

Summer Festival of Bridge

Wednesday 14 - Sunday 25 January 2026

Daily Bulletin



Thursday 15th January 2026

Editor: Lauren Travis — notbulletin@gmail.com / 0402 614 301

Bulletin 1

Congratulations to the winners of the Rookie All-Rounder Matchpoint Pairs, Lisa Towning and Sue West, and the Novice All-Rounder Matchpoint Pairs, David Melzer and Glenn Foard.

It's fantastic to see new players attending their first Summer Festival, hopefully having a great time and learning some new bridge tactics.

Damon Flicker's Celebrity Speaker talk was well-attended by the Rookie and Novice players — keep an eye out for Will Jenner-O'Shea and Laura Ginnan's talks before play today and tomorrow.



Today's Celebrity Speaker

Will Jenner-O'Shea

Competitive Bidding

A fresh new approach to When to Compete, and When to Defend. Which contracts should you aim to PLAY and when should you push the opponents out of their contract. Discussion about which cards are better for playing and better for defending.

9:00-9:30am at the Rex Hotel.
Free for Rookie All-Rounder and Novice All-Rounder players.
\$5 for all other attendees



Top left: Damon had the whole room engaged this morning.

Left: Practice hands after play finished.

Today's Program

Thursday 15th January

National Women's Teams Qualifying

9.45am – 6.30pm, 4 x 14-board rounds

National Seniors' Teams Qualifying

9.45am – 6.30pm, 3 x 20-board rounds

National Rookie (U20 MP) All-Rounder

IMP Swiss Pairs

9.00am – 9.30am *Celebrity Speaker Talk (optional)*,
10.00am – 5.00pm *Competitive Game*, 5.00pm –
6.00pm *Practice Hands (optional)*

National Novice (U100 MP) All-Rounder

IMP Swiss Pairs

9.00am – 9.30am *Celebrity Speaker Talk (optional)*,
10.00am – 5.00pm *Competitive Game*, 5.00pm –
6.00pm *Practice Hands (optional)*

Chris Diment Matchpoint Swiss Pairs

9.45am – 6.00pm, 4 x 14-board rounds

Important Note for iPhone Users of the MyABF App

The MyABF phone app can receive notifications of your match results and next round draws. This will be available for all Summer Festival events. There are separate Apple and Android Apps which can be downloaded from the respective App stores. Simply log in with your MyABF login details and you should receive these notifications.

Recently there has been a technical problem with the Apple App. It is now resolved but some users may initially still not receive notifications.

If your iPhone App does not appear to be working you may need to log out and log back in (using your MyABF login details). That should resolve things. It should not be necessary to uninstall and reinstall the whole App.

The Android App is not affected.

If you are still having problems check the broader guide to the Apps and the trouble shooting section within it. That can be found [here](#).

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Results

National Rookie All-Rounder Matchpoint Pairs

1 st	Lisa Towning – Sue West	106.98%
2 nd	Jen Saul – Adrienne Morey	105.27%
3 rd	Sharon Woodard – Robert Longair	102.64%
4 th	Sue Wallace – Gill Homan	101.73%
5 th	Ingrid Klein – Leonie Katekar	99.03%

National Novice All-Rounder Matchpoint Pairs

1 st	David Melzer – Glenn Foard	126.07%
2 nd	Sally Macallan – Brenda Templeton	123.34%
3 rd	Paul Freeman – Neville Hind	120.44%
4 th	Jeremy Lin – Alexandra Mills	114.44%
5 th	Belinda Moss – Jenny Bell	112.00%

National Women's Teams (after 3 of 9 rounds)

1 st	Smyth	59.56 VP
2 nd	Mott	55.60 VP
3 rd	Tobin	51.50 VP
4 th	Mayo	46.54 VP
5 th	Collett	46.20 VP

National Seniors' Teams (after 3 of 9 rounds)

1 st	Smolanko	53.11 VP
2 nd	Kozakos	47.24 VP
3 rd	Ewart	42.63 VP
4 th	Depasquale	40.46 VP
5 th	Buchen	40.26 VP

Chris Diment Matchpoint Swiss Pairs (after 4 of 8 rounds)

=1 st	Nick Jacob – Damon Flicker	61.77 VP
=1 st	Elizabeth Zeller – Alison Dawson	61.77 VP
3 rd	Eric Lippey – Kerry Boytell	58.17 VP
4 th	Keiran Crowe-Mai – Chris Mulley	57.34 VP
5 th	Dan Danton – Warren Smith	55.97 VP
6 th	Jack James – Jeremy Fraser-Hoskin	54.93 VP
7 th	Matthew Vadas – George Fleischer	52.01 VP
8 th	Tom Kiss – William Zhang	51.63 VP
9 th	Steve Geddes – Will Jenner-O'Shea	51.31 VP
10 th	Simon Rose – Barry Rawicki	50.96 VP



UPDATE

ARE YOU AND YOUR CLUB USING MY ABF?

Over 32,000 players now appear in My ABF and over 150 clubs are using it to manage their activities.

Come along to hear an update from Julian Foster on the latest developments and the future Masterpoint Centre integration.

During 2026 the Masterpoint Centre will be joining My ABF. That means there will be changes that will impact all clubs and all players. There will obviously be lots of communication during the year – but this is your chance to get an early indication of what will be happening.

**Sunday 18th January
8.30am – 9.15am**

Location: Main playing area, Rex Hotel

- Latest My ABF developments
- Masterpoint Centre Integration
- Questions

If you can't attend in person more information can be found here:

<https://www.abf.com.au/member-services/my-abf-resources/>

ABF Youth Awards

The ABF Youth Awards celebrate excellence, commitment, sportsmanship and contribution in Australian youth bridge. There are four major awards presented each year at the Australian Youth Bridge Championships:

- Andrew Reiner Trophy
- Helman-Klinger Achievement Award
- Helman-Klinger Masterpoint Award
- Hills-Hurley Trophy

Andrew Reiner Trophy: George Bartley and Bertie Morgan

The Andrew Reiner Trophy is granted to the best performed pair in the primary target international event, taking account of performance in the event itself, commitment and preparation and contribution to team success.



George Bartley and Bertie Morgan are deserving recipients of this award in 2025. Both are experienced Australian representatives, having played on Under 21 teams before moving up to the Under 26 category in 2024. George and Bertie had little time to prepare as a partnership, with the composition of the team changing just a few months before the World Championships in Italy. Despite this, they recorded the Under 26 team's most consistent results, especially against strong opposition. Both players also made an important contribution to the team's positive atmosphere throughout the event.

Helman-Klinger Achievement Award: Heath Watkins

This award is presented each year to the Australian Youth Bridge Player whose ability, achievements, sportsmanship, attitude, contribution and commitment during the calendar year are most deserving.



Heath has shown exceptional development and contribution throughout the year. He advanced quickly to become one of Australia's leading youth competitors. Heath won the 2025 youth team trials and represented Australia for the first time at the World Youth Championships in Italy. With his partner Matt, he finished 8th in the Victorian Festival of Bridge Open Pairs; he and Kate Macdonald reached the quarter-finals of the SNOT Open Teams Plate; and he consistently achieved strong results at Victorian congresses.

