckett
2nd	Alex Goss	Seb Wright
3rd	Carolyn O'Donnell	Diana Smart

The first picture on the following page

Left-to-right Bec (Rebecca) O'Reilly (organiser), Leigh Gold (director), David Beckett, Neil Ewart

The second picture on the following page Bec (Rebecca) O'Reilly (organiser) with

Best Restricted – Sam Angove and Samuel Goss (a youth pair finishing 6th overall)



The winners and place getters need to be congratulated. However, the more important outcome of the event was the money raised from the tournament participants and the generous donations from non-participating bridge players

It is important to understand how the money raised is used. and that any club can apply via Youth@bridgevictoria.au.

The Youth Fund is used for:

- Promotion of youth bridge
- Development of youth players
- Attracting new players
- Running youth events

It is available for any clubs in Victoria to submit applications for funding.

There is also an ABF youth fund that typically matches the amount the state fund puts up for any of the above activities.

If clubs wish further information, then contact a Bridge Victoria representative.

- STATE

The only 'state' event completed in February was the

FELICITY BEALE MIXED TEAMS

10 teams contested the Teams and the placegetters were

1st	Stephen Sharp	Danny Sharp	Jenny Thompson	Eva Caplan
2nd	David Beckett	Belind Lindsay	Kitty Muntz	Neil Ewart
3rd	Leo Saoud	Kae French	Thilak Ranasinghe	Kim Frazer

- NATIONAL

The **GOLD COAST CONGRESS** produced few Victorian highlights but one of them is shown in the picture below.

The YOFFA team were runners up in the final of the INTERMEDIATE TEAMS.

In the back row – Dan Craine and Lisa Yoffa

In the front row – Ruth Frydman and Maryanne Bird

Editor's Note: Well done a good result





UPCOMING EVENTS IN MARCH

RYE/DROMANA CONGRESS

Saturday 8th March

WHITTLESEA CONGRESS

Sunday 9th March

GRAND PRIX CONGRESS

Saturday 15th March and Sunday 16th March (held at the Waverley Bridge Club). See a flyer on the following page

BWONLINE BRIDGECLUB CONGRESS

Saturday 23rd March and Sunday 24th March

FRANKSTON CONGRESS

Saturday 5th April and Sunday 6th April

OCEAN GROVE FRIENDLY CONGRESS

Sunday 13th April

MORNINGTON FESTIVAL

Friday 18th April, Saturday 19th April and Sunday 20th April. See a flyer on a following page

BAYSIDE CONGRESS

Saturday 3rd May. See a flyer on a following page

Grand Prix Bridge Club Weekend Congress



IIMP PAIRS ON SATURDAY

MP PAIRS ON SUNDAY

GREAT PRIZES (AND THE BEST CAKE
YOU'VE EVER TASTED!)

March 15th and 16th @ Waverley Bridge Club

Director Martin Willcox

\$50 per day – bring lunch if you feel the need

Book online at [MyABE](#) or on Bridge Unlimited

EASTER FESTIVAL OF BRIDGE

PRESENTED BY

MORNINGTON BRIDGE CLUB

**VENUE: ST MARKS UNITING CHURCH
50 BARKLY STREET MORNINGTON**

GOOD FRIDAY PAIRS 18TH

1:00 PM TILL 4:00 PM \$15 PER PERSON

EASTER SAT SWISS PAIRS

10:00AM TILL 5:30 PM \$40 PER PERSON
RESTRICTED SECTION FOR PAIRS UNDER 100 MPTS
IF THERE ARE ENOUGH PAIRS

EASTER SUNDAY SWISS TEAMS

10:00 AM TILL 5:30 PM \$40 PER PERSON

EASTER MONDAY MATCH POINT PAIRS

10:00 AM TILL 4:30 PM \$40 PER PERSON

BAROMETER FINAL

CONVENOR: CHRISTINE PARKIN

EMAIL: CPARKIN_82@HOTMAIL.COM

PHONE: 0411 025 052

DIRECTOR: MARTIN WILLCOX

ENTRIES: WWW.BRIDGEUNLIMITED.COM

LUNCH WILL
NOT BE
PROVIDED BUT
TEA, COFFEE,
WATER AND
LIGHT SNACKS
WILL BE
AVAILABLE

**THE CONGRESS WILL BE CONDUCTED UNDER THE CURRENT VBA RULES
AND REGULATIONS**

SYSTEM CARDS ARE MANDATORY

ENTRIES MAY BE REFUSED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CONVENOR

