

From the wheelhouse

Hi Ho Me Hearrrrties. Seas a bit choppy? Hands a bit rough? deck hands absent?

Yerrrr! Too many firrreside lubbers I say. I know a quite a few of you have been burning up fossils getting around the world others are in bed with a cough or two (commiserations).

I am of course referring to evening bridge which is languishing. We hope to see more of you as the serious end of the year nears. You daytime players are very much to the fore. Keep it up!!

As I write this, I am looking forward to meeting the 'freshers' just out of learner classes. A very warm welcome to you all:

Pamela Bryan
Ian Carpenter
Vicky & Richard Forgie
Robbie Green
Sue Harris
Steve Hodges
Margaret Johnson
Helena Judd
Jacqui Kaiser
Tony McGhie
Debra McKnight
Bill Millham
Jeremy Neild
Kathryn & Bob Rankin
Jo Rosier
Rob Williams

I hope you rise to the challenge of learning your new language and enjoy the cross-table battles that ensue. Most of all I hope that in time you enjoy the camaraderie across the whole club.

The club must give Alistair James a special thanks. He has managed a large group of learners with a sense of fun and anticipation for more. Well done!!

It was good to see a cross-section of graded players together at our recent 'restricted pairs' tournament and with a good number of visitors from around the region. Congratulations to all prize winners and I hope you Maxine are spending your very generous raffle winnings well. Thanks to all who contributed and took part in the day.

Special thanks to Lorraine -our guiding light-who had a rocky start to the day with a scramble for replacement players.

We now look forward to the inter-club teams tournament against Hawera and Wanganui on Aug 11. Bob will organise the make-up for this and you may wish to put yourself forward to play in your grade. Twenty four players in all required. Contact Bob Hurley.

Housie (Bingo?) continues as a fundraising event. The next call is on Sat. 20th. We were competing with the rugby final last month. There should be a big crowd this. Thanks to our team of regular in house organisers. Come along! Lunch and Punt!! Further details posted at the club.

Just a reminder to respect the 'reserved' nature of 15 of our car parks. These are contributing nicely to our income!

Ken Bateman has prompted and Peter Wiles is refining a plan to install solar panels to help keep down our power bills. We are close to being able to present options that I think the wider club might want to consider. We (committee) would look forward to any opinions regarding us spending a proportion of our reserve funds to save money in the future.

Onwards and upwards I say!! Best wishes for perfect bridge.

Martin Carryer
President

Tips and Conventions

Defending at bridge is the hardest part of the game. When defending try not to be too helpful to declarer.

An example: play the card you are known to hold:

	AJx	
Q10x		xxx
	K9xx	

Declarer leads low finessing the jack, then plays the ace. Make sure you play the queen (in tempo). Most likely declarer will now finesse the nine.

Many players discard from a bad suit, often playing several such cards. That only helps declarer. Try to avoid this if possible. If you start with three small in a suit and refrain from discarding any declarer will likely play you for any missing honours.

If declarer leads towards KQ10 in dummy play low in tempo holding the ace and when declarer returns to hand and leads again, play low again. Likely the ten will be finessed. If partner has the ace they must let the queen win so that declarer has to guess when leading towards the K10.

If declarer is leading towards AJ9 in dummy and you hold KQx, unless you need a quick trick, play low as declarer should finesse the nine. Note, if declarer has the ten you only ever have one trick in this suit.

Many players don't play count. Good defence is then impossible. There are situations where count is very important. If you can identify them, discuss with partner, and play count when those situations occur you will improve your results.

Bob Hurley

Club and Tournament Results

Congratulations to pairs and teams who have performed well in recent tournaments.

Marton Picnic Pairs

Garry Hodge/Tony Clear - 1st
Marilyn Miller/Julie Bunnell - 2nd
Malcolm Loudon/Simon Loudon - 3rd

North Island Teams

Wayne Burrows/Claire Miao/Bob Hurley/Russell Wilson - 5th

Easter Open Pairs

Jack James/Brett Glass - 6th

Levin Easter Multigrade

Michael Hardman/Hans van Bunnik - 5th

Wanganui Intermediate Pairs

Terry Young/Grant Elliott - 2nd
Cindy Lowndes/Alistair James - 3rd
Julie Bunnell/Allan Mudford - 6th

Paraparaumu Open Pairs

Lorraine Stachurski/Jack James - 2nd

Hastings Open Teams

Jack James/Wayne Burrows/Andrew Poulgrain/George Masters - 2nd

PN Junior Pairs

Prue Drake/Maree Roberts - 1st
Suzanne Carpenter/John Redmayne - 3rd

PN Intermediate Pairs

Maureen Watts/Heather Simpson - 2nd
Betty Mclaughlin/Dianne Hunter - 4th

Dannevirke Open Pairs

Wayne Burrows/George Masters - 1st
Anita Thirtle/George Maclaughlan - 2nd
Anne Gordon/Bob Hurley - 3rd
Morgan Booker/Zheng Zhang - 6th