You would have seen Heath at almost every national event on the calendar in 2025. He practices hard, analyses boards, and works to improve his game. Additionally, Heath has put in the effort to play with a number of partners and is eager to play with and learn from more experienced players.

Heath is known for his positive table manner, ethical play and being enjoyable to partner or oppose. He regularly attends Victorian youth nights and supports and encourages less experienced youth players.

Helman-Klinger Masterpoint Award: Heath Watkins

This award is awarded to the Australian Youth Player who earns the most masterpoints in the calendar year in question.

Heath Watkins won the Helman-Klinger Masterpoint Award with 196.53 MPs in 2025. While Kate Macdonald earned 199.25 MPs, she was ineligible as she has won the award in a previous year. Special mentions to Kate Macdonald for winning the Life Master McCutcheon, Alex Goss for taking out the Bronze National Master McCutcheon, Lauren Morgan for 2nd place in the National Master category, Anne Davey for 3rd place in the Bronze State Master category, and Duncan Lai for 2nd in the State Master behind Heath in 1st.

Hills-Hurley Trophy: Kate Macdonald and Zac Ross

This trophy, donated by Richard Hills and Steve Hurley, is to encourage talented young bridge players in forming long-standing partnerships and reward successful pairs which have developed a well-organised partnership to harness their full potential.

In 2021 Zac and Kate were both very new to bridge, and they looked across the table at the empty bridge club that was Qld youth nights, and realised their destiny must lay ahead together. They quickly took to club play and formed a partnership for the ANC that year.

It was then that the competitive bridge bug really bit them, and they went from strength to strength playing in congresses, winning the gold coast novice pairs in 2023, and playing ANCs and youth weeks. They brought an enthusiastic and supportive attitude to their play together, along with their questionable assortment of matching Hawaiian shirts and KFC bucket headwear.

At the 2025 youth week selection trials they jumped like Mario over each collapsing ledge and were eventually rewarded with their first taste of international play as a pair. Their partnership has shown how invaluable it is to stay positive, patient, and persistent whether results are good or bad.

They have each put significant work into forming new youth partnerships recently, and both partnerships have prospered early on, in no small part due to the same traits that Kate and Zac learnt and developed together.



The highly anticipated Cliff Wake Challenge featured the Youth Teams winners (Bertie Morgan, Paddy Taylor, Remco Spencer and Zac Ross) taking on the Cliff Wake All-Stars (Sebastian Yuen, Christy Geromboux, Ella and Nick Jacob). The Cliff Wake All-Stars won 8-0 (BAM scoring).



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Stories of Stephen Burgess

Phil Gue

When Stephen Burgess died on January 3rd I lost a good friend, and my most recent (long term, hopefully) bridge partner. Thoughtless bastard!

Without a doubt, he was one of the finest bridge players to represent Australia. You can argue who the other 2 or 3 were, but, in my mind, he was number one.

You can get his tournament record from the ABF website, but I want to give you some stories about him – all true, so you can see what a generous and funny guy he was, at and away from the table.

He came to Australia from New Zealand in 1981, searching for fame and fortune, like most of our top players in the 1980's and onwards.

He soon was playing with Paul Marston and they went on to be the most successful partnership of the 80s, both Nationally and Internationally.

Over the forty plus years that followed, he developed some long-term partnerships, Irwin Otvosi in the 90s, and in later years Gabi Lorentz, as well as shorter term partnerships, with great success, such as Bobby Richman, Zolly Nagy, and others.

However, his favourite partnership was with Perth's Brian O'Hara. I'm not sure if they won anything, but they certainly made many friends at the table, and away, and were very generous, especially with the Chardonnay. When Brian died, Stephen was furious. I know the feeling.

One of my earliest memories was watching Stephen and Irwin play in the Butler in Adelaide. After a few hands, one poor result occurred when Irwin failed to push on to game, making easily. Nothing was said, but Stephen opened the next hand 3NT. When his LHO was waiting for Irwin to alert, Stephen said "Irwin, you have to alert and explain that bid". Asked what it meant, Irwin said "He's really pissed off with me for the last hand". Stephen made it easily.

Stephen was well known for being a difficult partner! However, Irwin had his moments too.

They were playing against a couple of ladies in a team match and had finished early, as usual, when Irwin got up to get a coffee. One of the opponents turned to Stephen and said, "what a dreadful person, I wouldn't play with him if you paid me \$50K". Stephen's response – "I don't". Rumour had it he was on a \$100K/year contract.

Whilst he was difficult to play with, he was always polite, and funny, to his opponents.

Another Irwin story. I was playing with Nigel Rosendorff in the Butler in Melbourne and we played Stephen and Irwin. Irwin opened and Stephen showed his spades. Soon Irwin was asking for aces and Stephen showed 3 and Irwin bid 7♠. Nigel doubled this very quickly, leaving me on lead. Obviously a Lightner double, but all the vibes suggested Nigel had a definite trump trick. I led my 4-card suit and dummy went down, aceless. Stephen said one off and we put our cards away. Irwin started to say "But you showed me 3 aces", Stephen proceeded to throw his 3 aces, one at a time, the ♣A, then ♦A, then ♥A, on to the table, and asked Irwin how many aces did he have.

Stephen did tell me about his favourite hand. It occurred whilst he was "dating" Margaret, his first wife, before coming to Australia, and they were playing together. This was the hand and bidding.

Margaret (North) Dealer

♠ x
♥ AQJxxxx
♦ x
♣ xxxx

Stephen (South)

♠ xxxxx
♥ x
♦ AKQJxx
♣ x

West	Margaret	East	Stephen
	3♥	Pass	Pass
X	Pass	Pass	4♦
X	4♥	X	4♠
X	5♣	X	5♦
X	5♥	X	7♥!
X	Pass	Pass	XX!!!



East, after commenting that “you’ve bid everything” and, remembering that a trump lead is the recommended lead against a grand, led the ♥10. With Kx onside, Margaret drew trumps and enjoyed dummy’s diamonds for 13 tricks. She did add after, she should have thrown all dummy’s top diamonds on the trumps! However, they still married, and the rest is history.

Paul Marston reported the hand with a title like “Star-crossed lovers, and the retribution re-double”.

Thank you, Stephen, for making my life so much better for knowing you, and I would like to encourage all those reading this to give the editor a “Stephen story” to publish over the Summer Festival, to enrich our lives even further.