HIGHLY COMPLEX SYSTEMS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED

MONETARY PRIZES IN ALL SECTIONS SUBJECT TO NUMBERS



2025 Bayside Congress
*Swiss Pairs - **Red Points***
Saturday, 3rd May at 10am – 5pm
(please arrive by 9:30am)

Hampton Bayside Bowls Club
25 Fewster Road, Hampton
(parking front and back of greens – off Earlsfield Road)

\$45 per person (cash / card / eft)
Prizes for first division, novice & best Bayside pairs
Bring your own lunch. Snacks & tea/coffee provided

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• System cards mandatory• Highly artificial systems not permitted• Entries may be refused at discretion of Convenor• Entries seeded at discretion of Director <p>Director: Martin Willcox</p>	<p>Entries close: 1 May</p> <p>Register: www.bridgeunlimited.com</p> <p>Payment: cash/card on day or transfer funds to: Account Name: GAR Bridge Pty Ltd BSB No: 633 000 Account Number: 181 259 656 Reference: Congress & name</p>
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Host: Bayside Bridge Club 0493 112 412
email: baysidebridgeclub@gmail.com
<https://www.bridgewebs.com/bayside>

OUR SPONSORS



WHAT NEXT IN DEFENCE? MARCH

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♦	1♥	2♠	4♥
4♠	P	P	P

Playing in a team's match where beating the contract is your main concern (overtricks are secondary).

2♠ is alerted as a six-card ♠ suit with 4-6 high card points.

NORTH(D)

♠AT8
♥2
♦AKQT2
♣J864

WEST

♠75
♥QT643
♦7653
♣AQ

You lead the ♥4. East wins the ♥K and returns the ♣2.

Over to you.

What is your plan?

Answer at the end of the bulletin.

RECENT RANKING PROMOTIONS

UPDATED BY THE CLUBS IN FEBRUARY 2025

CLUB	NAME	RANK
Alphington Bridge Club	McKay, Sam	Silver Local
Ballarat Bridge Club	Bulman, Diane	Regional
Bayside Bridge Club	Beaman, Fabienne	Bronze Local
Bayside Bridge Club	Carter, Melissa	Bronze Local
Bayside Bridge Club	McNicol, Pam	Bronze Local
Bayside Bridge Club	Wein, Tami	Club
Bayside Bridge Club	Wells, Lyn	Club
Bayside Bridge Club	Williams, Maree	Bronze Local
Bayside Bridge Club	Zagni, Denise	Bronze Local
Bendigo Bridge Club	Angove, Sam	Club
Bendigo Bridge Club	Tom, Helen	Club
Berwick Bridge Club	Shand, George	Bronze National
Bridge Fanatics Club	Schwarcz, Sylvia	Gold Life
Frankston Bridge Club	Sieredzinski, Matthew	National
Gardenvale Bridge Club	Altit, Albert	Regional
Gardenvale Bridge School	Blecher, Miriam	Regional
Gardenvale Bridge School	Heggie, Diana	Graduate
Kattery Bridge Club	Kraehe, Josephine	Regional
KLTC Bridge Club	Clements, Jenny	Local
Melton Bridge Club	Decouto, Lance	Graduate
Mildura Bridge Club	Andriske, Nola	Bronze Local
Moonee Valley Bridge Club	Bilal, Gulzar	Life
Moonee Valley Bridge Club	Howden, Brian	Local
Moonee Valley Bridge Club	Jessup, Liz	Graduate
Moonee Valley Bridge Club	Kirby, Julie	Silver Local
Moonee Valley Bridge Club	Muir, Ian	Grand
Mornington Bridge Club	Chapple, Rod	Silver Local
Mornington Bridge Club	Lehmann, Margaret	Local
Northern Bridge Club	Landgren, Kay	Club
Northern Bridge Club	Lu, Ken	Club
Northern Bridge Club	Macallan, Sally	Club
Northern Bridge Club	Tang, Jane	Local
Ocean Grove Bridge Club	Kay, Sheena	Silver Local
Patterson Lakes Bridge Club	Disher, Keith	Graduate
Phillip Island Bridge Club	McKergow, Wendy	Bronze Local
Royal South Yarra Bridge Club	Swann, Jenny	Regional
Rye-Dromana Bridge Club	Kuiper, Junice	Local
Rye-Dromana Bridge Club	McLeish, Andy	Local
Sale Bridge Club	Cheyne, Carol	State

