

# BRIDGE IN THE CITY INCORPORATED NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2023

[www.bridgeinthecity.net.au](http://www.bridgeinthecity.net.au)

## Hand of the Month

<b>Board : 13</b>	<b>S♠ AK92</b>	<b>Dir: N</b>	<b>Makeable Contracts</b>					
	<b>H♥ AKQT</b>	<b>Vul: Both</b>		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	<b>D♦ KJ7</b>		<b>N</b>	7	7	7	4	7
	<b>C♣ A7</b>		<b>S</b>	7	7	7	4	7
<b>S♠ T843</b>		<b>S♠ QJ765</b>	<b>E</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>H♥ 32</b>		<b>H♥ J86</b>	<b>W</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>D♦ 9532</b>		<b>D♦ T6</b>						
<b>C♣ 982</b>		<b>C♣ T64</b>						
	<b>S♠</b>							
24	<b>H♥ 9754</b>							
0    4	<b>D♦ AQ84</b>							
12	<b>C♣ KQJ53</b>							

How would you and your favourite partner bid the North-South hands?

If your 2NT opening shows 20-22 points then North should open 2C, 3C from South, 3NT by North showing the 23-24. South should now call for Aces (got them all), then Kings (none missing) and then consider.

South knows that they have two tricks in each of the majors, three diamond tricks, and five club tricks. And, we have only seen 21 of partner's 23-24 points. If partner has either of the major suit queens, or the jack of diamonds, then they have all thirteen tricks.

So, 7NT should be the final call.

## Committee News

The Christmas party will be held at the Warradale Hotel on December 17<sup>th</sup>, bookings to open in October.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on a Sunday in the New Year, followed by a barbecue and social bridge game.

The club now has its own bank account, so prepayment credits should now preferably go into BSB 805-050, account number 102-790- 715. Payments can still be made into the old account.

The club has recently purchased a supply of bidding boxes, and these should be in use shortly.

Finally, there will be a question and answer session mostly relating to bidding with the director each Friday at 12:15pm.

## Touching Honours – Which One Should You Play?

Too often I see players indiscriminately playing their touching honours. It doesn't matter much to them, however it certainly matters to their partners who can be confused by this lack of consistency. I obey the following rules, and you should too.

- If you are going to **win** the trick, play the **lowest** of touching honours.
- When **leading**, you should play the **highest** of touching honours, suggesting to partner that you lack the honour card above, however probably have the card immediately below.
- As **second** person to play you should play the **highest** of your touching honours. Again, this tells partner that you lack the card above, may have the card below.
- As **third** person to play you should contribute the **lowest** of touching honours. Partner will then know that you lack the card below the one played, however may have one or more of the cards immediately above it.

Try it – your defence will improve, and your partner should be grateful.

## Prepayment Scheme

Bridge in the City has its own prepayment scheme, allowing players to pay their table fees in advance.

Players then get a weekly email advising them of their balance, while containing a link to an internet schedule of all their deposits and deductions.

Payments can be made either to the Director on duty, or else online into the following Bridge in the City bank account. BSB 805-050, account number 102-790-715

Finally, when making an online deposit, please make sure that you give your name.

## T'was the Mabel before Christmas by Richard Pavlicek

Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, 'cept me and my spouse  
And one other couple who came over to play  
In a rubber bridge game that had lasted all day.  
The night lingered on and the cocktails they came  
As my wife was declarer in a contract of game.  
Our bidding was awful and very much troubled,  
But the ultimate bid was left undoubled.  
The opening lead saw my hand hit the table;  
My thoughts at the time were, "Come on, Mabel!"  
She handled the play with the greatest of ease,  
And scored up her contract as swift as a breeze.  
The defence, I might add, was top of the line;  
Not one trick was dropped, unmistakably, fine!  
So here is the deal that made us a winner,  
And gave Mabel's eye that perpetual glimmer.

Dir: South    ♠ A98

All vul.        ♥ 87

♦ A6432

♣ K52

♠ KQJ

♠ 76543

♥ QJ106

♥ 92

♦ QJ87

♦ 95

♣ 94

♣ QJ107

♠ 102

♥ AK543

♦ K10

♣ A863

What was the final contract?

### Solution

The puzzle could also be stated, "What is the only game contract that is makeable against best defence?" The most obvious candidate is 3NT. There are seven top tricks, and declarer can establish an eighth by playing on hearts or diamonds; but there is no way to come to a ninth trick against proper defence. No matter how well you play, it can't be made.

What about four hearts in the 5-2 trump fit? Eight tricks are easy - three natural trump tricks plus the aces and kings in the side suits - and declarer can score a ninth with careful play; but a 10th trick will elude even the finest declarer. Try again.