Victoria Multigrade Pairs

Steve Baron/Arthur Bennett - 4th

Masterton Junior Pairs

Kevin Conley/Theo Pippas - 1st

Wellington Congress Provincial Teams

Jan Whyte/Ken Bateman/Liz Burrows/Anne Gordon - 6th

Otaki Multigrade Pairs

Kevin Conley/Theo Pippas - 4th
Julie Bunnell/Michael Hardman - 5th

Levin Junior Pairs

Netty Keen/Janet Rogerson - 2nd

Levin Intermediate Pairs

Michael Hardman/Hans van Bunnik - 3rd
Cindy Lowndes/Alistair James - 4th
Terry Young/Grant Elliott - 5th

Dannevirke Intermediate Pairs

Cindy Lowndes/Alistair James - 4th

Here are some recent new entrants into the 70% club from our sessions:

Netty Keen/Wayne Stewart - 72.22%
Marilyn Miller/Tony Clear - 70.71%
Alan Doddridge/Allan Mudford - 70.63%

Gayle Leader


With a little help from my friends

You are part way through playing a hand and there are no mishaps so far. You feel as if you are in the right contract and are going to make it comfortably but with no overtricks. Unfortunately, all the other pairs playing your way are likely to be in a similar position, and, worse, this is match point pairs so you need to find a way to wring out an extra trick to get more than the standard 50%. But you can't see any way to do this. What is the answer? Well, sometimes the only choice is to let the opponents in to see if they can help.

If you are a novice then this may seem pretty strange. Surely, the idea is to make as many tricks as possible and losing the lead will just reduce your number of tricks by one? Also, unless you have very generous opponents they will just be trying to thwart you rather than help. That is true, but there are two factors that can come into play.

First, the opponents may have a shortage of options. Like you, they can only see two hands so could inadvertently make a poor lead that gives you an extra trick. Even if they don't make a mistake, they may have no choice but to help you out. Remember, the last person to play to a trick always has a slight but definite advantage. If the opponents are on lead then declarer or dummy is going to be that lucky last player.

I was in this position during a hand that I played in a Monday afternoon session at the club. I could see no alternative strategy to giving the opponents the lead, hoping they could help me out. Sitting East these are the two hands I can see when dummy goes down:

♠ A 6 5 ♥ A K 7 4 ♦ 6 5 2 ♣ K Q J		♠ 10 7 4 ♥ J 8 ♦ A Q J 9 3 ♣ 10 8 2
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With neither side vulnerable, here is the bidding.

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♣	Pass	1 NT	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
3 NT	All pass		

West's opener shows 16+ points any shape and her second bid is asking for a four-card major to which I have given a negative response.

South leads a low heart which runs around to my jack. With this bonus trick I could make eleven tricks if the diamonds behave. I start by leading up to the clubs in dummy. This is ducked so I take my first diamond finesse which succeeds. I lead a second club into dummy which South takes and leads back a third round of the suit to my

♣J with North following suit. The diamond finesse works again which is good news, but South shows out which means I cannot now run the suit.

It is time to assess the situation. I already have five tricks: one heart, two diamonds, two clubs. Here are the remnants of the EW cards:

♠ A 6 5 ♥ A K 7 ♦ 6 ♣ -		♠ 10 7 4 ♥ 8 ♦ A 9 3 ♣ -
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So, with the extra four top tricks I can cash I have a definite nine tricks with not much chance of a tenth. I could set up an extra diamond since North now only has two cards left in the suit but I would have no way of reaching it. Spades are going to give me one trick only and I can see no way of making more than two more hearts. My only recourse is to lose a trick and hope that the opponents can help so I play a low spade from each hand.

South gratefully accepts the trick and cashes the last club. Surprisingly, as it turns out, this is a mistake as we shall see. I can safely pitch a heart from dummy and a diamond from hand but North is coming under pressure. South continues with another heart. Nothing much to do now but for me to cash out and see what happens. When I play ♥K from dummy I realize that North is squirming. I later see what the problem is. She has the following cards left:

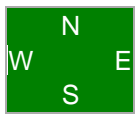
♠ K J
♥ -
♦ K T
♣ -

She has the unenviable choice of removing the protection for ♠K or ♦K with the aces of both suits still out. She chooses to pitch ♦T so I now win ♠A in dummy and return to the two diamonds left in my hand for ten tricks.

This may look like a squeeze but isn't that clever. In a squeeze situation, one or both opponents have no option but to hand declarer an extra trick. In this case, North could have thrown ♠K with impunity since her partner has the protected ♠Q. So, it is a 'pseudo-squeeze' or if a defender may have forgotten what cards have gone then it is a 'memory squeeze'. Computer systems don't get fooled by memory squeezes since they never forget what cards have been played, but being human, we are more prone to such misapprehensions. If I hadn't conceded a spade trick earlier and South hadn't cashed the last club, North would have still had extra spades when I played the hearts and could have thrown one away with no problem.

The full deal is shown on the next page.