Sale Bridge Club	Salce, Mary	Graduate
Sale Bridge Club	Steele, Marilyn	Club
Sunbury Bridge Club	Staub, Jackie	Graduate
Theodor Herzl Social Club	Hurst, Angela	Silver Local
Torquay Bridge Club Inc.	Kava, Rosanne	Graduate
Torquay Bridge Club Inc.	Pollock, Jim	Club
Victorian Bridge Centre	Jacobs, Leah	Local
Victorian Bridge Centre	Laurence, Julie	Graduate
Victorian Bridge Centre	Leach, Christopher	Grand
Victorian Bridge Centre	Longair, Robert	Club
Victorian Bridge Centre	Riska, Philip	Bronze Local
Victorian Bridge Centre	Shelton, Linda	State
Warrnambool Bridge Club	Dodd, Denys	Graduate
Warrnambool Bridge Club	Hogan, Tarsh	Club
Waverley Bridge Club	Ffrench, Ray	Club
Waverley Bridge Club	Gorham, Lesley	Bronze Regional
Waverley Bridge Club	Goss, Peter	State
Waverley Bridge Club	Gu, Kevin	Bronze National
Waverley Bridge Club	Hewson, Grant	Graduate
Waverley Bridge Club	Matthews, Paul	Bronze Local
Waverley Bridge Club	Munro, Mary	Bronze Regional
Waverley Bridge Club	Ruan, Paul	National

Congratulations to all of the above.

Now I have something that I need to mention at this stage. 😊

I believe that a former VBA President threatened me verbally if I didn't mention an achievement in the bulletin. Now I remember.

This month a big milestone has been achieved.

Christopher Leach is now a 'Grand Master' which indicates he has passed the 1000-master point level. (in the last month's update, he obtained 11.99 points to get a special mention by reaching the level)

Ian Muir, of the Moonee Valley Club, is now a 'Grand Master' which indicates he has passed the 1000-master point level. (in the last month's update, he obtained 2.49 points to get a special mention by reaching the level)

OTHER INTERESTING ITEMS

Colin Shrug sent me the following information as a thought-provoking concept. I thank the readers for any input that they are willing to send. I am not advocating its usage or dismissing the concept. Many partnerships play various 'gadgets' and, if it works for them, that is good. Besides, it is always refreshing to evaluate fresh ideas.

His solution for a potential bidding problem. He calls it 'COJAK'. I suggested that they might consider the name 'KOJAK' (a lollipop sucking police detective with a fiery righteous attitude to solving issues).

A problem "You open a minor, partner responds 1 ♥ (or 1 ♠). How many have they got?"

Be nice to know if it is a 4-card suit or 5 carder or longer.

Try using Cojak!! A system being used in the far south of Victoria (i.e. the Mornington Peninsula).

Cojak concentrates on using short ♣... 1 plus.... and a 5-card ♦ opening.

COJAK

1♣ = 1 plus with the following responses.....