Please Be Considerate

- ♥ Be polite to your partner, other competitors and tournament officials
- ♥ Greet your opponents as they arrive at the table
- ♥ Introduce yourself to people you don’t know
- ♥ Be on time
- ♥ Thank your opponents at the end of the round/match
- ♥ Explain your system clearly and simply, if asked
- ♥ Acknowledge good play by your opponents
- ♥ Don’t discuss hands until the break
- ♥ Be understanding of newer players
- ♥ Respect our directors
- ♥ Report poor behaviour to the Recorder

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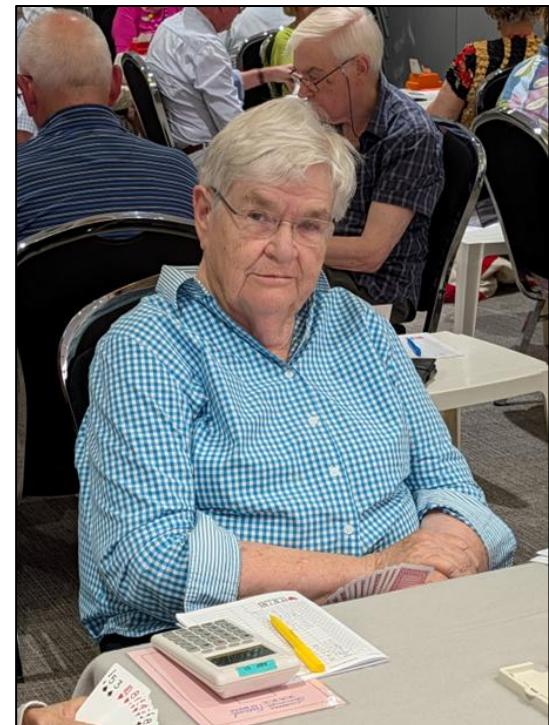
National Seniors' Teams – Round 1

As I waited before play in the Seniors' room, I was approached by a few comedians who suggested I perhaps didn't belong. Despite being less than halfway to seniors eligibility, I chose to begin my day with the most experienced field available. Arjuna de Livera, Andy Braithwaite, Julia Hoffman and Chis Quail were more than welcoming and provided plenty of entertainment.

On board 9, I was reminded of a Kate McCallum rule: don't pass their 1NT opening with a singleton if you can scrape up a bid. (I assume this also applies with a void.)

Board 9	♠ J843
Dealer N	♥ K864
Vul EW	♦ 107
	♣ J97
♠ Q10972	♠ --
♥ 7	♥ A952
♦ A8643	♦ QJ2
♣ K6	♣ Q108432
	♠ AK65
	♥ QJ103
	♦ K95
	♣ A5

West	North	East	South
de Livera	Quail	Braithwaite	Hoffman
	Pass	Pass	1NT (14-17)
All Pass			



Julia Hoffman

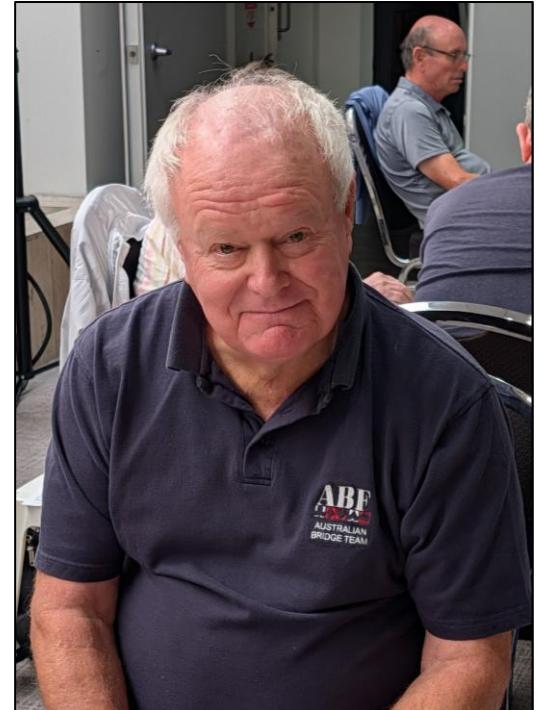
Clearly, neither Arjuna nor Andy subscribes to Kate's philosophy, as they both passed over Julia Hoffman's 1NT. In my experience, partner always manages to lead your shortage which is usually the opponents' suit, and it's all downhill from there.

Sure enough, Arjuna led the ♠10, won by dummy's Jack. It was already game over for the defenders—Julia Hoffman set to work knocking out the ♥A. Andy switched a club to the ♣A, with Arjuna neatly unblocking his King, but Julia banked her seven tricks.

Deep Finesse says East-West can make 9 tricks in either minor – a win for Kate's rule – although I am not suggesting I know how Andy could have shown clubs over 1NT.

Andy Braithwaite found a nice play on board 12 to bring home 3NT:

Board 12	♠ A103		
Dealer W	♥ 76		
Vul NS	♦ QJ9865		
	♣ 76		
♠ 87	♠ Q62		
♥ Q10	♥ K84		
♦ K1042	♦ A73		
♣ 108543	♣ AKQJ		
	♠ KJ954		
	♥ AJ9532		
	♦ --		
	♣ 92		
West	North	East	South
de Livera	Quail	Braithwaite	Hoffman
Pass	Pass	1♣	2♣ (majors)
3♣	Pass	3NT	All Pass



Andy Braithwaite

After Julia showed both majors, Andy's 3NT was slightly risky with fairly dodgy stoppers, but I would do the same. Naturally, Julia led her longer major and the ♥5 was won on the table with the ten. Andy only had eight tricks: one heart, two diamonds and five clubs. Requiring one more trick, he immediately exited the ♥Q to Julia's ace. Having not had any opportunity to discard or signal, Julia was flying blind and didn't find the spade switch to defeat the contract. The power of the closed hand was worth 7 IMPs on this occasion.

Chris and Julia applied the KISS principle as they reached slam on this deal:

Board 17	♠ KQ10632
Dealer N	♥ AQJ
Vul Nil	♦ Q76
	♣ 2
♠ J	♠ 875
♥ 84	♥ K953
♦ J92	♦ 8543
♣ K1087654	♣ 93
	♠ A94
	♥ 10762
	♦ AK10
	♣ AQJ



Chris Quail

West	North	East	South
de Livera	Quail	Braithwaite	Hoffman
	1♠	Pass	2♣ *
Pass	2♦ *	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣ *	Pass	4♦ *
Pass	4♥ *	Pass	4NT *
Pass	5♠ *	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

Julia's 2♣ was three-way: limit raise or better with three spades, game forcing with clubs, or a balanced game force. Chris showed a non-minimum hand with 2♦, then Julia set spades and suggested slam interest by bidding 3♠. After three cues showing 1st or 2nd round control, it was a matter of checking for keycards then bidding the cold slam.

The bidding on board 20 demonstrated the destructive power of preempts – and how sometimes bidding misunderstandings can work in your favour.

Board 20	♠ Q10732
Dealer W	♥ Q4
Vul All	♦ A2
	♣ AJ32
♠ 95	♠ KJ6
♥ 9863	♥ 1052
♦ 65	♦ KQJ9875
♣ 98654	♣ --
	♠ A84
	♥ AKJ7
	♦ 104
	♣ KQ107

West	North	East	South
de Livera	Quail	Braithwaite	Hoffman
Pass	1♠	3♦	X
Pass	4♣	Pass	4NT
All Pass			

Chris seemed unsure as he passed 4NT, and it's clear from the South hand that Julia was looking for slam in clubs. However, with the 5-0 break, 6♣ is doomed so disappointment turned to relief as 4NT made with 10 top tricks. Don't let anyone tell you bridge isn't about luck!

