

BRIDGE IN THE CITY INCORPORATED NEWSLETTER – JULY 2023

www.bridgeinthecity.net.au

Election Results

More than 50 people attended the 23rd June Special General Meeting, minutes of which are now on the website.

The elected office bearers for the remainder of this year are:

Patron	Sue Phillips		
President	David Anderson		
Vice President	Stewart Kingsborough		
Secretary	Leonie Shearing		
Treasurer	Darrell Mitton		
Committee – 2 year team	Pam Bowman	Dennis Reynolds	
Committee – 1 year term	Beverley Friling	Stuart Tuck	

Hand of the Month

A Friday afternoon special.

Board : 15	S♠ K954	Dir: S	Makeable Contracts					
	H♥ J62	Vul: N-S	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
	D♦ 65		N	-	-	4	3	-
	C♣ Q974		S	-	-	4	3	-
S♠ 6		S♠ JT7	E	5	6	-	-	2
H♥		H♥ A983	W	5	6	-	-	2
D♦ AKQJ97		D♦ T832						
C♣ AKT852		C♣ J3						
	S♠ AQ832							
6	H♥ KQT754							
17 6	D♦ 4							
11	C♣ 6							

What would you bid with the West cards after south's 1H opening? The ever optimistic Liz Jones bid 6D, making when partner produced some very useful cards. My choice would be 2NT, showing both minors, then raise partner's 3D bid to six, making seven on a heart lead. (With equal length partner should bid 3C.)

After all, where are your losers? Partner has shown more diamonds than clubs (with equal length partner should bid 3C), so you should be able to get at least one club ruff in dummy, establishing the suit.

The Law of Total Tricks

Competitive auctions are a real problem for newer players. Sometimes they bid too much, and sometimes they don't bid enough, particularly against their more experienced counterparts. The Law of Total Tricks, when used for those competitive auctions where each side has an eight card or longer fit, is a very useful guide in these situations.

The Law, simply stated, is that if your partnership and the opponents both have good trump fits, the total number of tricks available for both of your contracts equals the total number of trumps. As an example, if your partnership has a nine card heart fit, and the opponents have a ten card spade fit, then the sum of the number of tricks you can make in hearts, and the number of tricks the opponents can make in spades, equals 19.

Naturally this will not always provide a perfect answer, however extensive hand analysis has shown that the average deviation from the expected is only .4 of a trick.

Larry Cohen based the game he played with Marty Bergen on these principles, using pre-emptive jump raises whenever they had found a fit. You may have come across Bergen raises, which are really a form of celebration that you have a 9 card or longer trump fit (and want to keep the opponents out of the auction).

Bergen and Cohen also come up with some sensible adjustments, some of them as follows:

- Subtract a trick from the total if you have a holding in the opponent's suit which is worth a defensive trick, but is valueless if your side is declaring.
- Subtract a trick (or more) for misfitting hands.
- Add a trick for a double fit, particularly when you have no wasted cards.
- Add a trick for a seven card or longer suit.

Bergen Raises

I'm a firm believer in Bergen raises, where responder shows four+ cards support for opener's major suit opening. Knowing partner has four card support, rather than three, changes the assessment of a hand's potential entirely.

The responses I play, all showing four card support, are

- 2NT 15+
- 3C 6-9 high card points
- 3D a good 9 to 11
- 3M 3-6, will have a shortage or a fifth trump
- 3NT 12-14, no shortage
- 4C/4D 11-14, shortage in the bid suit.

Counting Your Winners

In his New York Times column Philip Alder mentioned that as dealer he picked up

♠ AJ9

♥ -

♦ AKQJ9

♣ KQ986

To give himself more bidding space he opened one diamond. To his surprise partner responded two clubs, both opponents passing. Alder then fulfilled a bridge playing fantasy by bidding seven clubs, all pass (partner did have the ace), for a flat board. Obviously seven clubs isn't the perfect call (5NT seeking details of partners trump honors is superior), however the real interest in the hand is the manner of assessment.

First of all, partner's 2C call denies a major of equal length, so the bid either shows a five card suit, or else, far less likely, partner has a 3-3-3-4 distribution.

Now for the number of tricks that we can expect to make. Players who count their losers, would be concerned about the possibility of losing a spade trick.