Five clubs? Or five diamonds? Either seems highly improbable since an additional trick is required. And you're right; five of a minor is out of the question. Well, what's left? You guessed it! After a few cocktails, Mabel was feeling a little tipsy and accidentally opened the bidding in the wrong suit. The auction went:

S	W	N	E
1S!	p	2D	p
2H	p	4S	

Yes, the game in spades is the only one that makes - on a 3-2 fit! The opening lead was a trump (best) and Mabel won the ace in dummy. She cashed the top cards in each side suit ending in her hand, then ruffed a heart with the eight, ruffed a diamond with the ten, and ruffed a heart with the nine. The defence was helpless to stop it.

Now, if you believe this story. . .

*A special thanks to Richard Pavlicek for this article, taken (with his permission) from his Internet homepage.*

*Richard Pavlicek lived with his wife Mabel in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and is a bridge expert, writer, teacher, and a 10-time North American champion. He is co-author of the internationally acclaimed book, *Modern Bridge Conventions*. You can visit his website at <http://rpbridge.net>*

## Eight ever, nine never - Calculating Bridge Statistics

Bridge is a game of chance, the top players usually being those who make the most of their opportunities. However, if one mentions bridge statistics to the average player, you will usually see their eyes glaze over as they search for another topic.

The percentages are also frequently misunderstood - an old friend of mine once led a small trump away from his King doubleton against the opponent's grand slam. Dummy came down with QJ10xx, and dummy's queen held the first trick. Declarer then led the Jack from dummy, the other defender played a small trump, and declarer played her Ace, dropping the King! When asked how she had found such a play, she replied triumphantly "Eight ever, nine never".

The top players know the probabilities from their years of accumulated experience. Ordinary mortals usually have to rely on what they have been told (sometimes incorrectly), or look up the answer in a textbook. This article refers to the manner in

which these statistics are calculated, and will hopefully teach the more patient readers how to resolve their own card play problems.

Let us start with the example of a nine card fit, missing the queen. If there is no other significant information, why is it right to play for the drop?

AJ1032

K987

Consider first of all that there is an imaginary dealer who is about to give out the Queen of this suit. This card is going to be distributed randomly to one of the available vacancies in the East and West hands.

So, when you first look at this suit, with no outside information, there is equal probability that the card can be with East or with West. Similarly, when you play the King and both opponents follow suit, then again the possibilities are equal. However, when you now lead a card towards dummy, and West follows, the odds change, since the West hand now has one less available place for the missing card than East does, so the better choice is to play dummy's Ace.

These odds vary depending at which in the hand of time you tackle the suit, If it is at trick two, with the card led towards dummy at trick three, the chance that West has been dealt the missing honour is 10/21, East 11/21, a marginal advantage in playing the Ace. If instead you are down to the last four cards, one of which West has shown, then West's chance is 3/7, East 4/7.

All the above presupposes that there is no other relevant information available. There will be instances where the missing honour can be placed through the opponent's bidding, or lack of it, such as being known to have opening points, or when there has been a pre-emptive call.

For more complex situations the table of probabilities should be used, some of the more useful percentages of a suit dividing in a particular manner being:

1-1	52%		2-0	48%			
2-1	78%		3-0	22%			
3-1	50%		2-2	40%		4-0	6%
3-2	68%		4-1	28%		5-0	4%
4-2	48%		3-3	35%		5-1	15%
4-3	62%		5-2	30%		6-1	7%

Some caution in the use of the above tables is required. They are, after all, based on no cards having previously been played, also no outside information. Further they give the total probabilities of an occurrence, some of which can be ignored. There will also

be occasions when you have to add together the chances of the various alternatives, as follows:

AJ103

K987

This time it is an eight card fit, so there are more possibilities to consider. Playing the King, both following, then finessing will work when West started with Qxx, also Qxxx, whereas playing the King and then the Ace is only successful if West started with xxx. So this time the finesse is a clear winner.

Finally, a test for the reader(s?) who made it this far. Consider the following hand:

♠ AJ1098

♥ KQ2

♦ Q54

♣ K6

♠ K876

♥ AJ4

♦ 642

♣ A43

You are declarer in 4S from the South hand after a diamond lead to East's Jack, then King, then Ace, and Queen of clubs return.

How would you play the trump suit in the following circumstances?

1. No opposition bidding, East passed as dealer.
2. East originally opened a weak No trump.
3. East originally pre-empted in diamonds, west led his singleton.
4. You as dealer originally opened, East passed throughout, and
  - (a) West followed to all three rounds of diamonds.
  - (b) West had a doubleton diamond.

**Answers on the last page.**

Bridge in the City GRADED PAIRS CONGRESS

Sunday november 19<sup>th</sup>

10:00 a.m. Start

## Negative Doubles

When I first played the game the only negative double was of a 1S overcall over a minor suit opening, all other doubles being penalty. I do recall a team mate at a National Championship having his 1H overcall doubled by the late Tim Seres for a score of -500. Times have changed, with the modern approach proving to be much more productive.