West Deals	♠ K J 9 3		
None Vul	♥ 5 2		
	♦ K 10 8 7		
	♣ 6 4 3		
	♠ A 6 5	♠ 10 7 4	
	♥ A K 7 4	♥ J 8	
	♦ 6 5 2	♦ A Q J 9 3	
	♣ K Q J	♣ 10 8 2	
	♠ Q 8 2		
	♥ Q 10 9 6 3		
	♦ 4		
	♣ A 9 7 5		



The all-seeing computer notes that East can always make an overtrick without all this palaver by finessing with ♦9. Fortunately for us, all the other EWs were human, and no one obviously spotted that clever trick.

Ray Kemp

Learning by doing

Recently, I played one of BBO's weekly 'instant tournaments' and found it educational to see how another player succeeded in a contract in which I went down. The contract is six diamonds by South and here are the four hands.

	♠ A		
	♥ A 8 4		
	♦ A Q J 8 6 3		
	♣ J 5 2		
♠ J 10 6 4 3 2		♠ 9 8 5	
♥ K 6		♥ J 10 9 7 5 2	
♦ 7 5		♦ 4	
♣ Q 9 8		♣ A 6 3	
	♠ K Q 7		
	♥ Q 3		
	♦ K 10 9 2		
	♣ K 10 7 4		



If you are not familiar with playing against the BBO robots, they are fairly consistent without being outstanding.

The lead is ♠J and looking at dummy I decide I have been a little optimistic in this bidding. There is no problem with the trump suit but there is a possible heart loser and maybe two club losers. To be honest I played rather like a robot myself, taking out trumps, throwing away the two heart losers from dummy on the king, queen of spades before deciding what to do with the club suit. I imagined there were various combinations that would allow me to avoid two losers in clubs. Well, there could be, but not as many as you might think. As you can see from the deal as it stands, the defence can always take two tricks in the suit. When I led a low club from dummy East came up with the ace and played another club. I optimistically inserted ♣T which lost to ♣Q.

One of the nice features of BBO instant tournaments is that not only can you see other folk's contracts and results

for each hand but you can also actually examine their bidding and follow through their play card by card. I noted that several other players had got to this slam, most going down but a couple had made. I was curious to see how, so followed through the play of one of them.

After the spade lead one declarer had taken out trumps but instead of getting rid of the heart losers he had immediately played on clubs, leading a low club from dummy. As when I played the contract, East rose with ♣A and led another club. Instead of taking the finesse declarer tried a different approach of taking the king. Presumably, he believed that even robots wouldn't gift declarer an unlikely contract by leading away from ♣Q. He then led ♠K, pitching the last club from dummy and then ruffed a club in dummy which set up the suit. Returning to hand with a trump, he could throw one heart on his winning club and the other one on ♠Q.

So, you might call declarer lucky that the clubs split and that East came up with the ace but, I guess, as Gary Player reportedly said about golf, "the more I play the luckier I get". So, what did I learn from watching this other player? I had been too keen to throw away heart losers early on. The opposition had not yet played the suit so I didn't have to be so eager. I was going to have to play clubs later anyway so, like this other guy, I should have tackled that suit first and retained my option of how to use the excess spade winners. Generally, one should check whether there is more than one way to play a contract and choose the way that allows one to switch tactics if the first method doesn't work out. To put it simply: "always look out for plan B".

So I maintain that learning by doing is good, but then following this by seeing someone playing the contract better is even more effective.

On this topic, I wonder how many of you took up my tip of following Gavin Wolpert's bridge hand challenges? The hands he sets up are very informative and there are twenty-two of them now. You start by attempting to play the hand, given the initial bidding and contract. If you fail then there is no penalty, you can just try again as many times as you like. If you eventually give up then just follow Wolpert's accompanying video which goes into detail on what your thought processes should be and how you might play the contract better. None of the hands so far involve any fancy play. It is just a matter of planning carefully and taking tricks in the right order. They are all hands that he has actually come across in tournaments so there is no trickery involved. Here is the web link again:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQb1KVgEEIs>

If you do try them out, let me know how you get on (R.Kemp@xtra.co.nz)

Ray Kemp

You must be joking

Welcome to all the novice players who have surmounted the first hurdle to becoming bridge grand masters. Your introductory classes will have given you plenty of tips of what to do when playing this intricate game. Here are a few examples of things you might *avoid* doing. These incidents are all taken from 'real' life.

The first story is related by a famous bridge player called John Gerber. He was teaching a class for learners using spoken rather than written bids. As he recounts it, he was playing with his star novice pupil and called out 1 no trump. His partner, perhaps rather overwhelmed playing with such a distinguished partner responded:

2 no spades!

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 pass."

Playing 4 card majors with the distinguished player, Oswald Jacoby, his partner raised Jacoby's one spade bid to 3 spades. Jacoby then bid 4 spades. During play his partner proudly put down the ace, king and queen of spades. Jacoby took out his watch and said "I'll give you 15 seconds to put down the 4th spade."

As an afterthought to that last story – always check whether your new partner plays four or five card major suit openers!

Ray Kemp