- 1♦ response = Stayman style asking partner for a 4-card major. Opener responds as they would over 1NT Stayman.
Where 1♥/♠ shows a major. 1♥ doesn't deny ♠s either, giving the partnership optimum opportunity to find their 4/4 fit.
Where a NT rebid from opener, or 2♣ unbalanced denies a major. 2NT or 3♣ shows a stronger hand with no major.*
- 1♥ or 1♠ response guarantees 5+ cards in that suit*.*

Responders hand is known at the 1 level, with no need to rebid a major to show 5.

** we have a couple of ways of showing 5/4 shapes*

The benefits of this are as follows:

**Opening 1♣ short means there are many more hands opened this way, which leads to more opportunities to use Cojak.*

**major shape is found straight away at the one level.*

** uncomplicated, easy for any level to use.*

** 1♦ opening allows you to play inverted minors if you want, allowing some pre-emptive opportunities, knowing opener has 5+.*

Chris, this is a précis of the system. We have added some extra bits to the system to encompass weak minor responses as well as a couple of strong versions...2♥ and 2♠ to show game forcing hands. An immediate response of 2♣/♦ and 3♣/♦ over 1♣ shows a normal and potentially unbalanced minor response (without a major) of various strengths. A NT response at any level is natural.

Quite a few players down this way, since we promoted it, play it. It is becoming popular, I guess principally because it solves the problem of how many ♥s or ♠s does partner have initially.

Another strong positive is that Martin Willcox, who runs a couple of clubs down this way and whom I love dearly, (seriously) HATES it.

I believe there is a system called "Wellington or Washington" in America that is similar but we had no knowledge of that when devising this.

If you see merit in publicising this feel free. I can provide the extras that we have built in, but most here just play the simplified version.

If you are of Martin's view that it shouldn't be played, or even discussed, then please ignore all of this, and we'll just continue pottering away down here.

It was originally constructed by Wojciech Sieredzinski and myself, and it works for us, so we are happy to share it.

I like to try and have a balanced approach to life. After Martin Willcox was mentioned in the above article in less than glowing terms, I would like to publish an article where the reader praises him. **Peter Radford** sent me the following article.

Some thoughts about Directors.

The Northern Region Bridge Association has been very fortunate to have had the support of Martin Willcox, over many years. Martin drives up from Melbourne, and spends one or two days Directing for us.

As we all know, the Director at a Congress is seen by most like a Policeman at a Pop Festival- a nuisance unless you are being beaten up! Those who have ever had to act as Director at club level know that Bridge players mostly think they are Right, and can be quite miffed when a ruling goes against them. So, it can be pretty thankless.

I like to think of the Director more as a Ski Patroller- we know there will be accidents, and we need someone to fix us up.

Martin would be a very special sort of Ski Patroller. (Arrives on scene-- bent person on the snow). Martin "Well you'd be some sort of bloody idiot doing that wouldn't you"- and would then go about fixing them up quite competently. He does not suffer fools gladly; in fact, he doesn't suffer them at all. He can be noisy, but he knows the players, and he knows the ones who are likely to make Director calls for perceived (rather than mechanical) infringements, and in my experience, makes good rulings in these situations, and even helps the beginners to understand the problem (within the rules of the game). When one sees the sorts of silly things which even experienced players can do to muck up a movement (and then try to justify it), it isn't surprising that exasperation may surface.

We have just run our regional Championship.

The picture shows the dapper Martin Willcox, Peter Radford and Geoff Rintala (the latter two won the 'Restricted Pairs').

So, thanks Martin, and thanks to all who put on the Director's red cape, and can leap tall buildings in a single bound.



Editor's note: I don't know if Martin can ski let alone leap buildings in a single bound. 😊

JUSTIN MILL

This Victorian champion player was awarded the best played hand of 2024 by the IBPA (International Bridge Press Association) covering the period January 2023 to December 2023. This award is called the Justin Lall Play Award and it is sponsored by the Lall Family and Bob Hamman.

(Editor's note: Justin Lall was an American expert player who had some health issues and died tragically in his mid-twenties yet his outstanding bridge achievements enabled him to be inducted into the American Hall of Fame).

A very prestigious award that players all across the world compete for. There have been many famous world champion players that have won this award over the years.