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**BREAKING GROUND.
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Chris Diment Matchpoint Swiss Pairs – Round 2

There's no rest for the wicked. In the Seniors' lunch break I popped in to kibitz a few boards of the Chris Diment Matchpoint Swiss Pairs. Last year's champions, Jenna Gibbons and Julian Foster, were taking on Chris Mulley and Keiran Crowe-Mai. They told me I'd already missed all the action but I'm not so sure.

Some of the decisions they made aren't fit for inclusion in the bulletin, but hopefully you'll enjoy Chris and Keiran's defence to 3NT on board 17:

Board 17	♠ K94
Dealer N	♥ KJ109
Vul Nil	♦ 84
	♣ J842
♠ A765	♠ Q83
♥ --	♥ 87642
♦ AQJ10976	♦ 2
♣ A7	♣ KQ65
	♠ J102
	♥ AQ53
	♦ K53
	♣ 1093

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10.00am start each day.
5.30pm finish on
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West	North	East	South
Foster	Crowe-Mai	Gibbons	Mulley
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Chris Mulley made a nice, passive lead of the ♠J which was ducked in dummy and won by Keiran's ♠K. Seeing dummy's heart void, Keiran knew a heart switch was in order, but he wanted to let his partner know unambiguously that hearts should be continued. With that in mind, he laid down the King at trick 2, followed by the Jack and two more hearts. After Jenna won the spade continuation, she took a diamond finesse then claimed one off.

Keiran avoided disaster on board 28. Holding ♠J ♥A10983 ♦K952 ♣962 at all vul, he heard 1♣ on his right and wisely chose to pass rather than making a very thin 2♥ overcall. When Jenna responded 2♥ he realised he'd dodged a fairly expensive bullet. As it happens, the opponents got to 4♣ which just made – and apparently they can take at least 10 tricks in hearts too!

National Seniors' Teams – Round 2

When Michael Courtney is at your table you can usually expect some interesting action. For round 2 of the National Seniors' Teams, I kibitzed Michael and Chris Depasquale taking on Terry Brown and Ian Thomson.

Terry started proceedings with a well-judged balancing bid:

Board 7	♠ KQ107
Dealer S	♥ 2
Vul All	♦ Q10632
	♣ 953
♠ 85	♠ AJ9632
♥ J1096	♥ KQ3
♦ KJ4	♦ 9
♣ AKJ7	♣ 1084
	♠ 4
	♥ A8754
	♦ A875
	♣ Q62

West	North	East	South
Thomson	Depasquale	Brown	Courtney
			1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	2♠	All Pass



Terry Brown

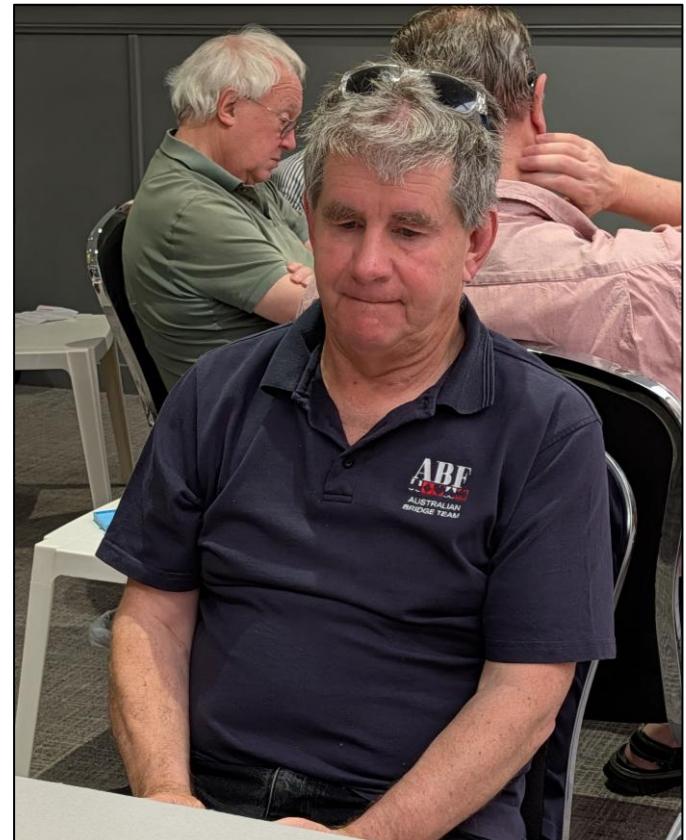
The East hand looked great until Chris bid spades. After Michael's slightly unusual 1NT rebid was passed around to him, Terry backed in with 2♠, now knowing they wouldn't be breaking but not wanting to sell out to 1NT.

Michael led a low club and Ian provided one more spade than Terry might have expected. The club was won with the Ace in dummy, followed by a spade to the nine and a diamond, which Michael won with the Ace. He continued another club to the King

and Terry cashed the ♦K pitching his low club then played another spade up to the Queen and Ace. He conceded one heart and two spades to make nine tricks.

If you asked me my ideal grand slam, it's one where I can claim on the lead, which Terry had the pleasure of doing on board 14.

Board 14	♠ J10743		
Dealer E	♥ 1042		
Vul Nil	♦ Q9		
	♣ 1043		
♠ KQ	♠ A85		
♥ A6	♥ KQ73		
♦ AJ4	♦ 853		
♣ KJ8752	♣ AQ6		
	♠ 962		
	♥ J985		
	♦ K10762		
	♣ 9		
West	North	East	South
Thomson	Depasquale	Brown	Courtney
		1NT	Pass
2♠ *	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♣ *	Pass	4NT *	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♣	Pass
7NT	All Pass		



Ian Thomson

2♠ was a transfer to clubs then 4♣ asked for keycards. Having found two and the queen, Ian confirmed all the keycards then realised he could bid 7NT even without Terry's cooperation.

Three spades, three hearts, one diamond and six clubs makes 13 top tricks. Only six pairs in the field were in grand – three in 7♣ and three in 7NT – and four of those teams were opposing each other so the board was essentially flat.

I'm not sure how many people would make the same call as Chris Depasquale on the following deal, but it worked brilliantly:

Board 4	♠ QJ852
Dealer W	♥ KJ743
Vul All	♦ 10
	♣ KQ
♠ 743	♠ A10
♥ 1096	♥ AQ85
♦ QJ64	♦ K9872
♣ 876	♣ A10
	♠ K96
	♥ 2
	♦ A53
	♣ J95432

West	North	East	South
Thomson	Depasquale	Brown	Courtney
Pass	1♠	X	2♠
Pass	4♣	All Pass	

After Terry's double and a simple raise from Michael, I wasn't expecting to see 4♣ come out of Chris' bidding box. He knew better than me on this one, though – 4♣ is unbeatable.