However, let's see what happens when we count our winners. If partner has a five card club suit to the Ace, and two or more hearts, then we can count our tricks as follows:

1 spade trick (the Ace)

5 diamond tricks

2 heart ruffs in hand

5 trump tricks (to which we will only follow for three rounds)

Which comes to 13 tricks!

No, I haven't used smoke and mirrors – it's just a different manner of counting the tricks for what, in this instance, is effectively a dummy reversal.

June Competition Winners

MONDAY JUNE PAIRS

- 1 Carmel & Norman Thompson
- 2 Genevieve Donnelly & Graham Stucley
- 3 Graham McLean & Dennis Miles

FRIDAY JUNE PAIRS

- 1 Susan Phillips & Graham Stucley
- 2 Chris Barnwell & Stewart Kingsborough
- 3 Terry Healey & Maureen Wilson

FRIDAY B GRADE JUNE PAIRS

- 1 Veronica McCaffrey & Maja Reed
- 2 Pam Bowman & Lois Glanfield
- 3 Ken Stone & Peter Tuck

Signals

At Bridge we spend a lot of time learning our bidding conventions but, sad to say, hardly any time on our defensive signals. Too many pairs don't play signals and, their scores suffer accordingly.

Defensive signals have been around since the days of whist, and can be as simple or as complicated as you wish. For the less experienced player it should be compulsory that they play some form of attitude signals, so they can encourage or discourage partner's lead, or ask for or deny a specific suit when discarding. This is usually done by playing a high card to encourage, or a low card to discourage.

Note: If you want to keep all your high cards when discarding, you can sometimes give partner the message by instead discouraging in the alternative suit.

Other common forms of signalling are as follows:

- High card for an even number, low card for an odd number. This signal is usually given when following to declarer's lead, and helps partner to determine declarer's actual distribution, and when to hold up in a No Trump contract.
- When returning a card that partner is going to ruff, a high card indicates a high outside entry, while a low card indicates that a lower suit lead is preferred.
- When making your first discard, a low even card calls for a low suit lead, a high even card indicates the higher other suit, while an odd card asks for the suit being discarded.

Bridge Humour by Eddie Kantar

The late Eddie Kantar was a top American Bridge player, an excellent Bridge teacher and writer, and also a very funny fellow. Here is a sample of his work,

Bridge is a great comfort in old age. It also helps you get there faster. One gets used to abuse. It's the waiting that is so trying.

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The difference between genius and stupidity at the bridge table is that genius has its limits.

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I'd like a review of the bidding with all of the original inflections. (George Kaufman)

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Learn from the mistake of others. You won't live long enough to make them all yourself. -Alfred Sheinwold.

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Your play was much better tonight and so were your excuses.

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We play forcing hesitations.

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If I did everything right, I wouldn't be playing with you.

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A lady is playing in her first duplicate hears an opponent say: "Alert". The lady says: "I am alert".

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A married couple are not speaking to each other after a horrible game and are driving home from a distant bridge tournament. They pass by a field where there are many donkeys. The husband breaks the silence by asking the wife: "Relations of yours"? "Yes" she says, "In-laws".

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Guy going out with this girl for some time and they play bridge regularly, but not much is happening romantically. Finally, she puts him in this God-awful slam and says: "If you make this contract, I'll sleep with you." He tries his hardest, but trumps don't break and a couple of finesses don't work and he winds up going down three! She says: "That's close enough".

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Student in class has xxx facing AQJ in dummy. She leads low and puts in the jack which holds. She plays the ace next. Teacher asks why she didn't take the finesse again? She says: "You told us that only one of two finesses work."

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P. Hal Sims a great expert of yesteryear had the reputation of never misguessing a queen in a two-way finesse position. He finds himself playing against two ladies missing a queen and finally announces that neither one of them has it. Sure enough the queen was on the floor.

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I am called over to a table by one of my students who tells me she only has 12 cards. Sure enough she is right. I look around and find the ♠A on the floor and give it to her. She was previously void in spades. She says to me: "Now you've gone and ruined my entire hand."