Used properly they are a very effective bidding tool, complementing and adding confidence to your regular calls. The accent is on the unbid major(s), and they should be used when, for reasons of either length or strength, you don't have a proper alternative bid available. They should be used to at least the 3D level, most top pairs playing negative doubles up to 4H.

Examples:

Partner opens 1C, opponent overcalls 1H

- Double shows a four card spade suit
- 1S shows five or more spades

Partner opens 1C, opponent overcalls 1S

- 2H shows a five card suit, 10+ points
- Double promises 4+ hearts, may have 5 or even 6 without enough points for a 2H call.

Partner opens 1S, opponent overcalls 2C, then

- 2D promises 4+ diamonds, 10+ points.
- 2H promises 10+ points, 5+ hearts
- Double promises 4+ hearts, may have 5 or even 6 without enough points for a 2H call.

Note: A new suit call after a previous negative double shows a good 5 or 6 card suit, less than 10 points, and is for play, showing a hand without the values for a free suit call. If you do have game values and have made a negative double (you lacked the necessary suit length) then you need to make a game call or, if uncertain as to the best contract, bid the opponent's suit seeking more information from partner.

### When partner gives the wrong explanation

Players are frequently in a quandary when this occurs, and often provide a correction far too soon. What they forget is that, whilst telling their opponents the correct information, they are also telling their partner!

Your first priority must be that partner is not in a position to take advantage of your correction. Therefore, if you are defending, you can only inform the opponents at the end of the hand.

If instead your pair wins the contract, the correction should be offered before the opening lead is made.

The director should always be called to assess any damage at the end of the hand.

## Another One

Board : 11	S♠ AKJ42	Dir: S	Makeable Contracts					
	H♥ A2	Vul: None		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
	D♦ 4		N	5	4	5	7	7
	C♣ AKQJ2		S	5	4	5	6	7
S♠ 9		S♠ T863	E	-	-	-	-	-
H♥ Q753		H♥ J86	W	-	-	-	-	-
D♦ 97		D♦ QJ8652						
C♣ T96543		C♣						
	S♠ Q75							
22	H♥ KT94							
2 4	D♦ AKT3							
12	C♣ 87							

You're sitting North, admiring the wonderful hand that you have been dealt, and then your eyes light up. Partner has opened the bidding!

You respond 1S, partner bids 2S, and away you go. First you call for Aces (one), then the trump Queen (yes), with two Kings, then 7NT.

Sadly, it didn't always go this way. One South player fell from grace by passing the 1S response, another misread partner's 4C Ace ask as 4S and passed.

P.S. How did I know that South had the spade Queen? Playing Key Card Blackwood, where the trump King is the fifth Ace, the steps are

- Zero or three
- One or four
- Two without the trump Queen
- Two with the trump Queen

After the first two steps a bid of the next free step asks for the trump Queen.

- If no, next step
- If yes, no outside non trump Kings, second step
- Yes, one outside trump King, third step
- Yes, two outside Kings, fourth step.

So, this auction could go

1D 1S

2S 4C

4H\* 4NT

5S\*\* 7NT

(\*) One Key card

(\*\*) Trump Queen, two non trump Kings



## July Competition Winners

### FRIDAY JULY PAIRS

- 1 Moira Smith & Graham Stucley
- 2 Susan Phillips & Dennis Reynolds
- 3 Chris Barnwell & Stewart Kingsborough

### FRIDAY B GRADE JULY PAIRS

- 1 Ken Stone & Peter Tuck
- 2 Jenny Kernbach & Sue Riddle
- 3 Lynne Cotton & Cynthia Hickey

### MONDAY JULY PAIRS

- 1 Genevieve Donnelly & Graham Stucley
- 2 Chris Barnwell & Stewart Kingsborough
- 3 Pam Bowman & Darrell Mitton

## 2023 Masterpoint Promotions

Jinny Fuss	Silver Life
Graham Stucley	National
Brian Lapsley	Bronze Regional
Nola Stone	Silver Local
Peter Tuck	Silver Local
Anita Hobbs	Silver Local
Shirley Chandler	Club
Sue Riddle	Silver Local

## Eight Ever, Nine Never - the Answers

1. Play the King, then finesse West, since East, a passed hand, has already shown 11 points and didn't open the bidding.
2. Play the Ace, then finesse East since he must have the trump Queen for his opening bid.
3. Play the King, then finesse West. East is known to have three more diamonds, so the respective chances of each player having the trump queen are  $8/13$  and  $5/13$  (where 13 is the total number of non-diamond cards in the defender's hands).
- 4(a) Play the King, then the Ace
- 4(b) A close decision - following the same calculation as used in 3., the respective chances are  $7/13$  and  $6/13$ , so the statistics marginally favour playing the King and then finessing.