Terry found a logical trump lead – ♣A followed by another spade, won in dummy. Chris immediately started working on the clubs, playing one up to his King and Terry's Ace. Terry exited ♦K to knock out dummy's entry but it was all in vain – a club to the Queen was followed by a spade to the 9, and the clubs provided four discards for those poorly-placed hearts. +620 was a flat board, but I wonder whether the auction was duplicated at the other table.



Chris Depasquale



The combined Novice and Rookie All-Rounder Matchpoint Pairs fields

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Gold Point

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Two days of ABF gold point events conducted by the Queensland Bridge Association under licence to the ABF.



RealBridge

Saturday 7th February: TBIB Matchpoint Swiss Pairs

Sunday 8th February: TBIB Cross-Imp Swiss Pairs

Both Days:  Start 9 am AEST (Queensland Time)

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Tournament Organiser: Kim Ellaway 0412 064 903

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National Women's Teams – Round 4

This table was loaded with 2025 Aussie representatives: Sue Lusk and Therese Demarco from the Women's team, and Liz Sylvester who played in the Mixed with Peter Gill – although she traded him in for Sachiko Cathcart for this event due to his ineligibility.

This match demonstrated some very different approaches to pre-empting. What would you do on each of these hands?

Hand 1

♠ AJ8
♥ Q9742
♦ J109
♣ Q4

Favourable vulnerability, RHO deals and passes.

Hand 2

♠ KJ98754
♥ K97
♦ 987
♣ --

Nil vul, RHO deals and opens 1♦.

On hand 1, the player chose to open 2♥, described as 5+ hearts and possibly very weak. Unfortunately, her partner held a nice 14-count but didn't expect quite so much, and they settled in 3♣ for +110 when 3NT can make. At favourable vulnerability, I would open this hand at the one-level 100 times out of 100. Favourable pre-empt can be far too weak for a hand of this calibre to be in the same category, and holding AJx in the other major is a huge negative for a pre-empt. Partner can reasonably expect a favourable opening to be about a point shy of your usual approach, and this hand is definitely not too crummy.

A different player held hand 2. She jumped straight to 4♠ and bought a phenomenal dummy: ♠AQ62 ♥AJ2 ♦K4 ♣J985. The play on this hand was quite interesting too:

♠ KJ98754	♠ AQ62
♥ K97	♥ AJ2
♦ 987	♦ K4
♣ --	♣ J985

North led a diamond, won by South with the Jack, and the ♦A was cashed. South switched to ♣A, ruffed by declarer who then drew trumps in two rounds, South following and North pitching clubs. Declarer ruffed her last diamond in dummy, trumped a club, crossed back to dummy's ♠Q (North discarding another club and South throwing a diamond) and ruffed another club. It was only for an overtrick on this hand, but she wanted to get the hearts right. Taking stock of what we know so far, South held 2 spades, 3 clubs and seemingly 5 diamonds (but possibly 4). She had shown up with 13 points: ♦AQJ and ♣AQ. Since she apparently had a balanced hand, it was impossible for her to also hold the ♥Q or she would have opened 1NT. Therefore, the heart finesse should be taken for the overtrick. It's easy for me to say as I could see South's cards, but it's logically sound as well.

What would you bid after (1♠) Pass (Pass) holding:

♠ AKQ
♥ 106543
♦ 87
♣ KQ9

Therese Demarco opted for 1NT, which seems much better than 2♥. Although you hold a 5-card suit, the real asset of your hand is those spade stoppers, and partner can always Stayman if they also have hearts. As it is, you have a 5-3 fit, but 3NT plays better than 4♥ so Therese's decision worked out perfectly.

Finally, an offering from the other table. Felicity Smyth and Sheila Bird bid a nice 6♣ which was missed at the table I kibitzed.

Board 28 ♠ QJ83
 Dealer W ♥ K1087
 Vul NS ♦ 76
 ♣ 852

♠ 7 ♠ A92
 ♥ AQJ43 ♥ 5
 ♦ KJ53 ♦ A8
 ♣ AKJ ♣ Q1097643
 ♠ K10654
 ♥ 962
 ♦ Q10942
 ♣ --

West	North	East	South
Bird	Milward	Smyth	Miller
1♥	Pass	2♣ *	X
XX	2♦	3♣ *	3♦
4♠ *	Pass	6♣	All Pass



Therese Demarco

Felicity Smyth's 2♣ was four-way: limit raise or better in hearts, balanced game force, game forcing with clubs, or decent but non-game forcing with clubs. Her 3♣ clarified that she held six clubs with non-game forcing values, but unsurprisingly, Sheila Bird was still interested in slam which she indicated with 4♣, which additionally implied a shortage. That was all Felicity needed to hear and she jumped to 6♣, easily making 13 tricks when Sheila's trump holding solidified her suit.

Celebrity Speaker Series

Week 1

Rex Hotel – 9.00-9.30am

Free for National Rookies All-Rounder and National Novice All-Rounder players, \$5 for all other attendees

<p>Wednesday 14th January Damon Flicker What Will You Do?</p> 	<p>Thursday 15th January Will Jenner-O'Shea Competitive Bidding</p> 	<p>Friday 16th January Laura Ginnan Opening Leads</p> 
<p>In this practical, hands-on session, Damon puts you in the hot seat and presents real situations where you choose your actions. Compare your decisions with others at the table and see whether you would make the same choices as Damon – and why.</p>	<p>A fresh new approach to When to Compete, and When to Defend. Which contracts should you aim to PLAY and when should you push the opponents out of their contract. Discussion about which cards are better for playing and better for defending.</p>	<p>The opening lead is the defence's first strike and often sets the course of the entire hand. This hands-on session puts cards in your hands, exploring how a well-chosen opening lead can build tricks, apply pressure, and put declarer on the back foot. Discussion will include choosing the right suit, leading with purpose, and using the auction to make that crucial first move count.</p>

Week 2

Canberra Accommodation Centre – 9.00-9.30am

Free for National Restricted All-Rounder and National U750 All-Rounder players, \$5 for all other attendees

<p>Monday 19th January Andy Hung Defending With or Without Signals</p> 	<p>Tuesday 20th January Will Jenner-O'Shea Tournament Tools</p> 	<p>Wednesday 21st January Laura Ginnan Decision Dynamics</p> 
<p>Defence can be straightforward when your partner provides a helpful signal, but there are times when partner had no opportunity to give a signal and you must rely on your own judgment. How do the top players still manage to find the winning defence? Join Andy as he shares some of the hidden secrets to improve your defence!</p>	<p>Conventions and Bids you need to be prepared for in Competitions. Defence to 1NT (Strong AND Weak). Defence to Weak Twos. Defence to Multi Twos. How to Handle Strange and Undiscussed situations.</p>	<p>Every hand presents a series of choices that shape the final result. In this hands-on session, Laura guides you through different situations, exploring the options at each turn and putting you in the position to decide what you would do.</p>

IMP Pairs Tips

For those who are playing the National Rookie IMP Swiss Pairs or National Novice IMP Swiss Pairs first up, or are entered in the or National U750 MP IMP Swiss Pairs or National Restricted IMP Swiss Pairs later on, here are some tips to maximise your success at IMP scoring:

- ♠ Look for the safest contract, rather than the highest scoring contract
- ♠ Bid game aggressively, especially when vulnerable
- ♠ Don't be scared of going down in game – it's worse to miss a making game than to go down one in an unmakeable contract
- ♠ Prioritise making your contract over chasing overtricks
- ♠ Consider taking safety plays and choosing lines that maximise your chances of making your contract, even if it may cost you tricks
- ♠ Defend solidly and safely, not creatively – avoid risky defence that may gain you a trick but could give away the contract
- ♠ Part-score battles are less important – don't strain to compete aiming for +110 instead of +100

System Health Check

Just like a heart health check on your cardiovascular system is important, a bridge system check can also identify problems before it's too late.