Even though the hand is understandably very complicated, it is worth the average player following the play to see the wizardry.

NORTH

♠AK842
♥KJT52
♦A5
♣7

WEST

♠
♥Q7643
♦76
♣KQJT84

EAST

♠J73
♥98
♦QJT983
♣32

SOUTH(D)

♠QT965
♥A
♦K42
♣A965

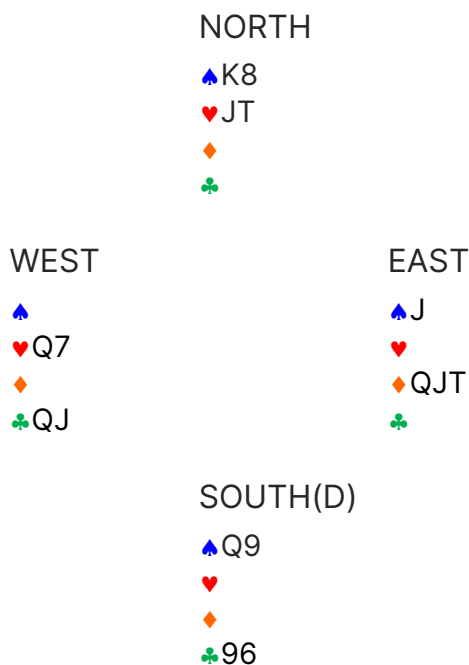
NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
		1♠	4♣
4NT	P	5♠	P
5NT	P	6♦	P
6♥	P	7♠	ALL PASS

West led the ♣K. Justin, as South, won the ♣A and played the ♠5 to the ♠A. The 3-0 break in trumps and that 'pesky' ♠J meant, he couldn't ruff his ♣ losers.

East's ♣ discard posed a problem for declarer. Had East held seven ♣s – which looked a near-certainty on the auction – declarer would have been unable to trump a ♣ low on the table without being overruffed. If ♥s was 4-3, this would still provide the thirteen tricks required.

So, Justin turned his attention to that suit. A ♥ to the ace was followed by a ♦ to the ace. The ♥ king was cashed for a ♣ discard, but West's ♣ discard on the third round of ♥s showed that this suit would not break either. Justin trumped the ♥ low and took stock.

East was now marked to be 0=5=2=6. East's ♠J would prevent a full crossruff, so Justin set about pruning East's idle cards for an exquisite ending. The ♦K was cashed before declarer trumped his third ♦ on the table. Justin now finessed the ♠T to reach the following ending:



Justin was in the South hand and led the ♠Q

East was caught in declarer's entry shifting trump squeeze.

Michael Courtney, another Australian champion player who was sitting West, graciously gave up at this point

A ♥ discard would allow declarer to overtake the ♠Q with dummy's ♠K, a ♥ would be trumped to fell East's ♥Q, and dummy could be reached with a ♣ ruff to cash the good ♥ for trick 13.

A ♣ discard fared no better. Declarer could duck the ♠Q in dummy, remaining in hand to trump East's last ♣. Now a ♥ ruff to hand allowed declarer to win trick 13 with that precious ♣.

Editor's note: This entry shifting trump squeeze comes up extremely rarely. The first problem for most expert players is to recognise the situation and the second problem is to create the position that you setup the appropriate ending to affect the squeeze. As a mere mortal, I can safely say that, with the exception of reading very advanced bridge books and creating the position after a lot of trial and error, I have never deliberately executed one at the table and I probably missed at least one opportunity that I didn't visualize.

Very well-done Justin, the award was fully deserved.

ON ANOTHER TOPIC

Laura Ginnan, who has featured many times in the Bulletin, is promoting two major national events that will occur later this year.

The following two pages show flyers showing details for the readers.

Australia's Bridge Day Out

ABF Foundation Fundraiser: Tuesday September 23rd, 2025

BRIDGE IN SCHOOLS

A key goal for the Foundation from 2025-2028 is to support a scalable, enduring nationwide Bridge in Schools program. The Foundation is exploring a holistic model that connects bridge clubs and schools, offering high-quality resources and training from bridge professionals. An early-stage pilot is underway.