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Alvin Roth a very ethical player is defending 7NT, vulnerable, in a money rubber bridge game where the declarer reduces to a three card ending. Dummy has the Axx of spades and declarer the KJ10. The lead is in declarer's hand and he leads the SJ. Second hand has xxx and Roth Oxx. Second hand goes into an act trying to make declarer think he has the queen and finally plays low. Declarer, taken in by the hesitation, also plays low. Roth, holding the queen, also plays low allowing the jack to take the trick and the declarer to make 7NT. When Roth's partner asks him why he didn't take the SQ, Roth says: "Because I thought you had it!"

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Howard Shenken never made a hand in a Truscott column. They were not on such good terms. Ditto with Stayman and Goren. In the Goren columns, a 2C response to 1NT was never referred to as Stayman. It was always 'the two club convention'.

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David Bruce, Life Master #1, was on lead against a grand slam in a suit contract holding two aces and he knew the dummy had to be void in one of those suits. The dummy was Ozzie Jacoby, who always left the table the moment a card was led. David Bruce decided to lead his gum wrapper. When Jacoby saw something hit the table he put this dummy down and David Bruce saw which ace would cash.

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Hugh Ross is playing 7NT and the fellow to his right is dying to lead an ace. Hugh says to him: "I have some good news and some bad news for you. The good news is that I know you have an ace to lead, the bad news is that your partner is on lead." Partner leads the wrong suit and Hugh makes the contract.

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Billy Eisenberg tells me after we go over our system: "Our convention basket is overflowing, we are leaking conventions."

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Hear about the guy who led the 8 from a 98 doubleton because his teacher told him "eight ever, nine never?"

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Another thing to tell your partner after dummy comes down weaker than expected: "Where is the hand you held during the bidding?"

In a novice game declarer calls director over to the table and tells him he is playing a slam contract and he has won the opening lead and played the ace and ruffed a diamond, ruffed a heart and ruffed a diamond. The director, impressed, asks him why he has been called over. The declarer tells him that the contract is 6NT.

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Lady phones me and asks me if I can teach her mother and her friends in November. I tell her I can't until January. She says: "Never mind, they won't last that long."

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In a novice game the wife leads a low club and her husband alerts. They ask about the alert. He says "She is leading a singleton." "How do you know", one opponent asks. "Because she led it with her left hand. If it were from a doubleton, she would have led it with her right hand."

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Patrick Jourdain, a famous bridge player-teacher from Wales is called over to a table at one of his classes where a hand has just passed out, but 4th hand had 17 high card points. "So why did you pass?" asks Patrick. "Because you told us after three passes the bidding is over, so I had to."

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This lady, Charlotte, plays very slowly. She is asked to speed it up a bit. She says: "I'm sorry, but I can't think and play bridge at the same time."

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When your partner is playing even worse than usual you might say: "You know, you may not be the worst player in the world, but if that person should die...."

The Multi Two Diamonds

Bridge systems should be based on frequency. If you play a convention that hardly ever occurs (and is forgotten when it does) then it could well be appropriate to use the bid with a different meaning.

Weak twos in some form or other should be in every pair's repertoire, however multi twos, where an opening 2H bid shows 5+ hearts and 4+ other, and 2S shows 5+ spades with a 4+ card minor, each with less than opening values, also have their advantages. The 2NT opening showing both minors can also work to your advantage.

To get the benefit of all of these calls I use the following two level openings structure

- 2C – 20-22 balanced, or a 9 playing trick hand
- 2D – weak two in a major, or 23+ balanced
- 2H – 5+ hearts, 4+ other (5+ if vul), less than opening values
- 2S – 5+ spades, 4+ minor (5+ if vul), less than opening values
- 2NT – 5+/5+ in the minors, also less than opening values.

Responses to 2D

Two or three of a major is correctable, 2NT an inquiry asking which suit, and range. (3C = hearts upper range, 3D = spades, upper range, 3H & 3S natural).

Responses to 2H

2S is pass or correct, 2NT asks for opener's second suit, 3 of a minor to play.

Responses to 2S

2NT inquiry, 3 of a new suit to play.

Responses to 2NT

Three of a minor to play, three of a major natural, one round force, four of a minor preemptive.

Defending against the Multi Two Diamonds

Double shows values (14+), second double is takeout, 2NT and suit overcalls are natural.

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 102-725-070

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