What is the meaning of 3♥ in your partnership? Is it invitational or forcing? Why?

1♦ - 1♥

2♦ - 3♥

This system health check is sponsored by the Heart Research Institute. Please support those who support bridge by wearing RED on Tuesday 20th January.



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Lunch + Kiosk

Food and beverage is available for purchase onsite. Bridge patrons (not staying at the Rex) are kindly requested not to bring food or beverages purchased elsewhere into the hotel for consumption on the premises as it contravenes Rex Hotel policy.

The kiosk will be staffed from 8:30am to 4pm for snacks and light refreshments. Lunch can be purchased from the kiosk or pre-ordered. The Swan & King restaurant menu is also open for lunch and bookings are recommended.

RED DAY

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Joining us from 19 - 21 January, HRI will be running a suite of activities that will be sure to keep your hearts happy and your cards in play. HRI will also be providing prizes to the Junior and Senior team champions.

You can get involved by:

- Wearing **RED** on Tuesday 20 January.
- Having a heart health check. HRI will be providing complimentary ECG and blood pressure checks. These 5 minute checks could save your life.
- Attending the complimentary lunch time health information session moderated by ABF member Professor Mathew Vadas.
- Chatting with the HRI team to learn about making a tax-deductible donation or gift that supports their groundbreaking research.



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Barbara's Daily Column: Pairs vs. Teams

Barbara Travis

♠ K 4
♥ 10 6 2
♦ J 9 5
♣ K Q J 9 6

♠ A Q J 10 3
♥ A 8 7
♦ 7 6
♣ A 10 8

You are playing in 4♠, South, with East having overcalled in diamonds. West leads the ♦10 to his partner's ♦Q, then East cashes the ♦A, and leads the ♦K at trick 3.

Your play here should depend on whether you are playing Pairs or Teams!

At Pairs, where you must take as many tricks as possible, you would trump high, hoping for a 4-2 (or better) trump break. When that is the scenario, you will have 11 tricks.

However, at Teams, the safety of the contract is the most important consideration. Given that an overtrick is worth 1 IMP, but a game (vulnerable, in this case) can be worth 12 IMPs, your focus is on making the game, and avoiding unnecessary risks. The 'risk' on this hand is that spades may break 5-1. Whereas at Pairs you wouldn't worry about such a low percentage situation, you should at Teams.

John McMahon, playing for the NSW Youth Team, found the expert play on the third round of diamonds, discarding a heart. (If East now continued diamonds, dummy could take care of any ruff.) In due course, he was rewarded with the contract when the hand proved to be:

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

By the way, if South trumps low, West does best to discard. This will give him trump control so, when clubs are led, he can trump the third round and wait for two heart winners.

(As it happened, at the other table, North-South had not reached game, so making the contract ensured a 10 IMP gain, rather than losing the part-score swing and 8 IMPs.)

♠ A 5 4
♥ A K 3 2
♦ 2
♣ A K Q 8 7

♠ K Q 3
♥ 9 8 7 6 5
♦ A K
♣ 9 4 3

You have arrived in 6♥, South. West leads the ♠J and you have to play this hand.

Once again, your line of play would be determined by the form of game you are playing – Pairs or Teams. (By the way, Butler Pairs is usually like Teams, with IMP scoring; Swiss Matchpoint Butler Pairs is like Pairs, where you are scored against the other Pairs, though later those results are converted to VPs.)

Playing Pairs, there are two considerations:

- (1) Are you in an excellent contract that others will not reach?
- (2) Are you in a contract that everyone is likely to reach?

If (1) applies, then play safely for your contract. If (2) applies, then you try for as many tricks as possible, as is ‘normal’ with Pairs play.

On this hand, you would assume that most people would reach this slam, so (2) applies. Therefore, you would play for a 2-2 or 3-1 heart break (90%).

However, at Teams you have to think about the safety of the contract, not worrying about the overtrick – even if you expect the opponents to be in the same slam.

Your only concern should be if hearts break 4-0 (10%). The missing hearts are the Q-J-10-4. If East has all four hearts, you have two trump losers no matter what. But what if West has all four hearts? If you knew that was the case, you would lead the ♥9 and finesse it on the first round. If West covers, you can win, then finesse again. If West ducks, the ♥9 wins, and you are left with only one heart loser.

It can be difficult adjusting between the two forms of the game. Pairs is about making as many tricks as possible, unless you are in a sensational contract that you think others won’t reach (when it’s about safety). Teams is about safety first, and overtricks only once your contract is assured.

This last example comes from the Playoffs for the Australian Women's Team, held in December 2019:

♠ J 9 4
♥ K Q 8 4
♦ K Q 4
♣ 10 4 2

♠ 6
♥ A J 7
♦ A J 7
♣ A Q 9 7 6 3

You reach a sensible 5♣ contract as South.

If you are playing Pairs, you should just take the finesse in clubs, as everyone else will do.

However, if you are playing Teams, you want to make your contract, first and foremost. You have one spade loser, so it's about ensuring that you keep your club losers to only one. This means taking a safety play in clubs. After all, if you finesse the ♣Q and lose to West's King, you will face a nasty guess on the next round – if East follows with a second low club, do you play her for the J-x-x or x-x (and K-J offside)?

Instead of 'guessing', you look at the safest line of play. It may cost an overtrick if clubs break 2-2 with the K-x onside, but it will win in many other situations. The first club you play should be the Ace. If that drops an honour from West (or East), your contract is assured.

If West plays the King, you cross to dummy and finesse East's J-x-x. If West plays the Jack, you just exit with a high enough club to draw trumps. If no club honour has appeared, you cross to dummy and lead towards your ♣Q-9. [Of course, you'll go down if West has K-J-x, but then you were always destined to fail in the contract.]

That's how Elizabeth Havas, in the TRAVIS team, played the clubs in her 5♣ contract. [Unfortunately for my team, the opposition reached a poor 6♣ contract – with the ♣K-x onside – making.]

Barbara Travis wrote a weekly column for subscribers in 2021. She has kindly offered for them to be reprinted in these bulletins. For more information, see Barbara's website www.bridgeatbeaumont.com.