THE ABF FOUNDATION

The ABF Foundation, established in 2020, is a not-for-profit organisation that supports bridge through grants and scholarships for research and projects that strengthen the game's future. Funded by bequests, donations, and fundraisers, it has already made a meaningful impact and is exploring charity status.

Games hosted by clubs
across Australia on
Tuesday
September 23rd

ABF sponsored
RED MASTERPOINTS &
Supported by many of
Australia's top players who
volunteer to be raffled and
auctioned to play in **STAR &**
SUPER SUPPORTER CLUBS

Funds raised by the ABF
Foundation to support
a nationwide bridge in
schools program

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help it thrive!*



2025 VICTORIAN



FESTIVAL

OF BRIDGE



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BOOKINGS MADE IN MARCH



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BRIDGE EVENTS BY CLICKING HERE



FEEDBACK

Chris

How could we have avoided a very poor 3NT contract?

WEST(D)

♠ J762
♥ QJ62
♦ K
♣ KQJ8

EAST

♠ T4
♥ K
♦ QJ764
♣ AT763

West opened 1♣ and I bid 2♣ (which was game force inverted minor).

West bid 3♣ and I bid 3♦, then West bid 3NT.

The contract went two down.

Answer:

A potential problem with playing inverted minors as a game force is sometimes you should not be in game as you are both stretching a little.

A common method played by many good partnerships is that an inverted minor is a game force unless either party shows a minimum. Opener bids next step as an artificial minimum (2♦), then responder can signoff in 3♣. In the hand that you illustrated here, West is not a dead minimum so, West would bid perhaps 2♥ showing values in the suit (not 2♦ - artificial minimum). Now you will get to game because anything is now game forcing once West isn't minimum.

The problem with the hand is that East's hand isn't quite a game force. Therefore, the auction might proceed.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♣	P	1♦	P
1♥	P	3♣	ALL PASS

Where 3♣ is highly encouraging but not forcing.

Please submit your queries to the email address.

editor@bridgevictoria.au

WHAT NEXT IN DEFENCE – MARCH SOLUTION

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♦	1♥	2♠	4♥
4♠	P	P	P

Playing in a team's match where beating the contract is your main concern (overtricks are secondary).

2♠ is alerted as a six-card ♠ suit with 4-6 high card points.

NORTH(D)

♠AT8
♥2
♦AKQT2
♣J864

WEST

♠75
♥QT643
♦7653
♣AQ

You lead the ♥4. East wins the ♥K and returns the ♣2.

Over to you.

What is your plan?

If you win the ♣Q and cash the ♣A, where is the fourth trick for the defence coming from?

Maybe, East has the ♠K.

This is wistful thinking at best.

There is a much better chance.

East returns the ♣2. This suggests an honour and a four-card suit (maybe a three-card suit) and that leaves South with three (or maybe four) cards in ♣s.

Now the answer becomes apparent.

Win trick two with the ♣A and lead the ♣Q. After this unusual sequence of play, East should overtake with the ♣K and give you a ♣ ruff. If East lets you hold the trick, then there are other things to consider.

TEST YOUR DECLARER SKILLS - MARCH SOLUTION

The following hand took place in a team event

NORTH

♠ A98643
♥ 5
♦ T973
♣ A5

WEST

♠
♥
♦
♣

EAST

♠
♥
♦
♣

SOUTH(D)

♠
♥ KT9863
♦ AKQ8
♣ KJ2

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
		1♥	p
1♠	p	3♦	p
6♦	p	p	p

With both sides vulnerable South opened 1♥ and over North's 1♠ decide to make a strong reverse.

South bid 3♦. North thought about this for a few seconds holding two aces, a singleton and four ♦s.

North bid slam.

West led the ♦2.

Dummy came down.

North has shown great faith in your bidding.

The first trick proceeds ♦T, ♦J and your ♦A.

Try and not let partner down.

What is your plan from here?

You will need the ♦ suit to behave and either the ♥A onside or a 3-3♥ break.