Share Your Stories

I am always happy to receive stories to publish in the bulletin. Whether you or your partner (or an opponent) found a great bid or play, or you'd like to share a funny story from the table, feel free to send it through to notbulletin@gmail.com. To submit a hand in detail, you can also [click here](#) to use our online form to ensure you provide all relevant information. Alternatively, feel free to approach me in the playing area and tell your story in person.





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Australia's Bridge Day Out

Lauren Travis

Bridge Australia Foundation's inaugural Bridge Day Out was held in September 2025. Over 40 clubs across Australia participated in the day, with funds raised to support a nationwide Bridge in Schools program. An additional feature of the day was a Zoom session hosted by Pete Hollands, with guest analysis from Sophie Ashton, Mike Doecke, Renee Cooper and Liam Milne. The hands written up in this series are from the [highlights video on YouTube](#).

Board 28	♠ J9852
Dealer W	♥ 10
NS Vul	♦ AKQ94
	♣ AK
♠ AK107	♠ --
♥ A4	♥ QJ76532
♦ 862	♦ 107
♣ J642	♣ Q853
	♠ Q643
	♥ K98
	♦ J53
	♣ 1097

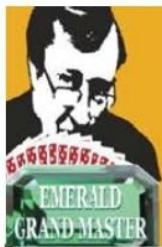
The player who raised this hand in the Zoom was North in the following auction:

West	North	East	South
1NT	X	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

East-West obviously had a misunderstanding, with East intending their 4♥ as a natural, preemptive bid, and West thinking it was a transfer. It's important to discuss whether you maintain your usual system over doubles of 1NT, or whether some or all of your conventional bids change.

The North player was confident in her initial double of the opponent's weak 1NT opening, but was unsure about how to act when the bidding came back to her at the 4-level. Pete Hollands observed that it appears East has a long suit and weak hand, given the HCP held by North alone. He pointed out that on the basis of HCP, this hand probably belongs to NS but they have no way to bid with any accuracy at this point. Therefore, doubling 5♥ would be a better decision, as North should be quite confident the contract won't make and doubling ensures they maximise their score. Sophie Ashton added that North should also make a takeout double if 4♥ was passed around to them – and on this hand, partner should pass, but if they held different cards NS may get to a good game.

The 2026 Bridge Day Out will be held on 28 July. Please see the [Bridge Australia Foundation](#) website for more details closer to the date.



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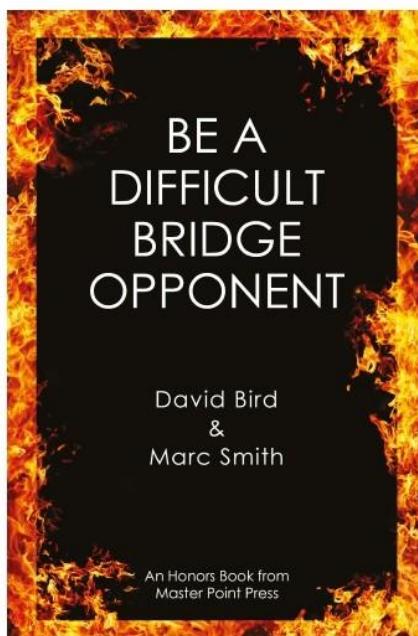
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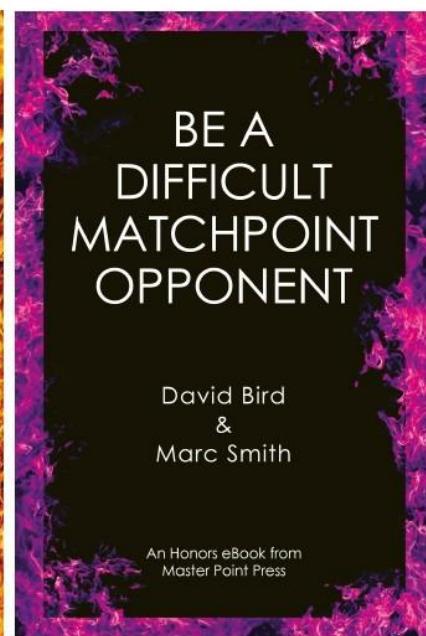
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Most of the hands are from actual play and have the names of the players. 8 or 9 are here in Canberra and Kate McCallum is mentioned 6 or 7 times.

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Kate's Way #1: Maintaining High Ethical Standards

Kate McCallum

Originally published in *Bridging NSW* by Bridge NSW, August 2025

In the game of bridge, regardless of the standards of our opponents, we strive to play honestly and fairly. That means we should embrace full disclosure and avoid body language that is contrary to fair play. We should strive for an even tempo. We should avoid taking advantage of partner's hesitation and play in tempo when following suit with small cards. We should answer enquiries honestly and fully and we should behave with courtesy and respect toward our opponents. In the world of the highest ethical standards of play we'd rather lose the match than our character. I'd like to reference a quote here that captures this ethos: "Be more concerned with your character than your reputation. Your character is what you really are. Your reputation is merely what others think you are." - John Wooden

Here's a recent hand that raised issues of ethical standards of play:

Dlr: S	♠ AQxxx		
Vul: NS	♥ AJT9		
	♦ --		
	♣ Axxx		
♠ Kx	♠ Jxxx		
♥ --	♥ xx		
♦ QJxxxx	♦ AKx		
♣ KQxxx	♣ JTxx		
	♠ xx		
	♥ KQxxxxxx		
	♦ T9xx		
	♣ --		
West	North	East	South
			4♥
4NT *	6♥	All Pass	

* both minors

In summary NS can make 7♥. EW will probably take 10 tricks in diamonds. Many NS pairs were +500 against 7♦. But several ethical problems occurred at my table. After 4♥ West's 4NT bid was made instantaneously. West should have avoided the super-fast action before bidding over a preemptive bid. This avoids giving his partner information that he has an easy decision at a high level. It's not required, but it's an ethical courtesy, giving his LHO time to consider his action after his partner's 4♥ opening. 6♥ was instantaneous. Again, North should have restrained his enthusiasm - for the same reasons. A brief pause would have been a courtesy to the East player who had to cope with a very active auction. East's Pass was very slow – about 30 seconds. Poor East was in a very bad spot. He had to absorb opener's 4♥, his partner's 4NT and RHO's 6♥ and act within 8-10 seconds or be guilty of hesitation which would give his partner unauthorized information. He had a difficult problem – defend 6♥ or save in 7♦. He was entitled to a reasonable amount of time to resolve it - time which he didn't get. At my table, he took around 30 seconds to pass,

effectively barring his partner. Many tables had the same auction and many Wests bid over 6♥ in the pass-out seat. At my table, my LHO did the ethical thing and passed out 6♥. He had unauthorized information from his partner's tempo.

The bottom line was that my partnership was somewhat unethical in bidding 6♥ instantaneously yet we were not punished. My opponents showed extremely good ethical behavior in their final decision and, as a result, they got a poor score. Given the two lightning-fast actions many players would have felt justified in ignoring a partner's slow tempo and bidding over 6♥. Our West did not and deserves admiration. A truly ethical player.