Lead the ♣2 to the ♣A and lead the ♥5.

East wins the ♥A and leads the ♦7.

When West follows with the ♦3, after you play the ♦K, you are nearly home.

Play the ♥3 and ruff with the ♦9.

Play the ♠A throwing the ♣J and then lead the ♣5 to the ♣K.

Lead the ♥6 and ruff with dummy's last ♦.

Lead the ♠3 and ruff this with the ♦8.

Pull the last trump and voila.

BRIDGE HAND OF THE MONTH – FEB. SOLUTION

Both sides nil vulnerable in a team's match

NORTH
 ♠ Q6
 ♥ A87
 ♦ J9873
 ♣ AK5

WEST(D)
 ♠ T8
 ♥
 ♦ Q62
 ♣

EAST
 ♠ 754
 ♥
 ♦ KT54
 ♣

SOUTH
 ♠ AKJ932
 ♥ KT2
 ♦ A
 ♣ 843

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
			1♠
P	2♦	P	3♠
P	4NT	P	5♦
P	6♠	ALL PASS	

Both North and South took an optimistic view of their hands.

5♦ showed three of the five key cards and so North bid the small slam.

This hand was played in the Christmas Teams at the Victorian Bridge Centre and it was sent to me by Ralph Berlinski (thank you).

West leads the ♣Q.

To indicate the ♠ holding, I have shown you that trumps are 3 – 2.

Also, there is no real good fortune in the ♦ suit (ie KQ are not doubleton or tripleton).

Moreover, the ♥QJ are not doubleton.

What is your plan from here?

Trick two – play a ♦ to the ♦A.

Trick three – play the ♠A.

Trick four – play ♠2 to the ♠Q.

You now know that trumps break 3 – 2.

Trick five – play the ♦7 and throw the ♣4.

Trick six – West wins the trick with the ♦Q and returns the ♣J on which East plays the ♣T (any red suit lead would be fatal for the defence on the actual layout). You win in dummy.

Trick seven – ruff a ♦ high. No luck the ♦K does not appear.

However, that ♣T from East suggests that West might have started with five ♣s.

In these situations, run your trumps.

The situation at trick nine is on the left of the following page (you hope).

NORTH
 ♠

NORTH
 ♠

West
 To in
 trum
 Also,
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 Ther
 You
 Now
 We v
 ♣J (a
 for th
 You
 ♦K d
 You
 entry
 Oh d
 hope
 ♦K, t
 You
 card

♥A8
♦J
♣5

WEST(D)

♠
♥J63
♦
♣9

EAST

♠
♥Q95
♦K
♣

SOUTH

♠3
♥KT2
♦
♣

♥A8
♦J
♣5

WEST(D)

♠
♥J3
♦K
♣9

EAST

♠
♥Q954
♦
♣

SOUTH

♠3
♥KT2
♦
♣

Sometimes things fall into place when you run trumps in these situations.

You lead the ♠3.

West must keep the ♣9 so throws the ♥3.

North plays the ♣5.

East must keep the ♦K so throws the ♥5.

You play the ♥2 to the ♥A and lead the ♥8 back to the ♥K.

The ♥T takes the twelfth trick.

Voila.

This is all well and good you say but what if West had the ♦K?

Now your best chance is that West also has one of the ♥ honours (either the ♥Q or ♥J or both).

Therefore, the ending is as follows (on the right)

Sometimes things fall into place when you run trumps in these situations.

You lead the ♠3.

West must keep the ♣9 and the ♦K so throws the ♥3.

North plays the ♣5.

East doesn't have a worry in the world and plays the ♥4.

You play the ♥2 to the ♥A and West, perforce plays the ♥J. You play the ♥8 and East plays the ♥9 and you play the ♥T.

The ♥K takes the twelfth trick.

Voila.

This is all well and good you say but what if East had the ♦K all along and West had the ♥Q left and takes the setting trick when you finesse?

This is where you need to guess the ending. There are no guarantees but getting a 'feel' for what is happening is the key.