The Difference Between Winning and Losing at Bridge: Concentration, Partnership Handling, Temperament and Focus

This is a modified version of Peter Gill's presentation at the Gold Coast Congress in 2013

Experts will tell you that the most important elements to playing good bridge are concentration, temperament and partnership handling. Given these results, shouldn't our improvement at bridge include coaching in these areas?

Concentration

Distraction and fatigue are among the main causes of poor concentration.

Distraction can occur when emotion from what just happened interferes with one's concentration. Mike Lawrence in his bridge tip called Ecstasy gives great advice – that you have to beware after any triumph (the distracting emotion = ecstasy) or disaster (the distracting emotion = despair).

Trick 1 is a very important time for all players – as soon as dummy comes down, thinking hard is essential. Yet this is a time when many dummies distract declarer by saying something like: "Sorry I didn't use Stayman, I guess I should have" or the like. Many declarers cannot concentrate fully when they listen to partner's comment.

Here's a sample hand. You hold:

♠ KJ974
♥ 1095
♦ 86
♣ AKQ

RHO opens a weak 2♥, vulnerable. You overcall 2♠. Pass by LHO, and your partner raises to 4♠, which is doubled in the pass out seat by LHO, who leads the ♥J.

Dummy comes down with:

♠ A5
♥ Q43
♦ AK105
♣ 5432

If you say to partner “Why didn’t you bid 3NT?” you fail. If partner (dummy) makes a comment to you, he has erred. The solution is that you should duck $\heartsuit J$ with as few hints of desperation as you can manage. If RHO plays you for a singleton or doubleton in hearts, and ducks, you have a chance.

Let’s look at the full deal. LHO had:

\spadesuit Q10863

\heartsuit J

\diamond Q975

\clubsuit J108

Any form of distraction at trick 1 reduces your chances of smoothly finding the only play that gives you a chance. If the $\heartsuit J$ is ducked, you can make $4\spadesuit X$ in various ways that involve cashing winners then end-playing West who has to trump his partner’s hearts in the ending. (After the heart lead and club shift you ruff a diamond low in hand, play off the top clubs and $\spadesuit A$, trump another diamond, then exit with a heart.)

One good player says he counts his cards multiple times, in order to “clear my brain of all extraneous thoughts”. He recommends that you develop a focusing routine such as that, and use it at the start of play, at the start of each hand, after a disaster, and after protracted breaks in play.

Mike Lawrence’s tip means that it should also apply after +1100 or slam success (Ecstasy), before the last board (keep focusing on the bridge, not on the lunch break), and whenever you are distracted.

Another “focusing routine” is to say internally to yourself “Next Hand” or “This Hand” multiple times, so that you forget about the previous hand.

Jens Auken from Denmark said in a BOLS Bridge Tip that you should try to develop the ability to spot Kill Points, i.e. points in the bidding or play when stopping to think are crucial. That’s not so easy to do, and Jens gives little advice on how to do so. However, it is certainly something to think about.

Decision Fatigue, or even general tiredness which is something different, can also cause concentration errors. When you are suffering general tiredness, Zia’s advice is to

take it easy and let partner be in charge - let partner make most of the decisions.

Partnership Handling

When Jeff Meckstroth was asked in an interview if he and Eric Rodwell (the world’s best pair) ever get angry, he replies “just about every hand”. But “we’re very good at rooting for each other”, he adds. (Handling of team members also is important.) Successful partnerships are all about looking after your partner and ensuring they are in their ‘comfort zone’.

Temperament

Getting irritated with partner is one thing. Anger management is an issue we will skip past.

Getting annoyed with oneself is more common and is a serious problem, partly because when you are annoyed with yourself, you are more likely to lash out at partner, especially if he could have prevented your own error, which upset you. This happens a lot at bridge.

We all have problems and we all try to deal with our anger. At bridge, making a massive effort to take it easy and not get upset is necessary if you want to become a better player.

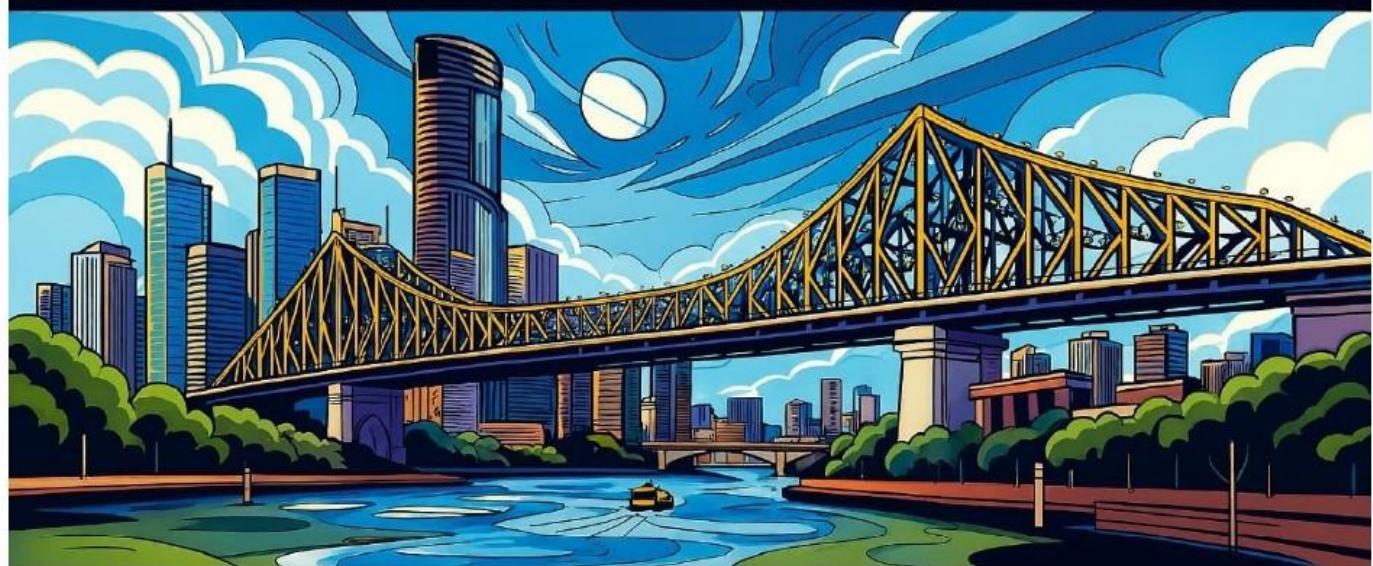
Focus

The 2013 Gold Coast Pairs began with a “hiccup” when some boards were put on the wrong tables. Directors halted play while the problem was rectified.

At our table where play had already started, concentration was difficult, so our opponent reassuringly said to his partner, “I understand that you are distracted, but we are in our little ‘Oasis of Calm’ now”. They promptly got a good score, so clearly the “Oasis of Calm” worked. At the end of the session, this particular pair had topped the whole field! It seemed that their approach to distraction management / focus was very effective.

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